Article

Society and Space

EPD: Society and Space
0(0) 1–18

DOI: 10.1177/0263775820934819
journals.sagepub.com/home/epd


LGBTQ situated memory, place-making and the sexual politics of gentrification

Emma Spruce
London School of Economics and Political Science, UK

Abstract
This article draws on material from an ethnographic study in the gentrifying/gentrified London neighbourhood of Brixton to analyse the relationship between practices of LGBTQ territorialisation and the politics of neighbourhood change. It proceeds with two interrelated aims: to think critically about the ways in which LGBTQ claims to place-based belonging interact with racialised and classed ideologies of displacement and disciplining, and to explore memory's significance in framing the relationship between LGBTQ people and place. 'LGBTQ situated memory' is thus introduced here as a concept that draws attention to the complex, contradictory and dynamic role that site-specific evocations of the past play in contemporary LGBTQ urban politics. By exploring three memory tropes that emerge in Brixton, I show that LGBTQ situated memory can be used to claim spatialised belonging, negotiate culpability for gentrification and disturb progress narratives. Ultimately this article both calls for, and works towards, an approach to sexual geography that foregrounds multiplicity: a multiplicity of LGBTQ situated histories and – as is reflected in the memories explored – a multiplicity of relationships between LGBTQ people and neighbourhood development.

Keywords
Sexuality, urban politics, memory, LGBTQ, London, gentrification

Introduction

Whilst recent work has crucially identified the significance of stigmatisation in naturalising and normalising processes of displacement and disciplining in the city (Kallin and Slater, 2014; Slater, 2006, 2008, 2018; Wacquant, 2007, 2016; Wacquant et al., 2014), the place of

Corresponding author:
Emma Spruce, LSE Gender Department, London School of Economics and Political Science, Houghton Street, London WC2A 2AE, UK.
Email: e.j.spruce@lse.ac.uk

sexual politics in these accounts is undertheorised. This is a significant oversight given the primary role that sexual and gendered norms play in marking populations and the places they reside in as 'modern' or 'backwards' (Butler, 2008; Hoad, 2000; Puar, 2007; Rao, 2014; Rifkin, 2010). Indeed, that sexual norms mark spatio-temporal hierarchies is evidenced by the widespread belief in a 'cultural map for homophobia' (Hanhardt, 2013: 14) or 'bigot geography' (Spruce, 2016), which claims to reflect knowledge about zones of sexual in/tolerance. Of specific relevance to this article, positive depictions of LGBTQ[1] life are associated with white and middle-class communities and spaces, whilst non-white[2] and/or working-class communities and spaces are associated with homophobia and anti-LGBTQ violence (Bérubé, 2011; Judge, 2018; Konrad, 2014; Nero, 2005; Skelton, 1995). Transposed to the urban neighbourhood where gay place-making signals sexual modernity, cosmopolitanism and development potential (Bell and Binnie, 2004; Binnie and Skeggs, 2004; Florida, 2002, 2005; Rushbrook, 2002), the displacement and disciplining of racially and/or economically marginalised subjects therefore appears necessary for progress (Bacchetta et al., 2015; El-Tayeb, 2012; Hanhardt, 2008, 2013; Haritaworn, 2015; Nero, 2005). These classed and racialised logics of sexual in/tolerance, moreover, render LGBTQ place-making *in* impoverished and/or racialised neighbourhoods, and *by* impoverished and/or racialised LGBTQ people, 'unthinkable'.[3]

Drawing on material from an ethnographic study in the gentrifying/gentrified London neighbourhood of Brixton, this article therefore develops the interrogative lens of earlier work on 'gay gentrification' to consider the ways in which contemporary place-making and space-taking in the name of LGBTQ people interacts with racialised and classed ideologies of displacement and disciplining.[4] Due to Brixton's particular relationship to Black (and) LGBTQ life in London, along with its interrelated figuration through tropes of disinvestment and development, this research also contributes to the epistemically and politically critical process of disturbing the tautologies which frame middle-class white gay male practices as *the* example of LGBTQ urban place-making.

My research reveals that in Brixton the politics of neighbourhood change are often 'made sense of' by turning to situated memory: that is, site-specific narratives about the individual or collective past. This reflects an understanding of the past, which is used to rationalise, drive and trouble logics of un/belonging and un/worth, as a key player in contemporary spatial politics (Andersson, 2012; De Cesari and Dimova, 2019; Loughran et al., 2015, 2018a, 2018b; Mathews and Picton, 2014; Morrell, 2011). Despite its importance, however, there has only been minimal analysis of the specific relationship between LGBTQ public memory and place-making (Andersson, 2011; Dunn, 2016; Mort, 1998; Patrick, 2014; Schulman, 2012; Zebracki, 2018).[5] By tracking three memory tropes that LGBTQ people in Brixton deploy, this research begins to chart a more nuanced, contradictory and pluralised account of the relationship between LGBTQ people, situated memory and the politics of urban change.[6]

This article proceeds with a brief description of the neighbourhood of Brixton, along with other salient methodological information. I then move on to review the dynamics of occupation, displacement and disciplining that are outlined in the literature on LGBTQ urban place-making, before providing to a fuller conceptualisation of LGBTQ situated memory. In the second part of the article, I turn to a close reading of the empirical material in order to interrogate the ways that LGBTQ situated memory appears in the place-making and space-claiming practices of Brixton's LGBTQ residents. I conclude that, although amenable to (homo)normative progress narratives, LGBTQ situated memory also has the potential to expand the horizons of LGBTQ place-making and push back against the racist and classist

logics of disciplining and displacement. The pursuit of multiplicity is central to realising this potential that LGBTQ situated memory holds as a strategy for resistance.

Plotting Brixton

Although previously a bourgeois suburb, throughout the latter part of the 20th-century, Brixton became synonymous with high levels of poverty, criminality and dilapidation. This association ossified as the area became linked with African-Caribbean immigrants who travelled to England in the mid-1950s to fill post-war labour shortages. Reflecting beliefs that continue to circulate today, Sheila Patterson's (1963) ethnography on African-Caribbean settlement in Brixton places sexual politics – in particular supposed deviation from normative (white, middle-class) family forms – at the heart of 'the problem of integration'. Routed through colonial logics of black violence and ungovernability (Hall, 2002), the neighbourhood gained further infamy in the 1980s and 1990s as the key location for uprisings (referred to in mainstream press as 'race riots') that protested rampant police brutality and institutional racism.

Following years of neglect and stigmatisation, over the last decade and a half the neighbourhood has experienced massive levels of investment and development. The neighbourhood's change (and opposition to it) has frequently been covered in regional and national press, leading to Brixton gaining prominence in the UK as an emblematic site of racialised gentrification.[7] Although it long justified disinvestment in the area, the neighbourhood's association with immigration has more recently provided fodder for its revaluation, blended into generic tropes of internationality and cosmopolitanism.[8] Paradoxically, the increase in positive representations of the area's 'ethnic difference' comes at the same moment as the residential population and socio-cultural infrastructure of Brixton has been whitened. Despite this ongoing erasure and displacement, however, Brixton retains particular significance for Black British social, cultural and political life.

