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Space and Place
The Communication of Gentrification to Young People in Hackney

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MSc in Media and Communications

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ABSTRACT

Through this research project, I examine the ways in which BME Youth in Hackney communicate their sense of place and attachment to the borough given its current gentrification. As a marginalised group who balance multiple cultures and communities their accounts as well as their participation in planning and place making is neglected. In conducting a focus group I explored the youth's attitudes towards the changes in their neighbourhood. I argue that youths in Hackney communicate their sense of attachment through cultural possession of certain spaces and a moral claim to space. Furthermore, their claims in new spaces are made through a form of territorialisation in which they claim material space by a ritualistic route and pattern performativity - overcoming alienation. Youth place making in Hackney is also legitimized by class contestation and progressive accumulation of capital as affirmation of their symbolic status.

ONE. INTRODUCTION

> As you descend from the ramp at Dalston Junction station your immediate area is filled with young professionals. You remind yourself that the commute into the city is easier since this station connects to the now complete London Overground circle. Across the road a simple black shop-front reads, 'Newcomer Wines'. Next to it, the infamous Hackney Peace Carnival Mural almost glitters in the sunlight. Through a small open door to the left of that you notice two mothers cautiously eyeing their babies in the grounds of Dalston Eastern Curve Garden, you spy shabby chic benches, sunflowers, herbal tea and the minimalist interior similar of the many hip businesses in the area. Further down you notice a large cluster of people on a walking tour. Directly opposite the latest private development 'Dalston Square' is framed by a new public square.
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> (Written from field notes taken 3 August)

Hackney (*see Figure 1*) is typified as a multi-ethnic working class borough. At the time of their publication Butler and Robson (2003) describe it as an area which was largely hollowed-out by urban decay and left with little neighbourhood identity and social capital. On top of that, Hackney was ranked as the second most deprived local authority in England in 2010 (LB Hackney Policy Team, 2016). Despite London's booming prosperity, the gap between the rich and poor is ever increasing with, "over a third of children... and 30 per cent of working adults in inner London (were) living in poverty. Black and minority ethnic (BME) communities have suffered disproportionately from marginalisation" (Imrie, Lees, and Raco, 2008: 9), yet, "house prices in Hackney are increasing at a faster rate than the London average despite the growth in new housing (LB Hackney Policy Team, 2016). Hackney is on the list of London boroughs undergoing 'regeneration', with areas like Shoreditch and Hackney Fields already well gentrified.

Figure 1. Map of Hackney

Gentrification is a widespread and complex social process. It was recognised and named by sociologist Ruth Glass in the 60s. The literature now extends across many disciplines most of it concerning geography, policy and planning. The term is subject to many interpretations but for this purpose we adopt Smith's definition that poorer working class neighbourhoods in the inner-city encounter a, "reversal, reinvestment, and the in-migration of a relatively well-off, middle and upper middle-class population" (Neducin et al. 2009 cited Smith, 1998: 199). These changes are not only material, they shape everyday lives. Atkinson writes about the effect on the ground level, "Stories of personal housing dislocation and loss, distended social networks, 'improved' local services out of sync with local needs and displacement have always been the darker underbelly of a process which, for city boosters, has represented something of a saviour for post-industrial cities" (Atkinson, 2005: 3).

With regards to types of displacement, Lees et al. (2007) make clear that attachment to place should not be ignored nor social networks destroyed. This can happen for example, due to affordability and council housing allocations through which kinships and networks are dispersed. Varying degrees of displacement are further caused by old inhabitants' loss of belonging as the neighbourhood changes to cater to the new inhabitants (Davidson, 2008), or enforce exclusionary policies (Brown-Saracino, 2010). Whether or not physical displacement happens, a long term re-engineering of place occurs (Duman, 2012). As we travel the streets, we are not only witnessing the manifestation of capital but also the competing and complex spatialities within it (Martin, 2005 citing Keith and Pile, 1993). We invest our spaces with a sense of ourselves and our communities, in a bid to claim them and be claimed by them, moreover, collective images and memories can symbolise who belongs in particular spaces, this is more or less - culture; a powerful means of control in cities (Zukin, 1995).

Gentrification is where deprived economic areas meets the middle class in a capital (economic, social or cultural) driven process, Zukin (1992) explains this is a, "concurrent symbolic and material recasting of a neighbourhood in accordance with the dominant tastes of the incoming groups" (p. 187). At the same time the, "local incumbent population is disenfranchised from this recasting, and so the re-imaging of such areas represents a violent imposition of a dominant perspective of place" (Martin, 2005: 1). What is interesting is the stance that belonging is the initial driver for frontier gentrifiers' move to the inner city. Even with this in mind, the process rewrites symbolic place as material changes are made, social and spatial restructuring is then key in the reimaging of place (Martin, 2005).

Atkinson (2005) draws comparison between the gentrifiers and a colonial elite citing their appropriation of urban space, prestigious location choice, exclusive residency and support of, "a domestic and local service class" (p. 3). Strengthened by the fact the new middle class gentry is mostly white, Atkinson writes that this colonialism, "by the more privileged classes" (p. 3) acts as a cultural force in, "its privileging of whiteness, as well as the more class-based identities and preferences in urban living" (p. 2). Also, those with more capital are more likely to be successful in their claim for space (Zukin, 1995). Gentrification's idealistic vision of social mixing and capital ripple is being sold convincingly seen in its adoption from New York public administration to cities including London (Jones and Ward, 2002). Because of this, "Gentrification now seems rather inevitable" asserts Lees et al. (2007), and therefore its displacement binding, accepted and normalised.

It is hard to ignore the media's part in the process of gentrification. The re-imagining of space and commodification of culture in the media is ultimately a tool in the mis/appropriation of space. It is a multi-layered process. It has been noted by academics (Neducin et al. 2009; Lees et al. 2007) how the discourse of gentrification has been littered with neutered terms such as, 'urban regeneration', 'urban renewal' and 'social mixing'. Gentrification is an uncomfortable process and therefore it is an uncomfortable term. Lees et al. note, "It's hard to be for 'gentrification', but who would oppose 'urban renaissance', 'urban regeneration', and 'urban sustainability" (2007: xix)? Similarly, the reframing and application of words such as 'gritty' to mean cool and authentic (Zukin, 2001: 51) is propelled by the media.

Secondly, the media frames space as nothing and then suddenly, new and discoverable. In the 're-making' of neighbourhoods, their 'rough' past is usually highlighted as one of the justifications for gentrification. The media's representations actively reinforce Hackney's past based on its poverty, crime and vagrants etc., however this is not the area in its totality. "Here one can find nearly every kind of food in the shops... Dalston is the UK home of reggae and hip-hop and reputedly has... more artists than anywhere else in London. It is also home to the Rio Cinema and the Arcola Street Theatre..." (Hart, 2003). Duman (2012) elaborates on the above stance, "When nothing of value is registered in the culturally educated aesthetic experience of a given individual or group, the casual response is to say: 'there is nothing here, only trash' (p. 678). Yet, this *gritty* aesthetic is discovered and then tamed for consumption. This colonization of 'untamed' territory is the narrative in the marketing of gentrified areas (Smith 1992; Martin 2005).

Lastly, the media legitimizes a certain perspective on the process. Contemporary artist and intellectuals appraises the cultural value of modern cities, this 'proper' perspective wipes out alternative readings, i.e. the marginalised perspective is minimised. Zukin (1995) notes, in mediated representations images of the city can be framed upon imaginative reconstructions from a certain viewpoint. The fetishization of cultural products such as festivals and markets is explored through the following text:

> In the context of gentrification, ethnic festivals like the Giglio arguably fulfil a double function. On the one hand, for the ethnic communities, they act as meaningful opportunities to express their culture and to lay claim to certain urban spaces, even if only symbolically. On the other hand, ethnic festivals are able to combine and offer many of the desired characteristic that help to make ethnic neighborhoods so attractive...
>
> Represented by media coverage as agents of an experiential lifestyle of exciting Otherness, a neighborhood's ethnic history, its ethnic communities, and its ethnic traditions can this unwittingly contribute to the attractiveness of an area, accelerate and define its gentrification, and aid in its marketing to potential gentrifiers. While ethnic groups might also use the media

exposure and gentrification processes to their advantage, the commodification of their place of residence as an ethnic neighborhood is ultimately not dependent of their physical presence. As real estate becomes too valuable for their actual presence, symbolic references are often enough to sell the ethnic neighborhood.

