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The making of space and the losing of place:
a critical geography of gentrification-by-
bulldozer in the North of England

Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD

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by

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Your houses they pull down, stand up now, stand up now,
Your houses they pull down, stand up now;
Your houses they pull down to fright poor men in town,
But the Gentry must come down, and the poor shall wear the crown.
"Stand up now, Diggers all!

The Gentry are all round, stand up now;
The Gentry are all round, on each side they are found,
Their wisdom's so profound to cheat us of our ground.
Stand up now, stand up now.

'You Noble Diggers All' (The Diggers Song, Winstanley, 1650).

Abstract

Much like the economic system that drives and sustains it, gentrification is a dynamic phenomenon that is continuously evolving and diversifying to take advantage of new opportunities. The diversification and proliferation of gentrification takes different forms and envelops a range of geographies, actors and victims. Recently, state-led, 'new build' gentrification has emerged as the latest mutation of gentrification. To date, however, this particular form of gentrification has largely been associated with dis-used 'brownfield' sites, where the absence of a resident population precludes direct displacement. This thesis adds to academic understandings of new build gentrification by extending analysis to urban areas in the north of England, conceptualising Housing Market Renewal and similar programmes as particularly aggressive forms of state-led, new-build gentrification that involve the direct displacement of incumbent residents, demolition of existing housing and the erasure of meaningful places to assemble land for the purpose of redevelopment. Examining the place-meanings of working-class residents living in areas threatened with demolition, the thesis develops a geography of (new-build) gentrification that is focused on matters of home, place and place attachment.

Advocating a deeper appreciation of people's prior emplacement, the thesis seeks to re-appraise the meaning and value of places that are too readily dismissed as 'disinvested' or 'decaying' by distanced 'outsiders', including policy-makers, planners and urban scholars. Using data from case studies in the north of England, the thesis further demonstrates how the state dispossesses people of their homes through a combination of discourse, attrition and compulsion. Finding evidence of the damaging impacts of displacement, the thesis concludes by calling for a re-orientation of gentrification research to adopt a more emplaced perspective, thereby strengthening the case for re-conceptualising displacement as a form of social harm.

Plate 1: "All materials of value have been removed..."

Plate 2: Flowers left in memory of a former home, Liverpool
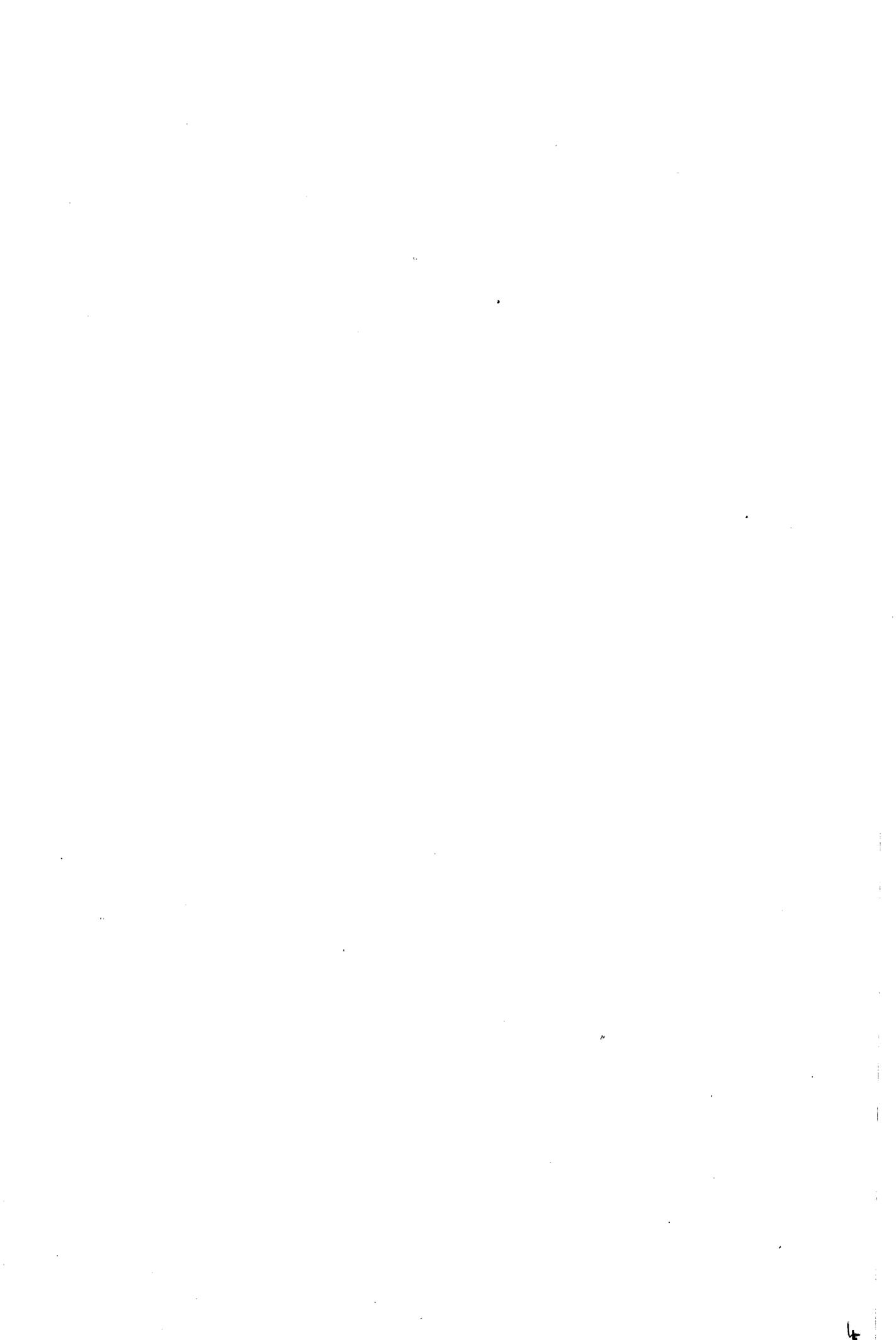
This thesis is written in memory of my grandfathers:

William Addis, 1919-1944

and

Ken Crookes, 1923-1970

Though I never knew them they have always been in my heart and I am immensely proud to be their grandson.

The thesis is dedicated to my mum and dad, who taught me about the things that really matter and who made my home such a special place as I was growing up. The values that I bring to this work are all down to them.

Acknowledgements

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Preface

"...I have come to this fundamental conclusion that if you want something really important to be done you must not merely satisfy the reason, you must move the heart also" (Gandhi, 1931)

"...a scientific man (*sic.*) ought to have no wishes, no affections, - a mere heart of stone" (Darwin, 1857, cited in Darwin and Seward, 1903)

Much urban scholarship apprehends the world from a social and epistemic distance (see for example Allen, 2008a; 2008b; 2009a) and much gentrification research, for example, is written by and for people who will likely never experience the trauma of being involuntarily displaced from their homes. Enjoying reasonably secure employment and/or attractive future career prospects, one assumes that the producers and users of urban research have the benefit of a relatively stable housing situation that is far removed from the vulnerable, if precarious, housing situations of those people living in areas marked by disinvestment. Many of the scholars working in this field (and most people generally) might therefore overlook the importance of home and take it for granted in the certainty that it is something that will always be there for them (see King, 2004). Approaching the world from a position of housing stability, where the permanence of one's housing is more or less assured, it takes some considerable effort of mind to contemplate how it would feel to be stripped of the material and emotional protections that home provides.

That urban scholars may be blessed with ontological security (Giddens, 1991; Hiscock *et al*, 2001; Saunders, 1984), however, should not excuse them from thinking about the moral and ethical implications of their work in the manner raised by David Smith:

> Those who take other people's place should have very good reason, and the moral principle of universalization, expressed in the question of *how they would feel if the positions were reversed*, is an appropriate test of whether the reason is good enough. (1994: 276)

Nowhere is this principle more relevant than in relation to those academics who were involved in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of the Housing Market Renewal (HMR) programme from the late 1990s to 2010 (see for example Cole and Nevin, 2004; Leather *et al*, 2007; Leather *et al*, 2009) . With the exception, perhaps, of Cole and Flint (2007), the proponents of HMR have mostly demonstrated indifference towards those sacrificing their homes for the greater 'good' of housing market renewal and elevated house prices. Neither of the two major National Evaluations that accompanied HMR presented any evidence on what happened to the residents displaced by HMR. There is not even any data to tell us *how many* households were displaced, let alone *how it felt* for those at the sharp end of the programme[1]. There is not the least hint of emotion. But, as I argue later, without this

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[1] We only know that, by the end of the programme, HMR had demolished around 31,000 houses (Audit Commission, 2011). Based on the material presented by Leather et al (2007), we can only

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sort of qualitative data, without the insights and experiences of those who are most adversely affected by demolition, any evaluation of HMR is incomplete. As Anderson and Smith argue:

> ...academic commitment to highlighting the emotional consequences of...economic decisions is an important element in bringing these actions to account. If the logic of efficiency depends on the silencing of the emotions, academics have a role in pointing out that this is an ethically questionable state of affairs. (Anderson and Smith, 2001: 8)

So it should be with gentrification too. If we are to better understand the impacts of a programme such as HMR, a programme that I interpret as a particular mutation of state-led, new-build gentrification, we must additionally examine its emotional consequences. Tracing our steps backwards, this requires, first, an understanding of incumbent residents' place-meanings, their idiosyncratic attachments to place and what happens when those attachments are broken. It demands we develop a 'geography of gentrification', no less, not so much in the sense of the contextualised, comparative geography envisaged by Lees (2000) and Slater (2004), but rather a geography of gentrification at the human scale that draws upon the humanistic tradition within the discipline and which builds on geographers' unique understanding of 'place'. If we, as geographers, can't speak up for place and the rich associations that people have with place then I have little hope for the future of the discipline. It should be our 'bread and butter'.

Smith's question, abbreviated to 'How would you feel?' should always be uppermost in our minds. *How would you feel?* I ask the question again to prompt readers into doing just that.

Whilst reading this preface, you might like to pause for a moment to think about your home and what it means to you. How might you feel to be threatened with dispossession and displacement, to be told that the peaceful enjoyment of your home falls short of the 'highest and best use' of the land you occupy, that is, it is defined as being "under-used or ineffectively used" (Leasehold Reform, Housing and Urban Development Act, 1993)? You might be interested to know how other people had fared in such circumstances. Unfortunately, the vast body of scholarship on gentrification actually tells us very little about residents' tactics of resistance or their experiences of displacement. With a few exceptions, the human and social costs of displacement are mostly absent from this literature: it rarely captures the raw emotions of people in the throes of defending and/or losing their homes. Those forced out have also been displaced from academic enquiry by what Slater (2006) summarises as "the eviction of critical perspectives from gentrification research". Similarly, Wacquant rightly bemoans "the empirical evaporation of working-class exiles from the literature on renovated urban quarters" (2008: 199). With so much research focused on the lifestyles of the middle-class incomers rather than the incumbent working-classes, the experience of displacement could be described, in effect, as one of the "hidden injuries of class" (Sennett and Cobb, 1973).

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speculate on how many of these houses were empty – there is no publicly available data on precisely how many households were displaced.

A number of scholars have suggested that this absence is partly a methodological problem insofar as one encounters substantial difficulties in tracing those who have already been displaced (see, for example, Atkinson, 2000; Slater *et al*, 2004). But this is less of an issue in the context of a large-scale demolition programme such as HMR. Methodologically, there is no need to scour data on land and property transactions to find evidence of an emerging rent-gap and those at risk of displacement. Those responsible for delineating the boundaries of the HMR areas have already done this for us, via the proxy indicator of arbitrary 'tipping points' in the proportion of empty properties (see for example Lee and Nevin, 2002). But, more than this, all the injustice of this particular form of new-build gentrification is occasionally brought into plain sight and concentrated in a public inquiry. Not only do we get to see the state using its Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) powers in support of gentrification, with the public interest aligned with the pursuance of private-sector and middle-class interests, we also see the erstwhile working-class 'phantoms' of urban scholarship (Slater, 2008) assuming a corporeal presence to determinedly oppose their planned displacement, *contra* Hackworth and Smith (2001) and Boddy (2007). If you really want to get a sense of how it might feel to face the prospect of losing your home and to put faces to those people that are actually in that unenviable position, a CPO inquiry is, I would suggest, without parallel: it makes visible both the agents of state-led, new-build gentrification and the ordinary people that get in their way. It is a place where the commodification of housing comes up against the emotional geographies of home. In a quite literal sense, a CPO public inquiry exemplifies Lefebvre's (1991) 'trial by space'. The incumbent working-class residents and the places they occupy are therefore central to any analysis of HMR.

Look at the anxious faces around the room where the inquiry is being held. Then think of what the threat of losing your home must mean if you're elderly or if you're already in poor health or have some form of disability. Or what if you work near to your home and can't afford to travel very far, or you've got children in the local school – how will moving affect them? If you're working, you may be reliant on family members living close by to mind the children or pick them up from school. If you're elderly you may depend on a carer living nearby or a kind neighbour. Moreover, what if you'd once been in the Armed Forces, fought a war, risked life and limb and lost good comrades – is this how you'd expect to be treated? These were exactly the issues that came up in the public inquiries I attended. You may also have paid off your mortgage years ago and have no wish to take on any new debt. In 2007, for example, owner-occupiers displaced by HMR faced, on average, a £35,000 shortfall between the money they received for their existing home and the purchase price of the property they moved into (Cole and Flint, 2007). Then take time to listen to those on the other side of the room, that is, the proponents who are promoting the CPOs. They want to take your home to build new houses to create a 'better' social 'mix'. Even though you may have lived there for most of your life or even been born there, you somehow don't quite fit in with their plans for the area (see Porter, 2009a). With prices six or seven times your (joint) income, you know you will never be able to afford to move back. And finally, recall that this is all being done and justified in the public interest.

How would you feel? Some felt it too sharply. For some, the prospect of upheaval proved too much: "Three people have died one after the other. They say it's the

worry." (Jackie, Oldham resident, cited in Minton, 2009: 86). In Liverpool too, local residents similarly allege that Housing Market Renewal has led to increased rates of illness and death: "We have had 41 neighbours die, and if it wasn't for the intensive care of my GP I suspect I would have by now joined them" (Pascoe, personal communication, 2010). In the fieldwork for this research, one of the people I interviewed in the town of 'Northerly'[2] told me about a neighbour who had attempted suicide whilst another interviewee attributed his wife's death to the anxiety of their impending move from a long-standing home. Many interviewees and public inquiry participants spoke of the onset of stress-related illnesses or the worsening of existing health conditions. By way of contrast, undertaking participant observation in the offices of the Council's HMR team, I saw council officers punching the air in victory on hearing of the decision to approve the demolition of more houses in the borough.

I will note that my reactions to housing demolition were, and continue to be, essentially ethical and emotional. It is hard not to be affected by injustice, misery, death and the contrasting fortunes of those who have built lucrative careers out of HMR or, alternately, had their lives devastated by it. Observing the frequently insensitive, sometimes brutal, manner in which HMR has proceeded and seeing, first-hand, the personal suffering that it has caused, it would, in my view, have been ethically unacceptable and personally unconscionable for me to have maintained the conventional detached stance of the academic and to have simply stood by and watched as people struggled to keep their homes. Allen (2008c: 31) takes a similar position: "I felt it would have been wrong to secure academic capital from writing about working class experiences of HMR whilst standing back and watching from the sidelines as working class people fought for their homes." More specifically, how can one claim to be against gentrification and then, when moments such as a CPO inquiry present themselves, refrain from intervening in support of those seeking to protect their 'right to stay put' (Hartman, 1984)? Academic disengagement from helping people in such struggles is, as Fuller (1999) suggests, tantamount to being complicit in their oppression.

Focusing on the working-class experience of gentrification-by-bulldozer, this thesis, may, at times, come across as 'personal' or 'emotional'. It might, in parts, exhibit the characteristics of "angry writing" (Keith, 1992). I make no apologies for this. Many of the residents I spoke with or listened to in the course of the research were extremely angry, aggrieved or distressed. Rather than objectifying this anger, however, as something that is inappropriate to the academic style of writing, the real challenge is "to express the pain and dispossession that working class people feel by making academic writing the medium of their anger rather than the form through which anger is objectified" (Allen, 2009a: 76).

Furthermore, the last four years have, invariably, been a very emotional time and that aspect of my recent 'being in the world' cannot help but spill on to the pages of this thesis. In seeking to fulfil my ethical responsibilities as a researcher critical of gentrification, I have tried to support residents' 'right to stay put' as best I can and in

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[2] Throughout, I use the name 'Northerly' as a pseudonym in order to preserve the anonymity of this particular metropolitan borough in the north of England. 'Parkside' is another pseudonym for a neighbourhood close to the centre of the town, whilst 'Hilltop' is several miles from the centre in a former coal-mining area.

various ways, ranging from driving people to meetings and hospital appointments, lending books, providing journal articles, preparing formal written objections to CPOs and, ultimately, writing this thesis. I have had my work rubbished by the HMR-funded barristers, had carefully prepared arguments ripped apart and been disparaged as an interfering 'busybody' and an un-knowing 'student'. I have been dismissed as providing only anecdotal evidence and writing polemically; more esteemed scholars than I have accused me of romanticising poverty. Other scholars who have dared to speak out against HMR have been similarly berated and subject to a tirade of threats and abuse that Allen (2009a) describes as a form of 'academic terrorism'. Sadly, the efforts of like-minded colleagues and myself have been to no avail, as all the residents' groups we have engaged with have ultimately lost their struggles to keep their homes. At the same time, however, the residents convinced me that the best contribution I could make to their struggle would be to write this thesis to make their voices heard beyond the inquiry, to challenge their effacement from policy and research by documenting their stories of home, their struggles against displacement, and their pain. As Elijah Debnam, one of the objectors to the Oldham CPO, expressed it to me: "What's wanted is for the people to be heard" (interview, 2007). That, essentially, is the purpose of this thesis.

Chapter 1

Introduction

...Distinctive and diverse places are manifestations of a deeply felt involvement with those places by the people who live in them, and that for many such a profound attachment to place is as necessary and significant as a close relationship with other people. It is therefore disturbing that so much planning and remaking of landscapes proceeds apparently in ignorance of the importance of place, even though the protests of the expropriated and uprooted demonstrate this very importance (Relph, 1976: *preface*).

1.1 The dark side of planning: place destruction

The Royal Town Planning Institute published its *New Vision for Planning* in 2001 (RTPI, 2001). Inherent to this contemporary reinterpretation of planning was the idea that planning is "driven by the twin activities of mediating space and making of place" (RTPI, 2001: 2). But the making of new places sometimes involves the destruction of existing places in order to yield space for development. In order to create development sites, some people must suffer the loss of familiar, cherished places. Planning, then, can also be understood as the making of space and the losing of place. From the perspective of urban research, however, the "destruction of cities...remains terra incognita" (Hewitt, 1983: 258). Several questions quickly arise. For example, by what processes are state assemblages able to legitimise the destruction of meaningful places? At the micro-level, in so called civilized society, how are states able to justify the "structural violence" (Galtung, 1969, 1971; Johnson, 2011) of forcibly taking someone's home as being in the public interest? In short, how does the state dispossess people of their homes and, after Fullilove (2004), what are the impacts upon those who are 'up-rooted'? It is these questions in which I am interested.

