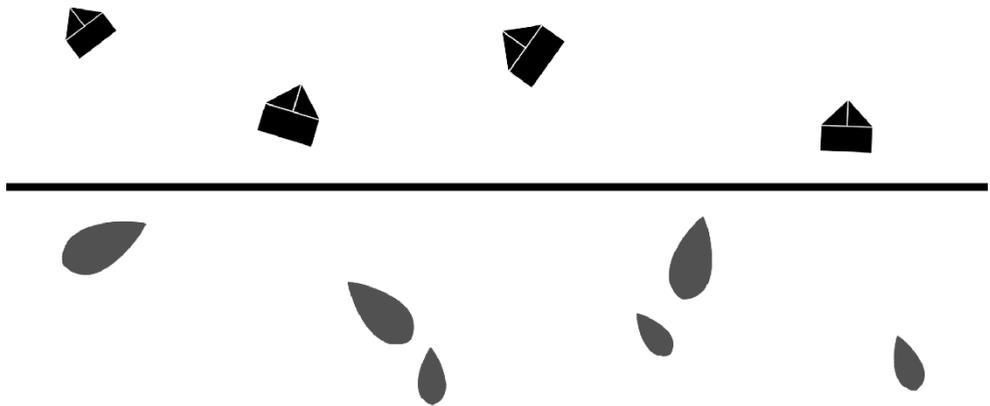


*The dynamics of rural gentrification  
and the effects of ageing  
on gentrified rural places*



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## ***The Dynamics of Rural Gentrification and the Effects of Ageing on Gentrified Rural Places***

**Abstract:** Theories of gentrification represent gentrifiers as social groups at early- to mid- phases of their lifecourse. In urban contexts, this encompasses young, childless and upwardly mobile professionals and family gentrifiers with children. The latter are also prominent figures within representations of idyllic, gentrified rural places for raising children, family life and neighbourly relations; although in early rural gentrification studies there was reference to retirement migration. Such issues, however, are under-explored and mature populations have been absent from gentrification scholarship, despite the recognition of affluent households within ageing societies. At the same time, the ageing of gentrified populations is overlooked within cross-sectional analyses of gentrification. Our aim is to widen the lens on gentrifier populations, and to consider the effects of ageing in gentrified villages. Drawing on 2011 census data for England and Wales and findings from a household questionnaire, we identify populations of ageing gentrifiers who in-migrated before and at retirement, and have 'stayed-put' for considerable lengths of time. Through three vignettes, we highlight how these staying rural gentrifiers may create displacement pressures impacting on younger residents and potentially influence the supply of housing for subsequent waves of gentrification, although they may also come to be displaced by such waves.

**Keywords:** Rurality, lifecourse, migration and mobility, retirement, population studies.

### ***La dinámica de gentrificación rural y los efectos del envejecimiento en los espacios rurales gentrificados***

**Resumen:** Las teorías de gentrificación representan a los gentrificadores como grupos sociales en las fases tempranas y medias de su ciclo de vida. En los espacios urbanos, esto incluye a los profesionales jóvenes, sin hijos y con elevada movilidad o directamente a familias con hijos. Estos últimos también son figuras clave dentro de las representaciones idílicas de los espacios rurales para la educación de los hijos, la vida familiar y las relaciones sociales; aunque en los primeros estudios sobre la gentrificación rural se hacía referencia a la migración de personas mayores ya jubiladas. Sin embargo, estos temas están poco explorados y las poblaciones envejecidas han estado ausentes de los análisis sobre gentrificación, a pesar del reconocimiento de los hogares acomodados dentro de las sociedades envejecidas. Al mismo tiempo, el envejecimiento de las poblaciones gentrificadas se pasa por alto en los análisis transversales de gentrificación. Nuestro objetivo es ampliar el análisis en las poblaciones gentrificadas y considerar los efectos del envejecimiento en el espacio rural gentrificado. Basándonos en los datos del Censo Nacional de 2011 para Inglaterra y Gales, y en los resultados de un cuestionario dirigido a familias, identificamos a las poblaciones de personas mayores que emigraron antes y después de la jubilación, y que han permanecido fuera del medio rural durante un período de tiempo considerable. A través de tres momentos, destacamos cómo estos gentrificadores rurales que se quedan pueden forzar el desplazamiento de los residentes más jóvenes y potencialmente influyen en la oferta de viviendas para los sucesivos procesos de gentrificación, aunque también pueden llegar a ser desplazados por estas mismas dinámicas.

**Palabras clave:** Ruralidad, origen rural, migración y movilidad, jubilación, estudios de población.

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## *Introduction*

Scholarship on rural population change often emphasises the transformative effects of counterurbanisation (Mitchell and Madden, 2014; Gkartzios, Remoundou and Garrod, 2017) and intra-rural mobilities on the demographic make-up of rural places (Milbourne, 2007; Phillips, 2010; Smith, 2007a). These processes are seen to propel the flows of affluent in-migrant households, often at family forming and child-rearing stages of their lifecourse, and the out-migration of lower income social groups (Milbourne and Kitchen, 2014; Smith, Finney, Halfacree and Walford, 2016; Woods, 2016).

