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The production of community in a gentrifying space: A case study of Chatsworth Road, Hackney.

Mahalia Sterling^{a,*}

^a*School of Environment and Technology, University of Brighton, Lewes Road, BN2 4GJ.*

* *Corresponding author: Email address: mahaliasterling@hotmail.co.uk (M. Sterling).*

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ABSTRACT

This paper will investigate the production of community in an early gentrifying space. The research will focus on Chatsworth Road, a high street in the East London borough of Hackney. The research aimed to investigate how community, a sense of belonging and gentrification is understood by the middle class and gentrifying community of Chatsworth Road. The focus is on the migration of the middle class due to the transformation and establishment of new sub-cultures and lifestyles that aid the gentrification process. An ethnographic approach was undertaken within this research, which involved a mix of methods such as semi-structured interviews, the analysis of online discussion forums and the analysis of secondary data.

Keywords *Gentrification, Community, Belonging, Middle Class, London, High Street*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The term ‘gentrification’ was first coined by Ruth Glass over 50 years ago to explain the inward migration of the middle class into working class areas (Lees et al., 2010). The term has now developed into a concept used throughout academic research and journalism.

The inner residential districts of London have been subject to gentrification from the early 1950s Moran (2007). Butler (2007) stated both suburbanisation (the migration of the middle class to the suburbs of greater London) and gentrification have proved the most significant within the urbanisation process in the twentieth

century; they have led to significant social, economic and cultural changes. It has altered and influenced how we as a society perceive certain areas and its inhabitants. The rise of the middle class into working class inner London has not only played a significant role in gentrification but in the understanding of the formation of community and a sense of belonging within an urban space. Ranging from previous research to conversations amongst peers, it seems clear that gentrification has become a controversial phenomenon. Although it often results in the redevelopment or regeneration of ‘tired’ working class or low income areas, it is often in the direction of those who have the power to implement and benefit from those changes, and in

the direction of the young working age middle class who are able to afford the rising living cost and lifestyle - leading to issues such as displacement.

This research focusses on an inner city London area undergoing gentrification, with particular emphasis on one aspect of gentrification - the link between the idea of community and gentrification. Community has proven to be a complex concept and has become a significant part of our society. The significance and meaning of the term has developed throughout time, from St Augustine's definition of emotional ties to the contemporary understanding of social relations. Overall, 'community' is defined as more than just an association but as a form of unity and membership amongst individuals (Avineri and De-Shalit, 1992). This research will focus on how the idea of community links to how the gentrifiers of Chatsworth Road make sense of the gentrifying space. Delanty (2003) stated that as communities undergo modernity there becomes a loss of a traditional community (a strong sense of belonging) with a new formation of a community unlikely. However, the middle class gentrifying community of Chatsworth Road, a high street in Hackney East London, which is an area undergoing significant waves of gentrification, has aimed to create and bring back a sense of community. Like many inner city areas, Hackney is undergoing an extensive processes of gentrification and is a well-known "trendy" area for young professionals. Chatsworth Road high street has undergone a significant amount of change over the last five years, making it ideal to investigate as a gentrifying site.

The main aim of this research is to understand how a sense of community and belonging is established on Chatsworth Road, and how the gentrifying residents understand the process of gentrification. This paper investigates how gentrification has influenced, and relates to, how community and a sense of belonging are understood along Chatsworth Road. It will also investigate how middle class residents understand gentrification and what it means to them as the "gentrifiers".

The Chatsworth Road Residents and Traders Association (CRRTA) play a pivotal role in this research. Several residents and business owners

along the high street manage the organisation. The CRRTA aims to give the community of Chatsworth Road a voice and power in the high street's development; one of the aims of the organisation is to bring back a sense of community on the high street. For an area that is undergoing gentrification this paper will investigate what a community means and how it is understood and produced - not only to the residents and business owners of Chatsworth Road, but also to those involved in the CRRTA.

