Love thy neighbour? Social mixing in London's gentrification frontiers

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Abstract. The issue of social mixing has recently moved to the forefront of gentrification debate. In part, this has been stimulated by neoliberal urban policies promoting 'social mix', research showing the inability of gentrified neighbourhoods to remain socially mixed and attempts to rethink the association between gentrification and displacement. This paper draws upon a mixed-methods study that examined levels of social mixing between gentrifying and incumbent communities in three neighbourhoods undergoing new-build gentrification in London, UK. Little evidence was found for substantial inter-actions between populations, and there were few shared perceptions of community. The author claims that the particular character of new-build gentrification has played an important role in generating this socially tectonic situation. Husserl's concept of the lifeworld and Bourdieu's thesis on the relative structuring of class identity are drawn upon to provide an explanatory framework.

> "... when people have lived for a long time under similar conditions (of climate, soil, danger, necessity, work), then something *comes into being* as a result, something that 'goes without saying'; a people."
>
> Nietzsche (*Beyond Good and Evil* 1998, page 148)

Introduction

The issue of social mixing has recently moved to the forefront of the gentrification debate (Butler and Robson, 2003; Cameron, 2003; Lees, 2008; Lees et al, 2007; Rose, 2004; Uitermark et al 2007; Walks and Maaranen, 2008). While the relationship between gentrification and social mixing has long been explored (see Lees, 2008, pages 2450 – 2451), the recent resurgence of interest can be explained by numerous factors, including the promotion of social mixing by pro-gentrification urban policy makers (Lees, 2008; Uitermark et al 2007), attempts to revise understandings of social relations in gentrifying neighbourhoods (eg Freeman, 2006) and a questioning of the extent to which gentrification causes displacement (Butler, 2007; Freeman, 2006; McKinnish et al, 2008).

In exploring this relationship gentrification researchers have begun to contribute to a large volume of literature that has examined the issue of social mixing within the neighbourhood context (eg Abrams et al, 1989; Allen et al, 2005; Cole and Goodchild, 2000; Goetz, 2003; Hoggett, 1997; Musterd and Andersson, 2005; Sarkissian et al, 1990; Tunstall and Fenton, 2006). However, the particular context of gentrification and, specifically, third-wave gentrification (Hackworth and Smith, 2001), has brought new and distinctive questions to this longstanding set of debates. These include a central prominence of social class, as opposed to race or ethnicity, for example, in terms of neighbourhood diversity (Slater, 2006). This is particularly important given that neighbouring studies conducted some thirty years ago (see Abrams et al, 1989; Bulmer, 1986; see also Hoggett, 1997) argued that distinctive differences existed between the working and middle classes in terms of their relative valuing of neighbourhood-based relations. Other important questions include the influence of contemporary pro-gentrification urban policy agendas (Lees, 2008) and the negative outcomes associated with gentrification (eg displacement; see Atkinson, 2005).

The paper examines social mixing within the context of policy-led new-build 'third-wave' gentrification. As such, it addresses Lees's (2008) call for current progentrification, pro-social mixing urban policy agendas to receive greater critical attention:

"For those who find it difficult to throw the concept of social mixing overboard, future research needs to compare more systematically, interviewing or surveying *both* gentrifiers and non-gentrifiers living in the same neighbourhoods" (page 2464, original emphasis).

The paper draws upon a mixed-method study of social mixing within three neighbourhoods in London, UK. It uses quantitative measures of social mix to illustrate the degrees to which in-moving gentrifiers and incumbent communities interact. The research therefore serves to illustrate the extent to which New Labour's planning reforms [ie the Urban Renaissance (DETR, 2000)] are impacting neighbourhood social mixing, specifically in terms of places which pose significant challenges because of their socioeconomic diversity. As such, it should be noted that the analytical focus of the paper remains on social class with, for example, race, ethnicity, and gender bracketed (Žižek, 2006). This stated, where these are integral to the processes of class structuring described they are duly noted. Following this, the paper utilises semistructured interviews with neighbourhood residents to interpret and supplement quantitative data—a pragmatic, complementary mixed-methods approach (Rocco et al, 2003).[1] Husserl's (1970 [1954]) concept of the lifeworld and Bourdieu's thesis on the relative structuring of class are used to develop the basis of an interpretative framework.

For some a recent concern with gentrification and social mixing may be missing the (critical) point. Indeed, in the context of the displacement taking place in cities such as Mumbai (see Harris, 2008), social mixing becomes anathema. However, in many cities questions of displacement and social mixing are often not divorced. Various, if eroding, forms of protection [see Shaw (2005 on the 'local limits' to gentrification] mean that the cross-class cohabitation of gentrifying neighbourhoods, does often occur, however fleetingly (see Davidson, 2008). It therefore becomes necessary to consider just what critical attention is required. Here, the recent revisiting of the concept of the 'neighbour' is insightful (Derrida, 1997; Jenkins, 2008; Žižek et al, 2005). Reinhard (2005, page 75) has claimed:

"[T]he political theology of the neighbour materializes the deadlock of ethics and politics. It assumes their radical incommensurability and finds its resources in their disjunction."

Also, attacking the Judeo–Christian edict 'love thy neighbour', Žižek (2005, page 182) claims:

"In contrast to love, justice begins when I remember the faceless many left in shadow in this privileging of the One. Justice and love are thus structurally incompatible; justice, not love, has to be blind."

Žižek's point is that in order to preference the neighbour, a radical choice has to occur—and therefore a process of othering results.

My intention here is not to enter into a debate over the ethics of neighbouring but, rather, to highlight the inherent politics bound up in any act of neighbouring. In particular, two points need to be made. First, because gentrification is a process driven by social class, the issue of neighbourhood-based social mixing must be set within the

[1] Such a methodological approach rejects the qualitative–quantitative philosophical divide (Brannan, 1992; see also Wyly, 2009). This stated that the relationship between quantitative and qualitative methods does require continued philosophical consideration. With reference to the different quantitative and qualitative social mix measures used here, they should not be read as purely commensurate and representative of the *same* underlying quality (ie cohesiveness).

context of wider contemporary class relations. Second, and related, it is necessary to acknowledge that displacement is not the only issue requiring the critical attention of gentrification researchers. In the context of socioeconomic juxtaposition, the neighbouring of social classes presents an important site of actively structuring social relations.