Whilst Brixton's popular mediatisation is through tropes of black heterosexuality, the larger research project upon which this article draws explores Brixton as a historic and contemporary site for multiracial and interracial LGBTQ residency, culture and politics.[9] Contrary to trends observed in other contexts, Brixton's LGBTQ associations have yet to be incorporated into its diversity (re)branding. There are no memorials, plaques or statues to mark this heritage, and the official narrative of the area is as likely to decentre its LGBTQ history, as Brixton is likely to be displaced from an account of London's LGBTQ geographies.[10]

In the process of visiting archives,[11] browsing the internet, talking with interviewees and conducting participant observation, however, Brixton's LGBTQ memories rang clear. Looking back to the 1970s I found traces of the radical drag discos held in Lambeth Town Hall and of drag queens in wedding-dresses lining the route of an anti-racism march (Author Fieldnotes). I learnt about the houses on Railton and Mayall Road that were squatted by the Gay Liberation Front (Cook, 2011) and the Gay Community Centre that, for two years, housed gay wrestling, a gay switchboard and an agit-prop gay theatre group (Hassan, 2014).[12] From the 1980s, I was told stories about houses squatted by Black-anarchist-lesbians, the pub where male strippers enlivened Sunday afternoons (Author Fieldnotes), and the radical policies of lesbian feminist and Black activist Lambeth Council Leader, Linda Bellos (What's Left, 2013).[13] Then, moving on to the 1990s, I discovered videos of the Pride festival held in Brockwell Park (Lewis, n.d.),[14] was caught up in the nostalgic tales of club nights in *Substation South* or *The Fridge,* and found myself swept along with the excitement of cruising for sex in a badly lit backstreet (Author Fieldnotes).

This patchwork of stories reflects just some of the pasts that I encountered during the ethnographic project into LGBTQ life in Brixton. The analysis below, however, focuses on 19 anonymised semi-structured interviews that I conducted with LGBTQ residents of Brixton, as well as a short film *Brixton recreation with Ajamu* (Solle, n.d. [2014]).[15] Amongst the interviewees, 10 participants identified as women, six as men and three as trans or 'other'. Eleven participants identified as white, three as black, three as mixed race, one as Latinx and one as South Asian. They ranged in age from 22 to 64 years, and their duration of residency in the neighbourhood spanned from just a few months, to over 30 years. Participants' classed locations were difficult to parse, as markers of education, house-ownership and upbringing were frequently contradictory; reflecting this, three identified as middle class, six as working class and 10 suggested their class was mixed, complicated or irrelevant. The subject of the short film, Ajamu X, is a black gay artist and activist who has lived in Brixton since the 1980s and has spearheaded efforts to document Black gay life, in part as a cofounder of the Black queer archive 'rukus!' (Ajamu et al., 2009). This combination of materials allows for an exploration of the complex, vernacular, ways in which a diverse range of LGBTQ situated memories are animated to 'make sense' of place-making in Brixton.

LGBTQ place-making: belonging, displacement and disciplining

One of sexual geography's key impulses has been to distinguish the ways in which LGBTQ people engage in place-making, particularly at the local level in urban contexts. A loose taxonomy of three kinds of LGBTQ-related neighbourhoods is outlined in this literature, with distinctive dynamics of displacement and disciplining attributed to each. The first model to gain attention, the 'gayborhood' or 'gay ghetto',[16] denotes a neighbourhood that is occupied by, and oriented towards, gay people. It has been expansively theorised in work on 'gay gentrification', which since the 1980s has explored (predominantly) gay male practices of urban occupation and renovation (Castells, 1983; Caulfield, 1989; Knopp, 1992, 1995, 1997; Lauria and Knopp, 1985 [2010]). For research on lesbian territorialisation, see Adler and Brenner (1992), Podmore (2006), and Valentine (1995). In his landmark research, Manuel Castells acknowledges that, whilst gay territorialisation in San Francisco was instrumental for gay community and political development, 'the improvement of the urban space by the gay community might … represent a new form of residential displacement and social inequality' (Castells, 1983: 167). Specifically, he recognises that a 'gay influx' into San Francisco led to black and Latino communities being displaced 'without compensation'. For Castells, displacement is an unfortunate by-product of gay progress: 'ethnic' place-making and gay place-making are depicted as two distinct struggles to occupy disinvested land in the broader context of mainstream homophobia and racism. Whilst providing an important recognition of displacement, this analysis has two fundamental blindspots that are widely shared in the gayborhood literature: first, it implies that ethnic minority and sexual minority identifications are mutually exclusive, erasing the experience of queer people of colour – a point I return to below – and, second, it suggests that gay place-making and ethnic place-making are similarly positioned in relation to wider urban processes. This parallelism is robustly refuted by research that identifies dominant strategies of gay place-making as widely (and increasingly) complimentary to neoliberal forms of urban development (Florida, 2002, 2005; see further Oswin, 2015: 558) whilst, in contrast, 'ethnic' place-making remains associated with neighbourhood decline and urban delinquency.[17] Binnie and Skeggs (2004) further elaborate the ways in which the gayborhood is produced through the policing of classed norms in their research on the Gay Village in Manchester, UK. They

note that 'uneducated working class people who . . . do not know how to behave in the gay village . . . are spatially located as provincial' (2004: 55): a displacement that is also marked in time as the working class becomes stigmatised through association with 'out of date' attitudes towards sexuality. Belonging in the gayborhood is contingent on 'appropriate' behaviour which – placed in tension with 'antisocial behaviour'– is defined, and enforced, along racist and classist lines. As Hanhardt compellingly argues, in the US (and I would suggest perhaps even more so in the UK) some forms of LGBTQ place-making are now recognised and protected by dominant economic, political and judicial institutions (Hanhardt, 2008, 2013, 2016). The continued cultural association of homophobia with impoverished and/or non-white communities therefore means that the 'establishment of protected gay territories . . . must be paired with two of global capital's own "spatial fixes": gentrification and mass imprisonment' (Hanhardt, 2013: 14). In other words, rather than myopically celebrating the decreasing stigmatisation of LGBTQ urban place-making, we must recognise the ways in which this shift further legitimises the displacement and disciplining of poor and/or non-white residents of all sexualities in the name of progress.

Often motivated by a desire to challenge the overrepresentation in existing research of relatively affluent white men, over the past two decades sexual geographers have increasingly sought to identify LGBTQ urbanisms 'beyond the gayborhood' (Doan and Higgins, 2011; Ghaziani, 2019).[18] Gavin Brown's research in Spitalfields, a historically Bengali neighbourhood in East London, conceptualises 'post-gay space' to describe neighbourhoods where 'sexual difference is visible and acknowledged without being a central marker' (Brown, 2006: 133). Seeming to trouble the zero-sum model of gay gentrification that suggests LGBTQ place-making is contingent on others' displacement, post-gay spaces are instead characterised by a 'cosmopolitan' mix of ethnicities, classes and sexualities. Brown finds that the fluidity of space (i.e. the lack of a clear demarcation of 'gay' and 'straight' zones), along with the circulation of 'metrosexual' masculinities, initially provides a spatial 'camouflage' that allows men from less privileged social groups to participate in same-sex sexual encounters (Brown, 2006: 141). However, he concludes that '[t]he people who gain most, materially and culturally, from the cosmopolitan experience of Spitalfields remain mostly young white middle-class professionals' (Brown, 2006: 143) and that, as gentrification proceeds, non-heterosexual men of colour are increasingly absent (Brown, 2006: 141). As such, the promise that 'post-gay' spaces hold as sites to explore more diverse forms of LGBTQ place-making is curtailed (see also Nash, 2013). The conceptualisation of 'post-gay' space also reaffirms the association between LGBTQ place-making and processes of displacement and disciplining because of the work that the prefix 'post' does to associate these neighbourhoods with particular claims to sexual modernity. In other words, 'post-gay' spaces are widely represented as an expression of LGBTQ place-making that becomes possible *after* homophobia (Nash, 2013) and is most commonly claimed of neighbourhoods that have undergone significant levels of gentrification. Again, therefore, the association between the displacement of poor and/or racialised minorities, and the cultivation of neighbourhoods for LGBTQ place-making, is sustained.