2.0 STUDY SITE

Chatsworth Road is a commercial high street surrounded by residential streets situated in the London Borough of Hackney, East London. The high street is also known and praised for being an independent high street, with some referring to it as one of the last real high streets due to its lack of chain businesses (Makinde and Counsell, 2010). Hackney is undergoing extensive social change as a result of gentrification and regeneration. Chatsworth Road is located in the district of Lower Clapton. Destination Hackney (no date) stated Clapton and Homerton are 'areas on the up'. The neighbourhood has adopted a coffee shop and restaurant character with Chatsworth Road high street and its weekly Sunday market at the forefront. Hackney has undergone significant change over the last 15 years. With the population now estimated at 263,150 people (London Borough of Hackney, 2015a) much of the growth and inward migration into Hackney has been attributed to a young working age group (aged 20-34) from a white background (London Borough of Hackney, 2015a). According to the London Borough of Hackney's Migration in Hackney 2015 Analysis and Briefing (2015a) report, migrants moving into Hackney from other parts of the UK are more likely to be economically active in employment. They are most likely to be working in managerial occupations, more likely to be renting in the private sector. The report determines that these characteristics suggest the majority of new migrants into Hackney are not likely to be heavy users of public services such as welfare and housing (London Borough of Hackney, 2015a). Recent economic activity by migration in the Borough has shown that those moving in to Hackney from other parts of the UK have higher full-time employment rates, while those leaving have slightly lower full-time

employment rates and slightly higher rates of economic inactivity (London Borough of Hackney, 2015a). Although this strengthens the argument of gentrification in Hackney, there is still a noticeable level of deprivation in the Borough. According to the Lower Level Super Output Areas in 2015 the London Borough of Hackney is the 11th most deprived local authority district in England (London Borough of Hackney, 2015b). When looking at income deprivation Hackney is ranked as the 13th most deprived local authority in England with deprivation concentrated in areas surrounding Kings Park, Homerton and Lea Bridge (London Borough of Hackney, 2015b). These are the wards surrounding Chatsworth Road; the high street borders both Lea Bridge and Kings Park and ends at the top of Homerton. The north of Kings Park and thus north of Chatsworth Road lies within the top 20% of the most deprived regions of Hackney while the South of the ward lies within the top 30%. However, Lea Bridge ward lies within the top 30% in the North and top 40% in the south. The variation in the level of deprivation in Lea Bridge and Kings Park wards strongly suggests there are still a proportionate number of residents in the working class and low-income social scale living within the Chatsworth Road area.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

In order to unravel the relationship between community and gentrification, an ethnographic and qualitative approach has been used. This method of research allowed for the collection and examination of data through studying and essentially immersing oneself into the way of life of the community of Chatsworth Road. Nine semi-structured interviews and one telephone interview were conducted. Due to practicality and convenience one telephone interview was conducted with a councillor from the local authority of Hackney. Analysis of online discussion forums was another method of data collection. In addition, comments and the discussion forum section of the CRRTA website were analysed. Secondary data in the form of a pre-coded workshop conducted by the CRRTA has also been used and analysed for this research. Coding and content analysis were the two methods used to interpret interviews and secondary data.

4.0 RESULTS, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Community and belonging

While researching the idea of ‘community’, it is clear that the term is complex and often difficult to define. During this research the concept and understanding of community has varied, however, there is a common notion of significance and importance of community. Henderson and Salmon (1998) argued that community is an idea that won’t go away; it is constant in society’s mind. ‘People wrestle with it because of its profound significance’ (Henderson and Salmon, 1998:16). This significance of community is due to the strong notion of community forming and creating a sense of belonging amongst individuals (Day, 2006) and despite contested views and arguments it is heavily related to the search for a belonging in what Delanty (2003) argues to be ‘insecure conditions of modern society’ (Delanty, 2003:1).

From the current research conducted along Chatsworth Road it was possible to establish a general impression of community and gentrification between the traders and residents. However, there is a contrast in the way in which this sense of community is produced. Although their sense of community is achieved differently, it is still present, as argued by Cohen (1985:98) who stated, ‘community exists in the minds of its members and should not be confused with geographic or socio-graphic assertions of fact’. Meaning community is produced by an individual’s connection rather than their locality - hence the difference in the understanding of how community is produced.