Here, then, we might question Butler and Robson's (2003) interpretation of 'social tectonics', in which neighbouring gentrifiers and nongentrifiers are said to "have very little to do with each other and pass across each other with almost no contact ... less dramatically, this describes the social structure of all these gentrified communities" (Butler, 2007, page 173). Clearly, if we assert that neighbouring is often concerned with the act of othering (Derrida, 1997; Žižek, 2005), then it becomes difficult to assert that a lack of social contact or shared social networks equates to 'having little to do with each other' [see also Abrams et al (1989) and Bulmer (1986) on 'neighbouring']. In the context of gentrification, then, the absence of social mixing cannot be viewed simply as another policy failure (Cheshire, 2008): rather, it demands an understanding which posits how social class continues to operate and be structured in the neighbourhood context.

Research methodology
Fieldwork was undertaken in three neighbourhoods across London: Wandsworth, Brentford, and Thamesmead West during 2002 – 06 (see figure 1). Each was selected because it had recently (late 1990s onwards) witnessed the development of up-market, high-density residential apartments on brownfield sites. As a result, these neighbourhoods have all been undergoing gentrification (Davidson and Lees, 2005). This having

Figure 1. Location of study areas.

Table 1. Comparison of the social profile of the study area (source: 2001 UK Census).

Ward (neigh-bourhood)	Total popu-lation	Ethnicity (% nonwhite population)	Tenure (% owner-occupier households)	Education (% popula-lation with university degree)	Economically inactive (% of population aged 16–74 years)	Social class (% of those aged 16–74 in professional occupations)[a]
Brentford (Brentford)	10 735	22.7	46.4	21.6	34.5	33.2
Fairfield (Wandsworth)	12 031	17.9	53.8	44.7	21.0	56.2
Glyndon (Thamesmead West)	13 877	38.0	39.8	13.1	40.4	21.8
London	7 172 091	28.8	56.5	31.0	32.4	34.3

[a] Professional occupations defined as those in NS-SEC 1 (higher managerial and professional occupations) and 2 (lower managerial and professional occupations).

been said, each of the neighbourhoods is distinct in terms of social trajectory and composition (see tables 1 and 3). Wandsworth has been undergoing gentrification for the past three decades; therefore, recent redevelopment has exacerbated gentrification, not stimulated a frontier. In Brentford and Thamesmead West gentrification is recent and directly associated with new development.

In each neighbourhood, multiple residential developments have been constructed. All have been built by large corporate developers, such as St George plc and Berkeley Homes (see table 2). The combined gentrifying impact of development in each area has been dramatic (see table 3). Of course, this transformation of neighbourhood social balance reflects a success in terms of the national government's urban policy agenda (see Lees, 2003). Furthermore, given their high-density and multistorey built form, they have a dominating presence in each neighbourhood. For the study, one new development was selected in each area. Those selected were the first to be inhabited: Capital West (CW) in Brentford, Riverside West (RW) in Wandsworth, and Royal Artillery

Table 2. Development profiles.

Develop-ment	Developer	Total apart-ments	Affordable-housing units	Types of apartments	Price range stated at time of completion (£)	Onsite facilities
Riverside West (RW) Wandsworth	St George plc	517	0	1–5 bed	299 500–995 000	hotel, private gym, restaurants (3), nursery, grocery store, estate agent, concierge, parking
Capital West (CW) Brentford	Barratt Homes	234	64	1–3 bed	235 000–900 000	private gym, parking, concierge
Royal Artillery Quays (RAQ) Thamesmead	Barratt Homes	414	82	1–2 bed	184 995–325 950	parking, concierge

Table 3. Estimated socioeconomic impact, in terms of occupational group (UK Census), of recent development in the study areas.

Population	Managers and senior officials	Professional	Associate professional and technical	Admin and secretarial	Skilled trades	Personal service	Sales and customer service	Process, plant, and machine	Elementary
Brentford Ward[a]	349	541	1788	816	544	459	799	613	337
Brentford New Developments[b]	245	280	175	140	105	0	105	0	0
Percentage increase due to development	70	52	10	17	19	0	13	0	0
Wandsworth Ward (Fairfield)[a]	1013	1436	3166	905	620	326	564	369	192
Wandsworth New developments[b]	240	720	336	56	34	0	96	0	0
Percentage increase due to development	24	50	11	6	5	0	17	0	0
Thamesmead West Ward (Glyndon)[a]	165	322	1632	980	558	645	1328	916	632
Thamesmead West developments[b]	32	191	191	96	32	0	64	0	0
Percentage increase due to development	19	59	12	10	6	0	5	0	0

[a] Source 2001 UK Census.
[b] Total new development population estimates are based upon housing units contained in each development and occupational data drawn from survey data.

Quays (RAQ) in Thamesmead West (see table 2). At CW and RAQ, the gentrifying impact of development has been mediated by the provision of affordable housing (see table 3).[2] No affordable housing has been provided at RW.

Quantitative measures of social mixing were generated using social surveys. In each study area two sample populations were identified: (1) the neighbourhood population, and (2) the development population. Development populations consisted of all those within the selected residential developments. Neighbourhood populations were defined using a geographic approach. Physical features (roads, railways, parks) were used to identify distinct neighbourhood spaces.[3] Both populations were sampled using a random, stratified approach (de Vaus, 2002). This involved creating a complete database of residential addresses for each of the six populations using the Royal Mail postcode directory. The stratification approach used geographical sections of neighbourhoods and developments to ensure that areal neighbourhood variations were captured in the survey data. In development populations 150 households were randomly selected and mailed surveys to be completed by one adult within the household. In neighbourhood populations 300 households were randomly selected and surveys were hand-delivered.[4]

The survey used two established (see Buckner, 1988; Reimer, 2004) measures of social cohesion to assess neighbourhood-based social mixing: behavioural and perceived types. The behavioural measure draws upon work in sociology (Fontainha, 2005; Glaeser et al, 1999; Reimer, 2004) which conceptualises social mixing as "conscious or unconscious interactions" (Fontainha, 2005, page 4). As such, social mixing may be understood more as practice than as perception. By gauging the cohesiveness of respondents' neighbourhood behaviours, a measure of how often residents mix and interact within their neighbourhood was developed. This approach had the advantage of measuring social mixing in the absence (ie yet to be developed, or lacking phenomenological significance) of a sense of mixing. The measure (see Reimer, 2004) uses a fourfold typology of social relations: market, bureaucratic, associative, and communal forms (see Fiske, 1991). Questionnaire respondents were asked: "How often do you meet, or at least pass the time of day, with other neighbourhood residents in the following settings?" Fourteen different neighbourhood settings were identified in which all four types of social relations occur. Respondents were asked to rate the frequency of their interactions on a five-point Likert scale, from (1) 'never' through to (5) 'regularly'.