Remarkably, we have now reached the position where the state legitimises the taking of place by reference to the need for gentrification, although the term itself is rarely used in policy circles. Instead, policy-makers and urban scholars engaged in policy-relevant research talk about regeneration, renewal, urban renaissance or the need to address 'low demand' and 'obsolete' housing' (Allen, 2008a) and create mixed, 'sustainable communities' (ODPM, 2003). They speak of creating socially 'mixed' communities (Davidson, 2008); they use the rhetoric of 'place-shaping' (Allen and Crookes, 2009) and, in the US, officials euphemise a federal programme of public housing demolition by reference to 'hope'. The acronym HOPE VI may stand for Home ownership and Opportunity for People Everywhere but it is actually about dispersing public housing residents to deconcentrate poverty. Demolition is thus re-presented not as destruction, erasure and displacement but rather as an 'opportunity'.

Implicitly associating public housing with hopelessness, HOPE VI is reconfigured as the means by which public housing residents are offered hope.

The callous indifference and insensitivity of the neoliberal academic and policy *doxa* that legitimise such policies of displacement by reference to 'deconcentrating poverty' are neatly captured by Steinberg (2010: 222) with reference to events that followed Hurricane Katrina:

> While bodies were still being plucked from the floodwaters, William Julius Wilson and Bruce Katz (2005) appeared on the News Hour, declaring that Katrina presented a historic opportunity to breakup concentrated poverty.

Imbroscio (2008: 111) describes how this 'dispersal consensus' quickly came to dominate the academic and policy debate on the ensuing 'clean-up' operation:

> In response to this crisis and desperation, more than 200 social scientists— many quite prominent—quickly signed a petition endorsing the idea that "our goal . . . should be to create a 'move to opportunity'" for the thousands of low-income, displaced (mostly African American) former New Orleanians (Briggs *et al.*, 2005). Rather than supporting policies that affirmatively facilitate the efforts of the displaced to reclaim their homes and communities, the petition advocated polices to resettle the displaced in wealthier (often white, suburban) neighborhoods in order to break up concentrations of poverty existing in the city pre-Katrina.

Briggs (2006: 121) later recounts how the nascent resettlement plan outlined in his petition "was not a plan to depopulate New Orleans' historically black communities but a plan, rather, to give struggling families more choices. Careful deconcentration would, in turn, give rebuilt communities back in New Orleans a chance to be somewhat more economically diverse and healthy than they had been pre-storm". What is implied is that New Orleans, through 'careful deconcentration', would be more middle-class than formerly, a process that we might conventionally describe as gentrification. As Slater attests: "Gentrification sweeps the 'badly behaved' urban poor from sight, and in the case of New Orleans is becoming the official post-Katrina reconstruction strategy" (2008: 213).

This "'historic opportunity' to implement poverty deconcentration measures that address urban ills by dispersing the African-American poor away from deprived areas of the inner city" (Imbroscio, 2008: 112) was described in a *New York Times* article as Katrina's 'silver lining' (Brooks, 2005). Perhaps for those city planners and developers who were suddenly gifted – literally overnight - with a *tabula rasa* for redevelopment, Katrina did have a 'silver lining':

> Katrina was a natural disaster that interrupted a social disaster. It separated tens of thousands of poor people from the run-down, isolated neighbourhoods in which they were trapped...It has created as close to a blank slate as we get in human affairs, and given us a chance to rebuild a city that wasn't working (Brooks, 2005: A29 cited in Lees *et al*, 2008)

But there was certainly no silver lining for those low-income residents who were displaced and, indeed, those who remained (see for example Hartman and Squires, 2006; Slater, 2008). If anything, the natural disaster was a preface to what Klein (2007) has described as 'disaster capitalism'. Johnson (2011: 93) describes events in post-Katrina New Orleans as nothing short of an assault on the city's Black communities:

> In law and common parlance, assault is understood as threatened or actual violence. When it is propagated by government policy, it is also state-sponsored structural violence. As posited in this chapter, gentrification must be viewed accordingly as direct and structural violent assaults on Black people and Black communities.

The rhetoric of 'social disaster' employed by Brooks (2005), the 'discourse of decline' (Beauregard, 1993) and the "peculiar epistemological framework of problems" (Baeten, 2002: 107) is what keeps the 'poverty research industry' (Reed and Steinberg, 2006) and 'disaster capitalism' in business, not just in the US, but across the globe. Set alongside these problem discourses are the destructive technologies of 'place annihilation' (Hewitt, 1983). Of particular concern is how, from the 1950s onwards, "the 'sciences' of urban and military strategy became extremely blurred and interwoven" (Graham, 2004: 43; see also Light, 2002), leading to widespread, militaristic, planning-based urban destruction that was frequently underpinned by a vicious 'urban Orientalism' (Wacquant, 1997). Graham recounts vividly how he and his colleague, Simon Marvin, travelling to Haifa for a conference that they assumed would be about urbanisation and political violence were, instead, plunged into:

> ...a dark world of 'urban research' ...where systematic repression and state killing were portrayed in glossy PowerPoint slides with a palpable sense of fascination, even excitement (2005: 1).

Graham goes on to describe how this pseudo-scientific discipline of urban state killing had been applied to the destruction of Fallujah, early in the recent war in Iraq. Whilst horrendous and disturbing, how is this relevant to urban regeneration in New Orleans or, for that matter the former industrial towns and cities of northern England? It is relevant because Graham argues that what happened in Fallujah was at the extreme end of a continuum that links urban planning, demolition, new-build gentrification and outright manifestations of what Berman (1996) terms 'urbicide'. As Graham contends:

> ...the division between urban planning geared towards urban growth and development, and that which focuses on attempts at place annihilation or attack, is not always clear. It is certainly much more fuzzy than urban planners – with their Enlightenment-tinged self-images of devoting themselves to instilling urban 'progress' and 'order' – might want to believe. In fact, it is necessary to assume that a continuum exists connecting acts of building and physical restructuring, on the one hand, and acts of all-out organised war and place annihilation on the other (2004: 33)

Urban Orientalism and the militaristic, colonialist practices that go with it are not limited to the battlegrounds of the US-Iraq war; less extreme manifestations of 'othering' and dehumanisation can quite readily be found on 'home' territory in Chicago, New Orleans and inner-urban Liverpool. Planning has always had what Yiftachel (1998) terms its 'dark side' but the recent proliferation of housing demolition under HOPE VI and HMR, coupled with the increasing use of compulsory purchase and eminent domain may point to a more aggressive turn in contemporary urbanism that is in keeping with the 'fourth wave' gentrification suggested by Lees *et al* (2008) and Harvey's (2003) notion of 'accumulation by dispossession'. The 'frothy', 'cappucino wars' of gentrification (apologies to Zukin, 1995) and the benign proclamations of New Urbanism and 'sustainable communities' are therefore something of a diversion, a 'sugar-coating' (Smith, 2002; Slater, 2006), that belies the sometimes brutal acts of dispossession and dehumanisation that foreshadow their genesis. Chapter 8 of this volume highlights, for example, how the HMR intervention areas in Liverpool were officially designated as 'Zones of Opportunity' or, more curtly, 'ZOOs', whilst the adjoining neighbourhoods were designated as 'holding areas' (New Heartlands, 2006).

Arguing that New Orleans was already in the throes of a 'social disaster' before Katrina and the deluge hit, Brooks (2005) invokes the familiar themes of decay, social disorganisation and moral and behavioural inferiority that are the 'stock-in-trade' of the 'poverty research industry'

> [Katrina] separated tens of thousands of poor people from the run-down, isolated neighbourhoods in which they were trapped... If we just put up new buildings and allow the same people to move back into their old neighborhoods, then urban New Orleans will become just as rundown and dysfunctional as before.

Consequently, according to Brooks:

> The first rule of the rebuilding effort should be: Nothing Like Before. Most of the ambitious and organized people abandoned the inner-city areas of New Orleans long ago, leaving neighborhoods where roughly three-quarters of the people were poor.

So the people left behind were mostly unambitious and disorganised? Katrina certainly exposed the deep poverty, inequalities and racial discrimination that lurked behind the superficial image of the 'Big Easy', if not wider US society. But it also revealed, if you cared to look beyond the sensationalist media coverage, a community that was deeply attached to its place (Chamlee-Wright and Storr, 2009) and, following Fried (1963), a community that mourned the loss of its place. Yet Brooks argues that under no circumstances should thousands of poor people be allowed to return to their old neighbourhoods. For him, it is they who make New Orleans 'run-down and dysfunctional'. As if the trauma of displacement was not enough, these former residents should also be kept away from their old homes, friends, family and neighbourhoods. If they do return, Brooks (*op cit*) feels that it is essential that they be 'integrated' with more 'upstanding' citizens:

That's why the second rule of rebuilding should be: Culturally Integrate. Culturally Integrate. Culturally Integrate. The only chance we have to break the cycle of poverty is to integrate people who lack middle-class skills into neighborhoods with people who possess these skills and who insist on certain standards of behavior.

Now, bear in mind that Brooks was writing just over nine days after the hurricane struck. At that point several hundred people were known to have died as a direct result of the hurricane and subsequent flooding. Crowley (2006) presents preliminary estimates that suggest at least 700,000 people lost their homes, of whom 300,000 were, by US federal poverty standards, low-income or poor. Given this unprecedented scale of devastation and suffering what was uppermost in the mind of the New York Times columnist - what was it that most animated Brooks? Gentrification. The challenge ahead, at least as far as Brooks was concerned, did not lie in resettlement and bringing people back home but rather in ensuring that the new New Orleans was made sufficiently attractive so as to lure middle-class families who he thought would demonstrate admirable courage by living in neighbourhoods that included poor people:

> For New Orleans, the key will be luring middle-class families into the rebuilt city, making it so attractive to them that they will move in, even knowing that their blocks will include a certain number of poor people (Brooks, 2005).

The extent to which Brooks' views were representative of other Americans is not known. But what Brooks touches on was also evident in the speed with which the 'Gang of 200' signed Xavier Briggs' online petition. It is a central issue in this thesis. As Reed and Steinberg assert (2006: 6):

> The Gang of 200's petition reproduces and reinforces this disregard for the idea that poor people may have, or deserve to have, emotional attachments to a place they consider home. This is one way in which the stereotype of the "urban underclass" -- which Wilson in particular has done so much to legitimize -- is insidious: it defines poor people's lives as only objects for "our" administration

1.2 Housing Market Renewal

Seeking to revitalise housing markets in so-called 'low-demand areas' so as to establish 'sustainable communities', HMR involved a mixture of housing demolition and refurbishment and was trumpeted as the saviour of low-income home-owners and social housing tenants living in some of the inner-urban areas of Liverpool, Manchester, Sheffield, Newcastle-Gateshead, Birmingham and Hull. Outside the larger cities, HMR partnerships were also engaged in the 'transformational' regeneration of housing in other, smaller, former industrial towns such as Burnley, Middlesbrough, Stoke-upon-Trent, and Barnsley. The fieldwork for this research, it should be noted, has been conducted in Liverpool, Oldham and one other mid-sized northern town that I refer to as 'Northerly' in order to preserve anonymity and confidentiality.

For all the talk of creating sustainable communities, what does 'transformation' mean for existing residents? Overall, HMR sought to *transform* places socially and materially to create communities that were ostensibly more middle-class, both in terms of the resident mix and the physical 'dwellingscape' (Cameron, 2006). One of its principal aims, it should be emphasised, was to *raise local house prices* to a level closer to the respective regional average house price, in order to 're-connect' what it termed as 'failing' or 'dysfunctional' local housing markets to the 'functional' higher-priced housing markets of the wider sub-region or region (ODPM, 2005a). Crudely, its strategy for achieving this was to reduce the supply of 'low demand' housing through demolition. Traditional terraced housing or social housing was then replaced with a smaller number of contemporary, 'aspirational' houses designed to attract new, more affluent, incomers. In this way, HMR sought to demolish and reduce the stock of affordable, low-cost housing, generating both direct and secondary forms of displacement.

1.3 Research problem: from displacement to emplacement

One of the definitions of the verb 'displace' is to 'shift from its accustomed place' (OED Online). This thesis argues that, in order to be relevant to those at risk of displacement, gentrification research must shift from its accustomed place, that is, its primary concerns with displacement and the lifestyles and preferences of middle-class gentrifiers, and first turn its attention to the existing working class residents and, in particular, matters related to their *em*placement. Examining the encroachment of the middle-classes through the eyes of those who are on the 'wrong' side of Smith's 'new urban frontier', gentrification takes on a much harder edge: it becomes much more about dispossession. Seen from below, gentrification might better be understood as a form of 'social harm' (Hillyard *et al*, 2004) or 'structural violence' (Galtung, 1969; Johnson, 2011). In completing this manoeuvre, the housing and neighbourhoods that we often casually dismiss as 'disinvested' or 'decayed' take on a very different meaning. Seen through the eyes of those who are fighting to remain, we begin to see these places as home, as places which have a personal meaning and significance that could never be captured through the crude calculus of market value. The members of the public who were present at the public inquiries I attended were there precisely because they did not want to be displaced from their homes. Given this strong attachment to home, this thesis argues that we need to fundamentally rethink how we conceptualise and approach the study of gentrification. This ontological and epistemological displacement will not be easy as we have, to some extent, become locked into particular ways of 'seeing' gentrification that almost naturalise it: "...how can we think of gentrification as anything else but the production of space for – and consumption by – a more affluent and very different incoming population?" (Slater *et al*, 2004: 1145). I share the frustration inherent in this statement but raise the question, what if we start from a different position? What if we were to use the notion of 'home' as our starting point, rather than immediately engaging with concerns related to displacement?

The theoretical focus on displacement, in particular, has always struck me as somewhat *post hoc* insofar as it precludes an early intervention into the politics of place. The occurrence of displacement signifies that residents have lost their battle

to remain. From the resident's perspective, any intervention at this point would now be too late: the 'damage' of displacement has already been done. Now, many theoretical purists would argue that displacement is logically and conceptually non-negotiable, that it constitutes the defining event, that is, the moment at which gentrification actually occurs. But, in practice, what does this do for our ability to contribute to struggles against displacement? By focusing our critical attention on displacement, we may overlook residents' prior emplacement. The settled condition of placement necessarily precedes *dis*-placement: displacement is only half the story, so to speak. This is a crucial oversight, as Davidson (2009) has warned. Furthermore, it raises the question, how can critical scholarship in gentrification be so vehemently anti-displacement without being commensurately *for* home and emplacement?

The lack of attention to working-class experiences of gentrification means that we have rarely focused on these neighbourhoods as people's homes, as places that are worth fighting for. Looked at from below - as a resident - such neighbourhoods may take on a very different aspect to that perceptible to the outsider (Allen, 2008a; Gans, 1962). Blomley expresses it in the following terms: "The streets of the Downtown Eastside may be mean and degraded to many, but they are also 'home'. It is the people of the area and the shared histories and material experiences that constitute the neighbourhood..." (2004: 53). The housing and the neighbourhood environment may not be visually attractive but, as Allen (2008a) demonstrates with reference to Kensington, Liverpool, this is only a problem where housing is primarily understood in terms of consumption and exchange values ('a position within the space of positions') rather than its potential for dwelling - its use value as a place to live ('as a lived space'). Capital may quickly come and go, seeking out new spatial fixes (Harvey, 1981; 1982) but people remain: places may have been long abandoned by capital, but a strong sense of attachment and rootedness means that many local residents maintain an enduring commitment to them (Blomley, 2004; Simone, 2004). Some residents, as this thesis will show, are willing to put up a determined fight to remain. Such commitment to place should be supported and nurtured: "[A]ttachment to place deserves recognition, and social networks should not be destroyed" (Holcomb and Beauregard, 1981: 70). Thus, before turning its attention to *dis*-placement, critical gentrification research should do more to acknowledge, understand and defend tenants and home-owners' loyalties to place and their desire to stay put.

Starting from the position of 'home' and emplacement offers a range of new analytical possibilities. In the broadest sense, the 'home' perspective allows us to reconceptualise gentrification as a peculiarly spatial form of social harm, providing an analytical lens through which we can focus evidence on the personal and social costs of displacement. Stressing the meaning and significance of home and attachments to place, we get a much better insight into the experience of *dis*-placement: "when we have some understanding of how we live, we can then understand more fully the extent of the trauma and crisis that comes with the loss of our dwelling environments" (King, 2004: 8). Overall, our deeper commitment to 'home' means that we are literally much better *placed* - to defend people's 'right to stay put' (Hartman, 1984) and to argue that "moving people involuntarily from their homes or neighbourhoods is wrong" (Hartman *et al*, 1982, pp 4-5). We are also able to stand Hackworth's (2002) definition of gentrification on its head, such that "the

production of space for more affluent users" becomes "the taking of place from less affluent incumbents". Clearly, working from the basis of home and emplacement, it is possible to shift from our accustomed place and approach gentrification differently, in a way that emphasises the positive features of working-class communities whilst focusing greater critical attention upon the violence of dispossession and the impacts upon these who are forced from their homes.

1.4 Summary of chapters

Responding to the arguments outlined above, this thesis critically examines the implementation and impacts of HMR and a non-HMR housing demolition/regeneration scheme via a focus on home, dispossession and displacement. In particular, it addresses these three questions:

1. What was the meaning of place and home for those residents living in areas threatened with demolition?

2. How did the state take people's homes in HMR areas?

3. What were the individual and social impacts of housing demolition and displacement?

These questions are described in more detail in Chapter 6. In essence, the research is based upon an ethnography of ordinary people that were living in areas threatened with demolition, who were fighting demolition or who had already lost their homes as a result of such schemes. Recognising that "a plethora of key actors are involved in the process of gentrification" (Lees *et al*, 2008: xxiii) it is also, to a lesser extent, a study of how HMR, as a distinct form of new-build gentrification, created *tabulae rasae* by erasing meaningful places and turning them into development-ready brownfield sites. In this, it examines how places are emptied of people and meaning and 'delivered vacant' (see DeFilippis, 2007). Combining data from three research settings, including areas undergoing demolition, council offices and public inquiries, the research presents a grounded account of gentrification-by-bulldozer in Northerly, Liverpool and Oldham.

One of the case-studies, 'Parkside' in central Northerly, is a standalone demolition/refurbishment project whose origins preceded the development of the HMR programme. The other case-studies – Hilltop (in Northerly), Liverpool and Oldham – are all HMR-funded schemes that form part of the respective sub-regional HMR plans. To preserve anonymity, I refer to the sub-regional HMR partnership and the area it covers as 'Metro'.

The thesis is structured into three parts: Background; Research aims and methods; and Analysis and Findings. Following on from this introduction, Part I reviews the literature on gentrification and traces the development of post-war urban policy, up to and including the introduction of HMR. Specifically, Chapter 2 summarises some key issues in gentrification research, including consumption and production-side explanations and the emergence of new forms of gentrification such as state-led and

new-build gentrification. It also considers the neglected issue of positionality in gentrification research.

Having identified some gaps in the gentrification literature, Chapter 3 draws upon humanistic geography to examine the literature on place and home and the invisibility of these concepts within gentrification research. I argue that place constitutes, in effect, a *terra incognita* for gentrification researchers that they seem reluctant to explore.

Chapter 4 considers the historical context and precedents for HMR, examining urban and housing policy in the UK between 1945 and 1997. Where appropriate, reference is also made to the US experience of urban renewal.

Chapter 5 outlines New Labour's approach to urban regeneration and examines the introduction of HMR and its objectives. It considers HMR in the context of the emerging literature on new-build gentrification and evaluates the programme against the four 'cardinal' criteria suggested by Davidson and Lees (2005).