With regards to Chatsworth Road the proposal that community is formed by locality translates to the idea of sharing a space, living within a cohesive community where there is a sense of belonging for all. Therefore, community is understood as a diverse space where there is and should always be a mix of people of all incomes, ethnic backgrounds and age along with a mixture of shops and amenities to meet that mix of demographics. This definition has been formed by a romanticised and socially constructed image of community, where in reality according to Tönnies (1963, cited in Knox and Pinch, 2006) community exists either naturally by members

acting on connections and networks, or by kinship. It is expressed on the basis of social integration and face-to-face social relations through locality and particularity (Delanty, 2003). Where social relations are depicted through propinquity and familiarity by a means of: kinships, as neighbours, as fellow business owners or customers, as well as living, working and socialising within close proximity to each other. Gans (1962, cited in Knox and Pinch, 2006) developed the concept of Urban Villages. From his study on the Italian Quarter in the west end of Boston he found a strong sense of community and solidarity between people occupying the same space. He argued that this was based on strong local networks of kinship and reinforced by factors such as employment, shopping and leisure activities. Young and Wilmott (1957) also studied working class families in Bethnal Green where they found close-knit ties and local solidarity. The idea of employment, shopping and leisure reinforcing the sense of community and solidarity relates strongly to a high street and the use of a high street as a shared, public space by the surrounding residents, business owners, market traders and therefore, community members. Gans' (1962, cited in Knox and Pinch, 2006) arguments suggest that the high street and its components provided a strong contribution to the making and understanding of a community. The CRRTA has undertaken a series of workshops with over 200 residents and business owners living and working in the Chatsworth Road area. The pre-coded secondary data collected from a workshop conducted by the CRRTA has provided data regarding how residents, traders and business owners understand what a community should consist of and who should be included.

A common response from the workshops was the reduction, or the removal, of betting shops from the high street. Betting shops have traditionally been located or targeted in working class and minority ethnic community areas and as argued by Blackshaw (2013), have become a symbolic culture of working-class life. Many betting shops have admitted to specifically targeting working class and low-income communities as well as areas of high unemployment. Betting shops have been successful in targeting minority ethnic communities; it has been found that 61% of the 327 Paddy Power's betting shops are located in areas with an above average rate of migrant

populations (Merril, 2015). Farrah (1997) refers to the attraction of betting shops amongst the African-Caribbean communities, as a response to financial anxiety; there is an allure to the immediate potential rewards of betting shops. The removal or reduction of the betting shops suggest that they do not belong on the road or in the community, as discussed at the CRRTA workshop. It can be argued that the betting shops on Chatsworth Road symbolise more than just gambling shops but a sense and place of belonging for the working class, low income and ethnic communities who use them. Direct observations of a betting shop as part of the current research, suggest that although the betting shop was not overly busy it was in use and is therefore, a service to some members of the community. Due to the nature of the observations it was not possible to determine if there was a strong sense of belonging amongst its users. However, there were exchanges and acknowledgement of one another between users. The use of the betting shop and the request for its removal by residents from the CRRTA workshop gives rise to issue of conflict in areas undergoing gentrification between what should and should not remain in the area.

A respondent to the CRRTA workshop online comment section stated the following:

Forum commenter 1: "We don't care about vintage clothes and cupcakes. Just want employment and our community back. Wait, that can't happen – we're being pushed out, a lot of them are uneasy around lower class people. I don't recall any hipsters moving into Brixton in 1981..."