The perceived social cohesion measure was developed from methods used in community psychology (Buckner, 1988; Puddifoot, 1995). It differs from the behavioural measure, in which social cohesion was examined as an embodied practice, not reliant on a conscious sense of mixing. The survey employed eighteen questions developed by Buckner (1988) to form a multidimensional social cohesion measure. In addition, a selection of Buckner's questions were modified and repeated at the end of the questionnaire to measure perceived social cohesion (a) between neighbourhood residents and development residents by neighbourhood residents; and (b) within the recently constructed developments by development residents. Three sets of statistics

[2] A detailing of the differing requirement for and provisions of affordable housing at each development is beyond the scope of this paper. See Mullins et al (2006) for a detailed discussion of affordable housing provision in the UK under New Labour.

[3] In requested comments left by survey respondents, most felt the neighbourhood definitions used were roughly representative of their understandings of neighbourhood geography.

[4] Survey response rates averaged 24% across the six populations. These were at the lower end of expected response rates (see Martikinen et al, 2007). However, post hoc analysis did not identify significant bias in the samples. A number of key reasons were identified for the low response rates. In particular, a fatigue of surveys of any kind was consistently noted.

were therefore produced: (1) a general measure of social cohesion for each population (COPERA); (2) neighbourhood residents' perceptions of cohesion with development residents (COPERN); and (3) development residents' feelings of social cohesion within their development (COPERD).

Both behavioural and perceived measures were analysed using the same multistage approach. First, the multiple variables of each measure were summed for each respondent and averaged and standardised (see figure 2) for the populations. In order to test the reliability of these measures, two procedures were performed. First, intraclass correlation coefficients (ICCs) were produced to demonstrate the amount of variance within populations. Second, a principal components analysis was performed to examine for underlying themes. Following the survey, thirty-two follow-up semistructured in-depth interviews were conducted with selected respondents. The intention was to use a complementary mixed-method approach (Rocco et al, 2003) in order to examine the qualitative aspects of neighbourhood-based social relations and to probe how indicative quantitative indicators of mixing were of significant neighbouring relations (see Young and Cullen, 1996). Recruitment for those interviews took place through the survey.
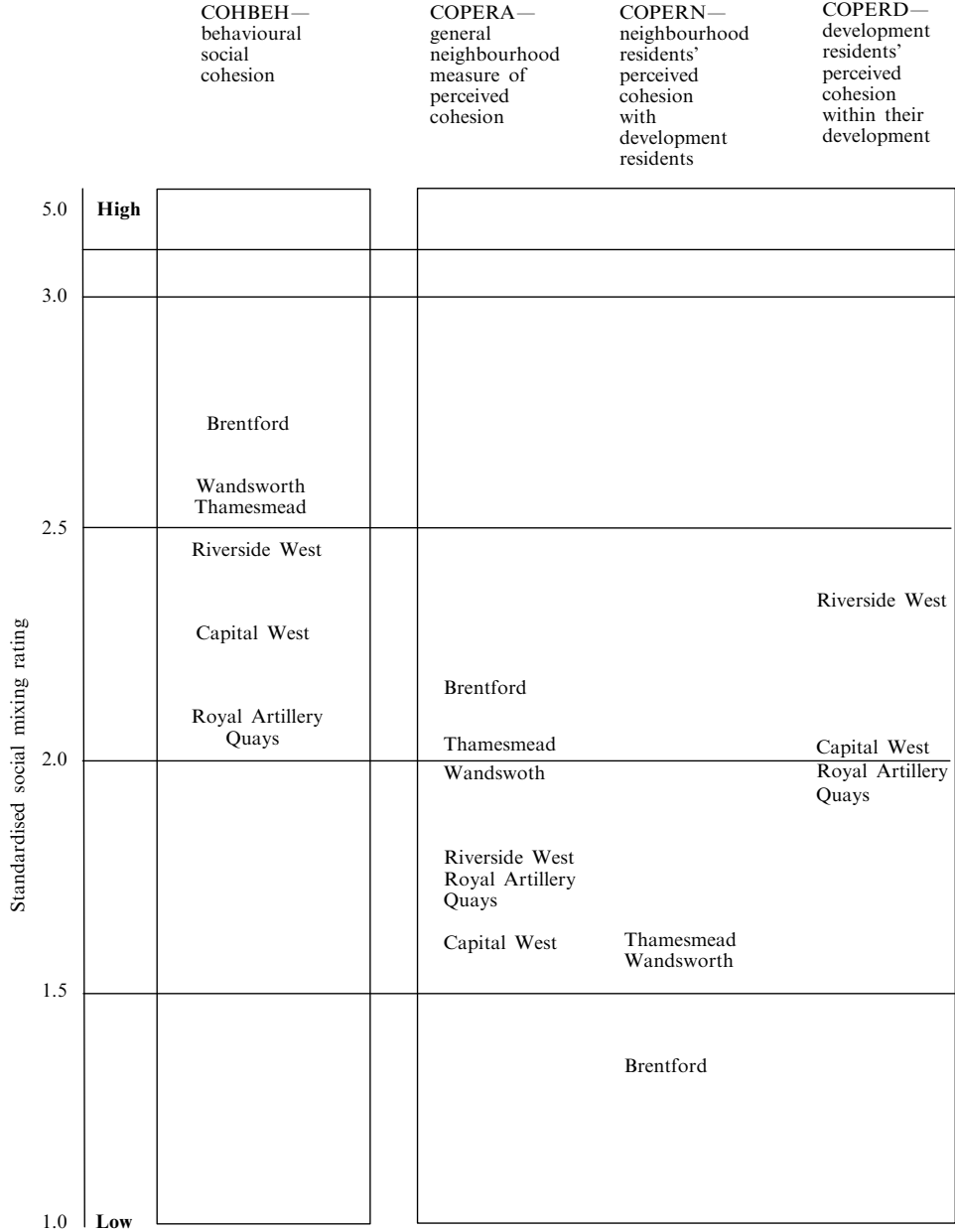
Quantitative measures
Levels of behavioural social cohesion (COHBEH) were higher in all neighbourhood populations compared with development populations (see figure 2), and significantly so ($p < 0.05$) in Brentford (ICC = 0.195) and Thamesmead West (ICC = 0.245).[5] In terms of using and occupying the same neighbourhood spaces, Wandsworth, therefore, was the only neighbourhood where middle-class gentrifiers and neighbourhood residents reported similar behaviours. This is explained, at least partially, by the fact that many neighbourhood respondents in Wandsworth were middle class (the neighbourhood has long been undergoing gentrification; see tables 1 and 3) and reported similar retail and leisure neighbourhood behaviours to those of Riverside West respondents [see on consumption and middle-class identity, Allen (2007) and Skeggs (2004)].