In Part II, Chapter 6 introduces the research aims and questions and presents an account of the ethnographic methods I adopted to conduct the research. It charts the evolution of the research and some of the ethical and epistemological implications of supporting residents' struggles against demolition.

Part III presents and analyses the empirical material collected over the course of the fieldwork. In Chapter 7, I am primarily concerned with matters of emplacement and present qualitative data about attitudes to home and place amongst working-class residents living in Parkside. This work is based upon participant observation and interviews conducted intermittently over the course of two years. It includes interviews with some of the residents who were remaining in the area, as well as those who were at risk of losing their homes.

Chapter 8 is one of three linked chapters that examine how the state took people's homes in the context of HMR. Over the three chapters, the taking of home is presented as a three-fold model that variously involves discursive strategies, practices of 'attrition' and, ultimately, compulsion. Beginning with 'demolition by discourse', Chapter 8 looks at how the state has employed various discursive strategies to devalorise 'target' neighbourhoods as a precursor to demolition. Chapter 9 analyses the processes and practices of 'attrition' that the Northerly HMR team used to get people to leave their homes. Collectively, these practices, I argue, amount to a contemporary form of 'winkling', but now practised by the state instead of private landlords.

Chapter 10 draws on my observation of three public inquires and my participation in two of them. It examines what happens when home-owners refuse to leave their homes and the local authority chooses to invoke its powers of compulsory purchase. It outlines recent changes to CPO laws and the nature of public inquiry proceedings, before examining some of the arguments that were made by both sides. Particular attention is focused on the experience of a number of key objectors including Mr Elijah Debnam, an elderly resident of Derker, Oldham.

Chapter 11 takes a comprehensive and detailed look at the impact of displacement on residents who were forced to leave Parkside, with additional reference to the actual and potential impacts that were being highlighted by people who attended the public inquiries. It draws together data from a questionnaire that was sent to displacees, desk-based analysis of their first destination addresses, interviews and observation. Highlighting the negative impacts of being displaced, particularly with regard to people's physical health and mental well-being, the chapter concludes by developing the argument for re-conceptualising gentrification as a form of social harm. This then leads into the discussion for the conclusion in Chapter 12.

PART I

THEORETICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Chapter 2

The debate on gentrification

2.1 Introduction

This thesis conceptualises HMR as a form of state-led, new-build gentrification. An understanding of the nature of HMR therefore demands an appreciation of some of the key issues in gentrification research. This chapter therefore provides an overview of the history of gentrification and highlights some of the main debates in contemporary scholarship on gentrification.

What is gentrification, exactly? Famously described as a 'chaotic' and 'complex' concept that connotes many diverse events and processes (Beauregard, 1986), scholars have long struggled with the problem of devising suitable definitions of gentrification that capture this breadth and diversity whilst also retaining the political purchase of the term. The chapter therefore begins by outlining some of these definitional deliberations. Understanding gentrification also requires a complementary appreciation of the different forms of displacement that may arise and I follow up the initial discussion with a brief summary of Marcuse's (1986) synoptic work that usefully pulled together the earlier insights of Grier and Grier (1978), and LeGates and Hartman (1981) to provide some much-needed conceptual clarity.

I then move on to consider the main explanations for gentrification, electing to focus on one of the dominant themes in the literature, that is, the production-side versus consumption side explanations of the phenomenon. With Neil Smith and David Ley portrayed "as polar opposites and the *de facto* representatives of mutually exclusive production and consumption explanations", Slater (2011: 575) argues that a generation of scholars have been misled into seeing gentrification "in stark binary terms of production or consumption, supply or demand, structure or agency, economics or culture", when the reality is that both analysts were much less one-sided than the naive onlooker might think. These heated, long-running squabbles over whether Smith or Ley had the most convincing explanation were seriously detrimental to critical, progressive scholarship (Slater, 2006; Slater et al, 2004).

Moving beyond these dualistic debates the next section looks at the geographical diffusion of gentrification and the 'mutation' of the phenomenon, focusing principally on the emergence of state-led and new-build gentrification. Some, such as Bondi (1999) and Lambert and Boddy (2002) feel that extending the definition of gentrification in this way is a step too far that stretches or overloads the term to a point where it is no longer meaningful. Conversely, in re-conceptualising gentrification to incorporate new-build residential development, Davidson and Lees (2005: 1187) argue that "Gentrification scholars need to allow the term gentrification enough elasticity to 'open up new insights'", using Glass's (1964) original, if dated, definition of the process "as a spring board from which to open out the definition as

opposed to something that restricts it". Smith's words highlight why this remains important: "Precisely because the language of gentrification tells the truth about the class shift involved in the 'regeneration' of the city, it has become a dirty word to developers, politicians and financiers..." (Smith, 2002: 445). Neo-liberal projects, disguised as 'regeneration', 'renaissance', 'renewal' or the 'deconcentration of poverty', artfully avoid any reference to gentrification. This is precisely why scholarship and activism should "keep hold of 'gentrification' as an important term and concept for analysing urban change in the 21st-century city" (Davidson and Lees, 2005: 1187). Moreover, as Slater (2011: 571) reminds us, invoking the term 'gentrification', "simply, yet very powerfully captures the class inequalities and injustices created by capitalist urban land markets and policies". The term therefore continues to be an important 'banner' for class struggle around which various urban social movements can mobilise and gain visibility.

Reading the vast international literature on gentrification, it quickly becomes apparent that gentrification is geographically and historically contingent: it has followed, and continues to trace, several different geographies and temporalities. In an effort to make sense of this complexity, the next section of the chapter introduces the historical schema developed by Hackworth and Smith (2002). Outlining their three 'waves' of gentrification, I develop Lees *et al* (2008) in arguing that HMR exemplifies a more recent 'fourth wave'.

Peter Marcuse (1999) argues that how gentrification is evaluated – whether it is seen as a negative or positive phenomenon - depends a great deal on how it is defined. But it also depends on where you 'stand' in a socio-spatial and political sense. Looked at from below, through the eyes of incumbent working-class residents, gentrification looks rather different from how it is perceived by middle-class gentrifiers, policy-makers and indeed, many academics. In recent years, many gentrification researchers have tended to focus on the lifestyles and preferences of the gentrifiers, with little concern for the experience and fates of the working-class households that are pushed out (see, for critical discussion, Slater, 2006). As Butler and Hamnett concede: "Undoubtedly, over the last 20 years too many glasses of chardonnay have been shared between researcher and gentrifier and this has probably led to a telling of the story of the city as that seen by the middle classes" (2009: 221). As Watt argues, however, "Gentrification researchers should consider not only studying 'people like us' (highly educated professionals) in Tim Butler's (1997) telling phrase, but also 'people not like us' " (2008a: 209). This raises some interesting questions about the positionality of gentrification researchers and the impact this has on our understanding of the perceived benefits and costs. Therefore, responding to Lees' (1998) call for gentrification researchers to be more open and transparent about their research methods, the final section considers the issue of positionality in gentrification research.

2.2 Defining gentrification and displacement

From the small-scale, localised phenomenon first observed by Engels (1935) and later conceptualised and named by Glass (1964), gentrification has evolved into a "global urban strategy" (Smith, 2002), becoming a principal goal of urban policy for central and city governments world-wide. As gentrification has developed and

mutated, there has been growing disagreement about how it should be defined. Drawing in different actors and exhibiting a qualitatively different dynamic, "gentrification today is quite different to gentrification in the early 1970s, late 1980s, even the early 1990s" (Lees, 2000: 16).

The British sociologist, Ruth Glass, was the first to use the term 'gentrification' in an effort to describe some of the processes of urban change that were beginning to emerge in parts of inner-London in the mid-1960s. The 'classic' gentrification she documented was initially an unplanned, haphazard affair of sporadic incidence. As Glass observed:

> One by one, many of the working class quarters of London have been invaded by the middle-classes—upper and lower. Shabby, modest mews and cottages—two rooms up and two down—have been taken over, when their leases have expired, and have become elegant, expensive residences ... Once this process of 'gentrification' starts in a district it goes on rapidly until all or most of the original working-class occupiers are displaced and the whole social character of the district is changed. (1964, xviii)

With echoes of the traditional English rural class structure, Glass coined the term to highlight the emergence of a new 'urban gentry' who were replacing the existing working-class population. For Glass, this complex urban process "included the rehabilitation of old housing stock, tenurial transformation from renting to owning, property price increases, and the displacement of working-class residents by the incoming middle-classes" (Lees et al, 2008: 5).

The 'classic' or 'organic' form of gentrification that Glass observed in Islington would often proceed incrementally and insidiously, with minimal intervention or encouragement from the state. In Britain at least, this classic form of gentrification was something undertaken largely by 'pioneer' gentrifiers - 'doer-uppers' - who would engage in some do-it-yourself rehabilitative work or 'sweat equity' as it came to be known. Yet, from these rather slow, uncertain beginnings, by the end of the twentieth century, this process of class transformation had become big business and a cornerstone of urban regeneration, involving both the state and private developers in major cities across the world (see, for example, Atkinson and Bridge, 2005; Smith, 2002).

But many scholars have been resistant to the ascription of these larger processes of planned urban change and regeneration as 'gentrification', preferring to limit the application of the concept to exactly the sort of limited-scale residential rehabilitation schemes that Glass described. But such narrow definitions fail to capture the spirit of Glass's intention which was concerned essentially with highlighting the impacts and injustice of an emerging process of class transformation in inner-London. This points to the need for a broader definition, as Smith and Williams have argued:

> If we look back at the attempted definitions of gentrification, it should be clear that we are concerned with a process much broader than merely residential rehabilitation ... [A]s the process has continued, it has become increasingly apparent that residential rehabilitation is only one facet ... of a

more profound economic, social, and spatial restructuring. In reality, residential gentrification is integrally linked to the redevelopment of urban waterfronts for recreational and other functions, the decline of remaining inner-city manufacturing facilities, the rise of hotel and convention complexes and central-city office developments, as well as the emergence of modern "trendy" retail and restaurant districts … Gentrification is a visible spatial component of this social transformation. A highly dynamic process, it is not amenable to overly restrictive definitions (Smith and Williams, 1986: 3).

Smith (1996: 39) himself admits to using an overly narrow definition in his earlier work:

> In my own research I began by making a strict distinction between gentrification (which involved rehabilitation of existing stock) and redevelopment that involved wholly new construction (Smith, 1979), and at a time when gentrification was distinguishing itself from large-scale urban renewal this made some sense. But I no longer feel that it is such a useful distinction.

Significantly, he concludes that:

> Gentrification is no longer about a narrow and quixotic oddity in the housing market but has become the leading residential edge of a much larger endeavour: the class remake of the central urban landscape. It would be anachronistic now to exclude redevelopment from the rubric of gentrification, to assume that the gentrification of the city was restricted to the recovery of an elegant history in the quaint mews and alleys of old cities, rather than bound up with a larger restructuring (Smith, 1996: 31).

Writing in the mid-1990s, Ley similarly argued for a broad definition of gentrification that includes "renovation and redevelopment on both residential and non-residential sites" (1996: 34). Sassen also notes how scholarship in the 1980s "developed a far broader meaning of gentrification, linking it with processes of spatial, economic and social restructuring" (1991: 255). Shaw captures something of the unprecedented scale and diversity of contemporary gentrification, describing it as:

> ...a generalised middle-class restructuring of place, encompassing the entire transformation from low-status neighbourhood to upper-middle-class playgrounds. Gentrifiers' residences are no longer just renovated houses but newly built townhouses and high-rise apartments...Gentrification extends to retail and commercial precincts, and can be seen in rural and coastal townships as well as cities...(2008: 2).

It is this diversity that has led some, such as Beauregard (1986) to describe gentrification as a 'chaotic concept' and others to question whether researchers can and should continue to use the term to describe such a broad range of processes and outcomes (see, for example, Boddy, 2007; Bondi, 1999). Even Smith concedes that extending 'gentrification' to encompass all its mutations and derivatives risks

undermining the "usefulness, and distinction, of the concept for understanding urban change" (Smith, 2002: 390-392). But, as Slater affirms:

> To label as anything other than gentrification the construction of upmarket housing aimed at young professionals in or on formerly working-class industrial spaces (for example, vacant dockyards or warehouses), and to use a term like 'revitalisation' or 'regeneration' to characterise the implosion of low-income public housing projects in favour of mixed income developments, is analytically erroneous and politically conservative (2011: 573).

Gentrification, Lees et al point out, is one of the most politicised and politically loaded words in urban studies and anti-gentrification groups "...would have little political clout without being able to be against 'gentrification' and the class-placed displacement and oppression that the word invokes" (2008: 155). The political force of the term can readily be appreciated by the extent to which policy-makers and developers astutely avoid reference to the term in relation to their policies and activities.

Advocating a broader conceptualisation, Clark offers a useful "elastic yet targeted definition" where "gentrification is a process involving a change in the population of land-users such that the new users are of a higher socio-economic status than the previous users, together with an associated change in the built environment through a reinvestment in fixed capital" (2005: 258). More succinctly, Hackworth defines gentrification as "the production of urban space for progressively more affluent users" (2002: 815). Capturing a sense of the social and physical changes that are inherent to the process, this is the preferred definition that I use throughout the thesis.

One cannot hope to fully grasp the social and political implications of gentrification without an understanding of displacement. Slater is unequivocal: "Displacement is and always will be vital to an understanding of gentrification, in terms of retaining definitional coherence and of retaining a critical perspective on the process" (2006: 748). Yet Slater's *Eviction* paper (2006) goes on to highlight the extent to which displacement has itself been displaced from the gentrification literature. The work of Marcuse (1985) therefore provides an important corrective to the 'displacement deniers' highlighted by Slater. Below, I reproduce Slater's (2009) discussion on Marcuse's four types of displacement:

> (1) Direct last-resident displacement: this can be physical (e.g. when landlords cut off the heat in a building, forcing the occupants to move out) or economic (e.g. a rent increase).

> (2) Direct chain displacement: this looks beyond standard 'last-resident' counting to include previous households that 'may have been forced to move at an earlier stage in the physical decline of the building or an earlier rent increase'.

> (3) Exclusionary displacement: this refers to those residents who cannot access housing as it has been gentrified/abandoned: 'When one household

vacates a housing unit voluntarily and that unit is then gentrified or abandoned so that another similar household is prevented from moving in, the number of units available to the second household in that housing market is reduced. The second household, therefore, is excluded from living where it would otherwise have lived.' (p. 206)

(4) Displacement pressure: this refers to the dispossession suffered by poor and working-class families during the transformation of the neighbourhoods where they live: 'When a family sees the neighbourhood around it changing dramatically, when their friends are leaving the neighbourhood, when the stores they patronise are liquidating and new stores for other clientele are taking their places, and when changes in public facilities, in transportation patterns, and in support services all clearly are making the area less and less livable, then the pressure of displacement already is severe. Its actuality is only a matter of time. Families living under these circumstances may move as soon as they can, rather than wait for the inevitable; nonetheless they are displaced.' (p. 207)

The first two types might also be understood as 'direct' or 'primary' forms of displacement. Exclusionary displacement and displacement pressure might be broadly categorised as 'indirect' or 'secondary' forms of displacement. Where most commentators' attention has been limited to the direct displacement that equates to (1) above, Marcuse's work highlights how displacement takes alternative forms that can produce similar effects and be just as devastating for the affected households. Exclusionary displacement, for example, refers to situations where low-income or working-class households are effectively priced-out and no longer able to access housing because it has been gentrified . As well as creating direct displacement, *demolition* of the affordable housing stock also generates additional exclusionary displacement. This explains why Hartman *et al* are so vehemently opposed to *any* reductions in the affordable housing stock:

> It is also fundamentally wrong to allow removal of housing units from the low-moderate income stock, for any purpose, without requiring at least a one-for-one replacement. Demolition, conversion, or 'upgrade' rehab of vacant private or publicly owned lower-rent housing should be just as vigorously opposed as when those units are occupied. (1982: 5)

In major cities such as London, where land for affordable, working-class housing is in short supply, one might additionally identify another form of exclusionary displacement in the sense that other forms of development forestall the opportunity to build new, affordable housing. In the 1980s, for example, opposition to the London Docklands Development Corporation was partly about the missed opportunity to build council housing on the land that was acquired by the LDDC[3].

Overall, a key benefit of Marcuse's improved, more analytically robust conceptualisation of displacement is that it strengthens researchers' ability to apply the gentrification label to processes of transformation that may not necessarily

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[3] I am grateful to Jamie Gough for this particular insight.

generate *direct* displacement. This is discussed below with respect to new-build development.

2.3 Explaining gentrification

Slater notes how "considerable time, energy, and ink have been consumed arguing over whether it is the quest for profit or the expansion of the middle classes that offers the best explanation of gentrification" (2011: 572). Re-working Smith's 'frontier' analogy, Hamnett suggests that one of the main reasons that so much attention has been devoted to gentrification is because it represents a theoretical and political frontier, "a contested boundary zone between radically different theories and explanations (1991: 174). For Hamnett, writing at a time when Marxist geography was under critical attack from post-modernists, gentrification represented one of the key battlegrounds in human geography,

> ...between the liberal humanists who stress the key role of choice, culture, consumption and consumer demand, and the structural Marxists who stress the role of capital, class, production and supply. Gentrification is one of the main arenas of conflict between the proponents of culture, preference and human agency, and the proponents of the imperatives of capital and profitability (1991: 174).

Briefly, production-side explanations of gentrification suggest that the phenomenon has its origins in uneven development across urban space as capitalists seek out new opportunities to maximise profits (see, for example, Smith, 1979). In creating new places for profit and accumulation, capitalist development simultaneously devalorises existing capital commitments, generating a cycle of investment and disinvestment through a process of 'creative destruction' (Schumpeter, 1934). Spatially, this sets in motion a process of uneven development that Smith characterises as a 'locational see-saw', that is:

> ...the successive development, underdevelopment, and redevelopment of given areas as captial jumps from one place to another, then back again, both creating and destroying its own opportunities for development".

Consequently, over time, the economically optimal use – the 'highest and best use' for a particular parcel of land will be subject to change. From this, Smith (1979), distinguishing between the actual economic return accruing to a parcel of land (the capitalised ground rent) and the potential retun if the parcel was put to its highest and best use (potential ground rent), develops the theory of the 'rent gap'- the difference between the potential rent and the actual rent for the land in its present use. As these rent-gaps increase, so does the pressure to rehabilitate or redevelop in order to realise the higher 'rent'. This eventually leads to gentrification. At the macro-level, Smith argues that:

> Gentrification is a structural product of the land and housing markets. Capital flows to where the rate of return is highest, and the movement of capital to the suburbs, along with the continual depreciation of inner-city capital, eventually produces the rent-gap (1979: 55)

At the micro-level,

> Gentrification occurs when the gap is wide enough that developers can purchase shells cheaply, can pay the builders' costs and profit for rehabilitation, can pay interest on mortgage and construction loans, and can then sell the end product for a sale price that leaves a satisfactory return to the developer (Smith, 1979: 545).

Although Smith's rent-gap theory provides an elegant explanation as to why gentrification occurs, production-side explanations have been criticised on a number of grounds. In particular, from an empirical perspective, the rent gap is difficult to measure and research. As Clark notes, how can the theory be translated "into an easily applied language of observation" (1995: 1493)? The main criticism of such accounts, however, is the extent to which they downplay the actions of individual actors and, more broadly, the role of the new, expanding middle class. In response, consumption-side explanations (see, for example, Ley, 1986; Hamnett, 1991; Butler, 1997) emphasised how changes in post-industrial cities' occupational structures, coupled with significant social and cultural change, "produced an expanding pool of gentrifiers with a disposition towards central-city living, and an associated rejection of suburbia for the blandness and monotony it symbolised" (Slater, 2011: 575). For Ley, activity in the property market is more a reflection of the market power exercised by the growing professional labour force. He describes it thus:

> ...job growth (in) the white-collar complex of downtown head offices, producer services, and indirectly, (in) public institutions and agencies. ... leads to the 'production' of professionals, managers and other quaternary employees working downtown, who then provide the demand base for housing re-investment in the inner city ... this population, as it gives political and economic expression to its own predilection to urban amenity, will restructure the built environment and accelerate the gentrification process (Ley,1986: 532).