Offering a third expression of LGBTQ place-making, Gorman-Murray and Waitt identify 'queer-friendly neighbourhoods' as areas where 'gay and lesbian residents, institutions, and businesses are not dominant, but are welcomed' (2009: 2858). Unlike in post-gay spaces, 'interaction and cohesion across sexual difference *is* a key characteristic' of queer-friendly neighbourhoods (Gorman-Murray and Waitt, 2009: 2859), and both local institutions and individual residents are expected to contribute to the upkeep of this character. For example, a white lesbian participant in Gorman-Murray and Waitt's research offers up the reflection that 'you'd be . . . like an outcast by being homophobic, racist or whatever in this town'

(2009: 2865). This comment gestures towards the increased centrality of 'tolerance' as a criterion for belonging in neighbourhoods that are marketed partly through the claim to being 'queer-friendly'; intolerance would merit disciplinary action, which could ultimately lead to the outcast being 'cast out'. Whilst this participant suggests racism and homophobia would be equally condemned as out of place, El-Tayeb finds that in European cities that define themselves 'around shared values of humanism, equality and tolerance, there is an increasingly intolerant and repressive attitude towards migrants and racialized minorities – justified by their supposed threat to exactly these values' (2012: 80; see also Bacchetta et al., 2015; Haritaworn, 2015; Kosnick, 2015). The pernicious circulation of 'homophile islamophobia' that El-Tayeb identifies draws on longstanding colonial logics that cite (supposed) sexual norms to distinguish the 'premodern savage' from the 'modern colonizer' and thus naturalise racial hierarchies (Butler, 2008; Hoad, 2000). Like the other configurations, celebrations of 'queer-friendly neighbourhoods' are compatible with the disciplining and displacement of marginalised subjects.

Although temporal claims are absolutely central to the above spatial conceptualisations, relatively little attention has been given to the role that evocations of the sexual past plays in LGBTQ place-making.[19] Despite this, it is clear that the development of London's LGBTQ neighbourhoods has drawn heavily on the sexual past in order to justify occupation and ground claims to authenticity and distinction.[20] Mort, for example, notes that Soho's reinvention 'has been achieved principally by astute marketing of its spatial and cultural distinctiveness and its historical accretions of bohemianism' (1998: 898). Similarly, Andersson's research on the emergence of Vauxhall as a neighbourhood for gay sex venues finds it was 'kick-started . . . through a process of re-imaging and place-marketing of Vauxhall as a historical and contemporary centre for hedonism' (2011: 91). Pushing the relationship between sexual memorialisation and development logics further, Patrick's research into the gentrification of New York's High Line finds that white bourgeois gay men whose interests align with real estate developers were able to reference the area's history as a cruising ground 'to immunize against meaningful political opposition' (2014: 921). He cautions: '[i]ndeed, while the High Line's gayness is invoked as a cultural "value added" according to the logic of the creative class, the reality of the project's uneven impact on the queer community, itself differentiated along racialized, classed, and gendered lines, is powerfully obscured by such pinkwashed statements as "The High Line is totally gay"'(Patrick, 2014: 929). As these writers reveal, the pursuit of development and the preservation of the LGBTQ situated memory appear co-dependent: development becomes naturalised as the best way to preserve the LGBTQ past, and the LGBTQ past is commodified in the pursuit of neighbourhood development.

Another facet of the sexual past's implication in the developmental logics of displacement and disciplining becomes apparent through a queer-feminist reading of the concept of 'territorial stigmatisation' (Wacquant, 2007). Developing this concept, Kallin and Slater argue that 'stigmatisation lays the foundations for state-sponsored gentrification . . . symbolic defamation provides the groundwork and ideological justification for a thorough class transformation' (2014: 1353). Narratives about the situated past are crucial in identifying the 'blocks' (including populations) that need to be removed in order for neighbourhoods to realise their (economic) potential. Whilst sexuality remains liminal in these analyses, feminist theory reveals that territorial stigmatisation relies centrally on the association of working class and/or ethnic minority groups with 'bad families', delinquent youth and sexual violence (Collins, 1998; Jensen, 2018; Razack, 2002; Tyler, 2008; Walkerdine, 2009).

Brought into dialogue with the literature reviewed above, the role that narratives about the sexual past play in framing contemporary spatial politics is therefore of central interest

here. Specifically, I conceptualise 'LGBTQ situated memory' to explore the everyday and dynamic ways that the sexual past is evoked in relation to questions of occupation, displacement and disciplining in the neighbourhood. This builds on scholarship that focuses on collective memory as 'a powerful tool for framing and advancing urbanites' actions for and against particular forms of development' (Loughran et al., 2015: 3). Whilst certain versions of the LGBTQ past are clearly amenable to market-led development, the following discussion reveals that LGBTQ situated memories also have the potential to challenge the sexual politics of gentrification by depicting impoverished (and) racialised neighbourhoods as sites of residence, culture and socialisation.

Situated memory and LGBTQ place-making in Brixton

The following discussion explores LGBTQ situated memory in Brixton, paying particular attention to its imbrication in logics of occupation, disciplining and displacement. I focus on snapshots of narrative, producing a fine-grained analysis of the tropes of *belonging*, *differentiation and gay-friendliness* that dominate participants' LGBTQ situated memories. Taken together, these narratives emphasise the centrality of memory practices for LGBTQ place-making and sharpen 'situated memory' as a lens that reveals the role that narratives about the past play in urban politics. Drawing on the empirical material in this way also illuminates that LGBTQ experiences of neighbourhood change, disciplining and displacement are intersected by other axes of privilege, most notably here race and class.[21]

A claim to belonging

LGBTQ history initiatives claim the presence of LGBTQ people across time and place: this naturalises non-normative sexual behaviour and inscribes (otherwise acceptable) LGBTQ people within the national body politic (Morris, 2004). As well as drawing on situated logics – we were always *here* – this inclusionary historical narrative has implications for contemporary contestations over space. At the neighbourhood level, several participants provided romanticised accounts of Brixton as a historically 'queer place' to naturalise their claim to belonging in the neighbourhood. In some cases, this involved stripping Brixton back to its topographical – implicitly pre-social – features: for example, when asked about the apparent clustering of LGBTQ+ people in the area, one participant suggested 'it has a feeling to it . . . in terms of Brixton's own gender; maybe it is a queer/gay place . . . [it] could be that the river runs under our feet, something spiritual like that.' More commonly, however, a contiguous line of descent was invoked to link contemporary LGBTQ residents to the 'queer' Brixtonites of the early 20th-century. Sarah, who moved to the neighbourhood in the early 1990s, told me:

> It felt very confrontational; it felt like a turf war. I remember thinking at the time it was ironic really, because people thought of Brixton as a black neighbourhood, but it was a gay neighbourhood before that, because it was a theatre neighbourhood before that. Its queer history is very old, because it was a dormitory town for the West End palaces of entertainment, and it was an entertainment centre in its own right. (Sarah)

Here, Sarah suggests that the duration of a community's association with a neighbourhood grounds individuals' identification with the space. To advance a corrective to accounts of 'Brixton as a black neighbourhood' where – as a white person – she might be out of place, Sarah therefore draws on public knowledge to extend her characterisation of the area back

beyond the 1950s, the point at which Brixton became associated with black immigration.[22] Given that it is only in the late 19th-century that 'homosexuality' condenses as an identity, or, in Foucault's terms, becomes 'a personage' or 'species' rather than 'a temporary aberration' (Foucault, 1979 [1998]: 43), turning to a logic of longevity initially seems like an unhelpful strategy for LGBTQ place-making. However, paralleling the marketing strategies of Soho and Vauxhall where a history of 'bohemian' sexual deviance is storied as the prelude to LGBTQ sexual identities (Andersson, 2011; Mort, 1998), Sarah side-steps the need to find past residents who self-identify as LGBTQ by claiming the area's 'theatrical' past as the origin story for LGBTQ territorialisation in Brixton. By articulating this longer history, Sarah refuses an interpretation of the 1990s 'turf war' as the result of LGBTQ incomers introducing 'out-of-place' sexual practices to the neighbourhood and instead portrays sexual non-normativity as endemic to Brixton. Collective LGBTQ situated memory is drawn upon to justify contemporary claims to belonging in the neighbourhood through a lineage of white queerness that is rooted in theatricality.