The measures of perceived social cohesion (COPERA) revealed a more complex pattern (see figure 2), with Brentford being the only area where levels were significantly ($p < 0.05$) higher in the neighbourhood (ICC = 0.347) than in the surveyed development (CW—ICC = 0.265). This stated, in the other two areas, neighbourhood populations recorded higher COPERA scores than their neighbouring development populations. Across all the neighbourhoods, the 'perception of local friends' was the most significant component of the measure, being mentioned between 34% and 43% of the time. This was followed by the 'perception of local support networks' (eg presence of help and advice) as the second most significant component. The Brentford neighbourhood population recorded the highest COPERA score ($M = 2.13$). This was largely due to the absence of the negative perception of 'detachment' (ie being dissimilar to other members of the local community; the desire to leave)—a perception that was present in all the other populations (reducing overall levels of COPERA).

The two remaining measures, COPERN (social cohesion perceived between neighbourhood and development populations by neighbourhood residents) and COPERD (perceived social cohesion within developments) indicated that (a) working-class neighbourhood residents did not feel closely associated with middle-class development residents, and (b) middle-class development residents feel a much greater sense

[5] The higher the ICC (range of 0–1), the more agreement (ie less variance) there is between the population respondents.

Figure 2. Results from quantitative social mixing measures.

of intradevelopment cohesion (see figure 2). There was strong agreement (indicated by high ICCs) in all the populations about these perceptions. As such, COPERD scores certainly support Abrams et al's (1989) claim that neighbouring has a strong and particularly middle-class dimension within postindustrial cities. For example, 'friendship' and 'belonging' were key principle components of COPERD scores—explaining 43%–54% of variance. This is in contrast to COPERN scores, where the perception of 'support' was the most significant factor [see Allen (2007) on working-class 'necessity'].

Three main conclusions can be drawn from the quantitative measures: (i) there is little mixing between middle-class development residents and working-class residents in surrounding neighbourhoods; (ii) middle-class development residents have consistently fostered a strong sense of community, but this does not significantly feature notions of 'support'; and (iii) there is no consistent level of neighbourhood social mixing—varying significantly across neighbourhood contexts. Further analysis[6] of the measures shows that while both for development and for neighbourhood residents there is a trend towards growing levels of neighbourhood interaction over time (ie more neighbourhood-based activities), the same cannot be said for perceptions of mixing in development populations, at least over the short (1–3 years) and medium (4–8 years) term.

Explaining modes of mixing
Quantitative measures of social mixing reveal a complex picture. Behavioural measures indicate that similar levels of neighbourhood interaction occur only where socioeconomic differences are small. Perceived measures indicate that divisions exist between working-class neighbourhood and middle-class development populations, although these are lesser in neighbourhoods with generally low levels of perceived social cohesion. These results can be seen to reflect Butler and Robson's (2003) observations of 'social tectonics' in other London neighbourhoods. However, the new-build form of the gentrification appears to generate a unique set of circumstances. In particular, it appears middle-class development communities are adept at generating internal perceptions of cohesion which are not possible in classically gentrifying neighbourhoods. However, survey results indicate that these perceptions are not equivalent to the forms in surrounding neighbourhoods (eg they are lacking in perceptions of 'support').

In the following sections interview data are drawn upon to explain why the neighbourhood cohabitation generated by new-build gentrification appears to have generated little cross-class interaction and particular perceptions of mixing. I seek to explain how the spatial proximity of different social classes (the UK government's urban policy vision) has failed to foster mixing. Three themes are identified: the inability of proximity to generate social relations, notions of social difference; and mechanisms of exclusion.

The inability of proximity to generate social relations
When asked whether or not length of residence contributed to mixing, both neighbourhood and development residents challenged the idea that people become more embedded in the neighbourhood over the long term. This comment was often made with reference to a lack of residential stability (in contrast with previous decades) and an expectation of multiple household moves. This certainly reflects the British Household Survey, which shows that people now move home between seven and eleven times during a lifetime (Böheim and Taylor, 1999); see Clark and Huang (2003) on community stability. This (expected) mobility may certainly contribute to the fact that many residents simply 'rub past each other' (Butler and Robson, 2003); having similar

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[6] A hierarchical multiple regression was used to examine seven predictor variables: block 1: length of residence; block 2 (exploratory): gender, age, employment, occupational status, education and housing tenure. Length of residence was found not to be correlated with the perceived (COPERA) social mixing measures. In terms of neighbourhood behaviour (COHBEH), the correlation between length of residence and COHBEH was more significant in neighbourhood populations ($p < 0.1$) compared with developments ($p < 0.5$).