(Erbacher, 2011: 245-260)

The whole process of gentrification is a physical and symbolic claim for space. However, as argued space is not empty, meanings already lay where gentrification occurs. It is a contest to signify space through the dominant symbolism of one culture; this is a power to rewrite relationships between people and space, defining one's place in society. I hope to obtain a direct understanding of the ways in which the youth negotiate the meanings attached to place and the meanings they attach in return as a place-making process. This study builds upon research exploring youth perspectives (Howarth 2002; Brown and Lees 2008), gentrification and identity (Keddie, 2014).

My study seeks to explore how people, especially the youth of Hackney, maintain and communicate their sense of place in a gentrifying borough. My focus on the youth fills a gap in research as gentrification is mostly explored through the lens local businesses, the gentrifiers or other vulnerable residents. As the future of the borough, with capital to accumulate and multiple identities to negotiate, their perspective should be highly relevant to the topic. If young people are to maintain their right to social development and quality of life, their participation in the process of 'regeneration' should not be underestimated. Additionally it would combat the perceived 'lack of citizenship' and anti-social behaviour (Brown and Lees, 2008). It is documented that the marginalised are not adequately represented in the mainstream (Georgiou, 2013) often leading them to create their own alternative forms of communication. Youths are a marginalised group but make up a quarter of the relatively young borough of Hackney (LB Hackney Policy Team, 2016), yet they are severely underestimated for what they can contribute to studies like this or even to planning and policy. Lee et al. make known, "Regions cannot complete unless they reach out to the creative classes, which include youth" (p. xix).

> You retrace your steps looking for the ghosts of the 'bad' neighbourhood it was, all down the road are buildings reaching the sky steeped in scaffolding, they tower over the old shopping centre, two minutes away you find the familiarity of the market, cranes frame the backdrop but a bright Jamaican flag steals your attention, a Rasta mans his stall selling yam, sorrel and seasoning. You walk through the market until you reach the impossibly busy Kingsland High Road towards home.

(Written from field notes taken 3 August)

TWO. LITERATURE REVIEW

What is space?

Space can be considered in its cartographic form of region, borders and landscape as a way to map and navigate the world. Furthermore, it can be considered through relationships between things as a means of making sense of the world and place making. Things that are situated within geographical space are spatial. This spatiality refers to, "how space and social relations are made through each other; that is, how space is made through social relations, and how social relations are shaped by the space in which they occur" (Kitchin and Hubbard, 2010: 499).

It was an early thought that space had no effect, however a class of urban geographers along with other interdisciplinary scholars began to theorise the relationship between space, place, culture and identity (Soja 1989; Harvey 1973; Massey 1995; Hall and Jefferson 1976). Harvey (1973: 14) looking beyond space as being absolute and unconditional but instead as a mediator narrates, "The question "What is space?" [Must]...be replaced by the question "how is it that distinctive human practices create and make use of distinctive...space[s]?'". Reflecting on Harvey's rejection of fixed space Castree elucidates, "Harvey's mid-way positions entails arguing that space - the material form that processes assume 'on the ground' as buildings, infrastructure, consumption sites and so on - is both cause and effect in/of social life..." (2010: 237). In other words, social practices create and construct space and space creates and constructs social practices as a relative and continuous process. This has major implications on the way space should be considered by those that inhabit it and those that manipulate it. Like Harvey, Massey (1995) fundamentally believes the social and the spatial are to be thought of together however, Massey does not prescribe space (material) as the explanatory variable but instead the forms of specific processes within space which is the deviation from Harvey's 'cause and effect'. Massey's writings show, "...how places might be understood as 'porous networks of social relations' (Callard, 2010) developing the term 'power geometry' to illustrate peoples positions within them (Massey, 1994).

If one should explore the discourse of space a prominent theme arises, meaning- the different layers and dimensions through which the processes occur. There follows - the geographical layer, the structural layer and the layer of the day-to-day. A good illustration of this is Lefebvre's three interrelated dimensions; the '*perceived space*', '*conceived space*' and the '*lived space*' (Lefebvre, 1991: 42).

- The *conceived* and conceptualised space of planners and other professionals, which contain objectified representations are seen as the representations of space.
- Spatial practices that legitimize societal ideology, structure reality and patterns of interaction produce and reproduce the normative and have affinity with *perceived* space.
- Finally, representational space of the lived space, everyday experience, is a space of symbols, it overlays the *conceived* space and makes use of objects and implies time and norms (Shields 2010; Merrifield 2000).

These all come together and are internalised as the 'urban'. Lefebvre and Harvey's works illustrates knowing *how* and *what* is internalised in space enables us knowledge of how to produce space, possess space, produce an entirely different space or city even. "To change life is to change space; to change space is to change life" (Merrifield, 2000: 173). The urban theorist summarises of Lefebvre, "So space - urban space, social space, physical space, experiential space - isn't just the staging of reproductive requirements, but part of the and is a vital, productive member of the cast at that. Space, in the apt words of David Harvey is an 'active moment' in expansion and reproduction of capitalism. It is a phenomenon which is colonized and commodified, bought and sold, created and torn down, used and abused, speculated on and fought over…" (p. 173).

Systems in space

A useful concept to explore some of the complex social processes that take place within space is Bourdieu's 'Habitus'. Habitus is defined as, "a system of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, principles which generate and organise practices and representations" (Bourdieu, 1990: 53). This concept is spatial as it allows exploration of one's place in relation to what is around us. "Habitus is thus a sense of one's (and other's) place and role in the world of one's lived environment… a cognitive, sense of place" (Hillier and Rooksby, 2005: 21). Habitus is a form of knowledge. The word is architectural in epistemology and derives from literature (for which Bourdieu was the translator) dictating architecture as a form of knowledge. Dovey makes clear, "The habitus is taken for granted rather than consciously conceived; a form of ideology in the sense of a socially constructed vision perceived as natural; culture seen as nature. Its importance derives largely from its thoughtlessness or doxa- its silence" (2005: 284-284). In the Bourdieuian sense, fields such as architecture or even gentrification are structured in order to maintain cultural authority to those already predisposed to the conditions (Dovey, 2005). The concept is inextricably linked to power. Here, power is culturally and symbolically recreated through forms of knowledge and legitimised through unconscious but seemingly natural social practices.

Bourdieu's theory is developed further by his concepts of Fields, Capital, Power etc. In Bourdieuian terms, gentrification would be a 'field', a "socially structured space in which actors play out their engagements with each other" (Hillier and Rooksby, 2005: 22). This usage is supported by the application of the concept to urban geography, architecture, planning and studies of gentrification (Dovey 2005; Butler and Robson 2003; Harvey, 1996). If habitus is a feeling for how the game is played then the 'field' is the board (Bourdieu, 1990). This is not meant in the physical sense of space but the playing arena, where actors are positioned and resources are assigned, given and identified. Dovey (2005) offers the insight that definition of the field, is what is mostly at stake. Defining a socially structured space is a subjective activity that all actors have a stake in. By this logic, socially constructed spaces are also spaces of contestation. "If the unspoken feel for the game aside from the rules is acknowledged then it gives rise to other possibilities of playing (Bridge, 2010: 79).

In this field, actors bring with them resources to play, this introduces another of Bourdieu's concepts, capital (1990). In the context of Bourdieu's framework, capital extends beyond its material denotation to, "status, power, personal contacts and formal and informal forms of knowledge" (Hillier and Rooksby, 2005: 24). These come together to form four sub categories: economic capital, social capital, cultural capital and symbolic capital. These are defined as:

> Economic capital of material wealth and concomitant power.
>
> Social capital, which may be defined as resources and power which people obtain through their social networks and connections.
>
> Cultural capital, which refers to knowledge and skills which actors acquire either through formally examined or through less formal means of education. Cultural capital often relates to prestige and status and includes resources such as articulateness, persuasiveness, aesthetic preferences and cultural awareness.
>
> (Hillier and Rooksby, 2005: 24)

Social capital is based on collective networking and is institutionalised by private and exclusive memberships and titles. An important category for our study, the meaning of cultural capital is extended by Dovey (2005) who furthers Hillier and Rooksby's definition of cultural capital that emphasises institutional cultural capital (formal education etc.) to

include cultural forms and goods. Cultural capital is positioned as the ability to create classifying practices and itself classify:

> For Bourdieu cultural capital is not some generally realisable resource, but a source of social distinction for one group possessing socially legitimised taste, against the tastes of other groups... Those with social power have a monopoly over ways of seeing and classifying objects according to their criteria of good taste. The ability to create new systems of discernment is class power.
>
> (Bridge, 2006: 1966)

Symbolic capital, a related yet more abstract concept (with a lot of slippage) is concerned with the power to legitimize symbolic order. It is the distribution of a limited resource but unlike the other forms of capital it does not accumulate with individuals rather it infuses itself in the field, legitimizing 'true' or 'false' norms. It reinforces what is known to be true (Dovey, 2005).