This framing underpins accounts of gentrified rural places becoming the preferred, and quite exclusionary, location of middle-class families with children (Phillips, 1993, 1998; Hillyard and Bagley, 2015), which has been widely tied to growing concerns about a lack of affordable housing, inaccessibility to services and the marginalisation of shrinking rural working-class populations (e.g. Halfacree, 2018; Phillips, Smith and Brooking, 2018; Shucksmith, 2016). These issues are integral to growing scholarship on rural gentrification (Mamonova and Sutherland, 2015; Phillips and Smith, 2018a; Nelson, 2018; Smith, Phillips, Kinton and Culora, 2019), although are by no means exclusively understood through this particular theoretical lens.

Of course, gentrified rural places are not 'frozen in time', as both in-migrant and settled populations can *either* age in place, or subsequently move out of or between rural places (Stockdale and Ni Laoire, 2016; Doheny and Milbourne, 2017). As these

dynamics unfold, the housing requirements and predilections of gentrifier populations, including material and cultural lifestyle services they desire, will change over time, related, for example, to events such as forming friendships during youth and young adulthood, forging unions with partners, the birth of children requiring more residential space, the entry of children into education adding a locational imperative of access to schooling, which, in turn, may be lost with the flight of children and the transition to 'empty-nesting' (Smith, 2011; Smith and Higley, 2012). Later phases of the lifecourse may also be associated with events such as divorce or break-up, and widowhood, which may create new lifestyle requirements. As Hochstenbach and Boterman (2018) argue, "life-course transitions alter preferences and trigger residential moves, and are crucial moments that generate the conditions for (middle-class) households to move into or out of a gentrifying neighbourhood" (p. 170), although they also remark that some gentrifiers stay in place through these transitions. It can also be argued that some people may engage in practices that gentrify locations as they navigate through transitions, by, for instance, investing capital and labour in expanding their place of residence or changing the function of particular rooms (Smith, 2007b).

In this paper we argue that the influence of such age-related lifecourse transitions has been overlooked within studies of rural gentrification, and indeed, within gentrification studies more widely, where, as Hochstenbach and Boterman (2018) have remarked, "age is often implicitly discussed" (p. 179), although they argue that it should be seen to play a central role within gentrification processes. It might be expected that recognition of such influences would be rather stronger within research on rural gentrification given that a demographic social imagination has been identified as a long-standing constituent of rural studies (Phillips 1998; Smith 2002) and asserted that "rural gentrification studies have been more closely aligned with population studies than their urban counterparts" (Phillips, 2010 p. 540).

Issues of ageing within developed nations have figured reasonably prominently within rural studies, with research detailing, amongst other features, the growing proportion of the elderly in rural areas (Argent, Griffin and Smailes, 2016; Champion and Shepherd, 2006; Glasgow and Brown, 2012; Hardill and Rees, 2016; Bevan, 2019), the migration of older people into the countryside and the migration of younger people out of the countryside (e.g. Farrugia, Smyth and Harrison, 2016), the needs and provision of services for children, teenagers and the elderly (Hamilton, 2016; Joseph and Skinner, 2012; O'Brien, 2014; Thiede, Brown, Sanders, Glasgow, and Kulcsar, 2017), representations of aged populations in the countryside (Davies, 2011; Ni Laoire, 2011; Powell, Taylor and Smith, 2013), the material circumstances and experiences of young and older people in the countryside (Corbett and Forsey, 2017; Garnham and Bryant, 2014; Milbourne and Doheny, 2012; Riley, 2016; Stockdale, Theunissen, and Haartsen,

2018), and the relations that younger and older people have within the formation of rural community life and place identities (Downey, Threlkeld and Warburton, 2017; Harper, 2014; Leyshon, 2008; Winterton and Warburton, 2012).

Issues of age were also evident in early discussions of rural gentrification, with this term frequently appearing alongside that of geriatrification (Cloke, 1979; Hanrahan and Cloke, 1983; Weekley, 1988). However, despite this early association, and later studies that have drawn connections between rural gentrification and the onset of child-rearing (Bryson and Wyckoff, 2010), we would contend that there is a need for more investigation of the relations between ageing and rural gentrification. Our main argument is that rural gentrification can involve social groups at mature stages of their lifecourse, and there is value in transcending conventional representations of rural gentrification as a process of change associated with the in-migration of affluent families with children. Stressing the need for a broader temporal perspective of gentrification to analyse the dynamics of rural gentrification processes in specific places, including how rural gentrifiers have not only moved into and transformed rural locations but have also often stayed-put in their gentrified locations, we would argue that ageing gentrifiers can influence the supply and value of gentrifiable housing stock. This is likely to impact on the distinctive forms of rural gentrification, and the magnitude of subsequent flows of in-migrants to gentrify. The staying-put of gentrifiers at later phases of their lifecourse can stimulate pressures of displacement on younger residents and have policy-related implications on rural housing markets and communities. We explore these dimensions of ageing and rural gentrification in this paper, drawing upon a comparative cross-national investigation of rural gentrification using findings from three case study English villages.

The paper is divided into five sections. In the next section we provide a review of scholarship on urban and rural gentrification to illustrate existing foci of understandings of the relationship between gentrification and age, as well as discuss some research on rural migration and ageing in the countryside. Second, we present some empirical analyses of census data for England and Wales to show the concentration of mature age groups in some rural areas. Third, we then briefly outline the geographical focus and methods employed in the English component of the comparative study of rural gentrification. The fourth section presents three vignettes to show some of the complex ways in which ageing can intersect with processes of rural gentrification. The final section of the paper considers the wider significance of our discussion for broader debates of gentrification, and calls for a more pronounced research agenda on the inter-connections between the changing socio-cultural characteristics of gentrifiers and lifecourse phases, and their effects on the dynamics of gentrified places.