The response by Forum commenter 1 raises further questions about what makes a good community. The response also reflects Delanty's (2006) argument of 'insecure conditions of modern society' (Delanty, 2003:1) with those insecure conditions being social changes of shops and services that they can no longer afford and therefore access, or a sense of hostility from the white middle class "gentrifiers" on the high street. Forum commenter 1 statement of "gentrifiers" feeling uneasy around lower class people supports the argument of the Revanchist city by Smith (1996) where crime and fear become desynchronised as a result of fear being distilled

into the middle class residents through influences such as the media. However, in the case of urban areas this fear instilled to the white middle class is the fear of non-white individuals, most noticeably black males, within the media. Cushion et al. (2011) argued, 'The idea still persists in our news media that black people are a threat to law abiding white society' (Cushion et al., 2011:10). Delanty (2003) acknowledged Smith's (1996) argument stating the middle class have become more concerned with security than anything else. This fear of crime and demand of security is prominent within the community of Chatsworth Road. This can be seen by the suggestion of the removal of betting shops along the high street that mostly attract and are used by working class, non-white males. When asked of their opinions of social changes on the high street the reduction of crime was a noticeable response from the participants.

Melissa: "... as a resident it is great because the area became a lot safer..."

Jonathon: "...there is less crimes, drug crimes, gang related crimes sure that to do with break-up of demographics of people living in the area that good..."

The opinions of crime and gentrification highlight the contrasting views on who and how a community can be judged. However, media and news outlets have had a long history of altering and influencing negative attitudes of people of colour especially black males (Cushion et al., 2011). Therefore, the white middle class, due to these influences, can judge or create assumptions of the vast majority of often low income, working class, and non-white males who use the betting shops.

Jonathon's quote stating that the reduction of crime is a result of the break-up of demographics of people living in the area leads to the question - who comprises the demographic that he is referring too? Although there is no specific crime data for Chatsworth Road, according to the local authority of Hackney crime levels have fallen 34.7% from 2002/3 to 2014/15 (London Borough of Hackney, 2016). One cannot help but wonder if this is directly cohesive to the changing population of Hackney; of the growth in the inward migration of working-age males from a white background in high rate full-time

employment with less dependence on public services such as welfare.

Many of the comments from the CRRTA workshop provided (and to some extent demanded) suggestions for new shops and businesses. Common suggestion's included the proposal for pubs and bars with many requesting the need for an improved night and evening economy on the Road. However, this was equally met with many against these ideas, with a desire to keep Chatsworth Road a predominately residential space. Savage (2008) developed this notion of elective belonging where he argues that the actual history of a place in which an individual lives is less important than the way in which they could define that place of belonging through their choice to move and settle in. He argues that this sense of belonging is more significant in the privilege of the affluent white middle class. This provides an explanation as to why many residents and traders of Chatsworth Road were interested in the CRRTA workshop. This notion of the history of the place in which an individual may settle being ignored is evident in the responses of some members of the community of Chatsworth Road, who want and propose for the removal of betting shops on the road. This strongly suggests their recent presence to the area outweighing the area's history in the sense of what should and should not belong. The idea that a betting shop is valued and used by some locals, is ignored or not seen as significant in terms of belonging to a community. One participant of the CRRTA workshop commented:

Participant 1: "People who want to get rid of takeaways/off-licences/betting shops basically want to get rid of the only thing that locals can still afford, i.e. want to get rid of the local character/what Hackney was before hipsters invaded."

In direct response to a comment suggesting the removal of betting shops another participant from the CRRTA workshop responded;

Participant 2: "Keep them, don't get rid of every local character."

Although made popular in recent years by journalists, the media and bloggers, the term 'hipster' has been neglected by academic research

(Schiermer, 2014). It has become its own sub-culture with heavy influences in our society, from the unique, yet sometimes cliché, restaurant and food concepts to the style of eyewear literally called 'hipster glasses'. However there is a deeper understanding of the definition of 'hipster' that reflects the theoretical concept of authenticity. Schiermer (2014) argues that unlike other sub-cultures hipster culture is a conserver culture. Instead of wholly being a 'counter culture' where values and norms differ from that of the main stream, the hipster culture wants to redeem and preserve the past not just as a form of nostalgia but also as a lifestyle. This is seen in the desire for the need to preserve and bring back a sense of community, a traditional community that has been lost along the high street and in our modern day cities.