neighbourhood behaviours, but without the perception of cohesiveness. Put in terms of Husserl's (1970) 'lifeworld' (*Lebenswelt*),[7] the practices and cognitive horizon of middle-class development residents are simply not paralleled by those of the surrounding working-class population. This was reflected when members of the counterposed populations would unreflexively explain how their respective lives, tastes and priorities were different from each other [see Allen on class difference (2007, pages 5 – 9)]. These commentaries were often made without reference to particular relationships, remaining generalised. Here, then, the different subjectivities of the working-class and middle-class populations can be seen to be relatively constructed as naturalised differences. Although separate, the copresence of the populations is reflected in intersubjectively formed lifeworlds: "The constitutive element of the life-world is inter-subjectivity, not the Ego" (Brand, 1973, page 158). For example, one development resident in Wandsworth, an accountant in his early thirties who was originally from Ireland and had stayed in London after graduating university, explained:

"I'm sure some of the locals had comments about this place [Riverside West], but bringing in the type of people who live here works…. We bring a boost to the area, but don't hassle what they do. I mean, I'm not going to fill up their schools, or change how they go shopping. This arrangement will benefit them in other ways though" (interview, 2004).

Differing interviewee social network geographies were often used to explain disjunctured lifeworlds. Mariah, a CW resident, explained:

"I know we all live here, but that doesn't mean you're going to get on. If you think about it, my friends are not connected to there [neighbourhood], so I'm not going to get on with the locals who do…. They will just connect to the area totally different from me, I guess" (interview, 2005).

Mariah, who worked in pharmaceutical research, had ended up moving into Brentford after searching in vain for an apartment in the more expensive neighbouring Chiswick. Her decision to buy at CW, in an area she considered "a bit off the beaten track", had been significantly influenced by the fact that she "recognised people like me when I [Mariah] was shown around" (interview, 2005). In the case of Thamesmead resident Toby, a single father of two who had worked in various labouring jobs primarily in and around South East London over the past 20 years, there was a similar view that the juxtaposed communities were distinct:

"I just can't imagine where I would meet them. Only if we literally bump into each other on the street…. I'm sure they drive around, in and out, you know" (interview, 2005).

Here, Husserl's test for a shared lifeworld—as something given to 'we'—is denied through different social network geographies which reduce or avoid the requirement for some sense of shared understanding to be developed. Disjuncture takes on a spatial dimension through the acknowledgment that, for middle-class development interviewees, although the neighbourhood serves as a site of certain resources (eg grocery stores and services), the neighbourhood as 'community' has little value or utility. This, of course, may reflect the absence of 'support' as a significant aspect of perceived neighbourhood cohesion for middle-class development respondents.

[7] Husserl (1970) defines the lifeworld as "the pregiven world. It is pregiven to us all quite naturally, as persons within the horizon of our fellow men, ie, in every actual connection with others, as 'the' world common to us all" (page 122). Husserl's understanding of the lifeworld as something premised is relatively decentred in the sense that groups of individuals will share a truth or reality to the extent of 'as things existing for us'. This interpretation of the lifeworld differs from a Habermasian notion, where the theory of communicative action is used to reject Husserl's 'ego-logical' approach in favor of a more structural idea of lifeworld as a background of "culturally transmitted and linguistically organized stock of interpretative patterns" (page 127).

The majority of middle-class development residents held ambivalent attitudes towards their local neighbourhood. Often posed in contrast to the 'local person' who has 'local connections', many middle-class development residents explained that 'neighbourhood' was not a significant concern. Tony, a RAQ resident in his late twenties, had purchased his apartment online, moving in largely blind to the surrounding neighbourhood. This situation had not changed greatly, with Tony's work as a travelling sales executive meaning that his neighbourhood contact is largely limited to driving in and out of the area:

"I don't see a concern for the area ... . They have their world, I have mine ... . Most folks in here won't really care about Thamesmead. If we had any relation to people around here maybe that would change" (interview, 2004).

The only exception to these striking contrasts occurred in Wandsworth, where middle-class neighbourhood and development residents perceived common patronage of certain retail areas (see figure 3) and shared neighbourhood concerns. And although there was a common understanding that middle-class development residents were likely "at an earlier stage in their lives where houses and gardens are less important" (interview, 2005, Wandsworth resident) and that neighbourhood residents "were a bit older with kids and higher salaries" (interview, 2005, RW resident), this was underlined with a sense of occupational, cultural, and educational commonality.

Whereas neighbourhood character has often been noted in studies of classical gentrification as central to identity (Ley, 1997; Rofe, 2003), because of the self-contained form of new-build developments, most of their residents associated more with the developments than with the surrounding neighbourhood. For example, Steve, a 35-year-old management consultant and CW resident explained:

"It is funny thinking about Brentford 'cos I can honestly say I never gave it that much thought. This place [CW] was mainly the basis of my decision. It was a nice and safe place that I could get to work from" (interview, 2005).

Figure 3. Old York Road, Wandsworth: a gentrified retail space shared by neighbourhood (classical) and development (new-build) gentrifiers (source: author's photograph).

Low levels of neighbourhood social mixing are therefore partly explained (for gentrifers) through a lack of engagement, attachment, and/or investment in the local area. For those interviewed, this occurred at the point of purchase/rental. However, it was also explained by interviewees as being maintained and/or fostered through onsite facilities.

Given the scale of the residential developments, it has been possible (eg, via communal charges) for each new-build development to be equipped with onsite facilities which range from private gyms, retail stores, and restaurants through to childcare services (see table 2). A consequence of these facilities was the accentuation of a lack of concern with local neighbourhood; in particular, the services served to restrict local facilities usage. For example, Rob, a CW resident who had moved into the area with his partner after they had both completed masters degrees, discussed how their 'local' needs were very small:

"I didn't know about the public pool or anything like that. I pay for the stuff here, so I'm going to use it.... So, you can see, I don't really have any call to do anything in Brentford. Apart from the odd pint of milk and the one time I looked for a paint brush in the home [hardware] store, I've not had to bother" (interview, 2005).

Here, then, the absence of valued neighbourhood social relations is reinforced by the particular built form of developments and economies of scale which enable the onsite provision of private services and goods.