In short, Ley argued that gentrification represented a new kind of urbanism that was characterised by "consumption factors, taste and a particular aesthetic outlook towards the city from an expanding middle class" (Lees et al, 2008: 92).

Thus, for a time, gentrification research became all about taking sides and, as Clark puts it: "throwing rocks from behind barricades" (1992: 359 cited in Slater, 2006). As has already been noted, however, the intensity of this conflict was over-stated. Both Ley and Smith, in fact, made repeated calls for a broader understanding of gentrification that would take both the actions of consumers and producers into account. Ley (2003), for example, has suggested that any robust explanation of gentrification must consider how production and consumption factors work together to produce class inequality at the neighbourhood level. In understanding the 'elephant of gentrification', Hamnett has also argued for "an integrated explanation" that involves "both explanation of the production of devalued areas and housing and the production of gentrifiers and their specific consumption and reproduction patterns" (1991: 173). Sensibly, contemporary writing on gentrification has

therefore tended to explain gentrification from both perspectives. As Clark has argued, "[N]either side is comprehensible without the other, and all present theories of gentrification touch bottom in these basic conditions for the existence of the phenomenon" (2005: 261).

2.4 A global urban strategy? The generalisation and diversification of gentrification

The origins of gentrification were relatively modest, both in scale and geography. By 2002, however, Smith was able to declare that gentrification had become a 'global urban strategy' (2002: 439). Allied to the development of a globalised economy, the growth and diversification of gentrification has been part of a wider neoliberalisation of space (Peck and Tickell, 2002) where cities "have become the incubators for many of the major political and ideological strategies through which the dominance of neoliberalism is being maintained" (Brenner and Theodore, 2002: 375-6). With gentrification often at the forefront of these changes, Smith observes "a generalization of gentrification in the urban landscape" (2002: 439)

Having outgrown its origins in London and major US cities, there has been a rapid and widespread geographical diffusion of gentrification. Writing of 'a new urban colonialism', Atkinson and Bridge describe the extent to which gentrification has become a global phenomenon that is no longer confined to western cities:

> Processes of neighbourhood change and colonisation represented by an increasing concentration of the new middle classes can be found in Shanghai as well as Sydney, or Seattle. Nor is it now limited to the 'global' cities, the focus of much of the gentrification debate to date. It can now be found in new regional centres such as Leeds and Barcelona as well as capital cities previously not associated with the process such as Moscow, Brussels and Berlin (2005: 1).

Nor is the phenomenon confined to large cities. Discussing the evolution and 'mutation' of gentrification, Lees et al (2008) point to the growing body of work on, for example, rural gentrification (Smith and Phillips, 2001) and 'studentification', that is, the colonisation of areas in university towns by middle-class students against the background of the expansion of higher education (see, for example, Chatterton, 2010; D. Smith, 2002). Whilst there is not space to discuss all of the mutations/derivations here, I will, however, focus on two recent variations of the phenomenon. These are, respectively, 'state-led' and 'new-build' gentrification.

State-led gentrification

In writing his seminal 1991 paper, '*The blind men and the elephant: the explanation of gentrification*', Hamnett's aim was to demonstrate that

...both of the two principal theoretical perspectives on gentrification are partial abstractions from the totality of the phenomenon, and have focused on different aspects to the neglect of other, equally crucial elements. Like Aesop's fable of the blind men and the elephant, each of the major theories has perceived only part of the elephant of gentrification.

Interestingly, Hamnett then proceeds to rather casually dismiss the role of the state in the composition of the elephant: "In arguing this thesis, only limited attention is paid to the debates over the role of the state in gentrification" since this is "essentially secondary to the central issue of production versus consumption" (1991: 175)[4]. Jan van Weesep disagreed, suggesting that there was a need "to put the gentrification debate into policy perspective" (1994: 74) and articulate the role of the state in supporting and managing gentrification.

Now involving local government and private developers as partners, Smith highlights how the character of gentrification has changed beyond all recognition:

> Whereas the key actors in Glass's story were assumed to be middle-class immigrants to a neighbourhood, the agents of urban regeneration thirty five-years later are governmental, corporate or corporate-governmental partnerships. A seemingly serendipitous, unplanned process that popped up in the post-war housing market is now, at one extreme, ambitiously and scrupulously planned. That which was utterly haphazard is increasingly systematised. In scale and diversity, the process of gentrification has evolved rapidly, to the point where the narrowly residential rehabilitation projects that were so paradigmatic of the process in the 1960s and 1970's now seem quaint" (2002: 439).

Of course, state involvement in gentrification was nothing new. In the US, for example, the federal government was already playing an active role in gentrification via its urban renewal policies and Neil Smith had subsequently documented the state's role in facilitating gentrification in his case study of the redevelopment of Society Hill, Philadelphia (Smith, 1979). In Britain, the government played a less direct role, with the provision of housing improvement grants inadvertently precipitating the expansion of gentrification in London in particular.

By the late 1980s, however, the British state had become a key actor in the process. Research on the Docklands regeneration showed how the state, acting through the public-private partnership of the LDDC, played a fundamental role in the gentrification of the area (see for example Brownill, 1990; Smith, 1989). The state's involvement in gentrification via the UDCs was also apparent in other cities, including Newcastle (Cameron, 1992) and Cardiff (Thomas and Imrie, 1999). Notwithstanding the brief interruption of the early-1990's recession, gentrification had, by the late 1990s, become deeply intertwined with urban policy, with central and city governments assertively supporting the intensification of gentrification and its extension into new areas beyond the immediate environs of the inner city. Such policies, however, continue to be euphemised and concealed by the language of

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[4] Cf. Hamnett (1973)

renewal, redevelopment, regeneration, social mix or, more grandly, 'renaissance' (see, for example Smith, 2002).

New-build gentrification

Gentrification researchers have for some time sought to widen the definition of gentrification to include regeneration projects that involve, for example, new-build development on the sites of dis-used factories, warehouses or vacant 'brownfield' sites (see for example Clark, 2005; Davidson and Lees, 2005; Smith, 1996, 2002). New-build gentrification therefore tends to be fairly broadly defined and includes the following:

(i) construction of middle class housing on long-cleared or industrial/commercial land,

(ii) demolition of inhabited, working class housing and building of new middle-class housing on the land;

(iii) some of the activities of Urban Development Corporations ;

(iv) Newcastle City Council's Going for Growth programme and HMR.

These might or might not involve state intervention in various forms and to varying degrees.

Williams (1984) was one of the first to note that housing demolition could result in gentrification but, to date, research on new-build (re)development has generally presumed an absence of conflict and direct displacement. For example, "When [gentrification] involves "invasion-succession" displacement, the process sometimes leads to open conflicts among old and new residents. *New construction or "grayfield" redevelopment avoids these conflicts*" (Wyly and Hammel, 1999: 717 emphasis added). Such comparisons have led some to question whether new-build, redevelopment schemes can even be characterised as gentrification at all. Drawing principally on research undertaken in Bristol and finding no evidence of direct displacement, Lambert and Boddy feel that it is 'stretching' the term to describe the production of new residential landscapes in Bristol (and London) as examples of gentrification:

> [W]e would question whether the sort of new housing development and conversion described in Bristol and other second tier cities, or indeed the development of London's Docklands can, in fact, still be characterised as `gentrification' - post-recession or otherwise. (2002: 20)

Disputing this argument, Davidson and Lees (2005) identify four defining characteristics of contemporary gentrification and then proceed to demonstrate the existence of these defining features in their case-studies. Examining several riverside, new-build, residential developments in London, they are able to present evidence of the 'reinvestment of capital', 'social upgrading of locale by incoming high-income groups' and 'landscape change'. But, when it comes to their fourth

defining characteristic, 'displacement', they struggle and are forced to concede that, "finding evidence of displacement is a difficult task" (2005: 1183). Whilst they do in fact present empirical evidence for *indirect* displacement (Marcuse, 1986) they make it clear that there is no direct displacement:

> New-build developments are often built on brownfield sites or on vacant and/or abandoned land; as such they do not displace a pre-existing residential population in the same way as classical gentrification has done. (2005: 1169)

The point is reaffirmed in Boddy's subsequent rejoinder to their arguments:

> Direct displacement of an existing (working-class) population, at the core of traditional gentrification, is not the issue, given that new-build and conversion have not generally impacted physically on existing residential areas. (Boddy, 2007: 99)

The absence of direct displacement is further reiterated in Davidson (2007; 2008) and again in the major work by Lees *et al* (2008), although they do go on to acknowledge that "some new-build gentrification is located on pre-existing residential sites" (p. 141) To this end, they present two pertinent case-studies, one of which is the aforementioned account of Newcastle's erstwhile *Going for Growth* strategy (Cameron, 2003) and the US Hope VI programme. As I have already noted, *Going for Growth* is effectively characterised as somewhat exceptional, a one-off strategy that was wholly atypical. Reading this and the other accounts mentioned above, the casual reader is irresistibly drawn to the conclusion that new-build gentrification is a phenomenon that: (a) is mostly restricted to vacant, uninhabited sites; and (b) rarely involves direct displacement. HMR challenges such assumptions.

Thus, whilst more overt displacement may be not have been a feature of redevelopment in the aforementioned studies of Bristol and London, it would certainly be incorrect to assume that it will always be absent from brownfield redevelopments elsewhere. In particular, one should note that the term 'brownfield', like gentrification, has considerable conceptual elasticity: most significantly, it may, and commonly does, refer to land that is currently used for residential purposes. Thus, as I will discuss in later chapters, some brownfield sites can be created through housing clearance that involves the direct displacement of existing residents.

2.5 'Waves' of gentrification?

Gentrification is undoubtedly a complex, multi-faceted phenomena that is the result of a range of social, economic and political processes. It is also historically and geographically contingent. How then do we begin to make sense of this complexity?

One possible way forward is the simple but effective historical schema devised by Hackworth and Smith (2001: 466) who periodise gentrification into three distinct 'waves' with each phase "demarcated by a particular constellation of political and

economic conditions nested at larger geographical scales". According to their schema, economic recession induces a breakdown of the prevailing politico-economic conditions such that each wave of gentrification is interrupted by a transitional period that begets a "restructuring of the institutional context and mechanisms through which gentrification occurred" (Lees, 2003b: 2491). Even though the Hackworth/Smith schema is based heavily on New York City they suggest that it has wider applicability, subject, of course, to variations in the timing of the phases in different places.

Thus, the first-wave gentrification beginning in the 1950s was cut short by the global economic recession that followed the 1973 oil price shock. By the late 1970's, however, there was a revival of depressed markets and a surge of gentrification "as never before" (Hackworth and Smith, 2001: 466). The regeneration of the London Docklands under the LDDC exhibited many of the characteristics of US second wave gentrification identified by Hackworth and Smith (2001). Like New York, London's emergence as a world city, allied to banking deregulation and an inflated housing market all helped to create conditions conducive to gentrification. Hackworth and Smith (*op cit.*) also highlight resistance to gentrification, such as the infamous 'Battle for Tompkins Square Park' (Abu-Lughod, 1994; Smith, 1996), as a further defining characteristic of the second wave. Such spirited resistance was also abundantly evident in the sustained protests against the LDDC and its plans for neighbourhood gentrification and office and retail developments that were aimed at "turning the East End into the West End" (Brownill, 1990; Foster, 1999; Rose, 1992).

Whilst the different 'geographies of gentrification' (Lees, 2000), give rise to such variations in the timing, nature and progress of gentrification, the ending of this particular phase of property-led urban redevelopment occurred simultaneously in both countries as a consequence of falling property values: "...the second wave crashed on the rocks of a short but sharp recession in the early 1990s" (Wyly and Hammel, 2001). Several commentators such as Bourne (1993) predicted the demise of gentrification. But gentrification only slowed and by the mid-1990's, Hackworth and Smith (*op cit.*) are able to point to the emergence of a distinctive, third-wave gentrification that is/was "more corporate, more state facilitated, and less resisted than ever before" (Hackworth, 2002: 839).

Supplemental to the Hackworth/Smith schema, Lees *et al* (2008) posit an additional 'fourth wave', beginning around 2001. They suggest that this fourth wave involves the "financialisation of housing combined with the consolidation of pro-gentrification politics and polarised urban regions; they also point to a political shift that favours the interests of the wealthiest households (*op cit*: 179, 183). Post-Katrina urban policy in New Orleans, involving a redoubling of the "aggressive, state-sponsored gentrification strategy" of HOPE VI (Slater, 2008), is presented as an example of this "more pure, harsh fourth wave of gentrification" (Lees *et al*, 2008: 185). But Lees et al contend, rather curiously, that "this fourth wave is not readily identifiable outside the United States". Johnson *et al* (2008) disagree, arguing that all these elements were also evident outside the US up until the 2008 financial crisis. In both its rationale and implementation, HMR could be said to represent an exemplar form of 'fourth wave', gentrification that does, *contra* Boddy

(2007), involve new-build gentrification that generates intense conflict and significant levels of direct displacement.

2.6 Methods and positionality in gentrification research

Over the last two decades, the cultural turn in geography has produced an explosion of work in relation to research methods and all manner of subsidiary matters that may impact upon the production of knowledge including, for example, the conduct and nature of the interaction with research participants, the researcher's positionality, the need for reflexivity and the political role of the researcher (see for example Jackson, 1989; Limb and Dwyer, 2001; McDowell, 1992). But, with very few exceptions (see for example Cahill, 2007), methodological innovations such as participatory action research, participatory mapping, visual methods and critical GIS have largely been absent from gentrification research. Nor has there been much in the way of personal reflection - the sort of methodological introspection that one finds in other parts of the discipline (though see Martin, 2008). Despite the impressive theoretical sophistication of gentrification research, "the importance of methodology has seldom been stressed in studies of gentrification" (Lees, 1998:. 2258). The point is reiterated by Slater *et al* (2004) who, in part, blame methodological issues for the dearth of research into the experiences of working-class people living in neighbourhoods experiencing gentrification:

> Part of this problem is methodological, and we still see few discussions of methodology in researching gentrification. The middle-class gentrifiers are much easier to find and arguably much easier to interview than any other `agents' in the gentrification process. For example, displaced tenants, or those living under the threat of eviction and/or displacement, are very difficult to track down... (Slater *et al*, 2004: 1142)

These specific points have been made again and again (see for example Atkinson, 2000; Lees *et al*, 2008; Newman and Wyly, 2006; Slater, 2006; Wacquant, 2008) but they do not explain, in general terms, why gentrification research is so averse to discussing its methods. The lack of attention to methodological and, indeed, ethical, concerns is all the more surprising when one considers both the intensely political nature of gentrification and the emotional distress that it can generate. In situations where people's homes are at stake, gentrification research, perhaps more than most topics of inquiry, demands a higher level of personal reflection in relation to, say, the nature and purpose of the research, the researcher's own politics, their emotional reaction and, not least, their initial motivation(s) for doing the research. Researchers also need to think carefully about the potential impact of their research on those who are most likely to be adversely affected by gentrification.

This neglect might, in part, reflect gentrification's position as "one of the key theoretical and ideological battlegrounds in urban geography" (Hamnett, 1991: 174) with scholars long embroiled in a highly-charged theoretical debate (see for example Hamnett, 1991; Ley, 1987; Smith, 1987). Given the polarisation of theoretical perspectives, methodological concerns, never prominent, inevitably took more of a back-seat. But such details are important for, as Lees reminds us: "different

methodological frameworks result in very different accounts of gentrification"
(1998: 2258). Thus, comparing the works of Smith (1996) and Butler (1997), Lees
highlights how the respective approaches they employed yielded very different
understandings of gentrification, as did the scale of their analyses:

> Given his interview data it is no surprise that matters of lifestyle and
> subjectivity are so much more prominent in Butler's text than in Smith's,
> whose real-estate-value maps and stark images of local resistance to
> gentrification paint a picture of class struggle as black and white as his
> photographs. The contrast between these alternative views of gentrification has
> usually been explained in terms of theory, but it is also one of methodology.
> Butler's qualitative sources open a different window on social reality than
> Smith's sources do. (1998: 2258)

Lees therefore urges gentrification researchers "to think more carefully about how
their research methods – as well as their theory – inflect their understandings" (1998:
2258). "Being explicit about our research practices forces us to be reflexive about
them – for example, to question why we use a particular method or data set" (Lees,
2003d: 108). But even more than that, considering "that academics are one of the
key groups involved in gentrification" (Allen, 2008b: 181) and apparently constitute
part of the urban knowledge economy's 'super-creative core'[!] (Florida, 2002), Lees
might have additionally queried how positionality - the social position, background
and politics *of the researcher* – might also inflect our understandings.

The deeply *classed* nature of gentrification as a phenomena surely warrants some
basic, however cursory, reflection on the researcher's own class position, as their
relative social distance/proximity to working-class people at risk of displacement
and/or middle-class gentrifiers, I would argue, will have a strong bearing on the
questions they ask, who they ask, their level of insight and the degree of empathy
with which they conduct their research. Noting that "The positionality and
biography of the researcher plays a central role in the research process, in the field as
well as in the final text", England suggests that we "locate ourselves in our work and
reflect on how our location influences the questions we ask, how we conduct our
research, and how we write our research (1994:87). Again, such matters have
received remarkably little attention from gentrification researchers, with the notable
exception of Allen's work on HMR (see for example Allen, 2008a; 2008b; 2009a).
Allen's arguments, discussed in the previous chapter, are again relevant here.
Following Bourdieu (1984), Allen's principal argument is that HMR has been
promulgated on a particular view of the market for houses as a 'space of positions', a
middle-class perspective that violates the practical form of being towards housing as
a "place to dwell" that he found in his interviews with working-class people in
Liverpool (Allen, 2008a). Allen suggests that much research in gentrification and,
particularly, the neglect of working-class experiences of displacement, is a reflection
of the middle-class interests and distance of the 'knowledge class' or 'academic
nobility':

> The theoretical understanding of the academic nobility is constituted at such a
> social and economic distance from the worlds that working-class people
> inhabit that it can never hope to feel — and thus fully understand —those
> worlds in terms of the impacts they have on ordinary working-class people.