## *Ageing gentrification studies*

Although scholarship on gentrification has increasingly exposed divergent geographical expressions of what has been identified as a globalised phenomenon (Lees, Shin and López-Morales, 2016). As Hochenstenbach and Boterman (2018) argue, consideration of gentrification's relationships with demographic processes, including those associated with ageing, opens up a series of questions about the "the global scope of gentrification and its specific geographical manifestations" (p. 170), not least raising issues that might have logics other than those of capital accumulation and the expression of class power. It can be argued that a narrative of gentrification as "real estate capitalism" (Forest, 2016 p. 610) promoted by many of these recent accounts of gentrification, whilst highlighting much of value, also risks occluding significance differences, including social differences between different groups of gentrifiers in diverse socio-spatial contexts.

These differences include those established in association with age and family structure. There is evidence to suggest that both the appeal and capacity of living in central urban, suburban and rural places varies for people at different phases of their lifecourse, linked both to their accrual of material resources capable of enabling residential access to such locations and to the desires and requirements association with lifecourse changes such as marriage/cohabitation or the absence/presence of children. Hochstenbach and Boterman (2018), for example, note how many young adults attracted to living in expensive cities have fuelled a rise of "rental gentrification" (p. 172), as well employed a range of, often highly precarious, pathways into housing such as extended stays in parental homes or institutional housing, flat sharing, staying with friends or in sub-lets, and illegal squatting (Hochstenbach and Boterman, 2015).

Hochstenbach and Boterman (2018) further argue that gentrification is "most prominently associated with the life-course and residential trajectories of young people" (p. 171). Academic, media and policy discourses have all widely presented gentrifiers as being young and childless (e.g. Blasius, Friedrichs and Rühl, 2016), a conception that clearly chimes with the notion of the yuppie (e.g. Smith, 1987; Lees, 2000), which Smith asserted (1996) was:

Coined apparently in 1983 to refer to those young, upwardly mobile professionals of the baby-boom generation, the term 'yuppie' has already achieved a wide currency; few words have had such an impressive debut in the language (p. 2).

In a more academic register, Beauregard (1990) wrote of prototypical gentrifiers being "single-person or two-person household comprised of affluent professionals without children... The gentrifiers are relatively young, just beginning their peak income-earning years" (p. 856). This representation is vividly exemplified on the cover page of the 'Yuppie Handbook' (Piesman and Hartley 1984), which caricatures the young adult male yuppie adorning a pin stripe suit, Rolex watch, squash racket, Burberry trench coat, L. L. Bean duck hunting boots, and Gucci briefcase. Alongside, the young adult female yuppie is depicted as wearing a Ralph Lauren suit, Cartier Tank watch, coach bag, running shoes, Sony Walkman, and carrying a gourmet shopping bag. Yet, it is telling that Beauregard also stressed that: "to attribute gentrification solely to yuppies is to eliminate quite complex processes" (*ibid*). This complexity of gentrification processes has been gradually teased out as studies within an increasing range of socio-spatial contexts have revealed demographic differentials amongst gentrifiers and intersections between gentrification and demographic characters of people at the later phases of their lifecourse (e.g. see Boterman, 2012; Boterman and Bridge, 2015; Boterman, Karsten and Musterd, 2010; Doucet, 2014; Karsten, 2014; Rerat and Lees, 2011). Karsten (2014), for instance, identifies "the transformation from childless yuppie to young urban professional parent (yupp) not only goes along with new consumption cultures but also with the production of a new city" (p. 175), suggesting that a growing presence of middle class families in inner-city areas has not only led to the growth of family-related consumption spaces, particularly related to food and drink, but extended into the emergence of 'family-directed' retailing and leisure services in these areas and new practices conducted in public spaces in the city (see also Karsten (2003) and Karsten, Lupi and de Stigter-Speksnijder (2013), for discussion of family gentrifiers).

Other studies have further highlighted the complex processes of gentrification by examining ties between sexuality and the dominant conceptual frames of social class, education, and occupational status within gentrification studies. Smith and Holt (2005), for instance, show how lesbian households can act as key agents of rural gentrification (see also Smith and Phillips, 2001).

Despite such movements to more fully acknowledge a diversity of gentrifiers, there continues to be a paucity of studies of the connections between gentrification and elderly populations. This is surprising given Mills' (1988) influential study of 'life on the upslopes' reveals that although "the majority of households are 'young professionals', there is also a fair proportion of 'empty nesters' close to retirement". Equally, Paris (2009) reiterates that: "Smith (2002), however, suggested that 'retirement hotspots', such as coastal resorts were worthy of consideration as cases