In contrast to the largely middle-class private market housing residents, those living in housing-association and shared-ownership (ie affordable housing) units at CW and RAQ recorded slightly greater levels of behavioural and perceived social mixing. Indeed, most perceived the local area in different ways from other development residents [on social perceptions and housing tenure, see Watt (2008a)]. For Sarah, a shared-ownership CW resident, Brentford had become a familiar space:

"I knew the area a bit, since I work around here sometimes... but since moving, I've gotten fond of it.... I go to the Beehive [local pub] and read a book. You get talking.... I talked with an old local last week" (interview, 2005).

Sarah, who worked for the emergency services, had initially been attracted to her apartment because, living alone, she felt it was a "safe, viable and attractive residential opportunity". But, as she explained, this choice had become more than that as her associations with the neighbourhood had evolved. At RAQ, Mary, a mother with two children living in a shared-ownership unit, explained how her children's usage of local facilities had changed her initial perceptions of the area:

"I know this place has a scary rep[utation], but we've gotten to know a few people through Jess [daughter]... it makes you realise it is not all bad. I really get on with some of the other mums" (interview, 2004).

Mary had been somewhat familiar with the neighbourhood having spent most of her life in neighbouring Woolwich. However, she had always known Thamesmead as a "dangerous" place. In particular, she noted that her brother had been involved in a fight in the area when he was a teenager and her father subsequently warned her about "the estate". More recently, Mary was concerned at the unrest which some of her relatives had voiced about "African" migrants moving into densely populated social housing blocks. Yet despite these concerns, Mary's necessary (Allen, 2007) neighbourhood activities had generated a familiarity that, despite the problems Mary identified, had fostered a sense of place. Although these examples are not indicative of a uniformly distinctive, tenure-based division, they do serve as an example of how tenure, (lack of) development-based facilities, and neighbourhood-based activities can interact to create a different sense of local social relations.

Different degrees and perceptions of social mixing can, therefore, begin to be explained by a combination of distinct lifeworlds and a built environment which both supports and mediates interactions within the local area. Gentrifying development residents, largely acknowledging this situation, characterised this disjuncture in very ambivalent terms: neither explicitly reflecting liberal (Caulfield, 1994; Ley, 1997) nor revanchist (Smith, 1996) attitudes. This became manifest as a situation whereby a sense of neighbourliness was absent for many development residents. In contrast, working-class neighbourhood residents were much more aware of, and some concerned about, their newly neighbouring development communities. As a consequence, there was an asymmetry to perceptions, with a form of liberal detachment/obliviousness for one and an acknowledged estrangement for the other.

Notions of social difference

Bourdieu's concept of 'habitus' has been used to understand how gentrification relates to education (Butler, 2003), architecture (Bridge, 2001) and artists (Ley, 2003). Much of this usage has been one-dimensional, as Watt (2008b) argues:

"working-class displacement has been largely 'displaced' by an overriding concern with understanding and explaining the habitus, in Bourdieu's terms, of the gentrifiers" (page 207).

Here, for Watt, a sole focus on middle-class habitus has pushed the working classes into the shadows—behind a narrative of numerical decline. However, there has also been little attention paid to how the formation of middle-class habitus is reliant on a relative process whereby the working classes play a hierarchical role as 'other'. In Bourdieu's own words, "differences in cultural capital mark the differences between the classes" (1984, page 69). Here, Bourdieu connects notions of social class, constituted through and across various fields, to symbolic capital[8] and power, with: "categories of perception [which] are the product of the incorporation of oppositions and divisions inscribed in the structured distribution of the species of capital in question" (1998, page 117, cited by Earle, 1999, page 183). Class distinctions, formed through oppositions and division, are therefore central to the reproduction and accumulation of social capital (Earle, 1999, pages 183–184). Without the 'other' above which to elevate the cultural dispositions of the middle classes, structuring, at least in the social and cultural fields, cannot occur.

The point here is that 'them' and 'us' are central to class structuring. It is not possible to conceive of middle-class formation or 'elective belonging' (Butler, 2007) without a (working class) 'other'. As Žižek (2000) claims, with reference to a discussion of the political subjectivities of the Universal and Particular, the construction of middle-class identity cannot deny its relativity. Indeed, to do so would be to overlook the hegemony involved in generating middle-class identity:

"the 'middle class' is, in its very 'real' existence, the *embodied lie*, the denial of antagonism—in psychoanalytic terms, the 'middle class' is a fetish, the impossible intersection of Left and Right which, by expelling both poles of the antagonism into the position of antisocial 'extremes' which corrode the healthy social body (multinational corporations and intruding immigrants), presents itself as the neutral common ground of Society" (page 187, original emphasis).

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[8] For Bourdieu (1986) social capital is generated through the mutual recognition of difference(s). When these 'objective' differences acquire symbolic characteristics they operate within hierarchies and classifications (ie modes of capital): "Symbolic capital—another name for distinction—is nothing other than capital, in whatever form, when perceived by an agent endowed with categories of perception arising from the internalization (embodiment) of the structure of its distribution, ie, when it is known and recognized as self-evident" (page 731).

Here Žižek, using Laclau's (2007) notion that Society exists when the 'subject accomplishes the operation of hegemony' (Žižek, 2000, page 182), asserts that "the 'middle class' is the very form of the disavowal of the fact that 'Social doesn't exist (Laclau)—in it, Society *does* exist" (page 187, original emphasis) to claim that "a class society in which the ideological perception of the class division was pure and direct would be a harmonious structure with no struggle" (page 187). Class difference is then seen both as necessary to middle-class practice (eg habitus) and at the same time as being denied by claims to the Universal (ie Laclau's 'Society').

Consequently, the absence of social mixing within the context of gentrification is politicised. It is integral to class practice. For, if mixing was to blur social distinctions, the resulting symbolic capital would be denigrated. In this sense, we can see symbolic capital operating as symbolic power: "power of constructing social reality" (Bourdieu, 1990, page 166). From this perspective the emancipatory (truly) liberal gentrifier (Caulfield, 1994) might therefore be presented as a radical intervention; an individual/ group operating to blur the fields which give rise to social class structures. Gentrifying neighbourhoods therefore see symbolic capital converted into symbolic power through a social reality that maintains class distinction. The results of this study reflect this: spatial cohabitation does not lead to shared social identification. Indeed, if we follow Bourdieu, it should not be expected that they would. This stated, a number of distinctions between classical and new-build gentrification are required. In particular, it is important to locate the creation of difference (ie 'them' and 'us') through the built environment and with real estate capital as much as, if not more than, gentrifiers' habitus (see Davidson, 2007).