It is now easier to connect components of Bourdieu's space and place making processes in the context of gentrification and indeed, it is a theory applied by many academics in the exploration of space and social relations. Butler and Robson (2003: 7-22) draw on Bourdieu's concepts of Habitus and capital to explore a range of gentrification scenarios and how different groups, depending on their resources and aspirations deploy their social, economic and/or cultural capital. They argue space and place is crucial in the investigation of building neighbourhoods.

The high cultural capital of vanguard gentrifiers sparks further waves of gentrifiers that bring with them more capital and that in turn sparks high neighbourhood investment. It should be noted that deployment of capital is both unconscious and conscious, furthermore, as Harvey notes capital is mobile, mutable and transferable, there is difficulty in fixing it. There is a tension between place investment and the mobile nature of capital. "Those who have invested in the physical qualities of place have to ensure that activities arise which render their investments profitable by ensuring the permanence of place. Coalitions of entrepreneurs actively try to shape activities in place for this purpose" (Harvey, 1996: 296). Zukin (1995) coins this as 'domestication by cappuccino'. Actively seeking to cater to those who possess significant capital is a meaningful, signifying and transformative practice through which the tastes, aesthetics, etc. (norms) of the middle class are legitimized.

Sense of place

Through spatiality, concepts of capital, gentrification and habitus all hold the power to negate social life. In this process a specific set of norms are legitimized and in the context of gentrification this is usually the preferred taste of the middle class, or the new middle class. Bourdieu's significance on class is explored through a chapter in *Thinking Space*, "Bourdieu analyses in great detail the relationships between social groups and social status on the one hand their tastes in clothes, food, furniture, pastimes, music and so on, to show that value judgements about 'good' and 'bad' taste are deeply entwined with social divisions of class, wealth and power" (Painter, 2000: 240). The concept's heavily reliance on class offers its critique. Butler and Robson (2003) highlight the studies of Mike Savage whose interests lay in cultural dimensions of inequality. Spatial inequality establishes the 'language of class' as a marker for the exploration of identity. Savage (2000) notes the declining impact the working class have on determining British culture that was historically built around them but iterates the resistance to letting it define their lives. For Savage, the simplistic 'us' and 'them' is not longer readily accepted in the multicultural capitalistic society, Butler and Robson adds to this, "Britain may remain a class society but it is not one that most of its citizens see as defining their lives" (2003: 18). Whilst London is a class-based society, it shouldn't be assumed it is readily accepted. Whilst the habitus may explain some unconscious signifying practices, collective thinking and habits, if the 'feel for the game' (Bourdieu, 1990: 66) (i.e. said dispositions of the habitus) is embodied, the rise of other approaches to the game may prevail - not by playing with a different set of rules but changing interaction with the board. In the study of class and the remaking of the inner city, Butler and Robson (2003) highlight the significance of the habitus in bridging individual life decision making and structures that frame society but he bridge is relational and could offer the space for resistance. Migration, change of class and resistance are but a few other critiques of the habitus (Friedmann, 2005).

Whilst Bourdieu's concepts are wide-ranging and complex, they still go some way in forging a sense of place, home and place in society. The argument is strengthened in its application by urban geographers when considering space and spatial relations but where it gains momentum in this discussion, is in its exploration by other academics and theorists in studies of identity and belonging.

In *Belonging: Towards a Theory of Identification with Space Leach* (2005) poses that architecture is linked with cultural identity. Identity is often embedded in the discourse of the built environment and so given meaning in this sphere. The field of architecture is in similar vein with the field of gentrification as it is part of neighbourhood building and the making of spatial structures that negate social life. It is the field of architecture in which gentrification is

further fuelled. Leach's work is an important beginning in exploring how a sense of place is formed within space. The dense material of the built environment is activated by cultural practices that unlock meaning. In other words, buildings can be likened to language and the stories are articulated by practice, 'pedestrian speech-acts' as described by Leach. Moreover, alienation is overcome by repetition (2005: 300). This makes clear one method for place making. Leach's schematic framework uses theories from Bhabha (1990), Bourdieu and De Certeau (1984) to explore the territorialisation of space, performance and mirroring as processes of place making. "Through habitual processes of movement, by covering and recovering the same paths and routes, we come to familiarise ourselves with a territory and thereby find meaning in that territory" (2005: 299). Spatial practices such as routes and patterns of interaction legitimize societal space and structure reality therefore, "space is practiced place" (p. 299).

De Certeau's (1984) emphasis on spatial tactics as a mode of making connections and meaning making is extended within this framework to explore how spatial tactics forge identity. Leach employs Butler's 'performativity' (1990; 1993) to constitute that place is formulated on the notion that we perform constructed identities that are not ontological in nature. Performativity is a reiteration of a set of norms hence our identity is a result of our performances. What we are is what we've become through our cultural practices. It is possible to see some commonality with the habitus but the departure from Bourdieu is that Butler imposes a sort of agency and once again the potential for contestation is made clear. Butler's works has wide implications for any form of structure across the social sciences but it is especially useful here. It states that through cultural practices such as performativity one can maintain, create or develop one's identity. Whilst identity is transient and complex, it is less rooted in space than sense of place. The latter notion is furthered by Bell (1999) who clarifies performativity and its connection to belonging, "The repetition, sometimes ritualistic repetition, of these normalised codes makes material the belongings they purport to simply describe" (p. 3), Leach (2005) elucidates, "It suggests a way in which communities might colonise various territories through the literal 'performances' - the actions, ritualistic behaviour and so on - that are acted out within a given architectural stage, and through performances achieve a certain attachment to place" (p. 301).

Belonging and Belongingness

It is Lefebvre's (1995) position that every person has a 'right to city', yet the city belongs to no one. This research project is not about which group of people Hackney *technically* belongs to, as that would be difficult to prove as the borough, like in London, New York and other global cities is usually "made up of historical migrations" (Zukin, 2011: 5). Any group can implement this 'right to the city' but the gentry's capital amplify their sense of belonging. Plus they prepossess community history and aesthetics and together these reinforce their symbolic claim as legitimate and undermine the already existing (but weaker) claim of subordinate groups (Zukin 2010; White 2015).

How a community is attached to place is arguably imagined. Usually, it is through a common history, shared experience, shared culture, belonging and their attachment to certain places (Fortier, 1999). Still, this notion of the imagined community implies that spaces of imagined communities are essentially also imagined and these intangible claims reside at the location(s) of their culture. People reinscribe and remember space; this in turn becomes spaces of belonging through cultural and historical 'possessions' that are practised through repeated meaning-making performances. This is how certain groups appropriate specific spaces (Leach, 2005), thus 'belonging' in Hackney can be based on a community of residents and non-residents who believe they have a collective claim to Hackney based on history or an experience they believed to be shared.