> Their 'theoretical understanding' only enables them to grasp the world from the distance of the privileged position that encourages them to grasp it from that distance, and therefore as an object of fascination rather than for what it is to ordinary people which is a practical matter to be dealt with (Allen, 2008b: 182)

The celebration of gentrification and middle-class lifestyles that "is now so pervasive in the social sciences", together with the corresponding indifference to issues of displacement and deprivation, Allen argues, stems "from an epistemic ignorance born of the privilege that the academic nobility enjoy" (2008b: 181). At a distance from economic necessity (middle-class) housing researchers fail to understand the 'proximity to necessity' that governs working-class households' 'average-everyday' relation to housing (Allen, 2008a). Nevertheless, "constituting themselves as 'experts' in the production of a 'superior' form of knowledge they [the 'academic nobility'], and others in complicity with them, create the social conditions in which only they have the authority to speak about gentrification in explanatory terms" (Allen, 2008b: 183). This authorisation enables them to quite unapologetically explain the world in ways that reflect their middle-class being-in-the-world: "the academic nobility assumes its middle-class cultural practices to be 'good for everybody" (Allen, 2008b: 182). Neil Smith's (1996) recollections of his early days in Philadelphia are indicative of the attitudes of those around him and the 'knowledge class' generally. Repeatedly questioned about his thesis topic, Smith would explain that:

> The poorest working-class neighbourhoods are getting a remake; capital and the gentry are coming home, and for some in their wake it is not an entirely pretty sight. Often as not that ended the conversation, but it also occasionally led to exclamations that gentrification sounded like a great idea: had I come up with it? (1996: 32)

The middle-class intelligentsia mistakenly assumes "that its being-towards-lifestyle (the so-called 'gentrification aesthetic' etc.) is characteristic of the late modern subject per se when, in fact, it is particular to the social and economic circumstances in which such a devotion to lifestyle can be reflexively accomplished" (Allen: 2008a: 153). As Allen's work demonstrates, we only really start to make progress when we recognise, like Skeggs, that: "The knowledge class's own interests are actually based upon representing their own position, their perspective, their own cultural politics openly and without embarrassment (Skeggs, 2004: 54, cited in Allen, 2008b). The "retreat from class" that characterises much of contemporary social science, Skeggs argues, "is just the expression of the class interests of a group of relatively powerfully placed professional intelligentsia" (*op cit*, 54).

Engaging insights from the philosophy of existential phenomenology, Allen argues that the dominant understanding of housing that informs HMR research and policy, an understanding that is constituted as 'scientific', is, in fact, not at all scientific "because housing researchers are, like all of us, already involved with the social world through the condition of their "already and always 'being-in-the-world'"" (2009a: 55). Stanley and Wise allude to this when they ask the question:

"[H]ow [can we] tell 'when we are experiencing things as a researcher' and 'when we are experiencing them as a person' [?] We are encouraged to believe that there is a difference between these two states of being – that we do different things, conduct ourselves differently, in each of them. (1993, cited in Fuller, 1999: 225)

This artificial separation of person and researcher does not withstand scrutiny. Equally, through our existential being-in-the-world it might also be claimed that we are also "always, everywhere in the field" (Katz, 1994: 72). The dominant 'position-taking' perspective then, rather reflects the position and preferences of the middle-class housing researchers who articulate it. Thus, when they approach the study of housing phenomena, housing researchers exhibit a classed form of being "that speaks for some interests and against others" (Allen, 2009a: 73).

Whilst Allen's focus is on 'housing researchers', his argument can readily be extended to those who conduct research into gentrification. The middle-class focus of most gentrification research can, following Skeggs, be understood as a reflection of "the embodied habitus of particular types of socially located individuals" (2004: 54), that is, the preferences, interests and acquired dispositions of middle-class academics and researchers who occupy influential positions in universities, research institutes and consultancies. The celebratory tone of most academic accounts of gentrification and the indifference towards working class residents' experience of displacement reflects the social and epistemological distance from which such accounts are written (Allen, 2008b).

Drawing on the works of Heidegger (1962), Gadamer (1960) and Bourdieu (2000), Allen argues that how we come to know the world "can never be separate from our 'being-in-the-world'" (2008a: 181). As David Smith observed some time ago, "The world we inhabit has a bearing on the attitudes and values that we bring to our work. Our 'average' professional geographer has a mortgaged home in a 'middle-class' suburb..." (1976: 84). Thus, 'the eviction of critical perspectives from gentrification research' (Slater, 2006) could, in part, be attributed to the class position of most gentrification researchers who, like Allen's 'housing researchers', comport themselves to the study of gentrification "from a form of middle-class being that is simply unable to grasp working-class being other than in terms imposed by middle-class forms of being" (Allen, 2008b: 182).

Matters of positionality can no longer be ignored by gentrification researchers. It is vitally important to acknowledge that "What we bring to the research affects what we get" (Crang and Cook, 2007: 9). In a context where we find much gentrification research conducted at a distance (Allen, 2008b), issues of positionality have not yet been conspicuous. But, in moving towards more critical views from below, as Slater (2006; 2010) advocates, it will be necessary for researchers to become much more explicit about their positioning. Indeed, it is precisely when research becomes more ethnographic in approach that such reflexivity is needed, since "ethnographies are as much about the culture of the student as they are of the studied" (Herbert, 2000: 563).

Reflecting on my positionality, I would argue that I see gentrification differently from the cosmopolitan, academic elite – the 'academic nobility' (Allen, 2008b) - that

monopolises the production of knowledge about gentrification. Having grown up in a working-class suburb of Sheffield and having lived most of my life in relatively deprived parts of the city, some now designated as HMR areas, I have a familiarity with the conditions and situations described by the residents I interviewed and I approach the world from a similar perspective. I come to this research more as an 'insider', engaging in dialogue with people with whom I share to some extent, a broadly similar northern, working-class culture, background and upbringing, the "underlying sharing of space, culture and life" highlighted by Charlesworth (2007: 5). My ontological referents are similarly situated and rooted in a particular socio-spatial context. This, I hope, makes for a very different account of gentrification from the positive, uncritical accounts issuing from universities, research institutes and policy think-tanks (see Slater, 2006; Wacquant, 2008 for critical discussion).

2.7 Summary

This chapter has provided a brief overview of some of the main debates in gentrification research and introduced readers to the concepts of state-led and new-build gentrification, as well as presenting Marcuse's four-fold typology of displacement. A basic grasp of these concepts is essential since these are themes that run through the entire thesis. The chapter has also highlighted the generalisation and diversification of gentrification into a highly systematised process of socio-spatial change that has variously transformed urban landscapes, lifestyles and demographics. The form of new-build gentrification that we see expressed in the HMR programme in northern England, for example, involving the demolition of tens of thousands of houses (Cameron, 2006; Allen, 2008a), differs from the Thames-side new-build gentrification described by Davidson and Lees (2005) which, in itself, is quite different from, say, the 'super-gentrification' that Butler and Lees (2006) have observed in Barnsbury, London and in Brooklyn Heights, New York (Lees, 2003b). Analyses of gentrification in other parts of the world reveal additional local differences and trajectories. The sporadic, small-scale phenomenon first conceptualised by Glass (1964) now seems incredibly remote. The chapter has also outlined how Hackworth and Smith (2002) have attempted to simplify this complexity by developing a historical schema that periodises gentrification into three distinct waves, with Lees *et al* (2008) positing an additional, more aggressive, fourth wave, of which HMR and HOPE VI are good examples.

One further issue that should be apparent from this overview is the general omission of working-class perspectives from gentrification research. This point is forcefully made by Slater in his 2006 '*Eviction*' paper (Slater, 2006) and it is something I have touched upon in this chapter. Slater (2006) expresses deep concern at the extent to which gentrification research has shifted from a commitment to fighting gentrification and its impacts to a position that is much more concerned with how the process might be best managed. For many commentators, gentrification is no longer the 'dirty word' (Smith, 1996) it once was and the term 'positive gentrification' has even crept into the lexicon (see, for example, Cameron and Coaffee, 2005). Alongside this decline in critical work, scholars have focused most of their attention on wealthy incomers' lifestyles rather than the adverse consequences faced by those

who are displaced. The need for such an approach has recently been restated by Peter Marcuse:

> We are neither scientists dispassionately solving complex equations, nor passive servants doing what we're told, answering only questions someone else asks of us. We are human beings, and the questions we deal with are about other human beings. If we do not understand and do not intuitively put ourselves in the place of those whose problems we examine, we will not understand them – either the people or the problems. If the pain of displacement is not a central component of what we are dealing with in studying gentrification – indeed, is not what brings us to the subject in the first place – we are not just missing one factor in a multi-factorial equation; we are missing the central point that needs to be addressed. That's why researchers need to be with, ultimately stand with, those whose problems they analyze, describe, explain, and try to understand. That proposition arises not from some prejudgement or personal bias, but rather from the understanding developed by the research. (2010: 187-188)

As Slater comments, "In a huge literature on gentrification, there are almost no qualitative accounts of displacement. Doing something about this is vital if critical perspectives are to be reinstated." (2006: 749). The corollary of this is that there are few accounts of the places that incumbent residents call 'home'. This is the subject of the next chapter. These are major gaps in the literature and it these omissions which the present thesis seeks to address.

Chapter 3

Emplacing gentrification research

We can't understand the losses unless we first appreciate what was there
(Fullilove, 2004: 20)

Plate 3: Percy Jenkins threatens to jumpPercy Jenkins made a last defiant bid to save
his home yesterday…but failed. For four hours he resisted bailiffs and police,
council officials and welfare workers. He roared at them from the roof top,
threatened to hurl himself from a 30ft high window ledge and barricaded his doors.
But in the end, weeping, he had to concede defeat. (*Daily Mirror*, 1969: 14-15)

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is, following Fullilove (2004), Manzo (2008), Porter and Barber (2006) and Davidson (2009), to highlight the urgent need for gentrification research to pay much greater attention to issues of home, place meanings, attachments and, commensurately, the effects of being forced to leave places that may provide stability, comforting familiarity, a source of identity and an array of immeasurable resources that help ordinary people better negotiate inequality, poverty and marginalisation. This is made all the more urgent by the fact that powerful 'outsiders' – policy-makers, planners *and* scholars – are captive to the logic of a system that institutionalises the production of 'abstract space' (Lefebvre, 1991) and frequently ignore or disregard the value of such places to those who live there. The 'official story' of place, the one that best serves the needs of capital, seems to everywhere trump the people's city of everyday life:

> In most cities around the world, the "official story" is the story of men in power. I have called them the power brokers... and they belong to both the public and private spheres of the city. Most of them are indeed men. Their view of the city is a restricted one and is driven by material interests. They tend to see land primarily as a potential source of profit. They privilege economic growth, capital accumulation, and globalization over social and ecological concerns. They drive big cars and are electronically linked to their likes in the rest of the world. The small, lived spaces of the city are for them chiefly a diversion from the all-absorbing business of making money. (Friedmann, 1999: np)

These 'power-brokers', men like Robert Moses (see Caro, 1974) or latterly, those policy-relevant researchers who 'have the ear of the Minister', frequently apprehend place through classed understandings and aesthetics (Allen, 2008b; Allen, 2009a) that fail to appreciate the value of such places to those who actually live there. Gans (1962), for example, notes how the planners' view depicts a world that is alien to the resident. As Fried and Gleicher have suggested:

> This view [among working class families] of an area as home and the significance of local people and local places are so profoundly at variance with typical middle-class orientations that it is difficult to appreciate the intensity of meaning, the basic sense of identity involved in living in the particular area. (1961: 310)

Place is also backgrounded in contemporary scholarship, overshadowed by the continuing interest in 'space'. In the context of the mobilities, fluidities and breathless, hyper-speed flux of the contemporary 'network society' (Castells, 2004), space, the medium of movement (Tuan, 1974) is dominant (see for example Foucault, 1986; Soja, 1989). Place, at least in the conventional, bounded, sense of the term, is seen as reactionary, as stasis (Massey, 1991). Amin and Thrift, for example, speak of a world of "distanciated economic relations" that involves ever-changing "flows of people, images, information and money moving within and across national borders" (2002: 51, 52). As Cresswell notes: "Place in this world

seems increasingly redundant" (2004: 48). Or is this just how it appears to the middle-classes, who generally exhibit greater levels of mobility (see for example Massey, 1991; Skeggs, 2004)? As Friedmann concedes:

> This distanciated view of the urban and its economic relations—that is, a view beheld at a distance—is to me a class-based perspective of those who... like myself, frequently jet-set across the oceans, have more friends and colleagues who live far from home, and who only occasionally come down in their own neighbourhoods...Yes, we who are part of the power elites, tend to see the world "at a distance." It is a spectral world without people (2010: 159).

For those who cannot afford to buy a business class ticket to gaze down at this seemingly flat earth (Smith, 2005) or for those who reside in the information-poor 'dead zones' of contemporary 'info-scapes' (Lash, 2002), place may continue to be of considerable importance in their everyday lives. Where we might say that middle-classness is perhaps more 'spaced', the working class, in contrast, are arguably more emplaced. Echoing Friedmann above, Forrest remarks that:

> The electronically connected intellectual sipping cappuccino in the waterfront café may have a very different perspective on the world than the ageing widow or the unemployed youth. The entrenched unemployment experienced by many groups in different parts of the world combined with rapid demographic ageing points to a world in which place of residence could be more rather than less important as the site for much of everyday life-both from choice and constraint (2008: 7)

For low-income, marginalised communities and vulnerable groups and individuals within those communities, *real*, geographically rooted social networks continue to be important (Bennett and Reed, 1999; Edin and Lein, 1997; Geronimus, 2000; Keene *et al*, 2010; Venkatesh, 2000). Goetz notes how:

> ...planners and policy advocates have underestimated the importance of supportive social networks and attachment to place for the low-income residents of public housing... Forced displacement...directly disrupts if not completely destroys these social networks. (2010: 30).

For households lacking money, the material and non-material resources provided through these social networks are vital (Briggs, 1998; Clampet-Lundquist, 2004; Lopez and Stack, 2001). Being torn away from these supportive networks through displacement can be hugely destructive:

> Displacees are forced to reconstruct the networks in their new environments, but in the meantime, carefully constructed and negotiated means of making ends meet are shattered. Movers thus understandably miss their old social contacts and acutely feel the isolation in their new communities (Goetz, 2010: 30).

Referring to Robert Putnam's (2000) work on the decline of social capital in US communities, Greenbaum notes how "proponents of HOPE VI routinely cite

Putnam" as a justification for the programme yet fail to highlight his concerns about the impact of earlier phases of urban renewal: "American slum clearance policy of the 1950s and 1960s, for example, renovated physical capital, but at a very high cost to existing social capital" Putnam, 1995: 76-77 cited in Greenbaum, 2002). What was lost under urban renewal was stability, one of the most important pre-conditions for developing the trust that social capital is dependent upon (Coleman, 1988; Sampson *et al*, 1997). Greenbaum notes that "Putnam himself strongly asserts the need for stability in the development of social capital" (2002: 11). Anticipating the later work of Fullilove (2004), Putnam refers to the "re-potting hypothesis...mobility, like the frequent re-potting of plants, tends to disrupt root systems, and it takes time for an uprooted individual to put down new roots" (Putnam, 1995: 73 cited in Greenbaum, 2002).

The thing with roots, however, is that they tend to be hidden below the surface: the 'roots' that are essential to survival are already present in low-income communities, even though they may not be immediately visible to the gaze of planners or amenable to statistical analysis. Citing William Foot Whyte's classic study of the 'street corner society' of Boston's Italian slum (1943: 273, emphasis added), Wacquant (1997) notes that "...what appears to outside observers as social disorganisation 'often turns out to be simply a different form of social organisation *if one takes the trouble to look closely*". This chapter is concerned with motivating critical gentrification researchers to look more closely at the places and people at risk of gentrification as a basis for mounting more effective challenges to gentrification and better understanding the losses that result from being displaced.

Providing an alternative take on arguments around the need for a 'geography of gentrification' (Lees, 2000; Slater, 2004), the chapter begins by grounding the discussion with a review of the key concepts of place, space, sense of place and place attachment. It briefly considers the differences between 'insider' and 'outsider' views of place, since it is these divergences that create conflicts between residents, planners and developers. It also examines 'home' as a particular kind of place. The focus throughout is largely on understandings derived from humanistic geography since these tend to best emphasise the strong affective relations between people and place that are so violently disrupted by displacement.

The subsequent section contends that gentrification research, in common with broader urban scholarship, has a tendency to view places that are vulnerable to gentrification "through the peculiar epistemological framework of problems", where the aesthetic and statistical manifestations of disinvestment seem to blind us to the fact that, despite tremendous hardship, people nevertheless remain committed to such places because they are their homes. This elision of home pushes us into the territory of the 'false choice' (DeFilippis, 2004; Slater, 2006, 2008) where "Those in the path of urban transformation are presented with a false choice: they can either have decay or gentrification. There is no alternative" (Slater, 2009: 297) Whilst residents may engage in determined struggles to remain in such places and fight for their 'right to stay put' (Hartman, 1984), our current representations of such places, where we actually include reference to them, tend to imply there is little worth fighting for. "The issue at hand...therefore" as Davidson suggests, "is one of understanding what is (potentially) lost when a building and/or neighbourhood is threatened with gentrification" (Davidson, 2009: 220). Seeing places only as

disinvested implicitly privileges exchange value. One of the ambitions for critical gentrification research should therefore be to revalorise the non-economic and/or use values of home and place (see Porter and Barber, 2006).

3.2 Place and space

"Space and place" as Tuan reminds us "are basic components of the lived world; we take them for granted" (1977: 3). As Casey asserts, "To be at all - to exist in any way – is to be somewhere, and to be somewhere is to be in some kind of place…We are surrounded by places. We walk over and through them. We live in places, relate to others in them, die in them" (Casey, 1996: ix). For Relph, "to be human is to have and to know your place" (1976: 1) and "place is inseparable from being" (2008: 42). Being-in-the-world depends upon being placed: "there is no place without self; and no self without place" (Casey, 2001: 406). Indeed, so fundamental are place and space, we tend to overlook their importance, leading us to conflate them and use them interchangeably without really attending to their respective meanings (Agnew, 2005). In everyday situations, an uncritical usage might not constitute a problem but, when policy-makers mistake place for space, the consequences can be highly damaging.

For Agnew (1987), place is a 'meaningful location' comprising three aspects: location; locale; and sense of place. Gieryn (2000) makes a similar assessment, understanding place as having location, material form, meaning and value. Thus, in the first instance, place is located. It is somewhere rather than nowhere. It has unique, fixed co-ordinates that allow us to find it on a map. "Place is the distinction between here and there, and it is what allows people to appreciate near and far" (Gieryn, 2000: 464). Locale is the concrete form of place, "the material setting for social relations" (Cresswell, 2004: 7).

"Place has physicality…place is stuff. It is a compilation of things or objects at some particular spot in the universe…Social processes (difference, power, inequality, collective action) happen *through* the material forms that we design, build, use and protest (Gieryn, 2000: 465). Place is both physically and socially constructed. People imbue place with meaning. This subjective and emotional attachment to place is what Agnew means by sense of place. But the meaning and value of a place is not fixed. The bricks and mortar of place may be relatively enduring but the social nature of place ensures that "the meaning or value of the same place is labile - flexible in the hands of different people or cultures, malleable over time, and inevitably contested" (Gieryn, 2000: 465).

"Place is not space" (Gieryn, 2000: 465) but, as Tuan elaborates, the two are very much interrelated:

> The ideas of 'space' and 'place' require each other for definition. From the security and stability of place we are aware of the openness, freedom, and threat of space, and vice versa. Furthermore, if we think of space as that

which allows movement, then place is pause; each pause in movement makes it possible for location to be transformed into place (Tuan, 1977: 6)

Place is particular, space is general. Agnew notes that "[terrestrial] space is often understood as the plane on which events and objects are located at particular places" (2005: 81). Space is everywhere and nowhere; place is somewhere. Tuan asserts that "Space is more abstract than place. What begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value" (1977: 6). Place is "humanised space" (Tuan, 1977: 54). It is space layered with meaning. As Gieryn asserts: "place is space filled up by people, practices, objects, and representations" (2000: 465). As Relph argues:

> Places are not abstractions or concepts, but are directly experienced phenomena of the lived-world and hence are full with meanings, with real objects, and with ongoing activities. They are important sources of individual and communal identity, and are often profound centres of human existence to which people have deep emotional and psychological ties (1976: 141).