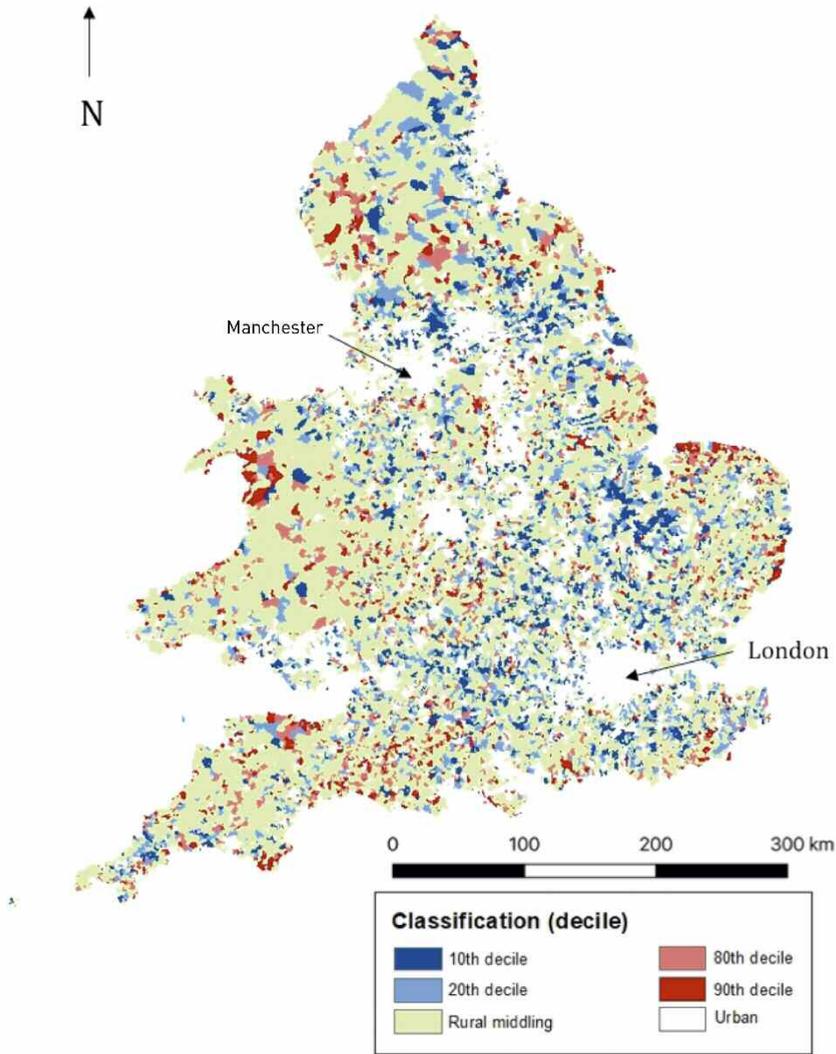
of gentrification" (p. 295). Perhaps more closely connected to the focus of this paper, Williams (1984) identified the presence of gentrifiers "in more remote villages favourable for retirement" (p. 222) – citing the study of Parsons (1980).

As discussed in the introduction, it might be expected that rural gentrification studies would exhibit stronger recognition of demographic influences than its urban counterpart, but beyond the early connections made with retirement and so-called geriatrification, there has been little direct exploration. That having been said, one researcher who has examined rural gentrification, Aileen Stockdale, has also undertaken a series of studies of ageing and rural retirement migration during the last two decades (e.g. Stockdale, 2011, 2014, 2017; Stockdale and MacLeod, 2013). Whilst Stockdale has yet to explicitly inter-connect these two areas of interest, her work does highlight a series of important aspects of ageing and their influences both on processes of rural in-migration and people remaining in place. She has, for instance, highlighted the need to carefully disaggregate the processes of ageing and recognise a diversity of aged groups. In relation to the retirees, for example, she has promoted the study of 'pre-retirement' migrants and the people who stay in place, as well as the study of movement at the point of retirement. She has also discussed the significance of socio-economic resources in enabling forms of migration and the differentiation of migration by forms of rural space. Connecting this work to the study of rural gentrification might suggest that the geographies of rural gentrification might be differentiated by aged cohorts, as well as by phases of gentrification. The locations selected for in-movement by pre-retired and retired household may be quite distinct to the locations identified as the focus of colonisation by gentrifier families with children, who might potentially be lured by the availability of small village primary schools and the presence of seemingly outstanding secondary and higher educational establishments, as well as the apparent possibilities for children to play and interact with nature, in addition to the more demographically widespread geographical imaginations of rural areas as place of safety and low crime, fresh air and less pollution, and community.

To explore this possibility, Figure 1 illustrates the distribution of households with one or more persons aged 65 or over as a percentage of total individuals in rural output areas of England and Wales. The figure shows the 10/20<sup>th</sup> and 80/90<sup>th</sup> deciles to emphasise areas of high and low concentrations of people of retirement age. It can be seen that there are relatively high concentrations of these households in the rural areas of North West Wales (in the Snowdonia National Park) and the Ceredigion coast, North and South Devon, Dorset, the north of Bognor Regis and New Romney on the South East coast, the south Suffolk coast, North Norfolk coast, Lincolnshire coast, North York Moors and Yorkshire Dales, and the Lake District. This geographic pattern

is in alignment with longstanding scholarship on retirement migration in the England and Wales (e.g. Warnes, 1993; Raymer, Abel and Smith, 2007)

Figure 1.  
*Households with one or more retired persons as a percentage of total households in England and Wales (2011 UK Census)*



Of course, these geographic concentrations of retired individuals may include both non-migrant and migrants. There may be individuals who have recently moved into a rural place as part of wider retirement decision-making processes. At the same time, there may be individuals and households that moved into a rural place at an earlier phase of their (working) lifecourse, and who have stayed-put and aged in the rural place. It is, however, not possible to distinguish between these different groups using census data.