Whereas those who have explained classical gentrification through Bourdieu's habitus (Bridge, 2001; Butler and Robson, 2003) posit the aesthetic/built environment, and educational and consumption practices of gentrifiers as central to the process, new-build gentrification involves a distinctly different interaction of class, capital, and built environment (Davidson, 2007). Distinctions between 'them' (incumbent working-class residents) and 'us' (gentrifiers) are therefore presented, shaped, and mediated by the architecture, marketing, and built form of gentrifying developments created by real estate developers. Notions of difference which reinforce an absence of social mixing are therefore influenced to a much greater extent by economic capital (Davidson, 2007). This was articulated by interviewees when the issue of housing choice was discussed. In particular, these discussions demonstrated how notions of difference were consistently referenced to the identity, built form, and institutions of the studied developments.

In contrast to the neighbourhood bonds/associations fostered in classical gentrification (Martin, 2007), the branded identity of the gentrifying developments studied created associations which have been used by developers to position their product which, in turn, have generated quite spatially defined affiliations. The creation of 'them' and 'us' is therefore integral to the developments themselves. As Tony, the resident who purchased an RAQ apartment online boldly stated:

"Oh, yeah. This is a place onto itself. I bought a place here [RAQ], not bloody Thamesmead" (interview, 2004).

Tony went on to use the identity of RAQ to distance himself from the immediate neighbourhood:

"I knew moving here that I would be okay, that people like me would be living here. The locals don't fit with the place. They could not afford it ... . I would never have looked to move into the area if I had not seen this place on the [Barratt Homes] website. God no! Who would?"

This interviewee reflected how the practices of developers, through marketing materials and websites, fostered a distinction between their potential/actual residents and those of the surrounding neighbourhood.

This distinction would also be connected to issues of lifestage, lifestyle, and, in particular, the idea that developments had been built for 'professionals' and for 'professional lifestyles': however, it should also be noted that racial and ethnic differences were important markers of difference/distinction—particularly in Thamesmead West. One interviewee who lived at RAQ described the development as "white and respectable" when contrasting it to neighbouring social housing. This latter was, for this interviewee, associated with African migrants. Occasionally, comments about the resident population of developments were also made with reference to marketing materials. For example, Stephanie, an RW resident who self-identified as single, white British and in her mid-forties, explained:

"I bought in here because, even from the brochures, [I knew] it is the kind of place that fits my life. I think most others [residents] are the same. I mean, the flats and all the benefits of the waterfront fit my life. I don't think people around here have the same priorities" (interview, 2005).

Although the bounded identity of the developments demarked 'them' from 'us', this distinction had also become institutionalised in resident's associations. Formed to represent the particular interests of private market housing development residents, these had the effect of reaffirming divisions:

"The residents' group is really active here [RW]. I've been to a few meetings, but I know they are active. They have really campaigned hard to move the dump from next door.... I know that has got the locals mad. They reckon we knew it was there all along, but I say if enough of us want rid of it, we should make it happen. That's democracy" (interview, John, RW resident, 2004).

Development-based residents' associations within the three neighbourhoods had therefore cemented ideas about the difference. For example, Monica, an elderly Brentford resident who had lived and worked around the area for some forty years, commented:

"The residents at CW and the [Brentford] Lock have been kicking up a fuss. They want to have their say, and they seem pretty good at it. I know they've managed to get that church building saved, even though they are the reason it was going to be knocked down" (interview, 2004).

Residents' associations served to institutionalise distinction: architectural aesthetics, social perceptions, and local political conflicts all coalesced to generate difference.

Exclusive spaces—mechanisms of exclusion

The disjuctured lifeworlds of the counterposed populations and the relative construction of class position described were supplemented by a set of spatial practices which restrict the creation of shared/public spaces.[9] By this, I mean that the particular built form and neighbourhood context of the new-build gentrification studied both reflects and reinforces the subjective detachment of gentrifiers from their surrounding neighbourhood. Built form and resulting public space forms which have been intentionally created by real estate capital (Lefebvre, 1991; 2003) are therefore acting to enable residents to access/consume social distinction (Davidson, 2007).

[9] Here a link from Husserl's phenomenological view on 'environment' (*Umwelt*) can be traced forward to Heidegger's notion of *Unwelt* in being and time. In this, our 'everyday world' of activity is thought of as the location of experience and practical engagement with the world we inhabit.

The sharing of urban space, and cooperation within public spaces, is closely associated with ideas of emancipatory cities (Lees, 2004) and democracy (Arendt, 1958; Low and Smith, 2005). Indeed, the ameliorative social policy potential of mixing within public spaces has become a significant theme of contemporary urban policy (Lees, 2008). This is certainly true in London, where national and metropolitan governments have placed significant emphasis on the provision of public spaces within major new residential and commercial development as a social policy tool (Atkinson and Kintrea, 2001; eg, GLA, 2004). Given the waterfront locale of the developments studied, all were subject to planning legislation which made the provision of public space and waterfront access a requirement for approval. As such, the creation of new public spaces offered the prospect of spaces for social mixing. Indeed, COHBEH variables appertaining to the usage of public space indicate similar levels of usage by the counterposed populations. Therefore, opposed to classical processes of gentrification which make few (direct) alterations/additions to public space (Smith, 1996), the gentrification studied did potentially offer significant public space contributions.

Overwhelmingly, most neighbourhood residents thought that few or no improvements had been made to public spaces within their neighbourhood. The exception to this was a waterfront park in Brentford which had been rehabilitated as part of CW's Section 106 requirements (figure 4). However, given the spatial disconnection of this park from the development, most residents were unaware of any connection to CW. There was the perception in Brentford that new development had made no public space additions. For example:

"I'm not sure what you mean? I did not think the flats [CW] had provided any spaces. It is all private, isn't it?" (interview, 2005, CW resident).

Figure 4. Watermans Park, Brentford: rehabilitated using planning gains associated with Capital West (far left) (source: author's photograph).