The oppositional account of a 'turf war' fought over whether Brixton was a 'gay' or a 'black' neighbourhood invisibilises non-white LGBTQ experience and entrenches the association between racialised communities and homophobia. Sarah's memory depicts a neighbourhood populated by distinctive groups who are locked in a power-struggle, affirming defences of gay gentrification that argue territorialisation is a necessary strategy for forming LGBTQ-friendly neighbourhoods. In London, the logic of 'who was here first' sustains racist and xenophobic urban politics, as the capacity to rely on collective memory is not equally available to all. It is difficult to imagine, in other words, local heterosexual people of colour staking their claim to belonging on identification with a pre-1950s white straight presence in the area, let alone having such a claim recognised. Indeed, this strategy for claiming LGBTQ+ belonging in Brixton was exclusively adopted by white participants, the majority of whom were middle class. Whilst this logic of belonging, combined with a queer adoption of 'bohemian' or 'theatrical' pasts, might therefore initially present opportunities to defend LGBTQ place-making, it both comes at the cost of reinforcing racist logics of gentrification and is limited as a strategy of LGBTQ place-making because it is contingent on whiteness.

Perhaps thinking of its exclusionary implications, as she moved from the memorialisation of Brixton into framing a contemporary neighbourhood agenda, Sarah continued: 'If you are going to get really shirty and turf-war about it you could argue that [the queer history is older] but I wouldn't advance that as a serious argument for who has got more right to be here' (Sarah). Withdrawing duration of presence as an appropriate measure for belonging, Sarah went on to propose that 'everybody has got a right to be here, and everybody should be able to be comfortable here'. Whilst this could be dismissed as a platitude, to take it seriously as an alternative framing of urban politics opens up some interesting questions for contemporary LGBTQ practices of cohabitation: centrally, what would it mean to embed the right for 'everybody . . . to be comfortable' into LGBTQ place-making? Indeed, an approach to place-making that seeks to create neighbourhoods around 'everybody's comfort' would have to interrogate the ideologies that govern *whose* comfort is currently prioritised in programmes for neighbourhood change.[23] Public space in the UK is moulded to the shape of white (cis, male, monied and able) bodies.[24] Whilst heterosexuality remains dominant, one of the most apparent ways in which the relationship between LGBTQ people and urbanism has shifted is in the novel valuation of LGBTQ comfort. In this context, the memory of past discomfort must be deployed very carefully by LGBTQ people, to avoid lending credence to the sexual politics of gentrification, where – as discussed earlier – putative homophobia renders marginalised populations targets for displacement and

disciplining. Notably, and exemplified further below, amplifying the memories of black (poor, migrant and disabled) LGBTQ people de-exceptionalises and complicates experiences of spatialised dis/comfort, in turn complicating and refusing LGBTQ strategies of place-making that operate with assumptions of whiteness and affluence.

Articulating differentiation

Across studies of urban change and gentrification, heritage has been identified as a key component of the 'authentic' 'cultural fabric' that attracts gentrifiers to urban neighbourhoods (Zukin,1987 [2010]). Brown-Saracino's wide-reaching research into the 'social preservationist' gentrifier finds that authenticity is defined 'as that which one is not' (2009: 175), suggesting that the commercialisation of the past thus relies on the lack of identification between incomers and the heritage being commemorated. Amongst LGBTQ residents in Brixton, however, it was precisely the identification *with* the past that characterised the political implications of situated memory.[25] Indeed, knowledge of the past was consistently deployed by newer arrivals in Brixton as a way to demonstrate an affinity for the area and naturalise their claim on the space.[26] In particular, collective memory of local political radicalism was deployed by middle-class participants as evidence that they shouldn't be interpellated as gentrifiers: the mourning tone that framed their investment in Brixton-present *because of* Brixton-past helped to distance them from association with the gentrifying cohort.

Despite moving to Brixton and purchasing a flat during what she described as 'the first wave of the most severe form of gentrification', Maizah told me:

> Because I feel like I have a history with the place, I don't feel that responsible, but I do feel quite conflicted, because when you say, 'I live in Brixton' people say, 'Oh yes, it's really hip and cool, the market is really good'. And I think yes, but, it's been here for such a long time and it has this amazing history. (Maizah)

Maizah's 'conflicted' feelings about being congratulated on her move to Brixton appear to emerge from an anxiety that her neighbourhood selection might be misattributed to the appeal of the recent changes, which would mark her complicity with gentrification. As a way to counter such a reading, she goes to lengths to underline her investment in Brixton's radical past. Grounding her 'history with the place' in a combination of long-term participation in Brixton's anti-racist-feminist-queer activism and the knowledge of these local histories, Maizah deployed situated memory to counterbalance her status as an incomer. She has more in common, her narrative contends, with the radical residents of Brixton-past than with those who have moved to Brixton in the last decade. Belonging, here, is framed as a dividend of situated historical knowledge, political investment and participation in community life.

Maizah's evocation of the past both corroborates and complicates the claim that it is identification *with* the past that makes situated memory so significant for LGBTQ place-making (Andersson, 2011; Mort, 1998). She continued:

> I feel really proud of living in Brixton, I'm really proud of where I live and I am thrilled to be here. I live just off Railton Road and there is the history of Railton Road, not just the riots, but the gay liberation house, and Olive Morris and all these things . . . I think the first queerruption was on Railton Road. (Maizah)

Combining elements of Black history ('the riots'), LGBTQ history ('the gay liberation house' and 'Queeruption') and Black-feminist history ('Olive Morris'[27]), it appeared to be precisely the

assonance of these Black-queer-feminist histories to her own identity as a South Asian-queer-feminist that allowed Maizah to convert her knowledge of the past into local pride. This feeling of pride invokes a particular relationship between individual, collective, past and place, which solidifies Maizah's connection to the neighbourhood. Echoing Sarah's account discussed above, Maizah's situated memory again speaks to a sense of connection to Brixton through an evocation of its past, but this time belonging is seen as a dividend of political investment.