On the other hand, locations with relatively low concentrations of retired individuals are evident within rural areas on the fringes of large metropolitan centres. This includes most of the Home Counties that encircle the M25 and London (i.e. Essex, Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Berkshire, Surrey, Sussex, Kent). This extends westwards along both the 'M4 corridor' to Bristol (including North Wessex Downs), and northwards along the 'M11 corridor' into Cambridgeshire. Low concentrations of retired individuals can also be identified in the Vale of York (to the East of Leeds), Lancashire (including the Forest of Bowland) (to the north of Manchester), the M6 corridor between Birmingham and Liverpool, and the north-east of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. This may point to the growing age segregation between rural places with relatively high concentrations with families with children and rural places with more mature populations (Smith and Culora, 2017).

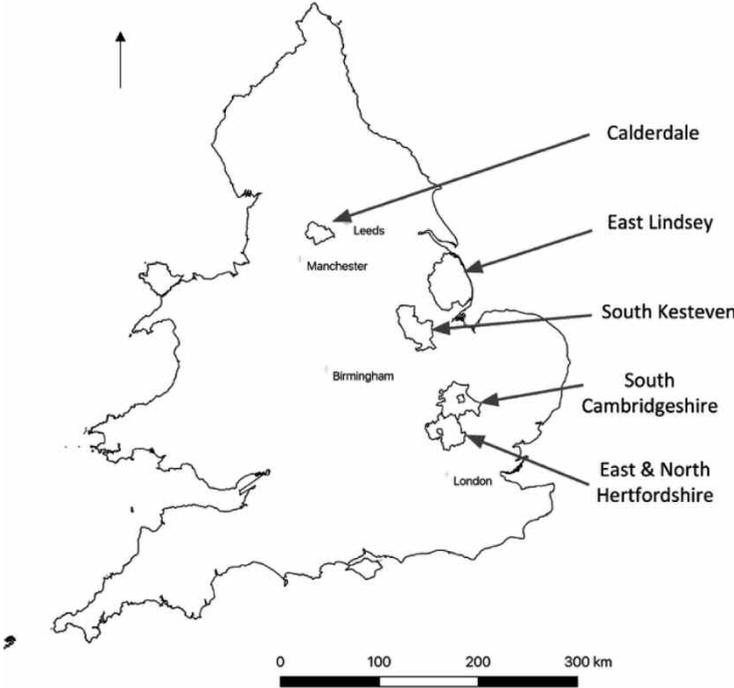
### *Moving beyond quantitative data: methods and case study locations*

To investigate the connections between ageing and rural gentrification in more detail, this paper will draw on qualitative data produced from an on-going ESRC-funded project investigating international rural gentrification (Phillips and Smith, 2018a). In England and Wales, analyses of 2011 census data was undertaken to identify different geographies of rural gentrification, illustrating the effects of different forms of capital (Phillips and Smith, 2018b).

From this mapping of diverse geographies of rural gentrification, five case study locations were identified in England to investigate the similarities and differences between different expressions of rural gentrification (Smith *et al.*, 2018, 2019). These locations were initially considered as Districts (see Figure 2) and then individual parishes

identified for detailed examination, before attention moved to considering individual settlements and settlement areas. In three of the Districts, a single village was identified for in-depth research, but in two Districts three settlements were selected for study in order to examine localised patterns of differentiation. In one case, the village itself contained a clear differentiation between two distinct areas of settlement, so it can be argued that within the study nine distinct areas of settlement were examined. In each of these settlement areas, a door-to-door, personally-administered, household questionnaire was issued with an extensive number of open questions. These took 1 hour on average to complete, and included sections on: household composition, views on the village and life in the village; reasons for and experiences of moving, transformations of properties, employment, use of services, leisure activities and attitudes to change in the countryside. All of the households in the each of the villages were approached to take part in the study.

Figure 2.  
Case study Districts



In the next section of the paper, we present three vignettes based on three of the settlement areas we examined. Two locations lie within a single parish within the District of East Hertfordshire (Tewin), whilst the third lies within a parish in the District of South Kesteven in Lincolnshire. The two locations in East Hertfordshire parish were included on Pahl's (1964) seminal *Urbs in Rure*, and as such provide valuable opportunities for historical comparisons. Pahl's study was very clearly focused around the influence of London-based commuting, he later wrote that his research was based on the assumption that "ease of commuting would be a fundamental factor" in determining middle class in-migration, with "parishes closer to London" being more likely to have been impacted by this migration (Pahl, 2005, p. 624). There has, however, been an extension of average commuting distances since the time of Pahl's research (see Brown, Champion, Coombes and Wymer, C, 2015; Pooley, Turnbull and Adams, 2005), and therefore it was decided to develop a case study of rural gentrification in a location more distant from London but where there was evidence of London focused commuting. Figure 3, for instance, shows the commuting pattern recorded in the 2011 Census for the case study parish in South Kesteven District, which lies in the county of Lincolnshire.