Zukin (2011) argues when a space is regenerated, its origins are about forgotten about, this is not to say its history or which group settled in a certain neighbourhood first but its '*origins*' (p. 5). '*Origins*' suggest, "a moral right to the city that enables people to put down roots" (p. 6), a legitimate right to inhabit-not perform a model of urban living. It is the expectation of continuity and when it is broken, it loses its soul. What is important here is the moral right allows habitation, in other words, living and being that is unlike 'performing' a model of urban living (p. 6). This moral right implies a more natural claim to the city and can be considered in relation to the performativity of inhabitants. It can be said; newcomers need to perform to claim their space whereas a moral right would place less emphasis on the spatial practices but rather a 'knowing' - a loose habitus. The moral claim to the city is important as it transcends class, property rights, policies and the accepted (social) displacement that is normalized in the discourse of gentrification. It concerns race and culture as a symbolic claim to space, especially in Hackney, an ethnic space and a nodal site in black history. White (2015) frames this process as 'Belongingness'; it is differentiated from a sense of place, which is presented as a more emotional or even practical attachment that forms meaning. Belongingness is that which takes 'space' to 'place'. Belongingness is defined as, "ownership

of and entitlement to a space that can challenge existing property-based claims and is communicated through physical, aural, and temporal iconography and display" (White, 2015: 341). White's argument is establishing a 'right to be' in a public space (belongingness) is an essential element in the movement of people into an already occupied area and is how said occupation is challenged. It is both a tool of facilitation and resistance. It represents, "the active and intentional ways in which actors can establish a place and make it into a space where certain ones belong" (p. 343).

White's case study (2015) explores the use of belongingness by a group of black drummers in a Harlem public park. In negotiations of space they defied property rights and demarcation to deploy racial and cultural symbols resulting in a victorious and recognised spatial claim. Reminiscent of Lefebvre's representational space, White writes, "belongingness allows one to instantly know if he or she has stumbled into a gay neighborhood or a yuppie enclave (or both)" (2015: 344). The 'right to the city' is always being contested. In any one space at any one time there exists a host of competing spatialities, this is only heightened in the context of a process such as gentrification.

Conceptual Framework and Research Question

At one time space was thought of as absolute, until the works of various urban and humanistic geographers who argued to dispel the myth and theorise that there are processes in space that are directly tied to social relations. Harvey identifies this as the 'cause and effect' of social life which has opened up the door to the exploration of spatial relations and thus communication. The processes in space are further investigated through the determination of three interrelated dimensions of space, the '*perceived space'*, '*conceived space'* and the '*lived space'*. Lefebvre's framework allows us to explore how social life is conceived on each layer; the material, the conceptual and the lived; they are undeniably intertwined and relational. These are the layers in which Bourdieu's social constructs arise in the negotiation of social life. The gentry are seen to consciously and unconsciously deploy habitus and supporting social constructs and in doing so define spatial processes and lay claim to space. Whilst a sense of place can be 'known' or implied by societal norms, it is through performativity, territorialisation as well the deployment of resources we form sense of place and belonging and lay claim to the city. However, society is democratic and always holds the possibility of contestation. This leads to an alternative right to space through a racial and/or cultural claim (belongingness), which is given by White as a moral right to space and presented as a tool for challenging gentrification.

Furthermore, the reproduction of these systems and structures (forms of power, control and knowledge) shape social interaction, space and sense of place in a continuous and relative process. The field of gentrification is a fascinating place to explore these concepts at play. Leach writes that architectural discourse is mostly concerned with form, while 'use' stands outside of its concern, "As a result, there is no accepted framework for exploring how people make sense of space and relate to it" (2005: 298). This makes it makes it difficult to explore the relation but it can be more thoroughly conceptualized with empirical case studies and research. As a process that involves people and space, gentrification holds many communication practices that span many disciplines. Much literature can be found on capitalism, displacement, migration and even the media's prominent role in the process, however, less so about the communication processes involved on the ground and what it communicates to residents, especially young people that have grown up in a certain space that is tied with a sense of place. In an attempt to understand how a subordinate group such as BME Youth maintain their sense of belonging and attachment to a place that is yielding to the symbolic and material power of gentrification, I consider how BME Youths communicate their sense of place in their neighbourhood in the context of their possible displacement due to the gentrification of Hackney.

THREE. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Research Strategy

The aim of this study is to explore sense of place as a communication practice within a gentrifying borough, especially through the eyes of young (18-30) BME people in Hackney. First, it is my belief that as people who are mostly born in the UK but are a part of diasporic communities, they negotiate the line between tradition and culture but also being products of a capitalist society in which they are young professionals/creatives with their very own capital and potential for class change and place making. This source of potential conflict is likely to result in richer data that is less biased than the research of solely older, poorer, long term residents or the middle class gentry. So, how is space claimed and communicated on the ground in Hackney, East London. This is a consideration of how this specific instance of gentrification is articulated and received in this moment to these young residents. "When we write about daily life now, we should think very carefully about whose daily life we are talking about. When we write about space, we should likewise think about whose space we mean" (Merrifield, 2000: 181).

Burgess (1990) acknowledges that research into areas such as these often lack direct accounts, especially the accounts of the marginal and as alluded to in earlier chapters, the discourse of gentrification mainly concerns the influx of the middle class, planning, policy, consumption *or* the displacement of older and poorer residents. This grassroots approach also aims to delve beyond mediated representations being that images of the city can be framed upon imaginative reconstructions from a certain viewpoint (Zukin, 1996). Additionally, ethnic communities are well documented for their lack of traditional media outlets and so usually implement alternative cultures of communication (Georgiou, 2013). The above illustrations are the justification for a qualitative approach, this is an effort to understand rather than quantify. Interviews allow us to make "cultural inferences" and thick descriptions of a given social world analysed for cultural patterns and themes" (Warren, 2002: 85). These are inferred from three sources what participants say, how they act and what artefacts they use. Interviews are conducted, "to get at particular issues, such as hidden feelings or attitudes and beliefs of which a respondent may not be aware or that are only dimly in his or her consciousness" (Berger, 1998: 55).

Ideally my study would consist of a mixed methodology using ethnographic research, qualitative interviews and experimental research. However, because of limited time and resource, I decided on qualitative interviews. On this issue Warren (2002) writes, "Researchers often choose qualitative interviews over ethnographic methods when their

topics of interest do not centre on particular settings but their concern is with establishing common patterns or themes between particular types of respondents" (p. 85). Although my interests lay in observation and a particular setting, I am more interested in the patterns within a specific group. Collective perceptions inform my research hence the decision to conduct a focus group as a form of qualitative research. A focus group is loosely defined as a group in collective discussion about a predetermined topic (Edwards and Holland, 2013). The dynamic of the focus group allows access to shared values and norms and helps us examine the formation of ideas and knowledge in cultural contexts. The emphasis of a focus group is on the insights that can arise from the interactions of the participants (Kitzinger, 1994; Kitzinger, 1995). Edwards and Holland elaborates on this notion, "Agreement between group members can help to build an elaborated picture of their views; disagreement may lead to participants defending their views and provide further explanation" (2013: 38). Participants are likely to been seen as 'meaning makers' in the interview process for which the researcher's purpose is to derive interpretations (Warren, 2002).

The participants and the researcher speak from varied perspectives and social positions. At any one time during the interaction the respondent can speak from a racial, generational or organisational standpoint. Warren (2002) highlights the significance of recognising this as it shapes the interview. I conduct this research from the perspective of a student of the LSE, as young professional and also as a young black woman who was raised East London after emigrating from the Caribbean. Amongst other things, I have found a sense of place through the large diasporic community in London, yet I witness (and benefit) from the gentrification of neighbourhoods in London, it is from the bias and interest I conduct this research.

Research Sampling and Data Selection

When defining my topic and research question I explored many secondary resources such as new articles, blog pieces, academic sources and social media, and in the early stages of my preliminary research I conducted field observations and spoke with various people in Hackney (residents and non residents alike). The combination of these field notes and current literature on Hackney make up a significant portion of the introduction (Part One). This fieldwork led to Hackney CVS (Council Voluntary Service), which is located at The Adiaha Antigha Centre, 24-30 Dalston Lane, London, E8 3AZ. This is the site where I found my participants, I first approached the centre in hopes it would be a resource by which to find participants due to its close links with the community.