Interestingly, claiming belonging through an affinity with the spatialised politics of the past seemed to carry an obligation to orient the area towards the future. Indeed, Maizah plays an important role in fostering local radical (anti-racist, feminist and queer) sociality and was spoke passionately about developments in the public spaces of the neighbourhood. The recourse to collective LGBTQ situated memories thereby seems to counter the 'concern [amongst incomers] that their transience limits their own claims to community' (Brown-Saracino, 2009: 172). For LGBTQ incomers then, identification with the politics of the past can trouble the logic of individual spatialised duration as grounds for attachment, and underwrite a responsibility to interact with the future of the space. Whilst this call to contemporary action may, as Brown-Saracino hopes, revitalise critical interactions with local development processes, the political direction of participation routed through an attachment to the past is, of course, impossible to anticipate. Patrick's (2014) analysis of the regeneration of an abandoned railway in New York (the High Line) serves as a cautionary tale. He finds that (race and class) privileged LGBTQ locals evoked the radical-queer past strategically: the radical-queer past was worthy of commemoration, but only as a feature of a past that had been grown out of as LGBTQ people achieved greater societal inclusion. '[M]elancholic attachments to disturbed urban ecologies of the bygone 'gay ghetto'' did not preclude LGBTQ history being 'reworked, displaced, and sanitized' (Patrick, 2014: 933) in the pursuit of profit maximisation. Indeed, by again evoking a narrative of LGBTQ situated memory that invisibilises the privilege differentials between LGBTQ people, the situated past can diminish the call to accountability for practices of settlement that amplify spatialised inequality. Whilst for some LGBTQ people, homelessness, public sex and police harassment constitute a story from the past rather than a present reality, for many this remains the everyday of queer survival in the city.

Queering gay-friendliness

Whilst these first two themes point to LGBTQ situated memory as a place-making practice that allows individuals to claim belonging, the third set of narratives explicitly troubled the dominant logic that suggests gentrified areas are 'better' for LGBTQ people by telling individualised histories of loss. These histories complicate the circulation of 'common-sense' logics that align better-lighting, the use of surveillance cameras, and police presence with increased safety, and thus improved urban experience for LGBTQ people. LGBTQ residents who were BAME and/or working class were the most common narrators of these histories of loss; whilst not exclusive to male-identified participants, gentrification's evisceration of spaces amenable to public sex between men was particularly central.[28]

The documentary segment *Brixton Recreation with Ajamu* (Solle n.d. [2014]) follows Ajamu X, a long-time resident and Black gay artist-activist-archivist[29] on a tour of dilapidated buildings and concrete overpasses to illustrate his memories of sex in Brixton in the 1980s and 1990s. This video thus offers a window into the past: a local queer public sex culture that Cook's research on Brixton in the 1970s characterised as predominantly black (Cook, 2011: 99). Standing in front of a yard scattered with construction material, Ajamu begins:

> This is where some of the guys would pick guys up and have sex down here. Get fucked, or whatever, and sometimes, we'd walk down here and get through there, and fuck down there as well. And there was an old porta-cabin here as well and sometimes we would sneak in there at night time, have sex, and kind of go back either that way past where the guys used to cruise, or that way, to home. (Ajamu, *Brixton Recreation*)

Throughout this section, Ajamu gestures in different directions. On multiple occasions the camera follows his gesticulation; shots linger on barbed wire and corrugated iron. Experienced alongside Ajamu's narrative, this refigures the hostile urban environment as a queer site of pleasure: a playground for outdoors sex.

These memories directly challenge the idea that the best sex is private sex, and that the facilitation of private sex for LGBTQ people is an unmitigated gain, rather than a gain tempered with loss of particular types of sociality. The threads of pleasure and danger are intertwined throughout Ajamu's narrative. As the camera returns to him, Ajamu matter-of-factly recounts:

> I've been accosted a couple of times up here [. . .] So then, this was known as *the walk*, and the guys would also be like cruising up and down here about midnight, one o'clock, two o'clock in the morning. And sometimes you would have to watch out that the police don't come walk up here. (Ajamu, *Brixton Recreation*)

In contrast to the many (predominantly white) accounts that emphasise local African-Caribbean community policing of homosexuality, Ajamu reminds the viewer that it was the Metropolitan Police who were mandated with disciplining 'deviant' expressions of sexuality. This identification of the police as the primary inhibitor of black queer sexual pleasure troubles the logic that suggests LGBTQ flourishing is contingent on the further securitisation of urban space. Just before Ajamu describes the historic policing of his sexuality, a police car speeds past him, and he points: 'there's a cop car now'. This juxtaposition of narrative and image serves as a reminder that public (and indeed private) sexual conduct in the UK continues to be regulated and criminalised by the police and legal system.

Even the threat posed by the police is not given an unequivocal interpretation by Ajamu; he continues:

> One night, I remember that I was with this guy upstairs, and the cops came in and we had to like run, across the car park, down the steps, and through the front entrance. But then that kind of made it a bit more . . . interesting? (Ajamu, Brixton Recreation)

In this comment, Ajamu suggests that whilst the police constrain sexual expression and punish sexual deviance, they also add to the 'interest' of transgression. Pleasure, in other words, is simultaneously sustained and constrained by its policing.[30] Ajamu wryly concludes: 'This is like the secret history of Brixton, in a strange kind of way, and some of the things that we used to do before, you know, Quicksave closed down, CCTV, and Lambeth changing the toilet entrances' (Ajamu, *Brixton Recreation*). Ajamu's 'secret history of Brixton' is a history of stolen moments and gay public sex against the context of repressive policing.

Instead of memorialising a past that provides the painful backstory for (homo)sexuality's happy ending in monogamous, private relationships, Ajamu's narrative suggests that as Brixton's public spaces have been sanitised, and the technology of policing has become more sophisticated, something has been lost. Ajamu's situated memories reiterate the very different demands that different LGBTQ people might have of space and critically interrupt the

common-sense that makes safety – and the particular technologies put in place to pursue it – a knowable and universalised investment for LGBTQ place-making. As projects to regenerate neighbourhoods are rolled out with insufficient, and highly normative, understandings of what constitutes spatial value, LGBTQ situated memories provide a tangible revitalisation of the question of *whose* comfort is prioritised in urban development, and add a challenge to the assumption that neighbourhood development has improved *all* LGBTQ people's quality of life.

Towards a disorderly past

In this article, I investigated the role that LGBTQ situated memory plays in sustaining and challenging dynamics of discipling and displacement. I began by outlining the ways that dominant conceptualisations of 'gayborhoods', '"post-gay" spaces' and 'queer-friendly neighbourhoods' reflect and reinforce the notion that neighbourhood's become sites of LGBTQ place-making through the disciplining and displacement of non-white and/or economically marginalised people. I then conceptualised 'LGBTQ situated memory' to explore the significance that site-specific narratives about the past have in practices of LGBTQ place-making and space-taking. Where other work has lamented limited political horizon offered by 'officially sanctioned narratives' of the LGBTQ past (Castiglia and Reed, 2012: 2), here I explored the political potential of the more 'disorderly' (Halberstam, 2005: 87) narratives that emerge in everyday evocations of LGBTQ situated memory. Halberstam argues that a strategy of prioritising and proliferating 'disorderly narratives' (2005: 187) can help to counter narrow stories that circumscribe – according to classed and racialised logics – *what* sexual progress consists of and *where* it can be found. The importance of proliferation here is joined by a move away from seeking to produce *definitive* accounts, and instead produce sexual geographies that foreground contradiction, ambivalence and multiplicity.[31]