Conversely, space is hollowed-out place: "space is what place becomes when the unique gathering of things, meanings and values are sucked out" (Gieryn, 2000: 465). At a material level, the housing demolition involved in HMR and HOPE VI is an example of a practice that routinely converts place into space, emptying places of meaning to produce brownfield development space. Nevertheless, emotional attachments to place ensure that places endure in people's memories (Hayden, 1995).

3.3 Place: a humanistic perspective

Cresswell (1996) suggests that place might be best conceptualised as a melding of objective fact and subjective feeling. Both elements seem to be necessary: "To understand place requires that we have access to both an objective and a subjective reality" (Entrikin, 1991: 5). The subjective understanding of place is the primary concern of humanistic geographers such as Relph (1976) and Tuan (1977). Their work was in large part a reaction to the excesses of 1960s quantitative geography which tended to reduce the complexity of human emotions and feelings to "little more than dots on a map, statistics on a graph or numbers in an equation" (Cloke *et al*, 1991: 69). In its quest for laws of spatial behaviour and its focus on abstract space, quantitative geography overlooked the depth, quality and emotional dimension of human relationships with place (Holloway and Hubbard, 2001).

Tuan approaches place in two ways. Focusing initially on what might be called 'iconic' places, Tuan notes how certain places have a symbolic meaning that is understood in similar ways by a specific group of people, for example monuments or sacred places. For present purposes, however, Tuan's experiential conceptualisation of place has much greater relevance: "place is a centre of meaning constructed by experience. Place is known not only through the eyes and mind but also through the more passive and direct modes of experience" (Tuan, 1975: 152). Understood as the product of extended experience, place takes on an intensely personal character:

In contrast to public symbolic places, the places which are meaningful for specific individuals are very difficult to identify, because there are not necessarily any clear outward indications inscribed in the place itself. Instead, for the individual, these places are known and cared for from within, existing as what Tuan calls 'fields of care' (Holloway and Hubbard, 2001: 75).

The experiential quality of place makes the study of places intriguing yet challenging: "As social beings and scientists we offer each other truncated images of people and their world. Experiences are slighted or ignored because the means to articulate them or point them out are lacking" (Tuan, 1977: 201). "These meanings", Friedmann confirms, "are difficult to represent persuasively at the points of strategic decisions...so they remain largely invisible to the planners of state and private capital as they endeavour to shape (and reshape) the city through comprehensive plans and large-scale projects" (1999: np).

3.4 Sense of place

'Sense of place' is a construct that has received attention from several disciplines, including environmental psychology, sociology, anthropology and, not least, humanistic geography, evades straightforward definition (Eyles and Williams, 2008). Broadly, as DeMiglio and Williams note, "the field of human geography acknowledges that sense of place is the product of the relationship that individuals from with places" (2008: 19) and it includes core elements such as rootedness, belonging, place identity, meaningfulness and emotional attachment (Eyles and Williams, 2008). In an early definition, Steele defines it as "an experiential process created by the setting, combined with what a person brings to it" (1981: 9 cited in Manzo, 2008). Some commentators consider sense of place to be an indispensable component of human existence: "...I do not think one can survive as a humane creature on this earth without special attachments to special places (Lewis, 1979: 29 cited in DeMiglio and Williams, 2008).

As Easthope notes: "A person's sense of place can provide them with a sense of belonging and of comfort" (2004: 131). Sense of place, however, is not the same for everyone and it varies over time and through the life-course as a reflection of one's continuing involvement with a particular place or places. It is transactional and dynamic (Manzo, 2008). One's sense of place, for example, may be the product of a long, 'monogamous' relationship with a single place – a particular home and neighbourhood, say - and one would expect, as Taylor and Townshend's (1976) research confirmed, that sense of place is closely correlated with age and length of residence. More recent research by Livingston *et al* (2008) reports that place attachment is positively associated with longer residence, being older, owner-occupation and higher levels of education. Thus, depending on the individual and variables such as their age, life-history and residential mobility, sense of place can either be positive or negative, weak or intense (Manzo, 2003; Relph, 1976).

Tuan (1974) suggests that, for some people, a deep, enduring involvement with a particular place may produce 'topophilia', an affective bond between people and place. In this way, place becomes an extension of the individual (Holloway and Hubbard, 2001). Place and self are co-constitutive: "One's sense of place (particularly one's home-place) is tied to one's identity and many people throughout history and across the world have demonstrated incredible commitments to their places, so much so that they are willing to die for them" (Easthope, 2004: 132).

Given such potentially strong associations between self and place, one can quickly see why demolition encounters such determined resistance. In this situation, the damaging discursive and physical interventions that are directed at place are also an attack on the self. Marris highlights this in relation to slum clearance in Lagos, whilst also drawing our attention to the different senses of place that are held by 'insiders' (those who live in the slums) and planners and visitors from England who perceive the slum as 'outsiders'. I quote this passage at length for it demonstrates several other themes relevant to the thesis:

> When people are forced to move from a familiar neighbourhood, they lose, most obviously, the habitual physical setting of their lives. To the planners who move them, this setting has an unambiguous meaning. It is a slum—dirty, dilapidated, overcrowded and dangerous to health. The signs of dirt and decay can be powerfully persuasive...Dirt is laden with connotations of danger and corruption once it is perceived as something anomalous and disordered (see Douglas, 1966). But the lives of people in slums are not necessarily disorderly, and so they may not notice the dirt, or see it only as an incidental nuisance. They would like more space, better drains, repairs—but to achieve this only at the cost of destroying the neighbourhood itself seems to them an inconceivable distortion of what is important. If the physical setting has one meaning to the planning authority, it has another to the residents. The corner shops, the shabby streets, the yards and lots where they played as children are invested with all kinds of intimate associations. They identify with the neighbourhood: it is part of them, and to hear it condemned as a slum is a condemnation of themselves too (Marris, 1986: 54-55)

Here, Marris, like Wacquant (1997), alludes to a form of social organisation that is different but by no means inferior to that found elsewhere. What the visitor finds exotic or disturbing, those who live there may find mundane; equally, one would not expect a visitor to be able to appreciate the intense, if latent, meanings that locals have come to attach to unremarkable spatial phenomena as a result of long experience and residency. The above passage further highlights how, just as some people experience places as home, others find them frightening or threatening. As Holloway and Hubbard observe, "This feeling of unease often results from a sense that the place belongs to other people in some way" (2001: 107). Attachment to place, described so warmly by Tuan and Relph, produces belonging for some and exclusion for others. Cresswell provides a pertinent reminder that: "Places are fundamental creators of difference. It is possible to be inside a place or outside a place" (1996: 154). Inside and outside invariably takes the form of 'us' and 'them'. Some places demand conformity. High-security, gated communities, for example, demand internal conformity whilst announcing, through various physical barriers and

symbols, that "this is my place, not yours!" Other places deploy more subtle forms of socio-cultural exclusion.

For these reasons, humanistic approaches to place have been criticised for propagating what many see as a reactionary, introverted, exclusionary sense of place. Massey (1991) has been foremost amongst those seeking to redefine place, arguing for the possibility of a different, more 'progressive sense of place'. Bringing the place debate forward into the 1990s, she asked a basic question. In a globalising era that is characterised by internationalization, movement and fragmentation, "how…can we retain any sense of a local place and its peculiarity?" (Massey, 1991, 22). Instead of it being bounded, closed, reactionary, "Is it not possible for a sense of place to be progressive, not self-enclosing and defensive, but outward looking?" (*op cit.*, 24). Presenting a vignette of Kilburn, the London suburb where she lives, Massey's alternative conceptualisation of place is that of a *meeting* place of multiple histories, interactions and identities. The particularity of place is not based upon a long, uninterrupted, internalized history "but the fact that it is constructed out of a particular constellation of social relations, meeting and weaving together at a particular locus" (1991: 18). The crucial point is that place is a process rather an enclosure. As a meeting of flows it is always dynamic, always becoming, never achieving fixity. Rather than being defined from the inside this alternative sense of place is constructed from the outside:

> Instead, then, of thinking of places as areas with particular boundaries, they should be imagined as articulated moments in networks of social relations and understandings, but where a large proportion of those relations, experiences and understandings are constructed on a far larger scale than what we happen to define for that moment as the place itself, whether that be a street, or a region or even a continent. And this in turn allows a sense of place which is extroverted, which includes a consciousness of its links with the wider world, which integrates in a positive way the global and the local" (Massey, 1991: 280).

Cresswell (2004: 74) is unconvinced: "What is the 'place' component of Massey's Kilburn? Is it no more than an accidental coming together of many different flows in one location?" Recall, for example, Tuan's notion of place as pause and space as movement. If place is nothing more than an ever-changing, momentary meeting of flows does Massey's re-conceptualisation take us into the realm of Auge's (1995) non-places, if not space? Whose sense of place has greater validity? Is it the jet-set academic or the long-time resident? Moreover, is this integration of global and local always a good thing, particularly where it might involve, say, greater openness to the ebb and flow of international capital? Has Massey simply replaced her aversion to idealised, romantic notions of place-based communities with the romance of the virtual networked community?

Furthermore, Massey's intervention only serves to strengthen the sorts of arguments made by the 'architects' of HMR who contend that 'weak' and/or 'failing' housing markets in the north of England were 'dysfunctional' precisely because they were, or had become, disconnected from wider housing markets: "housing market restructuring was required to ensure that the older urban areas could compete at a regional, national and international level" (Cole and Nevin, 2004: viii). They were,

in short, too place-bound, in a housing market constituted as a *'space* of positions'. Yet, as Allen (2008a) argues, working-class householders in Kensington, Liverpool were disinclined to see their homes as a commodity positioned in a local/national/international investment space. Rather, they regarded their houses and neighbourhoods as a " 'lived space' that is understood in terms of the way it presents itself to them 'in the thick' of their everyday lives" (Allen, 2008a: 73).

3.5 Place attachment

"Place attachment", Manzo suggests, "can be considered a dimension of sense of place" (2008: 90). It can be understood in terms of the emotional bond between people and places (Low and Altman, 1992) and research has mostly concentrated on the affective bonds to the residence or neighbourhood. According to Brown and Perkins (1992: 279): "Place attachment processes normally reflect the behavioural, cognitive and emotional embeddedness individuals experience in their socio-physical environment". Over time, and as a consequence of these processes, places gradually acquire familiarity and deep meaning through the "steady accretion of sentiment" (Tuan, 1974: 33). Generally latent, it is only when a stressful disruption in place attachment occurs that its fundamental, importance is revealed: "Attachment is a subjective, invisible attribute—invisible, that is, under normal circumstances. It may occasionally become visible when a neighborhood is threatened with demolition and organizes (or not) to fight for its survival" (Friedmann, 2010: 155). With time, a place may come to be seen as a sort of loyal, trusted friend and/or protector, providing a protective sheathing from the unknown:

> ...a person in the process of time invests bits of emotional life in his home and beyond the home in his neighbourhood. To be forcibly evicted from one's home and neighbourhood is to be stripped of a sheathing, which in its familiarity protects the human being from the bewilderments of the outside world" (Tuan, 1974: 99).

The classic studies undertaken by Young and Willmott, 1957, Fried (1963) and Gans (1962), showed the strength of place attachment in inner city working class neighbourhoods. "[I]n contrast to outside perceptions of them as distressed, [such neighbourhoods] served as a locus of meaning and value for residents" (Manzo, 2008: 90). *Contra* Martin (2005: 85) whose research suggests "that attachment to the symbolic meanings of place is a preoccupation mainly for those in relatively middle-class positions", the work of Brown, Perkins and Brown (2003), Corcoran (2002); Fried (1961; 2000) and Fullilove (2004) indicates that place attachments may be especially strong in lower income and/or ethnic neighbourhoods in response to marginalisation and residents' psycho-social and material needs. While such attachments "serve critical instrumental and emotional functions" (Manzo, 2008: 92) most planning practice and research has overlooked the importance of place meaning and attachment (Manzo and Perkins, 2006).

3.6 'Insiders' and 'outsiders'

Tuan (1974) introduces the idea of 'insider' and 'outsider', whom he respectively terms 'visitor' and 'native'. Highlighting how they see places from qualitatively different perspectives, Tuan's description of the visitor's perspective is, in many ways, a precursor of Urry's (1991) 'tourist gaze', a quintessentially visual form of consumption that is concerned only with superficial meaning:

> Visitor and native focus on very different aspects of the environment...
> ...Generally speaking, we may say that only the visitor (and particularly the tourist) has a viewpoint; his perception is often a matter of using his eyes to compose pictures. The native, by contrast, has a complex attitude derived from his immersion in the totality of his environment. The visitor's viewpoint, being simple, is easily stated...The complex attitude of the native, on the other hand, can be expressed by him only with difficulty and indirectly through behaviour, local tradition, lore, and myth. (Tuan, 1974: 65)

Similarly, for Relph, it is the condition of being inside or outside place that constitutes the essence of place:

> To be inside a place is to belong to it and to identify with it, and the more profoundly inside you are the stronger is this identity with the place...From the outside you look upon a place as a traveller might look upon a town from a distance; from the inside you experience a place, are surrounded by it and part of it" (1976: 49).

Tuan presents an extract from William James (1899) essay, *On a Certain Blindness in Human Beings*, to develop his argument about the prejudicial nature of the outsider's perspective. The 'blindness' which James addresses "is the blindness with which we all are afflicted in regard to the feelings of ...people different from ourselves". As James highlights:

> The spectator's judgment is sure to miss the root of the matter, and to possess no truth. The subject judged knows a part of the world of reality which the judging spectator fails to see, knows more while the spectator knows less; and, wherever there is conflict of opinion and difference of vision, we are bound to believe that the truer side is the side that feels the more, and not the side that feels the less (1958: 63).

James then provides an account of his travels through the mountains of North Carolina. He recounts being disturbed by the appearance of the newly-cut clearings in the forest and the visual disorder of the hastily erected dwellings and their surrounding, haphazard plots:

> Because to me the clearings spoke of naught but denudation, I thought that to those whose sturdy arms and obedient axes had made them they could tell no other story. But when THEY looked on the hideous stumps, what they thought of was personal victory. The chips, the girdled trees, and the vile split rails spoke of honest sweat, persistent toil, and final reward. The cabin was a warrant of safety for self and wife and babes. In short, the clearing

which to me was a mere ugly picture on the retina, was to them a symbol redolent with moral memories and sang a very paean of duty, struggle, and success... I had been as blind to the peculiar ideality of their conditions as they certainly would also have been to the ideality of mine, had they had a peep at my strange indoor academic ways of life at Cambridge (James, 1958: 150 cited in Tuan, 1974: 64, original emphasis).

The act of seeing, according to Tuan, "has the effect of putting a distance between self and object. What we see is always 'out there'" (1977: 146). Not only does James capture the outsider's inability to 'see' beyond superficial, outward appearances, the extract also highlights the personal sacrifice and 'investment' that are involved in creating home, the proud sense of achievement that attends it and its status as protector. One could draw parallels with those households living in the HMR intervention areas whose homes, at least to them, may represent a significant social and emotional investment, if not a life-time's commitment. But local authority officials are unable to see any of this. To them, the houses – not homes – present the 'wrong image' and are aesthetically displeasing to visiting tourists and potential investors:

> The [City A] Corridor presents an image of decline … and is an unsatisfactory approach to the city in terms of the quality of the visual and built environment and its surrounding uses. [City A approach road] offers the first impression of [City A and the sub-region] for visitors entering the city by road from the east and the poor quality environment of the area does little to encourage investor, business and visitor confidence. (Urban Regeneration Agency, City A, 2007 cited in Allen and Crookes, 2009).

Despite living in a neighbourhood that had the 'wrong image', the residents of this particular case study related to their neighbourhood as a 'lived space' that was mostly unproblematic. It is therefore unsurprising that "the planning concern to 'place shape' these neighbourhoods by replacing terraced houses...with an 'exciting' dwelling-scape did not meet with the approval of residents" (Allen and Crookes, 2009: 470). Approaching places at an "epistemic and aesthetic distance from 'lived experience'" (Allen and Crookes, 2009: 473), as they have been trained, planners are only ever able to grasp the abstract and general qualities of place(s) whereas residents' focus on the 'particulars' of the places they inhabit:

> Planners have been trained and disciplined in deductive thinking … Possibly because of this bad training, planners frequently seem to be less well equipped intellectually for respecting and understanding particulars than ordinary people, untrained in expertise, who are attached to a neighbourhood, accustomed to using it, and so are not accustomed to thinking of it in generalised or abstract fashion. (Jacobs, 1994, 455 cited in Allen and Crookes, 2009).

The inside/outside distinction is not always clearly drawn. Rather, it is possible to think of a continuum, of degrees of insideness and outsideness. In this respect, Relph finds Berger's (1971) work, which looks at the extent to which anthropologists are assimilated into the cultures which they study, to be particularly relevant. Relph develops this framework to break down the experience of

insideness into three different levels of intensity: "behavioural insideness – or physical presence in a place; empathetic insideness which involves emotional participation in and involvement with a place; and existential insideness, or complete and unself-conscious commitment to a place" (Relph, 1976: 50). For Relph, the meaning of place therefore depends upon the degree to which one feels 'inside' the place.

Outsiders see, interpret and describe places differently from insiders. This seems to operate universally and works at a range of different scales, from the next street to an entire continent. Developing this insider/outsider dichotomy, Buttimer notes that "there is a fundamental contrast between the insider's ways of experiencing place and the outsider's conventional ways of describing them" (1980: 170). Where the outsider is restricted to seeing or speaking of a place, the resident actively dwells within a place: "The meanings of place to those who live in them have more to do with everyday living and doing rather than thinking" (*ibid.*: 171). Indeed, these meanings "are often not brought to consciousness until they are threatened: normally, they are part of the fabric of everyday life and its taken-for-granted routines" (*ibid.*: 167).

The process by which a newcomer comes to overlook outwardly salient aspects of a place has been documented by Gans (1962) in his classic, ethnographic study of Boston's West End, a working-class district that was due to be demolished for redevelopment. Gans is struck initially by the area's conflicting aesthetic qualities. On one hand, the area's European character give it a certain appeal, an exotic flavour. But at the same time, Gans recounts:

> I also noticed the many vacant shops, the vacant and therefore dilapidated tenements, the cellars and alleys strewn with garbage, and the desolation on a few streets that were all but deserted. Looking at the area as a tourist, I noted the highly visible and divergent characteristics that set it off from others with which I was familiar. And, while the exotic quality of the West End did excite me, the dilapidation and garbage were depressing, and made me a little fearful of doing a participant-observation study. (1962: 12)

Gans' initial aesthetic (and classed) reaction is perhaps not unlike that of the British MPs who visited the North West as part of their evidence-gathering for their inquiry into empty homes (HMSO, 2002b: para 157), remarking that: "The rows of abandoned terraces, the broken windows and the burned out houses were shocking". Returning to his experience in 1960s Boston, after a few weeks living in the area, Gans recounts how his observations and perceptions of the area underwent a drastic change. He develops a selective vision:

> Subsequently, in wandering through the West End, and in using it as a resident, I developed a kind of selective perception, in which my eye focused only on those parts of the area that were actually being used by people. Vacant buildings and boarded-up stores were no longer so visible...once a shopping pattern had developed, I saw the same storekeepers frequently, as well as the area's 'characters' who wandered through the streets everyday on a fairly regular route and schedule. In short, the exotic quality of the stores and the residents also wore off as I became used to seeing them (1962: 12).