I purposely sought out respondents who fit the analytical criteria of my research, minimizing difference in the sample by age and ethnic background in a bid to highlight a pattern

(Warren, 2002). The sample was chosen through a 'snowball' process (Arksey and Knight 1990; Warren 2002; Edwards and Holland 2013). By approaching a site where I would likely find access to my sample, I found 3 individuals (Youth Programme Leaders) who were appropriate for my study and who in turn located others through their social network. This qualitative study is based on a focus group of 14 participants ages 18-30. All respondents actively visit the voluntary centre to varying degrees and are also somewhat familiarity with each other too. Edwards and Holland (2013) discuss the possibility that focus group members will have affiliation with each other in terms of age, class, gender, naturally occurring groups and specific groups and organisations. The sample over-represents young people and ethnic minorities, as this is my focus. Unintentionally, it also over-represents men as well as respondents who identify as black. It can be said the focus group consists of a large number of participants. Edwards and Holland (2013) recommend 6-10 but in later chapters state there is no definite number (p. 66). I proceeded with a large group due to their familiarity with each and the possibility of rich data due to their comfort. In hindsight, it was difficult to moderate the conversation at points; therefore I could have held 2 smaller groups and contrasted the results.

Design of Research Tools

The intentions of the study were made clear to all involved and the youth leaders received an illustrative consent form days prior to the session, I also received oral confirmation at the beginning of the focus group which was held at the voluntary centre for the convenience and comfort of participants as well as the reduction of power hierarchy (Edwards and Holland, 2013).

The topic guide (*see Appendix 3*) was informed by the literature and piloted by a secondary researcher. In reflection, the topic guide was quite extensive considering the focus group size. There was a second researcher present throughout the session and once the focus group was over the participants filled out a short demographic form. This should have been more thorough and more enforced as there was data missing.

The session was audio-recorded on two devices, an iPhone 5S and Macbook Pro. A full transcript was produced immediately thereafter by the researcher (myself), it was a detailed 24-page document with the identification of verbal cues, prominent actions and slang. Despite the detail, it cannot be ignored that transcription is interpretative process in itself, the act of capturing spoken aspects whilst missing the setting, body language and feel means decisions are made about how speech is represented are made by the transcriber (Arksey and Knight 1999; Bailey 2008).

The data was analysed through Thematic Analysis, which was performed in 3 stages: data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing (Miles and Huberman, 1994). The method is a search for themes that emerge as being important to the subjective human experience (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane, 2006). The transcript provided a lot of raw data for which thematic analysis was appropriate as it is a, "form of pattern recognition within the data, where emerging themes become the categories for analysis" (p. 4). Next, Open and Axial coding procedures were employed to find codes which were valid, mutually exclusive and exhaustive. Coding (Boyatzis 1998; Fereday and Muir-Cochrane 2006; Miles and Huberman 1994; Arksey and Knight 1999) is the process of assigning codes to chunks of data, it is significant in recognising something important before interpreting it. Through aggregating the raw data I was able to inductively identify emerging themes, concepts and ideas that were related to my conceptual framework. These were then coded and recoded upon rereading the data, this allows for the emergence of new codes or recognising the importance of other parts of the data.

As a researcher, one is always on the look-out for significant data from the early stages, a researcher can be guilty of looking for data that supports their theory (Arksey and Knight, 1999), in awareness of confirmation bias, I cross referenced my codes and themes with a secondary researcher. Then, in the analysis I allowed codes to emerge from the data (deductively) in order for themes that did not support my research to arise. The following chapter is a detailed discussion of some of the prominent themes in the data. These indicate outcomes that support and challenge the arguments explored in the literature review.

FOUR. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Authentic Spaces and Places

A lot of the respondents attached nostalgic sentiments to their local area. Moreover, the sentiments of remembering, attachment, familiarity, home and culture were directly tied to material spaces and buildings in Hackney.

> I think there will always be a form of attachment if you grew up in a certain area, if you grew up in Hackney, you got family here, you got friends that are still here, there will always be an element of attachment… I think that will- that will- that might change with a lot of stuff that's happening in the borough, plenty of people now are being forced to moved out (inaudible) it's getting really expensive… I don't think that Dalston Market will be in 10 years time, I'm gonna put it out there uhm I think when that market goes, I think that a lot of the heart and soul of the borough will go and I think that's when you'll start to see the change and maybe Hackney will be a place where we drive through and say, "*ah, I grew up here*" or, "*I lived here*" or, "*I worked here*".

Whilst familial attachment would be one of the strongest ties to place, the respondents centres their opinion on the possible loss of a physical space, expressing that the loss of the market would represent the loss of Hackney's "heart and soul". In a biological sense, the heart is a vital organ whilst the soul is existential. The loss of both would result in empty space or absolute space. This is reminiscent of Zukin's (2001) notion of 'origins', the moral right to inhabit. It surpasses performativity as a claim of space. It is an expectation of continuity within place.

When participants spoke about local buildings there was a large distinction between the new and the old. The old buildings and spaces were spoken about with fondness, familiarity, etc. and whilst it was largely agreed that the new buildings improved the neighbourhood's aesthetic, they were spoken about with apprehension. Respondents questioned the usefulness, intention and target group.

> When you go to the market, the elders, it don't matter what country they've come from, they see each other and they know each other from years ago and it's (makes noise/performs greeting action) "*how are you*"?

> I see my local jerk chicken shop everyday… I see- the same faces everyday. The same Jamaicans that chill out at the shop, I see everyone man. I think it's just, it's nice you know, 'cos you see the same faces and they know who you are. (inaudible) they see my face and you feel, it's that sense of belonging.

In contrast to, "are we really gonna use- I dunno- are we really gonna use the Travelodge across, next to Hackney Central" or, "I went down that road going up to the (inaudible) way by Dalston, by Hackney Central and saw a TKMaxx (noises) now I ain't been down that road for time, so I was like rah, when did that get there?"

Here, ownership and attachment are tied to spaces that are culturally and historically representative of himself or herself such as the jerk chicken shop or Dalston Market. It is my argument that explicit attachment to certain material spaces in borough is tied to a moral claim to cultural/ethnic places in Hackney. In negotiations of space, it defies property rights and demarcation to deploy racial and cultural symbols, signalling to whom the place belongs. It derives from history and/or shared experience as well as long term inhabitancy. This moral claim is carried out through both the everyday territorialisation of space (collectively or individually) and the practice of belonging/belongingness.

Perspective of Difference

Throughout the focus group, the theme of difference emerged. This manifested in a racial and class divide. The divide is interesting as Hackney is vocalised as a place of a community, diversity and expression by the youths, yet there was an undeniable 'us' vs. 'them' narrative that began with class division and abruptly turned racial:

> they can get their £10 cake, their drugs, all of that and they can see Tyrone and see their, get their little jungle fever.

'They' became interchangeable with 'white people' and 'us' or 'our' with 'black youths or 'non white'. This was a loudly verbalised notion even with the presence of youths of non-black ethnicity. This perspective of difference builds on two things. Firstly, there is a suspicion in the intentions of the other. The respondents talk of mixing, interacting and being inclusivity simultaneously of being used, built on top of, isolated and pushed out by 'them'. Through the eyes of the youth, each group endeavours to recognisably commodify the other in some shape or form.

There was also the discussion of the commodification of not only culture but also of the borough's history. Here the 'gritty' aesthetic of the borough is sold and reproduced and the youth consumed as part of this aesthetic. A participant comments:

> the image for me , is exploited... the thing for me- that no one ever asked this question is why is it so cool to live in Hackney?... And actually, it's based on the history, like, "*yeah I live in Hackney, it's a bit rough, it's a bit grimey, yeah*" ... actually it's not

rough, it's not grimey, it's just Hackney... there's a perception that doesn't really exist anymore...it's still kind of gangster, or you- you wouldn't come here...

But when the new residents are confronted in public with what seems to be this very image their judgemental reaction deepens the divide, "... you get the little looks like, "are you a gang member" type of thing..." Another youth observed:

> Like if you walk down Broadway now, they're looking at you. "*Why are you here*?" Like it's not our street... I can't go down there... If I walk down there in my tracksuit, like fully... with a couple of my boys, it's like, "*oh shit*", what's- something's gonna happen. It's sort of a bit awkward...

The claim of 'our street' extends beyond who has resided there longer, especially in the contexts of markets and other cultural spaces as outlined in *Authentic Spaces and Places*. Through gentrification, these ethnically 'practiced' places are essentially colonised and claimed by another collective. The feeling is why should they be judged in their *own* space? I believe this perspective of difference is once again tied to a moral claim to the space through belongingness, 'a right to be' based on the deployment of racial and cultural signifiers in a legitimate claim to space. This is important as it reaffirms the belief that culturally they have the right to the space.