In the first theme, the collective memory of a 'queer' past clearly naturalised and grounded contemporary claims to LGBTQ belonging. In the context of Brixton, however, this remembering of a distant 'queer' past also entrenched an association between LGBTQ identity and whiteness, delegitimised non-white claims to spatialised belonging in the UK and depoliticised local processes of racialised gentrification. Primarily articulated by white and middle-class residents, this cautioned against a reading of LGBTQ situated memory as *necessarily* disruptive to the sexual politics of gentrification. The second theme turned to memories about a more recent past, where participants' knowledge of the area as a site of political activism were foregrounded to articulate their attachment and investment in the neighbourhood. This revealed the politicising function of collective situated memory, where incomers' connection to the past generated a sense of responsibility for the present. The collective memory of queer-black-feminist place-making also troubled the spatialised racialisation of homophobia, which renders post-1950s Brixton an unlikely site of radical sexual politics. This turning to the past, however, remained politically ambivalent as it allowed incomers to distinguish themselves from the 'real' gentrifiers and promoted classed cultural values and capacities as a condition of ethical residency. The third memory trope to be explored directly challenged the correlation of gentrification to '*gay-friendliness*' by remembering a pleasurable sexual past in Brixton. This contests practices of gentrification, most notably the securitisation of public space, which have been justified primarily through a sexual politics that invokes women and LGBTQ people as subjects in need of protection. Nostalgic memories of public sex in Brixton foregrounded the racialised figuration and experience of 'threat', 'pleasure' and 'protection'; emphasising the plurality of LGBTQ urban desires, challenging the stronghold of 'gay respectability politics' and (thereby) providing a strong counter-logic to the sexual politics

of gentrification. Prioritising complexity over coherence, however, this use of memory did not provide a clear agenda for LGBTQ place-making or urban politics.

Taken together, the three themes emphasise the political utility, as well as the ideological flexibility, of LGBTQ situated memory as a strategy for place-making. Whilst cautious of the potential for co-optation into 'heritage-value', this research shows that LGBTQ situated memory can challenge the sexual logics of displacement and disciplining. Demonstrating this, the ambivalent and contradictory accounts of change made available through LGBTQ situated memory crucially interrupt the a priori assumption that – for all its ills – gentrification provides the conditions for LGBTQ flourishing. Moreover, by focusing on LGBTQ place-making in Brixton, a neighbourhood that is rarely recognised in cartographies of LGBTQ London, this research contributes to the critical project of recognising and redressing sexual geography's own biases. The amplification of memories beyond the 'white gay ghetto' and beyond the 'gay gentrifier' must be prioritised in research on LGBTQ urbanisms as it is through these memories in particular that the racist and classist logics that underwrite contemporary celebrations of 'gay-friendliness' are clearly challenged.

Acknowledgements

I am very grateful for the extremely helpful comments on the paper that I received from the anonymous referees, as well as the editor. My thanks also to CBR whose support has been invaluable. Any errors are my own.

Declaration of conflicting interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article: This work was supported by an Economic and Social Research Council Doctoral Studentship.

Notes

1. Reflecting participants' slippery attachments to identities, the acronym LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer) is used throughout this article. To register power relations within the acronym, however, I specifically use 'gay' to describe the exclusionary (white, middle-class and cismale) politics that often passes under the sign of LGBTQ. Where I use 'queer' on its own this references the interrelation of non-normative gender and sexuality with non-normative epistemologies, ontologies and praxes (see further Halberstam, 2005; Muñoz, 2009).
2. Although such definitional decisions are marked by contestation (see further Mirza, 2015), in this article, I use *Black* to designate the political identity, '*racialized people*', '*people of colour*' or '*non-white communities*' to reflect the dominance of white/Other conceptions of race in the UK, and *black* where participants describe their own or others' race/ethnicity as such. Although actually comprising of multiple communities, in Brixton B/black is particularly associated with people of African-Caribbean heritage, and I specify this where appropriate.
3. This use of 'unthinkability' is indebted to the scholarship of Trouillot (2012).
4. Whilst sexual politics are at work everywhere, localised research is crucial for examining their interaction with specific patterns of settlement, development and resistance. See further Massey (1991).
5. A related body of literature explores the global proliferation of LGBTQ monuments. For a recent review, see Orangias et al. (2018).

6. My theorisation of the past is informed by queer approaches, including work by Castiglia and Reed (2012), Dinshaw et al. (2007), Halberstam (2005), Hemmings (2011), Love (2009), Morris (2004) and Muñoz (1996, 2009).
7. That some people of colour have emerged as the 'beneficiaries' of gentrification does not detract from an analysis of gentrification that attends to structural inequality, and thus recognises the uneven, racialised experience of impoverishment and housing deprivation.
8. Exemplifying this, a 2015 tube advertisement for Brixton market read 'Main in Macau. Dessert in Denver. Without Leaving London', whilst shops named 'Diverse' and 'Rejuvenate: something for everyone' sprung up (Author Fieldnotes).
9. I conducted research on the temporal and spatial imaginaries of sexual progress and sexual exceptionalism in Brixton between 2012 and 2015. Comprising participant-observation, semi-structured interviews with LGBTQ-identified residents, archival research and engagement with local and city-wide political and cultural material, this project provides the backdrop to my analysis here.
10. For other scholarship on LGBTQ Brixton, see Cook (2011), Skelton (1995) and Spruce (2016, 2017).
11. Most obviously, the archival traces of LGBTQ life in Brixton are found in 'Rukus', an archive of Black LGBTQ life, at London Metropolitan University, and the 'Hall-Carpenter Archive', an archive of gay activism, held at the London School of Economics. There is also an increasing amount of material online that I provide links to throughout.
12. http://www.urban75.org/blog/the-brixton-fairies-and-the-south-london-gay-community-centre-brixton-1974-6/; Cash (2014) and Hassan (2014).
13. https://www.channel4.com/news/brixton-radicals-bellos-wolmar-kenlock-villa-road-squat.
14. https://vimeo.com/46486129.
15. *Brixton Recreation* . . . is available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v = 4dRva4Va0qE.
16. Gayborhood is used in preference to gay ghetto throughout this article to clearly distinguish between those spatial formations that are chosen and those which are enforced.
17. This is not to negate the ways in which 'ethnoscapes' form part of cosmopolitan branding, including in Brixton, but to distinguish this process of commodification from the pejorative depiction of racialised residential zones and to emphasise that the beneficiaries of 'ethnoscapes' are rarely the ethnic minority communities (Brown, 2006: 138).
18. Halberstam's influential neologism metronormativity has been useful in capturing the exclusions produced by an overdetermined relationship between LGBTQ sexual freedom and urban locations (2005). However, greater attention to non-urban LGBTQ geographies must be complemented by a more fully 'disaggregated' and 'contextualised' account of LGBTQ urbanisms, which is particularly attentive to 'the power relations involved in where we look for geographies of sexualities' (Podmore 2016: 21).
19. More commonly, the inscription of the LGBTQ past in public space has explored memorialisation as a strategy for fostering LGBTQ acceptance (Orangias et al., 2018) and as a key terrain for conceptualising and contesting understandings of sexual identity (Dunn, 2011, 2014, 2016).
20. The role that heritage plays in gentrification has been extensively explored from a number of angles, and in a range of sites. See, for example, Zukin (1987), Brown-Saracino (2009), Mathews and Picton (2014), Morrell (2011) and Puzon (2017).
21. Although feminist and lesbian geographies have drawn crucial attention to the ways that place-making is gendered (see further Podmore, 2006), this did not appear to be a particularly salient factor in terms of LGBTQ situated memory. Further research is required to determine whether this lack of gendered differential is an exception, or the rule.
22. This account presents a queer echo to the depoliticising narrative that defended the racialised nature of displacement by presenting recent demographic shifts as merely a return to the area's mid-19th-century norms.
23. Applied to Brixton, this democratisation of the right to comfort would provide a clear mandate against the introduction of anti-homeless architecture in the re-design of Windrush Square, the pedestrianised centre of Brixton, which underwent a major redevelopment in 2010 that included the removal of a fountain previously used by rough sleepers to wash, and the replacement of benches with individual seating.