The merits and defects in an environment may quickly fade away with lived-in familiarity: "The human being is exceptionally adaptable. Beauty or ugliness – each tends to sink into his subconscious mind as he learns to live in his world" (Tuan, 1974: 65). In contrast, the state official, in Relph's terms, an 'objective outsider' who is equipped with 'professional vision' (Goodwin, 1994), sees only the defects of place. This fresh perspective may occasionally be useful, drawing residents' attention to things that may no longer be visible to them. Equally, however, there is much that is invisible to the 'objective outsider'. In an attempt to overcome this impasse, planners and their colleagues need to develop a view from somewhere in-between. As Fougere (2003) suggests, interactions between insiders and outsiders may be best mediated by Relph's (1976) 'empathetic insider'. Empathetic insideness demands:

> ...a willingness to be open to significances of a place, to feel it, to know and respect its symbols – much as a person might experience a holy place as sacred without necessarily believing in that particular religion. This involves not merely looking at a place, but *seeing* into and appreciating the essential elements of its identity...Such identity of place does not present itself automatically, but must be sought by training ourselves to see and understand places in themselves" (Relph, 1976: 54-55).

This degree of openness to, and respect for, the valued places of citizens' daily lives was more or less what urban designer Randolph Hester sought to attain in his 'sacred structures' approach to the redevelopment work that he undertook in the US coastal town of Manteo. In particular, he worked closely with local residents to identify:

> ...those places -buildings, outdoor spaces, and landscapes - that exemplify, typify, reinforce, and perhaps even extol the everyday life patterns and special rituals of community life, places that have become so essential to the lives of the residents through use or symbolism that the community collectively identifies with the places. The places are synonymous with residents' concepts and uses of their town. The loss of such places would reorder or destroy something or some social process essential to the community's collective being (1985: 15).

This work culminated in a participatory map that sought to represent the important, if unacknowledged, places in the town which either had intense *folk* meaning and/or which supported the reproduction of everyday life:

> Manteo's Sacred Structure, for the most part, consisted of humble places...that were the settings for the community's daily routines...not one of them was exotic...These places were almost universally unappealing to the trained professional eyes of an architect, historian, real estate developer, or upper middle-class tourist" (Hester, 1985: 15)

It is this very invisibility that makes such places so vulnerable to erasure. Difficult to represent statistically, verbally or cartographically, these sacred structures of place, the loci that constitute the basis of people's place attachments, are left off the map and left out of planning decision-making processes. Consequently:

...the local state is typically unaware of sacrilege when it reduces a neighborhood to rubble in order to make way for a profitable real estate venture such as an office building or shopping mall. By whatever name, whether it's slum clearance or gentrification, the results are the same: the erasure of places is a violent act, as established patterns of human relationships are destroyed (Friedmann, 2010: 157)

3.7 The Production of Space and Place-Space Tensions

The manner in which planners apprehend neighbourhoods could be interpreted, quite literally, as a form of 'professional vision', that is, "socially organised ways of seeing and understanding events and phenomena that are answerable to the distinctive interests of a particular social group" (Goodwin, 1994: 606). In his book, *Ways of Seeing*, Berger notes that "We only see what we look at. To look is an act of choice" (1972: 8). So it is with planners, other urban professionals and, dare I say, scholars in housing and urban research. Trained to 'see' in a particular way, certain things are immediately salient whilst other aspects of the urban environment may fall below their 'radar'. Crudely, we might see planners as developing a professional vision that is centred on 'space' or, as Lefebvre terms it, 'conceived space', rather than place or (a little confusingly) 'lived space'. But it can be a "treacherous selective vision" (Shields, 1996: 245). For Lefebvre, this conceived space, "the space of scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic subdividers and social engineers...is the dominant space in any society (or mode of production)" (1991: 39). Lefebvre's work, in particular, highlights how "those groups in society who possess power and knowledge are able to command space and impose what they know or conceive upon what is lived in place" (Merrifield, 1993: 106). In this way, abstract space "endeavours to mould the spaces it dominates (i.e. peripheral spaces), and it seeks, often by violent means, to reduce the obstacles and resistance it encounters there" (Lefebvre, 1991: 49). With the production of space shaped by capitalism, "the juggernaut of commodification transforms the use value of social space into the exchange value of abstract space...People no longer value space for its own sake but come to view space...as a means to the single end of financial gain" (Gotham *et al*, 2001: 326). The end result is that "...lived experience is crushed, vanquished by what is 'conceived of'"(Lefebvre, 1991: 51) The abstract spaces of capitalist modernity – bureaucratisation and commodification – "make a *tabula rasa* of whatever stands in their way, of whatever threatens them – in short, of differences. These forces seem to grind down and crush everything before them, with space performing the function of a plane, a bulldozer or a tank" (Lefebvre, 1991: 285).

Taylor (1999a, 1999b) also takes up these themes, developing the notion of 'place-space tension':

> I am interested in the relations between space and place rather than pitting the idea of one against the other. The key point is that the same location can be both place or space: everywhere, in fact has the potential for being both space

and place. This can be historical as when a space is transformed into a place or vice versa or it can be contemporaneous as when the same location is viewed from different perspectives. In practice these two processes merge in what I shall call *place-space tension* between the producers of space and the makers of place. I will interpret this as a particularly geographical expression of the ambiguity within modernity. When place and space constitute a single entity they define a geographically focused, contested politics. The question of who defines an institution in spatial terms and who sees it as a place create a modern politics of space and place (Taylor,1999a: 99)

This concept of place-space tension has much in common with Lefebvre's conceived and lived spaces, though Taylor, a political geographer, seems to have more interest in the bureaucratic homogenisation that states impose upon place. Nonetheless he provides further evidence of how 'planning' situations are characterised by abstract spaces confronting meaningful human places:

> I shall begin with the notion that space is more abstract than place, which immediately relates space to rationality, bureaucracy and the state. In this argument states are space-producers in their designation and recognition of boundaries. States impose spaces on places. The places being collected together or divided by the boundaries drawn by state elites are locations in which material life is reproduced in everyday routine behaviour...Spaces, therefore are the outcome of top-down political processes; places can be the site for bottom-up opposition. (Taylor, 1999a: 101)

The challenge then, following Harvey (1996), is to understand the respective processes by which people construct meaningful places and, conversely, the manner in which states convert place into space. Place, then, can also be seen as the outcome of the ongoing struggle between use value and exchange value (see Logan and Molotch, 1987).

3.8 Territorial Stigmatisation

One of the ways in which the state and other actors convert place into space is through processes of 'territorial stigmatisation' (Wacquant, 1993; 1997; 2007; 2008). In political and bureaucratic life, in popular writing and academic treatises, working-class neighbourhoods and, particularly, US public housing or British council estates, are frequently described in fatalistic, doom-laden terms that suggest they are desperate, 'dead' or 'dying' places from which people are eager to leave. The predominant ethos in these neighbourhoods is seen to be one of "escape, fuelled by unrelenting suffering and oppression" (Patillo, 2009: 859-860). One need look no further than, for example, Tony Blair's foreword to *Bringing Britain Together* (1998):

> We all know the problems of our poorest neighbourhoods – decaying housing, unemployment, street crime and drugs. People who can, move out. Nightmare neighbours move in. Shops, banks and other vital services close...

Those involved in the development and implementation of HMR, for example, have consistently argued that existing residents were 'trapped' (DTLR, 2002; ODPM, 2005a) or 'marooned' and in need of 'rescue'.

Introducing the notion of 'territorial stigmatisation', Wacquant insists that studies of contemporary urban poverty in advanced societies: "must begin with the *powerful stigma attached to residence in bounded and segregated spaces*, the 'neighbourhoods' of exile to which the populations marginalized or condemned to redundancy by the post-Fordist reorganization of the economy and state are increasingly being relegated" (Wacquant 1993, 369, original emphasis). In a later paper, Wacquant (1997: 344) describes how Appardurai (1992) has shown that "certain places come cumulatively to be represented and discussed in terms of 'strong tropes', i.e. recurrent sets of images and narrative strategies that predetermine and skew the ways in which they are perceived and conceptualised". Such places become subject to 'a blemish of place' whereby "discourses of vilification proliferate and agglomerate about them, 'from below', in the ordinary interactions of daily life, as well as 'from above', in the journalistic, political and bureaucratic (and even scientific) fields" (Wacquant, 2007: 67). Consequently, "In every metropolis of the First World, one or more towns, districts or concentrations of public housing are publicly known and recognized as those urban hellholes in which violence, vice, and dereliction are the order of things" (op.cit.: 67). This is a theme taken up by, for example, Macek (2006), Hanley (2007), Mooney (2008) and Gray (2010). The crucial point here is that the reality is rarely as extreme as the graphic accounts suggest: "Whether or not these areas are in fact dilapidated and dangerous... matters little in the end: the prejudicial belief that they are suffices to set off socially noxious consequences" (op cit: 68).

From the perspective of urban regeneration, territorial stigmatisation has come to play an important role in legitimising certain policy choices. As Wacquant notes:

> Once a place is publicly labelled as a 'lawless zone' or an 'outlaw estate', outside the common norm, it is easy for the authorities to justify special measures...to destabilise and further marginalise their occupants...render them invisible, or drive them out of a coveted space (2008: 240).

Such processes can be seen at work in, for example, the proposals to 'redevelop' Cabrini-Green in Chicago that were critiqued by Bennett and Reed (1999). They suggest that the housing authority and developers' arguments would often adopt the following logic: "If we can manage to convince the public at large that Cabrini-Green is a chaotic jungle...then we can proceed with wholesale demolition and new, upscale residential development" (Bennett and Reed 1999: 209, cited in Crump, 2002). Similarly, a major study of HOPE VI has suggested that it played "upon inaccurate stereotypes about public housing to justify a drastic model of large-scale family displacement and housing redevelopment" (NHLP, 2002: iii). Chapter 8 demonstrates how processes of territorial stigmatisation have informed the development of HMR.

But territorial stigmatisation is not confined to politicians, bureaucrats and the popular press. Many academic researchers often seem to slip unintentionally into what Baeten (2002: 107) describes as the "peculiar epistemological framework of

'problems' ", a singularly dystopian approach to the city that he sees as a pervasive feature of wider urban scholarship. Lees (2004: 4) has also noted how:

> ...the relentless focus on urban problems has tended to reinforce longstanding narratives of perverse and pathological urbanism...The prevailing mood in urban studies has become one of doom and gloom, even fatalism.

For example, Wyly, whilst subverting Berry (1985), still writes of "islands of decay in seas of renewal", whilst Lees *et al* suggest that "[gentrification] often begins in a relatively depressed, devalorized, working-class part of the city – but *not* the absolute epicentre of the region's worst poverty and disinvestment" (2008: 58). Even Wacquant, who has critiqued "the tendency to exoticise the ghetto and its residents, that is, to highlight the most extreme and unusual aspects of ghetto life as seen from outside and above" (1997: 342), is not immune from this. For example, in the space of one relatively short article, he writes of:

> ...the physical and human detritus wrought by economic deregulation and welfare retrenchment (Wacquant, 2008: 198); and

> ...neighbourhoods of relegation that fester at the bottom of the system of places that comprise the metropolis (*op cit.* 2008: 203)

His book-length work, *Urban Outcasts* (Wacquant, 2007) also comes in for some sharp criticism from Patillo (2009). Whilst Patillo concedes that she is "not fully equipped to evaluate Wacquant's comparative exercise" (2009: 859), she contends that he "both overstates the collective revulsion directed at disadvantaged neighborhoods and understates contemporary processes of erasure" (2009: 858). In light of the arguments I am making here, Patillo's reaction to Wacquant's work merits close attention:

> All of us who study disadvantaged people and places want to use the strongest language possible in order to powerfully show the human consequences of policy assaults and neglect. But how do we name the phenomenon without ourselves repeating the stigmatizing labels that further fuel the cycle of disregard? 'The hyperghetto of century's end' Wacquant writes, 'is a despised and loathed space from which nearly everyone is desperately trying to escape' (p. 62). 'Ouch!' I wrote in my book's margin. Despised?! Loathed?! More than just the sting of the words... there is evidence that this is not quite true (Patillo, 2009: 859)

Patillo identifies several reasons for people not wanting to leave, some of which related to problems with the 'destination' aspect of the moving/not moving decision, such as racist landlords and a reluctance to move into predominantly white neighbourhoods. Nonetheless, her main argument is that the low rates of movement do not exactly suggest that people were desperate to leave their homes in the ill-famed 'hyperghettos'. However diminished or deteriorated the conditions of their homes and environment might be, the humble council estate or 'slum' neighbourhood may well provide the same sort of protections and reassurances – the ontological security - for its inhabitants that the middle-classes seek in their (gated) communities (see for example Mee, 2007).

3.9 'Home'

Analyses that begin by attempting to understand 'home' present a direct challenge to the territorial stigmatisation described above. For many people, 'home' is perhaps the ultimate example of a meaningful place. Home, one might say, has got 'soul'. In our routine, multi-scalar efforts to convert space into place, Tuan (1977) argues that we are invariably trying to (re)create some feeling of homeliness. Place-making, as Friedmann confirms is mostly about home-making:

> When one of us moves into a new office or newly painted flat we have rented, the first thing we do is to arrange it in ways that will make us feel comfortable and 'at home'...We shift the furniture around (or buy new furnishings), perhaps put some pictures on the wall that will make the room more 'homey', throw a rug on the floor, buy some plants to make us feel more cheerful, etc. (Friedmann, 2007, 259)

Cresswell notes how Tuan's work reifies home as "an exemplary kind of place where people feel a sense of attachment and rootedness. Home, more than anywhere else, is seen as a centre of meaning and a field of care" (2004: 24). In counterpoint, Rose (1993), writing from a feminist perspective, alerts us to the fact that some people, women especially, might not share Tuan's rosy, somewhat masculinist, view of home/place. Rather, "...homes can be and often are places of drudgery, abuse and neglect" (Cresswell, 2004: 25). For others, however, home is a haven from oppression and a place where, ultimately, you can be yourself.

For King (2004: 176), the essence of home lies in the activity of 'dwelling':

> Dwelling is about activity within a given space. It is the controlling of space, but also where the space itself becomes implicated in the activity. The space, in effect, becomes part of the mechanism of control itself...

Like Tuan's view that "place is pause" (1977: 6), King sees home as a 'stopping place': "the thing is, if we wish to use our dwelling fully and to accomplish what it can achieve for us, *we have to stop* (King, 2004: 178, original emphasis).

Contra Massey (1991) and the current scholarly emphasis on 'flows' and mobilities, King argues that:

> We have to see dwelling as a form of stasis, as tranquillity and not transformation: *as a filling-up and not as a flow*...We fill up the dwelling with memories, happenings, with loving and caring, with sharing with those we love. We do all these things by stopping still: we stay in one place so that we can love and care, share, dream and remember. Stopping in this sense brings with it familiarity, quietude, permanence and stillness. But most of all it brings a sense of belonging...Here we cling on and have what we need, namely, dear life itself (King, 2004: 178-9, original emphasis).

Home is the place where we stop and 'put down roots': it is where we dwell. But housing policy does not easily recognise or apprehend the activity of dwelling and this is where difficulties begin to arise:

The problem comes when we try to translate this into a language that is useable for policy makers, politicians and planners. The difficulty is essentially that one aspect of this process is quantifiable, measurable and controllable – we can count dwellings, measure standards, estimate supply and demand, and try to alter prices – whilst the other aspect is almost beyond prescription... It is therefore not surprising that we concentrate on what we can count, and try to persuade ourselves that these are the things that really matter. But just because something comes with a price tag and can be measured does not mean it is the most important (King, 2004: 176).

This is the position from which Allen (2008a) begins to critique the research that produced HMR and, in particular, its misrecognition of how residents of Liverpool's Kensington neighbourhood related to their homes, that is, their way of being-toward houses. For Allen, the middle-class housing researchers who developed HMR understood the housing market in Liverpool primarily as a "social space of positions on the urban landscape" (2008a: 74) rather than as somewhere to live. The fundamental problem, Allen argues, is that:

> ...this characterisation of the market for houses as a space of positions is articulated from (middle-class) social positions that are separate in social and epistemological terms from the 'lived' reality of housing for a lot of 'ordinary' people on an average-everyday basis. Indeed the dominant view that the market for houses consists of a space of positions violates the whole way of being-toward houses that working-class people possess, which, as a product of proximity to necessity, construes consumption, *in general*. In terms of the satisfaction of basic necessities and housing, *in particular*, according to the 'reality principle' (i.e. as a 'thing', e.g. 'bricks and mortar', 'shelter') (2008a: 74, original emphasis).

HMR researchers' emphasis on housing as a form of position-taking within a competitive housing landscape that operates at the city-region level, if not beyond, reflects not only the researchers' own being-toward housing, it also demonstrates the extent to which housing and neighbourhoods have become, more than ever, "commodities in a market for residential location" (Lupton and Tunstall, 2008: 110) with primacy accorded to a city's 'housing offer', as discussed in the previous chapter.

In contrast, Allen contends, working-class residents relate to housing via the 'reality principle'. They are "immersed in the 'reality' of dwelling rather than the hyper-reality of the market for houses as a space of positions...[and]...talk about their relation to housing only in a matter-of-fact form of language that emerges from...the reality of their existence and the proximity to necessity that envelops and characterises it" (Allen, 2008a: 75). Thus, for Allen, "housing is 'bricks and mortar', 'shelter', 'where you live' and little more" (2008a: 75).

My concern, here, however, is that in trying to distinguish middle-class and working-class relations to housing *consumption* and mounting a much-needed challenge to the symbolic violence that is effected through the dominant middle-class perspective, Allen possibly overstates the *practical* economy of working-class relations to

housing and neglects the emotional relation to housing, that is, its role as 'home'. If housing was little more than 'bricks and mortar' or 'shelter', people would generally have little objection to being forcibly moved elsewhere since they would have no relation to the house beyond the materiality of the structure: in essence, they could move anywhere as long as it provided shelter. But the protests against demolition suggest a much deeper connection to home.

That Allen's respondents made relatively little reference to the emotional dimension of home might reflect the timing of his interviews and/or the relative stability of his respondents' housing situations: as far as I understand, the majority of Allen's interviewees were not under immediate threat of losing their homes. Absent that threat, people *do* generally talk about their homes in everyday, matter-of-fact terms, that is, with respect to their practical economy, their functionality in supporting their everyday lives (see King, 2004). The emotional dimension, I would suggest, only comes to the fore when home has been lost or is under threat, when the taken-for-granted stability and familiarity that home provides is at risk.

King captures the tension between the dweller's preference for familiarity and stability and policy-makers' commitment to housing transformation:

> Our housing is a familiar space, full of familiar things. It is the one place where we seek to avoid the exceptional and the surprising. It is commonplace, even nondescript, and fits around our regular routines so that we lose sight of its complexity. This is both ironic and important: ironic because, whilst policy makers and academics seek to attain transformation or 'step changes' in housing, what we seek from our own housing is stability, routine and a means to avoid change; and it is important precisely because we need this stability and lack of change...We wish to maintain what we have, or else to build on it and develop it on our terms and in our time. We seek to be free from intrusion, especially from large impersonal forces that we cannot control or understand (2005: 1).