Marginalisation

Much of the discourse on displacement studies the displacement of older and/or poorer residents and the closure of local businesses. This displacement is usually from the narrative that residents are being displaced from their home or out of the area completely. In this case none of the respondents knew anyone that was directly displaced. In fact upon addressing displacement, none were identified, however, through the expression of opinions on other topics forms of displacement were recognised.

Three interrelated strands of displacement were identified within the data, I categorise these as economic displacement, social displacement and spatial displacement.

In spatial displacement, the youths mentioned 'being built on top of', 'being pushed out' or 'taken over'. These sentiments were mostly attached to material space. A young lady stated, "... the reason why I don't like it is because I feel like they're building on top of us, there's no space, you don't see many trees around, it's just buildings, concrete jungle"

In reference to the well-documented gentrification of Broadway market, another respondent stated:

> It's like one sort of community doing it, like- loads of white people that are just... but it's not... (sigh/exhale) it's alright. What i'm tryna say is that yeah, like isolation sort of, d'you know what I mean?

There is a sense that the newcomers had not come to share space but rather to colonise it and absorb their culture and space(s) in the process.

In social displacement the young people talk about being excluded from certain venues or events, it was said that, "they've kinda just did their own thing" and, "What they're doing now is these secret".

> they'll have like, they'll have like events and it'll be exclusively to people, like just exclusive people and the people in the borough will not have access to those things, I think that's weird. I think that's weird.

In economic displacement, gentrification is seen to elevate the average price points of private housing, certain services and businesses.

> A lemon cake and a cup of tea costs six pounds, straight... so only a certain type of people or person can afford to eat out in this borough... so if you're not earning a certain amount of money you cannot rent there, period, so, it's- it is kicking people out whether you see it, it's stepping up game or whatever,

> I feel like you can really tell the people who are really in the midst of poverty now and the people who are like, the people who are out-the people who are aspiring, the Yuppies and the people who are really-.

Whilst the youths interact with the newcomers and find positivity in their influx generally, there is a stronger notion that the larger process of gentrification excludes them. A participant expresses, "that's for the people on the ground, I think there's a sense that, I dunno if that's for us like". Participants also voiced that they felt they were being used, nothing was being catered for them and that Hackney was not their home anymore, more worrying matters of marginalisation.

If we make sense of the world through our relationships with things and use this to define our place within space and the argument of the literature is that everything within space is relational, then we can see how the prescription of space, access and wealth defines social life

and who we are in society. It is Harvey's cause and effect of social life. Also, if we consider Lefebvre's three dimensions of space, where place-making happens on every layer, the strands discussed here lend themselves to the conceived space, the perceived and lived space. They all come together and are internalised and applied to the change, reproduction or possession of space (Merrifield, 2000).

Capital

Spatial practices and structures shape a sense of place through the habitus; a cognitive sense of place. No other tools are as adept at establishing structure in society (and also social status) as capital; how much money one has, who they know, their education, class and knowledge. Collectively, gentrifiers have more material wealth, larger social networks; more formal means of education or other knowledge systems i.e. a middle class aesthetic preference and a set of predispositions (which organise practices and representations). The gentry enter the field with higher capital and upon deploying these resources; they can define the space and place of themselves and others. This is the tension in gentrification.

Capital of all forms (economic, social, cultural and symbolic) was a common theme in the conversation. A distinction was drawn between the capital of both groups (the gentrifiers and the youth) throughout conversation but they are discussed here together as one theme to understand the way capital is thought of by the youth overall. One youth highlighted their lack of their economic capital but placed emphasis on their creative talent and culture as cultural capital:

> I think because a lot, a lot of things have been developed in Hackney with just no-little, little amount of things like Grime for example, like, I don't know if people class-some people classify Bow as Hackney, I don't know if they do, but like Grime is basically like a genre that is made out of like, like nothing like, it's just like loads of things into one and like you can create it with no equipment, nothing and it just goes to show you can make something really authentic and really organic from yourself and be honest to yourself and not have to be pretentious and say, "*oh yeah I'm rich, I got this and that*", you can wear anything you want and yeah I think that's good. I feel like a lot of people come to Hackney because we create those resources out of nothing, because we're-a lot of people have been broke but they wanna excel and they wanna turn some-the nothing into something sort of- d'ya get me... so I think that's good.

The participants pointed to economic capital as the leading resource of the newcomers.

> ... they can afford to live here and they're pushing us out if they were trying to join us, they'd-we'd work together. You'd see these little coffee shops with Hackney residents working there. These coffee shops here all under the library, you don't see no black

people there... and they, they have more resource and they have more power and they have more influence, so what's happening now is, they're starting to do their thing and it's either you join them or you... get out.

Economic deprivation in Hackney is nothing new and participants expressed that although there was more money in borough due to the gentrification of it, the process itself has not added nor taken individual wealth from them. Instead, they witness those with more resources being catered to by the council and local businesses. This innate servitude points to symbolic capital, which does not accumulate in groups or individuals but infuses itself in the field to legitimize certain structures. Another process that symbolically legitimizes structure in a similar way is the commodification of culture. More than one respondent conveyed how they feel the 'yuppies' (Young Urban Professionals) commodify their culture and talent for their own economic and cultural capital:

> Them stories are created from the circumstances that we're actually in, it's created from the poverty, that's what goes on, it's about them boys being in poverty and things like this happening, those people capitalising it and they're thinking, *"rah, I can't get a job, I've got no prospects, like let me-what should I do, to make money"* and they're telling stories from that- showing that perspective-

and,

> you're right in the sense that we should capitalize on our clothing because nowadays you got white people making dashikis -and see, because they're making it all of a sudden now it's in fashion and because it's in fashion now.

However, instead of feeling defeated and overlooked, there is a theme of positive resilience. The young people grasp Harvey's notion that capital is mutable (Harvey, 1996). Perhaps unsurprisingly, the youths have benefited from the high neighbourhood investment, influx of people and expansion of capital, which they can tap into. More importantly, they have indirectly benefited from the capital and influence of the gentrifiers:

> The one point I'd really like to raise is that I see a lot of like connections being made that wouldn't usually happen init

> Like, before, people in Hackney would find it very difficult to network with people that are above like the middle class level but now as upper middle class people are moving into Hackney the chance for our development as like a working class background is is is doubled, tripled

> Yeah, they've got more access to raw talent now, they have, especially how they're riders and they get frustrated now, now they can ride their bikes and go past the young John Boyega ... or someone

Habitus may structure a way of being, a way of approaching employment, opportunity and networking for groups but true to the critiques of the habitus, these young people aspire to escape their working class background, migrate or chose to play the 'field' by alternative dispositions innate to the youth collective. The youth in Hackney are drawing upon their own cultural and social capital (especially in creative sectors) and funnelling capital from that of the newcomers in order to establish a level playing field of cultural products and networks of their own groups/cultures.

Cultural Pride as Contestation

In discussions about occupying or using the space provided by the regeneration, the young people expressed little desire to utilize the spaces. This is not to refute their belief that the spaces are not for them or that in spite of that belief they do not use said spaces. Whilst the young people appreciate the new spaces and buildings aesthetically they prefer to and continue to use their own cultural spaces. There is a strong sense of pride regarding their culture, their creativity and self. In the observation of 'domestication by cappuccino' a respondent notes, "... we still have the likes of Dalston Market, we still have places to go where we can get our hair cut, where we can buy our food, where we can do what we do. Another says, "we've still got our own gyms like..." and later, "we don't even need them like".

Zukin (1995) and Harvey (1996) write about ensuring the permanence of place by catering to the dominant aesthetic in a bid to fix capital to a certain space. In the context of the gentrification of Hackney, the youths expressed that they often see this happening, undoubtedly, communicating *who* belongs and *what* is important. They spoke of businesses and people having to change 'who they are' and the implication that they should too.

> Oh now, I have to come out of my character to fit someone else's characteristics because uh, you could be yourself you know and that's what makes it more better, if you're yourself and proud then that'll draw people to you.

In resistance to this, there was a prominent desire to create their own platforms and networks. A young person says:

> We need to create our own platforms and believe in ourselves and do the whole infrastructure of things instead of saying that's long... that's why you're doing your ting, that's why Deji's doing his ting, I'm doing my ting...