*Figure 3.*  
*Vehicle and train based commuting from superoutput area covering case study parish in South Kesteven District*



## Three Vignettes of Aged Rural Gentrification

### **Vignette 1: Staying put in the changing middle class world of Tewin Wood**

Tewin Wood was an area that played a prominent role in Pahl's *Urbs in Rure*, being identified as a "middle-class world" (Pahl, 2005, p. 624) that had emerged through the in-migration of affluent commuters into detached housing being built by a firm of builders from North London on the woodland plots from the 1930s, through into the time when Pahl was conducting a questionnaire survey in the early 1960s. He remarks that the housing took the form of 3-, 4- and 5-bedroom houses constructed from "a choice of standard, split level and continental designs" set within one acre plots, with many of the incoming residents buying "cheap adjoining plots for additional privacy" (*ibid*). The significance of Tewin Wood is vividly stressed by Thompson (1990), who claims that:

The woodland inhabitants of Tewin Wood in Hertfordshire, with their large detached houses in individual clearings in the wood, commuting to work in nearby Welwyn Garden City or going up to London, enjoying their rural environment and their detachment from any rural labours, became the sociologist's paradigm of the urban-rural middle class of the 1960s (p. 74).

Pahl himself did not use the term gentrification in his studies of Tewin Wood and other locations in rural Hertfordshire, although as Paris (2009) has remarked, his arguments can be seen to be highly commensurable with the concept (although see Halfacree, 2018). Much of Pahl's focus was on detailing the growing presence of middle class people who whilst choosing to live in a rural location had a lifestyle that clearly connected to urban locations. He, however, also recognised the existence of other lines of differentiation amongst rural residents, including the presence of retired people who had previously worked in urban locations and had decided "to buy or build a house for retirement" (Pahl, 1966, p. 305) in an area that they viewed as rural. In the case of Tewin Wood, only 4.5 % of the people interviewed by Pahl were aged over 65, compared to 21.6 % and 14.2 % in the 35-44 and 45-52 age groups, respectively (based on Pahl, 1965).

Today, Tewin Wood is an exclusive rural location that is widely promoted by a variety of institutional agencies and marketed in London for its unique setting of detached housing in large plots in woodland (see Figure 4). Tewin Wood has received some public recognition for being the place of residence of the father of Formula 1 motor-racing star, Lewis Hamilton, and as an exclusive residential area occupied by millionaires. This is exemplified by HertsAd (15/02/17) which describes the location as: "an affluent area – the average home costs just under a million pounds – its population is older, healthier, better educated and more likely to be employed than the county or national average". Crucially, it is also noted that: "In current uncertain times Tewin still remains extremely desirable, with high demand and low stock levels helping to support current price levels throughout the market".

*Figure 4:  
Aerial view of Tewin Wood*



Source: Google earth.

Findings from the household survey revealed that the high demand for housing in Tewin Wood was increasingly fuelled by affluent in-migrant households seeking to acquire the large plots within the woodland for new-build housing projects. As stated by DreamPad (2018): "We have just completed a sale (£1.75 million) on this stunning

home in Tewin Wood. We urgently require similar homes of high quality in the Tewin Wood/Welwyn area for genuine purchasers. If you are looking to sell, please call or email us for a free and confidential valuation".

This new expression of rural gentrification within Tewin Wood might be viewed as an instance of supergentrification, which as outlined by Lees (2003) involves "the transformation of already gentrified, prosperous and solidly upper-middle-class neighbourhoods into much more exclusive and expensive enclaves" (p. 2487) (see also Butler and Lees, 2006; Smith and Phillips, 2018a). One resident described how there had been a series of new builds occurring in Tewin Wood, either on plots of land between pre-existing dwellings or on the site of existing buildings which were demolished and a new, much larger, replacement house built. The area they claimed had become "a developer's paradise", and such that "in the next 20 years I would predict that every bungalow will be developed". They cited as one instance, the construction of a modern detached residential dwelling (Figure 5) following the demolition of a 3-bedroom bungalow that was purchased for £545,000 in April 2013. Architects IDL describe the development on their home webpage as a "new 5500 sq ft house on three floors recently completed for a private client. Clad completely in black to nestle into the wooded site. The double-volume fully glazed façade takes maximum advantage of its south-facing position".

Figure 5:  
*New housing development in Tewin Wood*



Source: authors photograph.

The household survey identified the presence of long-term residents in Tewin Wood that had moved into the location from the 1960s onwards. These individual residents had stayed-put and continued to age, often undergoing a series of lifecourse transitions such as family formation, the departure of children from the home, and, in some cases, marriage/partnership break-up or widowhood. Through these lifecourse changes they had remained in Tewin Wood for a variety of reasons including: the presence of longstanding friends and neighbours who provided support and countered loneliness, involvement in a 'community' and access to community-based activities and trips, concerns about the costs and practicalities of selling property and moving to another property, a lack of suitable 'down-sizing' properties to move into, and a general sense of satisfaction with and attachment to the current residential location. The strength of commitment to place was demonstrated by comments such as: "When I leave this village it will be in a long black taxi and I will be horizontal in a pine box". However, some elderly respondents described how recent widowhood had caused feelings of loneliness and difficulties with maintaining gardens and the upkeep of large properties. There were also expressions of resistance to change, both in relationship to the conduct of people's own lives and also to change in the locality, with some elderly respondents expressing a desire to stay-put as a way of blocking some of the ways in which Tewin Wood was being reconfigured through new-build developments of the form outlined earlier. So, for example, one widow in her late 80s who had moved into a large 3-bedroom split-level detached house in Tewin Wood in the late 1950s with her husband and two children, described how the area had changed and why she had elected to remain there despite clearly viewing these changes in a negative light:

The houses have now expanded to million-pound monsters. This [house] was never the largest but it wasn't the tiny one it is now. It has almost finished - the extensions now. I have lived through that side [pointing to house next door], and I have lived through that side [pointing to house next door]. When my husband died they said "are you moving on". I said "no", this will be pulled down and extended. Most of them have really extended, they are enormous some of them.