When questioning the search for authenticity in regards to hipster culture Schiermer (2014) stated the following:

"Hipster culture's quest for the authentic is so strong that it may transcend usual cultural borders, generational gaps and social distinctions in search for genuine cultural expressions... In real life, hipsters often combine authentic and inauthentic objects, connect different fields and upset usual hierarchies" (Schiermer, 2014:172).

This can be seen in the two comments above from the CRRTA workshop in regards to belonging and of what can and cannot be classed as authentic. Although it can be difficult to determine what is truly authentic and inauthentic to the high street, the notion of hipsters transcending cultural borders and social distinctions in search of the genuine can be seen in the transformation of Chatsworth Road, and the conflicting view of the local character. This leads to question - what does the term 'local character' mean? What is the local character to a multicultural mixed class and mixed use high street? And furthermore who can define the said local character?

This further supports the argument of elective belonging by Savage (2008) and Day (2006) who argued that processes such as gentrification or urban degeneration could transform an area's meaning and reputation. Therefore, gentrification has resulted in the transformation of Chatsworth Road and of who and what belongs on the high

street. A business owner (Jonathon) when asked of what he thought of the changes on the high street supports this in the quote below. Jonathon's statement highlights not only the decline in crime but also the negative perception and fear of crime on the high street. Due to close proximity, Chatsworth Road and much of the Homerton and Clapton areas were often associated with the gun violence during the late 1990s and early 2000s. With Upper and Lower Clapton adopting the nickname 'murder mile'.

Jonathon: "Well Chatsworth Road has changed immensely over the last 10 years, I mean there was a time when I would never stop along here, there was no reason too, it was very run down so it's changed dramatically along with the sort of people moving into the area..."

4.2 How gentrification is understood

Clay (2010) and Hackworth and Smith (2000) discussed the waves and stages of gentrification. This process strongly suggests gentrification can be understood as the movement of people - that is people who generate and start off the process of gentrification. There are different stages within the process of gentrification that impact the socio-economic characteristics of a neighbourhood, as well as heavily influence the economic and housing market. Clay (2010) states that in the third stage of gentrification the new middle class residents begin to organise their own groups and essentially build and create organised communities that would then promote the neighbourhood to other middle class people. This is how the CRRTA works - by supporting many businesses on the Road via promotions on their website and various social media platforms. In turn as Clay (2010) again argues this helps to shape community life. This promotes the positivity of gentrification with the strong notion of community and community spirit amongst the residents, a factor that has been established to attract many of the gentrifying residents to the area.

Displacement and the loss of diverse communities has been understood and seen as a downside to gentrification or regeneration by the gentrifying community. One participant, a cabinet minister for Hackney, stated that socio-economic change in Hackney is not due to the council or government

but due to people. His quote is presented in the extract below.

Cabinet minister: "...all this change is generated by people it's not happening through the council not happening through the government but through people... I have to admit that I was part of that gentrification because that moment I moved into Hackney and came to be part of this community in 1986 I gentrified things. I started that process off then there were others that came equally every time something like that happens then there's gentrification as another person moves to make a home in the Borough and that been going on so I acknowledge that I am as much to do with gentrification as you maybe be or the next may be and so on..."

Some of the participants interviewed acknowledge they were part of the process of gentrification stating they were seen as part of the "problem" (the negative views and impacts of gentrification). Evidence of this is shown in the quotes below;

Bonny: "I don't mind nice things coming: new things opening' new cafes, new shops and don't know, don't mind it. I'm probably seen as the gentrifying...I'm probably seen as the problem you know basically but people don't like it so"

Aaron: "I have almost come to find gentrification as quite a negative word although I am aware I am part of that..."

It is interesting to note how Aaron expresses his dislike of the word gentrification. He further stated he finds it to be a negative word and implies the cleaning up of an area as opposed to regeneration, which he says, improves an area and brings more to a community. This suggests his understanding of gentrification to be positive as it benefits his lifestyle however, his mixed acknowledgement of the issues surrounding gentrification brings forth the complexity of the term and how it should be viewed in an early gentrifying space. His understanding along with Bonny's and other participants shows the complex moral scale of gentrification in which they lay. On the one hand they understand gentrification results in displacement, in the loss of diverse communities and rising property and rent prices. Yet on the other hand as business owners they benefit greatly from these changes, where the new

middle class, in the form of young professionals and families, become their dominant consumers. When I asked Jonathon a business owner what attracted him to set up his business on Chatsworth Road he stated he noticed the area was getting busier and more people were moving into the area who were buying his antiques and luxury goods. When asked what he felt about the Road he stated business-wise it was good due to more people with disposable income and greater accessibility moving into the area. The quotes from Jonathon's and Aaron's interviews are presented in the extracts below.