Although public space and access had been provided in and around the three developments, most interviewees perceived little public space value. Two reasons for this were commonly given both by gentrifiers and by incumbent residents: (i) the excluding nature of the developments, an (ii) the overt presence of security.

Despite all the developments having some type of barrier-less access into and around them, with the exception of RAQ, there was a perception that the developments had not offered new public spaces. Indeed, many working-class neighbourhood residents perceived once visible, if rundown, waterfront areas to now be 'colonised' and 'unfamiliar'. For example, Monica, the long-term Brentford resident, described the following:

"It is like a canyon down there. You can't see in and there is no light. I can't imagine why I would go for a walk through there…. I honestly feel it has become someone else's space now. Which is a shame because it is a lovely part of the river" (interview, 2004).

This view was somewhat reflected by development residents, although they did not feature any narration of loss:

"Is that really a public space? I thought this was kind-of private. Bloody hell …. One of the reasons I like it, and it is kind of a guilty thing, is that it is safe. I mean, the wife is safe coming home" (interview, 2005, CW resident).

For other middle-class development residents, the exclusivity of the spaces was part of the benefit of living in them. It motivated their purchase:

"I like it because I know when I go away for work … things are secure here. Good locks, gates and not just any Joe can walk in" (interview, 2004, John, RW resident).

This view was repeated at RAQ by Tony, when he argued:

"The safety of the place [RAQ] is what you are paying for. If you can afford it, you buy it. You're stupid not to really…. It is all part of the package. I guess you could call it a bit antisocial, but I think you're just keeping the antisocial stuff out" (interview, 2005).

Poor access routes in and through the developments ensured little regular foot traffic. However, this situation was also supplemented by the unease created by onsite security guards and highly visible CCTV surveillance. For many, the developments were seen as places you are kept out of. Marvin, a middle-aged working-class Brentford resident who worried that his local football team's ground was in danger of being sold for residential development, described the development spaces as excluding:

"Come on, they are no way go-to places. There is a bloody security guard watching to make sure you don't go and use their pool, or gym, or whatever. I'm sure if you went and sat down to have lunch, they would soon bother you" (interview, 2005).

A similar narrative was offered by a retired working-class resident in Wandsworth:

"Honestly, I would not be able to tell you what it is like…. It [riverside] is not really there anymore for me" (interview, 2004).

Although the built environment and overt securities certainly kept neighbourhood from development, it also had the effect of dividing those in social/affordable housing from those in market housing within the developments. At CW, Sarah, the previously mentioned shared-ownership 'key worker', explained:

"We, even me, are not part of that [CW]. I can't use any of the facilities, don't have an access key and even our garage is not secured like theirs…. It is very much them and us. We are the subsidised housing people, which I hate because I work hard, and they are [those] who have money. So they get all the bells and whistles" (interview, 2005).

Therefore, while the exclusive and excluding spaces of the developments certainly restricted the possibilities of public spaces and thoroughfares acting as conduits for social mixing, they also served as markers of distinction and difference, yet further enforcing 'them' and 'us'.

Conclusions

As gentrification has mutated in its third wave (Hackworth and Smith, 2001), its relationship to social mixing has come into focus. As a result there has been a rethinking of the consequences and politics of gentrification (eg Butler, 2007; Freeman, 2006; Lees, 2008; Slater, 2006). While much of this discussion has focused upon classical gentrification, in this paper I have attempted to document and explain social mixing in the context of new-build gentrification. It has been shown that the levels of social mixing measured in the studied neighbourhoods show similarities to previous studies in London (Butler and Robson, 2003) and elsewhere (Freeman, 2006; Rose, 2004; Walks and Maaranen, 2008). However, I have argued that some key distinctions emerge based upon the particular character of the policy-led gentrification observed. These draw attention to the 'neighbourhood' question which Lees (2008) highlights by claiming: "the neighbourhood itself needs to be re-evaluated" (page 2463). Here, Lees (see also Cheshire, 2008) questions the effectiveness of neighbourhood-premised social mixing policies in bringing about social equity outcomes. What this study of new-build gentrification illustrates is that the built form of neighbourhoods themselves is being altered by current policy and planning frameworks which transform their structure in ways which challenge the premise of social mixing policies. Specifically, large, infill, high-density, self-contained, new-build developments create very specific built and social additions to existing neighbourhoods.

The research presented here suggests that this has particular implications in terms of the prospects of converting neighbourhood cohabitation and interactions into perceptions of community. Subjective notions of difference based around social class distinctions are seen to be both central to the economic success of new-build developments and subsequently fostered by the services and community structures operating within them. The consequent continued construction of 'them' and 'us' therefore acts as an important element in the relative process of social (class) structuring. In contrast to those employing Bourdieu's habitus to understand gentrification as increasingly devoid of working-class conflict (Butler, 2007; for critique see Watt, 2008), the hierarchical and relative nature of class construction found here asserts the inherent politics of class difference (Žižek, 2000). Specifically, the structuring of gentrifying 'development' versus 'neighbourhood' is not viewed as a benign relationship.

The absence of many modes of social mixing in gentrifying neighbourhoods is constitutive of processes which actively structure class difference. We must therefore avoid benign diagnosis. As Žižek (2000) notes, the unrelational assertion of middle-class being is, in Laclau's (2007) terms, a defining political act. With reference to policy agendas embracing social mixing as a means to deal with urban deprivation (Atkinson and Kintrea, 2001), is the consequence of Žižek's (2000) critique not this: that prescriptions, as presently pursued, for harmonious socially mixed communities—and by this is meant socioeconomically mixed—embody a deep contradiction? Namely, that spatial proximity somehow engenders the creation of a people. That working class and middle class living in proximity can create a 'Society' (Laclau, 2007). That the low paid, whatever their personal associations to 'class', can simply accept to 'love thy neighbour'; to become, as if it was not itself denied by the middle-class reliance of the other, middle class (and, of course, vice versa). While the absence of social mixing contains within it a class politics, the assertion of social mixing in current urban policies is therefore "the *embodied lie*: the denial of antagonism" (Žižek, 2000, page 187, original emphasis); empty without another form of 'society' imagined in our politics (Žižek, 2006).

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