When asked to describe the current value of her property, the respondent noted:

I had it valued about 4 years ago, and it was about £675,000. I think it should get a good sum because they are all looking for this size of house and plot. I will tell a story about a young man, now lives in that bungalow [points to house], he

has just moved in there. He said "I knocked on your door last year". I said "I know, you wanted to see if I would sell you my house".

Although this respondent had resisted the offer to sell her house, this act had clearly not prevented the in-movement of this younger man, and there was a clear sense amongst many of the older residents in the area that there was both a restructuring of properties and a demographic shift occurring within Tewin Wood. So, for example, a female resident in her 50s commented:

there were a lot of maybe smaller houses or quite old houses and run-down houses. Probably where there were elderly people living. And ... those have been sold and new families have moved in. We see a lot more families moving in from London and they have made a lot of improvements. So, on the one hand, the houses are generally, they look a lot better, but... the space has been eaten up because there just seem to [be] so many houses being extended.... you would have some plots where there was a just a relatively medium-sized house with a huge land around it and then that gets just demolished and a big house goes up on it.

This quote raises intriguing questions about the temporalities of (rural) gentrification and the complex intersection of the individual biographical ageing of gentrifiers within the context of different, and dynamic, waves of gentrification processes. This emphasises that processes of gentrification change over time, and involve different forms and age-related demographics.

### ***Vignette 2: Settling down in the village of Tewin***

The second area we wish to discuss is the village of Tewin (see Figure 6), which was also a focus of Pahl's (1965) *Urbs in Rure*. Whilst located just "a mile or so" from Tewin Wood, Pahl presented Tewin village as quite a different social world, suggesting it was a "more 'traditional' world of the mainly working-class villagers" (Pahl, 2005, p. 624), although also differentiating at times between an area of council housing and other areas of the Village.

Figure 6:  
*Aerial view of Tewin Village*



Source: Google earth.

The differentiation between 'the Wood' and 'the Village' observed by Pahl was clearly echoed in some of the descriptions of the areas given by respondents we interviewed: hence one Tewin Wood resident remarked that there was "a bit of snobbery assigned to 'The Wood'" and although they sought to resist this division they "don't feel part of the village". However, as in Tewin Wood, it was clear that many residents in Tewin village had remained there over an extended period and exhibited strong place attachment. So, for example, one couple resident of the village remarked:

We are very old. I am 74, and [my wife] is 79 ... [The village] has not changed much in the 30 years we have been here. Most people who come here don't leave. People are satisfied at what they have got.

Later, they remarked:

We intended to live here for five years... We have never thought of moving. This is a pine casket territory. I will only leave here in a pine casket. Unless you can find me a nice bungalow within walking distance of this house, an easy walking distance. I would think about it.

This quote simultaneously illustrates the presence of a determination to remain in place, a willingness to downsize dwelling size, a perceived lack of suitable accommodation to move into, and an indication that the attachment to place was in a sense unanticipated at the time of movement. Such comments resonate with the arguments of Halfacree and Rivera (2012) and Phillips (2016) about how representational impressions of place, that may be important to residential movement, may be over-written and eclipsed by affective and embodied engagements with places, and with the human and more-than human inhabitants in these places. As Maclaren (2018) has observed, older people may have both "long trajectories... of encounters", and also spend "more time in the spaces of the village" (p. 227) during a normal day, and hence maybe come to develop affective attachments that differ quite significantly from their initial assessments of place, as clearly illustrated in the following comments from an interview with a retired couple, both in their 70s, who coordinate the local jumble sale events in Tewin village:

We came here to make a quick financial killing. Properties were going up in prices so fast. In three or four years we will be gone – but we fell in love with it. There is nothing to touch this place. We did so recently say when the lottery was 76 million, if we won it, would we move. And we said we wouldn't move... We got involved in the community. It just happens. You are encouraged to be part of it... I have 106 people on my email list that are helpers in the village.

Whilst quite clearly there were people who were ageing in place and developing very strong relations with the place and its inhabitants, it was also evident that Tewin village was experiencing considerable amounts of in-migration by younger people. These were often people with children or intending to start a family, but also included some single people who, in at least the instance of one man in his 40s, clearly felt out of place in a space occupied by households composed predominantly of older and families:

I think living on your own here is not a, no, it's not a great place to live if you're looking for social interaction to any degree, I would say. "Great, great little place if you've got a family". But yeah, in my current situation ... the likelihood is that I'll probably move out the village.

Such comments indicate how demographic structure may itself be a constituent of displacement pressures (e.g. Hochstenbach and Boterman, 2018; Smith, 2002), and whilst some people clearly came, settled and as they aged came to establish strong attachment to the place and people of Tewin village, for at least some

younger people without children or partners, the village, despite some very positive features, has yet to feel like a place to stay.