Aaron: "What I don't like about the term gentrification is that it is cleaning up and that it was bad and contrived or bad before I mean regeneration I think is a much more positive word gentrification, I see is an area and making it more trendy and making everything more expensive and unaffordable and I think those are the things that get associated with gentrification and regeneration is making things better and bringing more to a community and more back to it"

Jonathon: "...the street was changing, the Sunday market, now other streets were opening up, it was getting busier, people moving into the areas were buying this kind of stuff for their houses so it seemed like a good location"

Overall there was a common understanding and definition of gentrification from the business owners and residents interviewed. As stated earlier the participants acknowledged that gentrification results in the increase of property and rent prices and therefore, prices out and results in the displacement of people who cannot afford to live there, therefore creating a dominant group. However, Smith (2007) argues gentrification is due to the movement of capital rather than people, and it is the people who are taking advantage of this movement. He calls this the back to the city movement where the city attracts social capital in the form of residential or civilian construction. This is deemed attractive to the middle class, whose movement out of the suburbs creates a back to the city movement while the working class and poor inherit the suburbs. The social capital in the form of residential and civilian construction is seen in the transformation of the area to a culture and lifestyle that appeals to the middle class. Along with the cheap cost of

living this can be seen as the basis of the understanding of gentrification and the initial appeal to an area. Especially to an area that was once seen as run-down but has now been transformed and given a new identity that attracts a particular social capital. For example, Hackney Wick has a strong industrial history and is now popular amongst the creative community with rise of the art studios and even a yearly art exhibition (Hidden London, no date). Chatsworth Road is dominated by the movement of people who have the power (to purchase or rent both residential and commercial properties) to implement change through the provision of capital and services. As well as through the setting up of the CRRTA, networks have helped the community to take ownership of their space, influence policies and access regeneration benefits. In other words they have the capital to access and gain from the social capital that will in turn present them with more capital. This can be understood with the types of businesses on the Road, for example Jonathon and Melissa both started their businesses on the high street because they saw potential consumers and customers. The market on Chatsworth Road is successful because there are consumers in the area who like and are attracted to these produces. Forum member 2 (a resident) commented on the Chatsworth Road forum stating the following;

Forum member 2: "I like hipsters and vintage shops, I like buying nice bread, good quality fresh fish and meat, I don't sit in coffee shops but I'd like to know I could if I wanted to.... I don't want to travel across London to areas that have embraced innovation and positivity and are flourishing. I want to spend my time and money in my local street getting to know even more of my neighbours..."

This strongly suggests the movement of people is due to the attraction of the area for its social and economic characteristics. This is known as 'consumer's tastes', a perspective developed by Ley (1980, cited in Hjorthol, 2005) where the cultural and social processes taking place in urban areas heavily relates to gentrification. Therefore, the choice of residential areas can be related to the social capital and the different dimensions of economic activity on the Road (the types of businesses or events). Aaron a Chatsworth Road resident and local shop owner supports this;

Aaron: "...having what you need on your doorstep, not having to drive to the local big shopping centre but it's there when you need it. But you know keeping it local is nice"

From the evidence presented it can be suggested that gentrification on Chatsworth Road is heavily influenced by the businesses, services and facilities on the high street. There is a strong link between the influx of business and services catering to the rise in potential customers, which therefore influences the inward migration of a certain demographic of consumers. Zukin (1987) discussed the patterns of gentrification along with socio-economic factors surrounding private investments (residential and commercial):

"Together with a surge in service-sector employment and corresponding cultural and commercial amenities, their presence as a newly minted urban "gentry" gave the downtown a different form" (Zukin, 1987:130).