As well as capitalise from their own cultures,

> I just think that we need to take advantage of the opportunities and our culture because a lot of them, I'm not being rude, their, their culture is very like very minimal, yeah, limited, yeah, and our culture is vibrant and all of that and I feel like we need to capitalise (cough) on this opportunity and make the shops and all these things so they go, "oh this is so authentic"

It is important to acknowledge that this goal of their 'own' network, platforms and spaces is to them, idealistic. In multiple contexts the participants spoke of having to 'step it up' or 'step outside our comfort zone'. In the analogy of the game, it means they have yet to waiver their current stake in the 'field'.

The youths assign cultural capital as the driver for collective social capital. This involves accumulating more resource in a bid to define the 'field' and define what gentrification means for the agents involved. This is a conscious decision against cultural homogenization in order to construct a different social space. It is a desire to legitimize their distinct, "bodily movement, tastes and judgements according to class position" (Bridge, 2006), to produce practices and products and to redefine class (or their class) using the habitus. If upbringing and life experiences are embodied within the habitus then resourcefulness and improvisation can be said to be a predisposition of the working class.

This form of contestation can only be activated and legitimized by symbolic cultural practices. With practice (space assigned meaning) the young people can potentially claim a material right to Hackney that extends beyond their moral claim, imagined spaces of the ethnic community and/or shared cultural history and experience.

The renewal of everyday life
The majority of participants talked about their attitudes towards the changes that gentrification brought about to their everyday lives. The youths were generally quite positive about gentrification regarding day-to-day life:

> Yeah, I just feel like from how it was before, like years back, compared to now, it's a better atmosphere in the air, if you go Dalston and like Shoreditch, everyone's partying every week, before it weren't like, you used to see probably crackheads walking through Dalston.

One aspect that the respondents spoke about with appreciation was the changes the local services implemented as a part of the process. The narrative is this; Hackney is now a safer and cleaner place. The youths identified the events, policies and programmes that were

catalysts for this change. It is interesting to note these (listed below) were targeted at or involved the youth in part.

> I was thinking that you know, that all worked in- hand in hand, the the riots, yeah, the riots, Joint Enterprise, Olympics, (inaudible) Operation Shield (multiple people talking, inaudible) that was a cleanup...that was a cleanup! (multiple people talking, inaudible) Hackney got cleansed! Hackney got cleansed!

Again, the youths feel they are benefiting from day to day changes to their neighbourhood that arose indirectly.

> I think that's true and uhm I'm happy to see that the area has changed but it's the way it's sort of changed... but I always think if they wanted to they could've really sorted it out earlier than they did

Mostly importantly, it has changed their perspective on life and the relation they have with certain spaces in the area, a participant discloses, "I feel better just by coming out and not seeing like gangs". Another adds:

> ...and seeing people on their laptops there create a different mindframe for the kids when they're going past... I wanna buy a Macbook Pro now (points to laptop) and sit down in Costa and drink coffee

In recognition and yet, resistance of the middle class aesthetic and demand for equal access a participant communicated his desire to be included in the process:

> we like classy things as well, we like nice things as well, we should be able to have access to those things and we should be able to penalize those things because we've been living in these areas for years

In disregard of their belief that the spaces are not 'made for them', they aspire to these spaces and proceed to interact with them.

> We are seeing the new developments the new shops and stuff and actually what you're finding is, rather than being scared we're embracing it, so...Dalston Square just over there, they've got 3, there's about 3 or 4 restaurants on that strip, Turtle Bay uhm, Zizzi or whatever- and actually what you find is that, we are using it. People are going there rather than saying, "nah, that's not for me"

To recognise a preferred "system of discernment" (Bridge, 2006), for example what a 'nice' restaurant or a coffee shop might signify to the young people is to acknowledge this system

exists and is place-making but to contest its power is to challenge its socially constructed definition of others. It is only through a sense of place, one chooses or not chooses to enter an establishment for fear of belonging, to challenge these signifiers by visiting these spaces and adopting a ritual of performativity as a territorial claim, is to affirm one's sense of place. As Leach (2005) states, spatial practices like routes and patterns structure reality and importantly "alienation is overcome by repetition" (p. 300). A ritualistic performance achieves a certain attachment to place. This is how the young people are beginning to ascertain their sense of place in these newly created spaces.

FIVE. CONCLUSION

Through this study we explore the ways in which the youth of Hackney communicate their sense of place in the context of the gentrification of their neighbourhood. Gentrification can seem to legitimize the claim to space of a dominant incoming group; space is both symbolically and materially restructured. It yields to the claim with the possibility of challenging the lived space and practiced space of the longer standing residents. In a bid to explore which identities are prominent in the material city, who the city represents and what this communicates to others and how this then constructs a sense of belonging I asked a group of young BME people how they maintain and communicate their attachment to their gentrifying neighbourhood. This is an attempt to understand how a sense of attachment or belonging is negotiated in this specific context.

From this rudimentary study, it would appear that the youths feel substantially marginalised. It was expressed most clearly in relations to the influx of capital in the area - although they feel as if none of these changes were made for them, they explain how they take advantage of these indirect changes. Issues of class were also present but the young people expressed the potential of capital as place making, class-making and identity-making for themselves collectively, here they made clear their contestation to performing assigned roles in society instead aspiring to create their own. A racial and cultural divide further deepens the claim for space and place in this study. A strong 'us' vs. 'them' narrative runs throughout which reinforces their strong cultural pride and desire to create their 'own' spaces as hegemonic contestation. Furthermore, they identified cultural spaces of meaning to which they attached themselves through a 'moral claim' (Zukin 2011; White 2015). These spaces were imagined to be more real or authentic, via shared experience/origins. For the young people, culture becomes the utmost basis for spatial claim and ergo, sense of belonging in Hackney. This being said, the youths actively do not segregate themselves from the changing space, instead they are mostly positive, adapting and laying claim to new spaces through ritualistic performances that achieves a certain attachment to place. Through these symbolic practices, they deepen their sense of attachment and legitimize their claim; ironically it is the very same process of the gentry.

Resource notwithstanding my next avenue of research related to this issue would take into account the practices of youth marginalisation, as part of policy and planning in gentrification. It would also engage with youth participation into the planning process of neighbourhood building. Finally, through the emergence of a data, the heavy emphasis on creativity in Hackney, I would explore production and consumption practices of urban youth media.

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APPENDIX 1. EXCERPT OF CODING TABLE

Raw Data (From transcript)	Codes	Themes
I feel like, uhm, i'll always live here, like i'll always have a house here and it's somewhere that you always come back to because it's like a home, uhm, yeah so there is, for me there is an attachment. It's like i've grown up here for most of life now, it's one of them things where i'd leave but I wouldn't fully fully leave, if you get what I mean	Attachment Home Everyday life	Authenticity Local businesses **Authentic Spaces and Places**
Yeah, we got the most talent and most creative people I feel like we provide a lot of that for… either uh the industry or the uh corporate companies	Creative people Talent	Cultural capital Hustling/Economic Deprivation Social status **Capital**
I think the attachment level, I think there will always be a form of attachment if you grew up in a certain area, if you grew up in Hackney, you got family here, you got friends that are still here, there will always be an element of attachment. I think that will- that will- that might change with a lot of stuff that's happening in the borough, plenty of people now are being forced to moved out (inaudible) it's getting really expensive I don't think that Dalston Market will be in 10 years time, I'm gonna put it out there uhm I think when that market goes, I think that a lot of the heart and soul of the borough will go and I think *that's* when you'll start to see the change and maybe Hackney will be a place where we drive through and say, "ah, I grew up here" or, "I lived here" or, "I worked here"	Attachment Family Change Forced to move Expensive Dalston Market Heart and Soul Past	Perception Othering **Perspective of Difference** Contestation Cultural Pride **Cultural Pride as Contestation** Spatial Displacement Social Displacement Marginalisation Inclusivity **Marginalisation** Lifestyle Everyday life **The renewal of everyday life**
I feel like it's the community because Hackney like-even though it's such a big place, we have a community within ourselves and (inaudible) a lot of people and we form our communities and markets and such are all made from that.	Community Markets	