24. Both Puwar (2004) and Ahmed (2007) provide insightful analysis, in particular, of the gendered and racialised norms that govern which bodies are made to feel 'at home' in any given space.
25. This may also point to differences between LGBTQ place-making in the USA and UK, which are often overlooked in the transnational travel of queer theory.
26. For further research into 'place attachment', see Low and Altman (1992).
27. https://rememberolivemorris.wordpress.com/about/
28. This echoes the observations made about New York in Delany's influential ethnography *Times Square Red, Times Square Blue* (Delany, 1999). See also Andersson (2012) and Hanhardt (2013).
29. For further reflections on the Black queer archive rukus!, see Ajamu et al. (2009).
30. Indeed, in the first quotation, there is an echo between *the walk* of the men cruising for sex and the 'walk up' of the police which points to the experience of a blurred boundary between the production and the repression of erotic feelings.
31. The revolutionary potential of putting disorderly narratives at the centre of sexual geography is vibrantly evoked in *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments* (Hartman, 2019).

References

Adler SY and Brenner J (1992) Gender and space: lesbians and gay men in the city. *International journal of urban and regional research* 16(1): 24–34.

Ahmed S (2007) A phenomenology of whiteness. *Feminist Theory* 8(2): 149–168.

Ajamu X, Campbell T and Stevens M (2009) Love and lubrication in the archives, or rukus!: A black queer archive for the United Kingdom. *Archivaria* 68: 271–294.

Andersson J (2011) Vauxhall's post-industrial pleasure gardens: 'Death wish' and hedonism in 21st-century London. *Urban Studies* (*Edinburgh, Scotland*) 48(1): 85–100.

Andersson J (2012) Heritage discourse and the desexualisation of public space: The "historical restorations" of Bloomsbury's Squares. *Antipode* 44(4): 1081–1098.

Bacchetta P, El-Tayeb F and Haritaworn J (2015) Queer of colour formations and translocal spaces in. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 33(5): 769–778.

Bell D and Binnie J (2004) Authenticating queer space: Citizenship, urbanism and governance. *Urban Studies* 41(9): 1807–1820.

Bérubé A (2011) How gay stays white and what kind of white it stays. In: D'Emilio J and Freedman E (eds) *My Desire for History: Essays in Gay, Community, and Labour History*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, pp.202–232.

Binnie J and Skeggs B (2004) Cosmopolitan knowledge and the production and consumption of sexualized space: Manchester's gay village. *The Sociological Review* 39–61.

Brown G (2006) Cosmopolitan camouflage: (post-)gay space in Spitalfields, East London. In: Binnie J, Holloway J, Young C and Millington S (eds) *Cosmopolitan Urbanism*. Abingdon: Routledge, pp.130–145.

Brown-Saracino J (2009) *A Neighbourhood That Never Changes: Gentrification, Social Preservation, and the Search for Authenticity*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Butler J (2008) Sexual politics, torture, and secular time. *The British Journal of Sociology* 59(1): 1–23.

Cash P (2014) Brixton fairies: Introduction. *QX Magazine*. Available at: http://www.qxmagazine.com/2014/02/brixton-fairies-introduction/ (accessed 5 July 2018)

Castells M (1983) *The City and the Grassroots: A Cross-Cultural Theory of Urban Social Movements*. London: Edward Arnold Publishers Ltd.

Castiglia C and Reed C (2012) *If Memory Serves: Gay Men, AIDS, and the Promise of the Queer Past*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Caulfield J (1989) 'Gentrification' and desire. *Canadian Review of Sociology/Revue Canadienne de Sociologie* 26(4): 617–632.

Collins PH (1998) It's all in the family: Intersections of gender, race, and nation. *Hypatia* 13(3): 62–82.

Cook M (2011) 'Gay times': Identity, locality, memory, and the Brixton squats in 1970's. *Twentieth Century British History* 24(1): 84–109.

De Cesari C and Dimova R (2019) Heritage, gentrification, participation: Remaking urban landscapes in the name of culture and historic preservation. *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 25(9): 863–869.
Delany SR (1999) *Times Square Red, Times Square Blue*. New York: New York University Press.
Dinshaw C, Edelman L, Ferguson RA, et al. (2007) Theorizing queer temporalities: A roundtable discussion. *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 13(2): 177–195.
Doan PL and Higgins H (2011) The demise of queer space? Resurgent gentrification and the assimilation of LGBT neighborhoods. *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 31(1): 6–25.
Dunn TR (2011) Remembering "a great fag": Visualizing public memory and the construction of queer space. *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 97(4): 435–460.
Dunn TR (2014) "The Quare in the Square": Queer memory, sensibilities, and Oscar Wilde. *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 100(2): 213–240.
Dunn TR (2016) *Queerly Remembered: Rhetorics for Representing the GLBTQ past*. Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press.
El-Tayeb (2012) 'Gays who cannot properly be gay': Queer Muslims in the neoliberal European city. *European Journal of Women's Studies* 19(1): 79–95.
Florida R (2002) *The Rise of the Creative Class: And How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday Life*. New York: Basic Books.
Florida R (2005) *Cities and the Creative Class*. London: Routledge.
Foucault M (1979 [1998]) *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1: An Introduction*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
Ghaziani A (2019) Cultural archipelagos: New directions in the study of sexuality and space. *City & Community* 18(1): 4–22.
Gorman-Murray A and Waitt G (2009) Queer-friendly neighbourhoods: Interrogating social cohesion across sexual difference in two Australian neighbourhoods. *Environment and Planning A* 41(12): 2855–2873.
Halberstam J (2005) *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives*. New York: New York University Press.
Hall S (2002) From Scarman to Stephen Lawrence. In: *Criminology: A reader*. London: Sage, pp.225–234.
Hanhardt CB (2008) Butterflies, whistles, and fists: Gay safe street patrols and the new gay ghetto, 1976–1981. *Radical History Review* 100: 61–85.
Hanhardt CB (2013) *Safe Space: Gay Neighborhood History and the Politics of Violence*. Durham: Duke University Press.
Hanhardt CB (2016) Safe space out of place. *QED: A Journal in GLBTQ Worldmaking* 3(3): 121–125.
Haritaworn J (2015) *Queer Lovers and Hateful Others: Regenerating Violent Times and Places*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Hartman S (2019) *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Social Upheaval*. New York: WW Norton & Company.
Hassan T (Director, Producer) (2014) *Brixton Fairies: Made Possible by Squatting*. United Kingdom: Laundrette Pictures. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fZxapxG_ew4. (accessed 11 May 2020)
Hemmings C (2011) *Why Stories Matter: The Political Grammar of Feminist Theory*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
Hoad N (2000) Arrested development or the queerness of savages: Resisting evolutionary narratives of difference. *Postcolonial Studies* 3(2): 133–158.
Jensen T (2018) *Parenting the Crisis: The Cultural Politics of Parent-Blame*. UK: Policy Press.
Judge M (2018) *Blackwashing Homophobia: Violence and the Politics of Sexuality, Gender and Race*. New York: Routledge.
Kallin H and Slater T (2014) Activating territorial stigma: Gentrifying marginality on Edinburgh's periphery. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 46(6): 1351–1368.
Knopp L (1992) Sexuality and the spatial dynamics of capitalism. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 10(6): 651–669.
Knopp L (1995) Sexuality and urban space: A framework for analysis. In: Bell D and Valentine G (eds) *Mapping Desire*. London: Routledge, pp.149–161.