Service-sector employment and cultural and commercial amenities translates into businesses such as shops, restaurants and cafes, which are more inclined to attract and cater to the middle class. The presence of certain services, goods and employment opportunities physically and socio-economically transforms working class areas and distinguishes the middle class from the working class therefore, resulting in the transformation known as gentrification. This is evident on Chatsworth Road with the new influx of shops in the area catering to middle class tastes. These changes have received a mixed response from some participants from interviews conducted as part of the current research and in the CRRTA workshop. This highlights the divided opinions from the residents and business owners of Chatsworth Road as well as the growing divide between the residents who have the economic power and security compared to those who do not. Reinforcing Henderson and Salmon's (1998) argument of the distance in society between those who 'have' and those who 'have not' resulting in social exclusion.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

This paper has found that there is a contrast in the way in which community is produced through locality, as a result of sharing a space. The

contested ideas of belonging on the high street from the CRRTA workshop questions whether community is inclusive to all who share the space therefore, community is essentially produced via locality and connections between like-minded individuals living and working in the same space.

Overall, it seems that the desired idea of community reflects the ideals of the middle class residents and business owners of Chatsworth Road. It seems to coincide with the idea of improving the high street and Savage's (2008) argument of elective belonging where Chatsworth Road working class and low income history is not reflected in the vision of the new community. It is also worthy to note that the sense of community can be understood as going beyond just the formation of networks and kinships through sharing a space, but is instead reinforced by the connections between like-minded individuals with aims on improving the area to their desired tastes. According to Mason (2000), to produce a community a group of people need to have a shared range of values, way of life and identity along with the recognition of each other as members. These shared values and way of life can be seen in the rise of the café and hipster culture e.g. Jonathon and Melissa's businesses. There are a number of cafés and niche restaurants along the high street that bring a culture that attract social capital in the form of working age, white middle class through migration and tourism, essentially creating the fun, pleasant community feel. This formation of community can also be seen within the CRRTA and how it recognises its members and promotes businesses.

Through the analysis of the results of the current research it is possible to establish that there is a prominent 'us' and 'them' culture in terms of belonging. The most noticeable issues surrounding belonging on the high street were the disputes surrounding the presence and use of betting shops along the Road. There were many residents and business owners of Chatsworth Road who suggested the removal of betting shops; this idea of community and its boundaries is supporting the argument of elective belonging. The suggestion for the removal of the betting shops implies, for some members of the community, that they do not belong on Chatsworth Road. This leads to further questions on whether the individuals who use the betting

shops belong and are therefore, recognised as part of the 'diverse' community of Chatsworth Road.

The research has also discussed how the middle class gentrifying residents understand gentrification. Overall there was recognition of the negative impacts of gentrification seen in the increase in rent and property prices and the displacement of residents. However, in contrast to the negative impact on their community, participants admitted to benefitting from the process of gentrification. Since the majority of participants owned businesses on the high street it would be foolish to think otherwise however, it was interesting to note how much they were against the loss of diversity within the area. Some referred to the neighbouring Broadway Market London Fields (nicknamed by many as a 'trendy farmers market') as an example of what they do not want Chatsworth Road and the Sunday market to become.

Despite the diverse methods of data collection, this research contained some limitations within the data collection techniques used. For example, there were little opportunities to interview just residents. Overall I feel further research into the issues surrounding ethnicity within gentrification, and the role of ethnic communities in the understanding of belonging and community, is required to fully embrace and explore the themes and arguments presented within this research.

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BIOGRAPHY

Mahalia is a Level 6 BA (Hons) Geography student in the School of Environment and Technology at the University of Brighton. Mahalia's particular research interests include

urban geography, urban planning, migration and globalisation, which form the basis of this research article. This research was carried out as part of a final year project. Mahalia has been awarded a first class honours for her research. With family roots in Hackney Mahalia has a deep connection to the area and has first-hand seen the many changes as a result of gentrification. This has been the inspiration for the research.

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