APPENDIX 2. EXCERPT OF CODING TABLE

Authentic Spaces and Places		Perspective of	Cultural Pride as Contestation		Capital			Marginalisation		the renewal of everyday life
Authenticity	cultural capital	perception	**Cultural Pride**	hustling	economic capit	social status	local business	**Spatial Displac**	marginalisatio	lifestyle
Feelings of Plac				economic depr						**Penalizing services**
Attachment	Skills		Doing my thing	Utilised poor sto	Money	Power	Coffee shops	Using space	Exclusivity	Not seeing gangs outside
Past	Work and rewar	Perspective	Maintain yourse	Circumstance	Funding	Influence	Caribbean shop	Awareness of s	Events	Hackney got cleansed
Stories	Creating platfor	Perception no lo	Know their wort	Struggling from	Capitalism	Resource	Businesses	(not) Using spa	Music festivals	Security
Memories	Talent	Hackney as rou	Proudness		Being in poverty	Power	Hood	Private space	Secret events	Revamp and remove
History	Jobs and prosp	Hackney is cool	Be yourself	Made out of not	Affordability	Control/ Power	Dalston Square	Restricted spac	Access to event	Comfort
Parents	Indirect opportu	Image exploitati	Out of my character		Money	Politics	Dalston Market	Useful Spaces	Access	Gang members went to jail
Everyday life	Embracing new	Perception of Hackney as Bad			Rent	Creating resour	New train lines			Collection of clean up initiatives
Familiarity	More opportunit	Negative perce	Speaking slang		Poverty gap	Class	Costa	**Social Displacement**		Crackheads
Family	Projects	Perception of su	Know who you	**Othering**			Travelodge, Ha	Pushing us out	Pleasing Upper	Yuppies
Locals	Indirect access			Difference			Broadway Mark	They're coming	Cater for that m	Gangster
Change	Aspirations and wants			Black people			Dalston, Shored	Using us	Sense of not being catered to	
Growing up	Raised aspirations		**Contestation**	Black people		Certain type of person		Making their ow	Make rich peopl	
Community	Step it up		Our own places	Interaction with Other		Earning certain amount of money		They don't want	Catering to nee	**everyday life**
Being from Hac	Different mindframe		Our own space	Brothers (black men)	Inclusivity			Kicking people out		Jogging
Sense of belong	Maneuver		Their own thing	Jungle fever		Join the 'in' crowd		Displacement		Ride bikes
The real Hackn	We needed it		Our street	Black people/ mixing		Join them		Limited displacement		Seeing people on their laptops
Home	Motivation to change		We don't need t	Negative looks in public spaces		Joining in		Building on top of us		
Authenticity	Take advantage of opportunity		Capitalise on ou	White people		Joining us		Space being taken over		Everyday living
Culture						Involvement		Not made for us		Seeing same faces
Heart and Soul	Barrier mindset				Poor people out	Mixing				
Our home no m	Young people not utilising				Rich people in	Bringing people together				
Remembering										
Isolation										
Disconnect										

APPENDIX 3. TOPIC GUIDE

<u>Self-Introduction</u>

Hey Guys... I want to thank you guys for showing up on a Tuesday afternoon in summer! My name is Kimberley, I'm doing some research for my thesis.

<u>Oral explanation of proposed research project:</u>

This is a research project that explores how young locals communicate their sense of place in Hackney, how do you negotiate coming from backgrounds where parents or grandparents settled in this country and Hackney and made their home away from home in this borough with growing up as young Londoner balancing 2 cultures -with access to services and education to gain social mobility and economic capital ... does sense of 'place'/home/tradition still exist, does it still exist with Hackney for you? How does this all play out in the changing face of Hackney?

Participation is voluntary and the likely duration is 90 minutes, you have the right not to answer a question or withdraw from participating at any minute. There are no wrong or right answers; I only ask that you express your opinion if you feel comfortable doing so. There should be no inconvenience, discomfort, distress expected.

The focus group will be audio recorded with 2 devices and only I have will have access to these recordings. Personal information will not be disclosed to anyone other than myself. It is possible findings of this study may be published at some point in the future, however your identity will be protected.

Is there anyone that objects to being recorded?

<u>Self-introductions and warm-up questions</u>

Do you know each other? Are you guys students? If we could go around and introduce ourselves and also where or what is your favourite place?

<u>General Questions</u>

- Where are your families from in terms of country, culture and nationality?

- Where were you born?

- What nationality do you identify with? Where do you consider yourself to be from?

<u>Place</u>

- Do you spend much of your free time in Hackney?
- Do you consider Hackney your home? Or is it just a place you live in?
- In what way, if any do you feel a sense of attachment or belonging to Hackney?
- What would you say Hackney is all about (What is the culture of Hackney)
    - What makes Hackney, Hackney?
    - Has it lost that?
- What do you think Hackney means to the local community, especially the African/Caribbean community?
    - What does Hackney mean to your parents?
    - How do they retain their culture and identities?
    - How do you retain your culture and identity?
    - Does Hackney help you do that?
        - In what way?
        - Are there particular places or spaces, which help? Which?
    - In what way is your attachment to Hackney different to the attachment of your parents
- Think back over the last few years, what/who would you say was the dominant local culture?
    - And now?

<u>Gentrification</u>

- Thinking about your local area as you go about your daily life, what do you see around you...
        - Is anything changing?
        - What is your interpretation of this?
        - Is it positive or negative?

This process is sometimes called Urban renewal, regeneration or gentrification (the transformation of a working-class or vacant area of the central into middle-class residential and/or commercial use)

- In your opinion what is the aim of gentrification?
- Have you seen this pattern in any other boroughs and if so which?
- Is gentrification a system or carried out by individuals? Do you believe it's the people that move here and then the government, trends media follow or the media, government and trends attract them and encourage them to move?
- Do you believe this race based, class based or based on something else?
- If you feel comfortable disclosing, have you, a business/service or someone known to you or your family been affected by gentrification?
  - Please explain.
- Hackney, especially places like Dalston, Hoxton, Hackney Wick are sold on its diverse history, ethnic mix, creativity etc.
  - How do you feel about this image being used to sell Hackney as diverse, cultural, real etc?
  - TV movies or series like Top Boy, do you think it reinforces an image of Hackney that needs to be cleansed or do you think it shows it an alterative lifestyle/culture?
  - Do you think that image is exploited in marketing to potential new residents?
  - Once residents move into the area, do they interact with these environments and images?
  - Do you think gentrifiers are knowledgeable about the communities and groups of people that were there before they arrived? Beyond the media stories?
- Are gentrifiers settling into a community or culture or are they creating a new one?

Space
- Would you say you're open to the newer residents?
  - Do you interact with their businesses or spaces?
  - For example, Newcomer Wines on the corner or any of the restaurants in the Square about 2 minutes away?
  - Do you ever play or sit in, chill in the square itself?
- What public spaces do you find yourself sharing with the newest residents? For example, stations
- Are there any spaces/facilities/buildings that you feel are not for you, in terms of, you do not feel they cater to you or you feel uncomfortable in them, or you've had no interest in engaging with?

- o Are there any barriers? Such as affordability?
- o Have you ever been informed of any new spaces that are public and is for the use of everyone, anyone? Even if they are within new developments.
- o As far as you know, have the private developers in Hackney (the people building the new private residencies) contribute to the community in any way? Funding, public spaces, etc.?
- o Whose needs are being serviced with the newest buildings, facilities and spaces in Hackney?
  - ▪ Whose needs do you feel are most being met by the local government?
- o Do you feel as if any of the recent changes are for your benefit?
  - o Is there a way to benefit from them, personally?
- o There is talk of Hackney changing for the better, how much do you agree with this idea?
  - o Is Hackney safer?
  - o Is Hackney cleaner?
  - o Is Hackney more policed?
  - o Why do you think this is?
- o How have these changes affected your daily routines, or interactions, quality of life?
- o Is there space for the new hackney and the old hackney right now?
  - o Do you think there still will be in 10 years?
- o Do you currently or would you want to live in Hackney, either as it was or as it is now?
  - o Would you want to own a home in Hackney?
  - o Do you think you would be able to?

Debriefing
Anything you would like to express, clarify or add to our talk today?
Do you have any questions for me?

Thank you very much for your valuable contributions and the interesting conversation we've just had.

If there is anything else you would like to know or say- I will leave my contact details at this centre should anyone wish to contact me.

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