Knopp L (1997) Gentrification and gay neighbourhood formation in New Orleans. In: Gluckman A and Reed B (eds) *Homo Economics: Capitalism, Community, and Lesbian and Gay Life*. New York: Routledge, pp.45–59.

Konrad CL (2014) This is where we live: Queering poor urban spaces in literature of black gay men. *Gender, Place & Culture* 21(3): 337–352.

Kosnick K (2015) A clash of subcultures? Questioning Queer–Muslim antagonisms in the neoliberal city. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 39(4): 687–703.

Lauria M and Knopp L (1985 [2010]) Towards an analysis of the role of gay communities in the urban renaissance. In: *The Gentrification Reader*. London: Routledge, pp.272–284.

Loughran K, Fine GA and Hunter MA (2015) Urban spaces, city cultures, and collective memories. In: *Routledge International Handbook of Memory Studies*. New York: Taylor and Francis Inc., pp.193–204.

Loughran K, Fine GA and Hunter MA (2018a) Architectures of memory: When growth machines embrace preservationists. *Sociological Forum* 1–22.

Loughran K, Fine GA and Hunter MA (2018b) Memory politics: Growth coalitions, urban pasts, and the creation of "historic" Philadelphia. *City & Community* 330–349.

Love H (2009) *Feeling Backward*. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Low SM and Altman I (1992) Place attachment. In: *Place attachment*. Springer, Boston, MA, pp.1–12.

Massey D (1991) The political place of locality studies. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 23(2): 267–281.

Mathews V and Picton RM (2014) Intoxifying gentrification: Brew pubs and the geography of post-industrial heritage. *Urban Geography* 35(3): 337–356.

Mirza HS (2015) "Harvesting our collective intelligence": Black British feminism in post-race times. *Women's Studies International Forum* 51: 1–9.

Morrell M (2011) Working class heritage without the working class. In: Smith L, Shackel PA and Campbell G (eds) *Heritage, Labour, and the Working Classes*. London: Routledge, pp.283–302.

Morris C (2004) My old Kentucky homo: Lincoln and the politics of queer public memory. In: Phillips KR (ed) *Framing Public Memory*. Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, pp.89–114.

Mort (1998) Cityscapes: Consumption, masculinities and the mapping of London since 1950. *Urban Studies* 35(5-6): 889–907.

Muñoz JE (1996) Ephemera as evidence: Introductory notes to queer acts. *Women & Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory* 8(2): 5–16.

Muñoz JE (2009) *Cruising Utopia: The There and Then of Queer Theory*. New York: New York University Press.

Nash CJ (2013) The age of the "post-mo"? Toronto's gay village and a new generation. *Geoforum* 49: 243–252.

Nero CI (2005) Why are the gay ghettos white? In: Johnson EP and Henderson M (eds) *Black Queer Studies: A Critical Anthology*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, pp.228–245.

Orangias J, Simms J and French S (2018) The cultural functions and social potential of queer monuments: A preliminary inventory and analysis. *Journal of Homosexuality* 65(6): 705–726.

Oswin N (2015) World, city, queer. *Antipode* 47(3): 557–565.

Patrick DJ (2014) The matter of displacement: A queer urban ecology of New York City's High Line. *Social & Cultural Geography* 18(5): 920–941.

Patterson S (1963) *Dark Strangers: A Sociological Study of the Absorption of a Recent West Indian Migrant Group in Brixton, South London*. London: Tavistock.

Podmore JA (2006) Gone 'underground'? Lesbian visibility and the consolidation of queer space in Montréal. *Social & Cultural Geography* 7(4): 595–625.

Podmore JA (2016) Disaggregating sexual metronormativities: Looking back at 'lesbian' urbanisms. In: Brown G and Browne K (eds) *The Routledge Companion to Geographies of Sex and Sexualities*. London: Routledge, pp.21–28.

Puar J (2007) *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Puwar N (2004) *Space Invaders: Race, Gender and Bodies out of Place*. London: Berg.

Puzon K (2017) Saving Beirut: Heritage and the city. *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 1–12.

Rao R (2014) Queer questions. *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 16(2): 199–217.
Razack S (ed) (2002) *Race, Space, and the Law: Unmapping a White Settler Society*. Toronto: Between the Lines.
Rifkin M (2010) *When Did Indians Become Straight? Kinship, the History of Sexuality, and Native Sovereignty*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Rushbrook D (2002) Cities, queer space, and the cosmopolitan tourist. *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 8(1–2): 183–206.
Schulman S (2012) *The Gentrification of the Mind: Witness to a Lost Imagination*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Skelton T (1995) 'Boom, bye, bye' Jamaican Ragga and gay resistance. In: Bell D and Valentine G (eds) *Mapping Desire*. London: Routledge, pp.264–281.
Slater T (2006) The eviction of critical perspectives from gentrification research. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 30: 737–757.
Slater T (2008) 'A literal necessity to be re-placed': A rejoinder to the gentrification debate. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 32(1): 212–223.
Slater T (2018) The invention of the 'sink estate': Consequential categorisation and the UK housing crisis. *The Sociological Review* 66(4): 877–897.
Solle (Director) (n.d. [2014]) Brixton Recreation with Ajamu. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4dRva4Va0qE (accessed 4 May 2019)
Spruce E (2016) Bigot geographies: Queering geopolitics in Brixton. In: Avery S and Graham KM (eds) *Sex, Time and Place: Queer Histories of London, C. 1850 to the Present*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, pp.65–80.
Spruce E (2017) *Telling Times: Exploring LGBTQ Progress Narratives in Brixton, South London*. London: London School of Economics.
Trouillot MR (2012) An unthinkable history: The Haitian Revolution as a non-event. In: *Haitian History*. London: Routledge, pp.43–64.
Tyler I (2008) Chav mum chav scum: Class disgust in contemporary Britain. *Feminist Media Studies* 8(1): 17–34.
Valentine G (1995) Out and about: Geographies of lesbian landscapes. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 19(1): 96–111.
Wacquant L (2007) Territorial stigmatization in the age of advanced marginality. *Thesis Eleven* 91(1): 66–77.
Wacquant L (2016) Revisiting territories of relegation: Class, ethnicity and state in the making of advanced marginality. *Urban Studies* 53(6): 1077–1088.
Wacquant L, Slater T and Pereira VB (2014) Territorial stigmatization in action. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 46(6): 1270–1280.
Walkerdine V (2009) Steel, identity, community: Regenerating identities in a South Wales town. In: Wetherell M (ed) *Identity in the 21st Century*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp.59–75.
Zebracki M (2018) Urban preservation and the queerying spaces of (un) remembering: Memorial landscapes of the Miami Beach art deco historic district. *Urban Studies* 55(10): 2261–2285.
Zukin S (1987 [2010]) Gentrification: Culture and capital in the urban core. In: *The Gentrification Reader*. London: Routledge, pp.220–232.

Emma Spruce is a teaching Fellow in Gender, Sexuality and Human Rights at LSE Department of Gender Studies. Her research examines the intersections of sexuality, space and place, exploring the movement of sexual politics across scales and the ways that place and space acquire meaning through narratives of sexuality and gender. In particular, Emma's work interrogates the way that race, class and sexuality work on each other to govern 'the right to the city' and unpacks the spatial and social imaginaries constituted through narratives about changing sexual worlds.