***Vignette 3: Long-distance commuting as a means of ageing in place.***

The first two vignettes have focused largely on people ageing in place over an extended period and becoming attached to a location that initially some people had viewed as only a temporary place of residence. Contrasting with these experiences, the final vignette considers a case where people appear to have moved with the expectation of ageing in a place. As discussed earlier, a parish in South Kesteven district was selected for study on the basis of evidence of rural gentrification linked to long-distance commuting within the 2011 Census. However, when interviewing in three villages in this parish some 7 years later, it became evident that many of residents who had commuted to London in the past had ceased to do so, and that indeed the move to area had very much been undertaken with both the onset and cessation of commuting in mind. So, for example, a couple in their late forties/early fifties explained their decision to move to the village as follows:

We didn't want to be in London anymore. Every weekend we were trying to get out of London ... So, we came here or basically around Grantham because of the timing for the commute ... he'd commute two hours door to door in London. Even when we were in Wimbledon Park it would still take over an hour and he'd end up standing on the train. And the quality of life at the end of the day and the weekend is completely different. So, it was a quality of life thing as well really. And with a viewpoint that this wasn't going to go on forever, because he'd set the timeframe to commute for five years and then stop. So, you want to be somewhere nice at the end of that five years.

Here was a clear instance of pre-retirement migration occurring with an eye to settling into a place for retirement. This example furthermore demonstrates clear parallels with findings from previous studies of pre-retirement migration (see Philip and MacLeod, 2018), which have, for instance, claimed that these moves often commence when individuals are "in their early 50s", tend to involve two-adult empty-nest households who move after children have left the family home, and are heavily influenced by "quality of life consideration" (Stockdale, 2006, p. 4).

Whilst pre-retirement was not the only migration stream impacting this village, with many residents commenting on the 'mix of people' who had moved into and out

of the village, it was clear that the settlement had been impacted in the preceding couple of decades by a movement of people into the village who had commuted to work, in some cases to London, but who had subsequently retired. Many of these residents appeared to be active gentrifiers, with one resident commenting on the extent of change in the village "in terms of building new properties, quite big properties, [and] refurbishing properties", and also to be engaged in active retirement, both in relation to events within the village and surrounding communities, but also, in several cases, quite extensively in quite distant arenas. One couple in their 60s, for example, explained how they both found the village very attractive but also valued its accessibility to other parts of the country, both initially for work but also within their retirement.

peaceful, picturesque, friendly, lovely... but also accessible, it gives you a feel of being, in the countryside, a bit of rural life, but when we're only 15 minutes from a mainline station and we have accessibility in terms of driving or train into Nottingham, to Peterborough, to London, it's dead easy. And that is important to us... because we've got family all over the country, we want to be near a good road network, and because a lot of our leisure time, we're at the theatre, we do a lot of live performances, and not to be able to access that, we wouldn't like that.... And also we've got two or three circles of friends, and we're broadly in the centre of where are friends live.

## *Discussion and conclusion*

Our main aim in this paper was to move beyond conventional representations of rural gentrification that are often cast as a process of rural change tied to the in-migration of affluent family gentrifiers with children. Instead, we have presented empirical findings from an on-going study of rural gentrification to show how the processes of change can involve social groups at more mature stages of their lifecourse. These under-explored dimensions of rural gentrification serve to demonstrate the need to more fully consider the ageing of gentrifiers in place, and emphasises how a wider temporal perspective can shed more light on the complex dynamics of rural gentrification processes in specific places. In our case study locations, this focus reveals how ageing gentrifiers can influence the supply of available properties for subsequent waves of in-migrants to gentrify, and mediate the distinctive forms and expressions of rural gentrification. By staying-put during the latter stages of their lifecourse, albeit in

housing that may not suit their lifestyle, and living arrangements and family structure, rural gentrifiers can obliquely create displacement pressures impacting on younger residents and have serious impacts on local housing markets.

There are clearly important policy implications here for such rural places, which may have a knock-on effect on wider local rural and urban housing markets. For example, the increased development and supply of one- or two-bedroom bungalows in gentrified rural places may possibly free-up larger housing for families at child forming or rearing stages of their lifecourse, if ageing gentrifiers were to sell-up and move into bungalows; a theme that has been articulated by ageing gentrifiers in our case study locations. However, we also noted how in-coming family gentrifiers may be involved in the demolition of bungalows in their search to colonise certain rural locations, a practice that might reduce the possibility of residents down-sizing to smaller properties and thereby restrict the release of properties that might facilitate the in-migration of younger people with families.

Such situations highlight the complex relations that surround gentrification and ageing, and clearly illustrate the broader significance of this paper which has been to argue for the need for research that examines the intersections of ageing with processes of gentrification and adopt a fuller focus on gentrifiers at different stages of their lifecourse. Processes of rural gentrification are, as we have shown here, not restricted to in-migrant affluent families with children. At the same time, a wider temporal perspective of gentrifiers and a fuller consideration of what happens to gentrifiers when they stay-put and age in place would be valuable.

In this way, we would argue that processes of rural gentrification are an understated influence on the ageing of rural societies in many gentrified rural places. The ageing of rural gentrifiers may also be an overlooked factor in the growing exclusivity of some rural places, and the increasing exclusion of lower income social groups from gentrified rural places.

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