King maintains that housing policy rarely touches on the matter of our dwelling, of how we live and his view is that it should not attempt to do so. Mostly, "housing policy is concerned only with process – with the provision of dwellings, but not with how we use them" (2004: 34). Subject to the restrictions of law and, for example, conditions of tenancy, the manner in which we live usually remains outside policy's sphere of influence: "housing policy does not, because it cannot, engage with *how* we live. There is little it can do about how we use housing, *without destroying that use through its interventions*" (King, 2004: 19, emphasis added). But this is exactly what housing-led regeneration does: its interventions destroy our quiet enjoyment of home. The local reaction to the Parkside scheme and the opposition to HMR nationally exemplify what happens when housing policy comes into direct conflict with home, when it crosses the domestic threshold, so to speak, and intrudes upon our lived space. The threat and actualisation of demolition violates all of our domestic comforts and sources of well-being. It is therefore unsurprising that many people refuse to go quietly.

What I am arguing here is that people mobilise against HMR and similar schemes of gentrification-by-bulldozer in an attempt to protect 'home' and the use values and

psycho-social benefits that go with it. By 'home', I mean the *place* that is constituted by the individual or family's specific dwelling and the immediate, known, familiar neighbourhood that surrounds it: "Neighbourhood is the district in which one feels at home" (Tuan, 1974: 215). For many people, home is clearly something that is worth defending. It literally occupies the centre-ground of many of the place-space conflicts noted above.

The problem, as King (2004) highlights, is that under normal circumstances (i.e. absent the threat of its loss), our experience of home, our *private dwelling* is so banal, mundane and ordinary that we lose sight of its complexity, we overlook its importance, we just take it for granted as something that is, and will always be, there. Unfortunately this means that, like housing policy, research in housing and gentrification has tended to overlook the importance and value of dwelling and place. Or, rather, gentrification research has certainly engaged with middle-class lifestyles, consumption practices and gentrifiers' attitudes towards housing but it remains poorly equipped to challenge housing policy where it impacts upon specifically *working class* forms of dwelling and relations to place, as I discuss below. Allen's work (2008a) is an essential step in the right direction in developing our understanding of working-class relations to housing on its own terms.

3.10 Losing home and leaving the neighbourhood: the experience of displacement

The adverse consequences of displacement are long established (see for example Dennis, 1970; Fried, 1963; Gans, 1959; Goodman, 1972; Gower-Davies, 1972; Hartman, 1964; Marris, 1962, 1974; Porteous and Smith, 2001; Young and Wilmott, 1957). Hartman's (1964) paper, for example, which presents the findings of his study of households dislocated by urban renewal in Boston's West End along with a review of thirty previous studies which assessed the housing conditions of relocated families, found that, overall, displacees experienced only limited improvement in their housing conditions, with many still living in sub-standard, overcrowded housing and additionally reporting increased housing costs, negative health impacts and the loss of vital social support networks:

> Our findings from the West End, supported by similar studies from other cities, suggest that the deleterious effects of the uprooting experience, the loss of familiar places and persons, and the difficulties of adjusting to accepting new living environments may be far more serious issues than are changes in housing status (Hartman, 1964: 279).

Hartman was also one of the first scholars to draw attention to the differential impact of displacement on different sub-groups within the affected community, with certain individuals and households finding it easier to adapt to a change in their residential circumstances and location than others:

> Review of the literature on mobility, preparedness for change, and modes of adaptation...suggests that families who relocate satisfactorily are by and large those with adequate financial, personal and social resources, those who are

prepared for upward mobility and who (despite frequent initial resentment about having to leave a satisfying environment) view forced relocation as an opportunity to obtain the kind of housing that they have long desired. On the other hand, those who are least prepared and able to effect a positive change, because of inadequacies in income and personal or social resources, appear to incur heavy costs in terms of severe personal and social disruption, failure to improve housing conditions, and increased housing expenses...(Hartman, 1964: 278)

In particular, the literature suggests that the academic and psychological well-being of children and adolescents are negatively impacted by relocation (Astone and McLanahan, 1994; Clampet-Lundquist, 2007; Hendershott, 1989; Humke & Schaefer, 1995; Scanlon and Devine, 2001), as are older people who have enjoyed longer residence in an area:

> Qualitative studies across America from Marc Fried to Chester Hartman to John Betancur to Winifred Curran have found the sense of bereavement that comes with being displaced to be particularly acute among the elderly (Slater, 2009: 299)

More pointedly, Dumbleton (2006) draws attention to the *deaths* and increased rates of illness amongst elderly residents who were forced to leave their pre-fab homes in Bristol and Newport as a result of demolition schemes. Drawing on over 22,000 individual cases, a comprehensive study by Danermark *et al* (1996) into the effects of residential relocation among elderly people found that the death rate among those who were forced to make temporary or permanent moves as a result of urban renewal was higher than among non-movers and among those who moved for other reasons. They attributed this to the forced nature of the move and the displacees' associated lack of control with respect to the timing and circumstances of the move. Examining the effects upon a more age-diverse population, a much earlier study by McGonigle and Kirby (1936) compared the health and expenditure of a 'slum' population in Stockton on Tees with that of a group that had been moved to modern housing. As Garside reports:

> The results were dramatic. Although the estate to which the families moved was carefully planned and well-built, and the houses were fitted with a bath, kitchen range, ventilated food store, wash boiler and all the most modern sanitary arrangements, the death rate of the families *increased by 46 per cent* over what it had previously been in the slum area they left behind (1988: 39, emphasis added).

As Gilbert (2007: 709) explains:

> The simple explanation was that in order to pay for their new housing the families were able to spend much less on food. Poor people need cheap accommodation. If cheap accommodation is not available, they become homeless or they spend too much on housing.

Dis-placement also removes comforting familiarity and "disrupts the role of place in supporting residents' daily lives" (Manzo *et al*, 2008: 1861). It disrupts established

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spatially determined routines. As Jolley affirms: "...any change from an established routine can be received as stressful and illness provoking within individuals and indeed in any living creature" (Jolley, 2002: para. 26). Echoing Hartman's point from above, Jolley goes on to suggest that the nature of that response depends very much on the individual:

> Some individuals are strong, well suited by constitution and life's experience to withstand and even prosper in the light of change. Others are less robust and may have demonstrated by breakdowns in response to stress in the past that they are vulnerable to such stresses. In addition, the presence of concurrent frailty or impairment of physical health, mental health or sensory competence, make adjustment and compensation to change more difficult and less likely to be achieved. (2002: para. 27)

These different levels of preparedness, adaptability, coping, resourcefulness, attachment to place and not least, displacees' age and health, go some way to explaining the mixed results found by more recent studies, most notably the two HUD-funded multi-site, longitudinal studies examining the relocation outcomes for residents displaced by HOPE VI, namely the HOPE VI Resident Tracking Study (L. Buron et al., 2002) and the HOPE VI Panel Study (see for example Harris and Kaye, 2004; D. Levy & Kaye, 2004; Popkin et al 2002; Popkin et al, 2004). Similarly, whilst single-site studies examining the relocation experiences of displaced public housing residents in Chicago (Venkatesh et al, 2004), Philadelphia (Clampet-Lundquist, 2004; 2007); Tampa (Greenbaum, 2002; 2008), Minneapolis (Crump, 2002; Goetz, 2003), Duluth (Goetz, 2010) and the Seattle area (Kleit and Manzo, 2006; Manzo, 2008) reported modest improvements in residents' housing conditions, the expected broader improvements in health, well-being and employment that were hypothesized as a result of residents leaving 'severely distressed' public housing were mostly unrealised. With respect to HOPE VI, Goetz summarises the position as follows:

> The demolition of public housing has for the most part not produced significant or consistent benefits for the very low-income families displaced. The argument behind public housing demolition is that conditions were so desperate there that any move away would benefit the families. In fact, the evidence to date suggests that while some of the intended outcomes have been produced, others have not. In some areas, residents are as a whole arguably worse off than before. Families feel safer and in most places they report greater satisfaction with their new housing. But there are conspicuously no benefits in employment, income, welfare dependency, or physical health. Further, many of the families suffer significant disruptions in the systems of social supports they construct to get by on very limited incomes... The lack of benefits from such moves is problematic at best, and it is even more profound and more consistent for the most disadvantaged families living in public housing. The most vulnerable populations, those with significant human capital deficiencies or significant health challenges, are the least likely to see any benefits from being displaced from public housing. (2010: 28)

Residents' experiences, Goetz (*op cit*: 27) notes, "defy easy generalisations, either positive or negative... Some families thrive as a result of moving out, some suffer". Gibson (2007: 7) makes a similar point:

> Some residents do fine: they appreciate the privacy of their new homes and consider their new neighborhoods safer places...Yet, others view the mandatory relocation from their homes as a stressful disruption of their lives because of the increased financial hardship, the loss of social support networks, and feelings of isolation in unfamiliar, unsafe neighbourhoods. For some it leads to depression. The variety of responses reflects the spectrum of fragility and strength among households in public housing communities.

At worst, some vulnerable individuals – particularly the elderly - may find involuntary relocation so traumatic that they are exposed to the risk of premature death:

> My own view is that from common experience, from my clinical experience, and from an informed review of the literature, it is an inescapable truism that relocation is a stressful event and can precipitate problems of mental health, physical health, and even bring forth death. (Jolley, 2002: para. 32)

Blomley highlights how activists opposing the gentrification of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside have told and re-told the story of the 87 year-old Olaf Solheim as a cautionary tale:

> A retired logger, he had lived in the same hotel room for 30 years, only to be displaced in preparation for Expo. Although he found new accommodation, he died soon after. This narrative was told again and again...reminding listeners that one uncouples people from their 'home landscape'...at a cost (1998, 569)

Property and personhood

In assessing the 'costs' of losing one's home, Radin's (1982) 'personhood' theory of property is of particular relevance. Basically, Radin's argument is that people become closely attached to certain objects to the point where they become, in effect, an extension of the self:

> Most people possess certain objects they feel are almost part of themselves. These objects are bound up with personhood because they are part of the way we constitute ourselves as continuing personal entities in the world. They may be as different as people are different, but some common examples might be a wedding ring, a portrait, an heirloom, or a house.

> One may gauge the strength or significance of someone's relationship with an object by the kind of pain that would be occasioned by its loss. On this view, an object is closely related to one's personhood if its loss causes pain that cannot be relieved by the object's replacement. If so, that particular object is bound up with the holder.

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The (im)possibility of replacing the object allows Radin to distinguish between two types of property – personal and fungible. Fungible property is held for "purely instrumental reasons" and can be replaced by market value compensation. Money would be an obvious example. Personal property, by contrast, such as a wedding ring owned by a spouse or a home cannot be completely replaced by market value compensation. In short, some items of property are more identity-constitutive than others and therefore less easily replaced should they be lost or alienated from the owner (Chartier, 2005). In fact, Chartier (2005: 272) contends that "some items of property will be at least as identity-constitutive as some body parts":

> A residence in which a family has lived for several generations might be as important to the identities of a member of the family as, say (to use a homely example), one of her toes. A deprivation of such a residence could be as violative as an attack on at least a more peripheral body part, and as comparably objectionable; both would amount to assaults on the self

Approached in this way, the taking of home can be understood as an attack on the self – as an action that causes harm. At the same time, it suggests that people being displaced from their homes can never be compensated fully for the loss suffered. But that should not stop us from trying to ascertain what these losses might be. Merrill (1986), examining the compensation paid to those whose houses are condemned under eminent domain, suggests that the standard formula of market value compensation:

> ...does not compensate [the condemnee] for the subjective "premium" he might attach to his property above its opportunity cost. In some cases, such as those involving undeveloped land, there may be no subjective premium. But in other cases, the premium may be quite large and may reflect several potential concerns: a condemnee may have a sentimental attachment to the property, or may have made improvements or modifications to accommodate his unique needs, or may simply wish to avoid the costs and inconvenience of relocation (1986: 83).

This 'subjective premium', the difference between the subjective value placed upon the home by the occupier and the market value is represented graphically in Figure 1 (below).

Figure 1: The 'subjective premium' associated with home
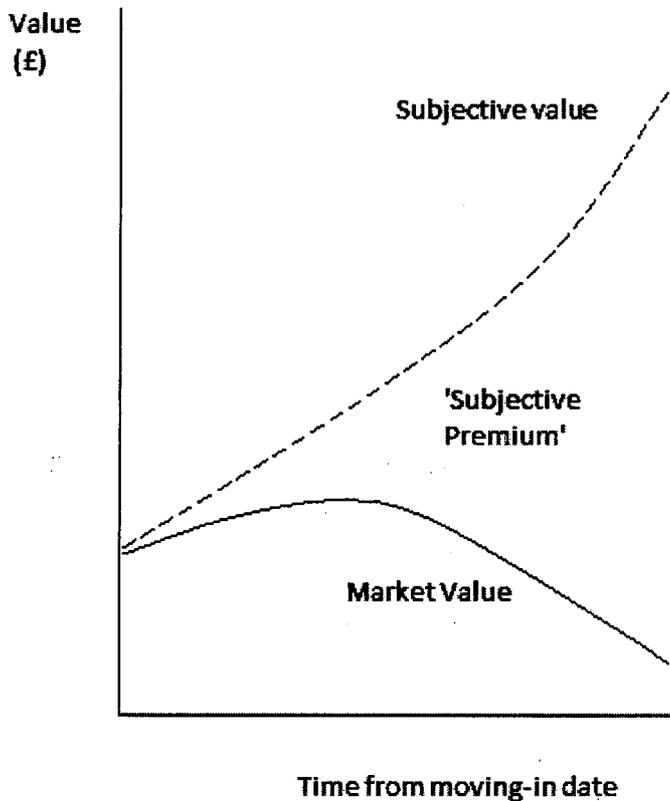
The assumption here, of course, is that the occupier's subjective interest in the property will increase over time. The subjective premium represents, in effect, the obverse of the rent gap. It is what keeps people in place and what encourages them to defend their right to stay put, even though the market value may be falling. It is what makes the 'space of positions' irrelevant to the considerations of people living in homes in the so-called low demand areas of Liverpool, Oldham and Parkside. For the occupier the vertical axis could easily be extended *ad infinitum*.

Home Loss Payments

The thesis examines issues associated with compulsory purchase in later chapters. It is worth noting here, however, that those losing their homes as a result of CPO are paid compensation under three heads: market value of the land and buildings acquired; 'disturbance allowance' to cover the costs of moving such as solicitor's fees and removal costs; and, significantly, a Home Loss Payment (HLP). This latter payment, established under the provisions of Sections 29 and 30 of the Land Compensation Act 1973, represents "an additional sum to reflect and recognise the distress and discomfort of being compelled to move out of your home" (DCLG,

2004: 20). The payment to displaced owner-occupiers and tenants[5] is "intended to reflect the fact that the acquisition is compulsory and that the market value of a property may not fully reflect the attributes which the owner values on a personal basis" (Roots, 1999: 41). In other words, there is an attempt to compensate the owner (and tenants) financially for the loss of *subjective, non-market values* over and above the cost of the bricks and mortar and land. An element of the harm that arises from the loss of home is, in effect, already recognised in law. This, I will argue, presents a possible opening for developing work around state-led gentrification, displacement and social harm.

The HLP represents an example of what Todd and McDonagh (2011) describe as a 'solatium' payment, a compensatory payment that is meant to give comfort or consolation in the event of misery or distress. Appendix V of the House of Lords Special Report on the Crossrail Bill summarises the background to the introduction of these payments:

> ...the Report of the Commission on the Third London Airport (HMSO 1971) and the Report of the Urban Motorways Committee (HMSO 1972) recognised that when a person's home is acquired compulsorily for public projects, he is displaced and suffers a loss over and above that represented by the open market value of his interest in land plus disturbance. That further loss embraces personal upset and inconvenience, loss of social ties and having to leave his home at a time not of his own choosing. Such losses are difficult to quantify or value in money terms. (House of Lords, 2008: np)

Notwithstanding the difficulties in quantifying such losses, the respective provisions of the Land Compensation Act 1973 were introduced to provide a monetary remedy in addition to the compensation ordinarily paid to the owner for the acquisition of his/her property. The HLP represents, in effect, a statutory acknowledgement that home provides intangible benefits to the occupier that imbue the dwelling with a personal or subjective value over and above the property's market value.

It follows that the involuntary acquisition of one's home and the attendant displacement will incur substantial personal and emotional costs. Indeed, displacement destroys the occupier's subjective premium and the HLP is an attempt to provide redress for or, at least, acknowledge, these losses. That is, the HLP seeks to elevate the amount of compensation to a level closer to the occupier's subjective value.

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[5] Claims for HLP can be made by occupiers (owners and tenants) who have been displaced from their main residence by compulsory purchase or by housing orders, redevelopment or other specified improvements made under the Housing Act 1985. Claimants are also required to have lived at the property for no less than one year. For owner-occupiers, the HLP is set at 10% of the assessed market value of the property, with payments up to a maximum of £47,000 (as at 2008). Eligible tenants receive the prescribed minimum payment that is currently set at £4,700.

3.11 Place: the *terra incognita* of gentrification research?

Within the gentrification literature, research on *new-build* gentrification, though increasing, is still comparatively rare. Nevertheless, we have seen that there is already a tendency to characterise the locations at which new-build gentrification occurs as essentially 'empty', that is, devoid of people and life. Quickly dismissed as 'brownfield sites', attention soon moves to other matters. But this happens *too* quickly: it is done uncritically, almost without thinking. For example:

> Direct displacement is not a significant feature of the gentrification of London's riverside because most of the new-build developments are situated on brownfield sites (Davidson and Lees, 2005: 1184)

Note here how 'brownfield' is implicitly equated with emptiness. There is no attempt to probe any further. In the rush to find evidence of displacement, place gets left behind. Now, this might well reflect the particularities of the sites in question. Whilst the places at which HMR and its US comparator – HOPE VI – were implemented were previously inhabited, some brownfield sites *are* simply long-disused, former industrial premises that do not merit the same level of critical scrutiny. But my concern here runs deeper. If we extend this discussion to accounts of 'conventional' gentrification, just how much time do we spend understanding who and what is already *in situ*, that is to say, how often do we approach gentrification from the perspective of 'home'? How much do we value, let alone fight for, what is already there before moving swiftly on to displacement issues? My answers to these questions would, in turn, be 'rarely' and 'hardly at all'.

But my point is that even when we do undertake critical research, we seem to have little time for the places that are experiencing/at risk of gentrification. Focusing on rent-gaps, disinvestment and displacement, we struggle to see them as anything other than sites of gentrification. Our understanding of these neighbourhoods is essentially one-dimensional. We apprehend them through the economic lens of rent-gaps or as points of departure for displacement but rarely do we engage with them as places in themselves, as rounded places where people might lead meaningful lives. Instead, the subject of place tends to fall and disappear into the epistemological gap between analyses of gentrification's economic and political causes and its displacement effects. This particular tendency – the epistemological displacement of place - is captured in the introduction to a recent issue of Urban Studies devoted to the topic of gentrification and public policy. Following van Weesep's exhortations "to put the gentrification debate into policy perspective" (1994: 74), Lees and Ley inform us that

> This Special Issue places gentrification within the lens of public policy, but in so doing it urges *both* an analysis of the causes of gentrification (especially where gentrification is induced by public policy) and an analysis of the effects (2008: 2383, original emphasis)

With research focusing primarily upon causes and effects, place, located somewhere in the middle, gets squeezed out of the analysis. Its meaning and value to current

residents apparently falls outside our scholarly concerns. Causes flow smoothly into effects and place is effectively discounted as something not worthy of our critical attention. Like the 'backstage' working-class (Slater, 2006; Watt, 2008a), the places they inhabit function as little more than a backdrop – the scenery – to the middle-class drama of gentrification. Remarking upon the lack of social interaction between gentrifiers and working-class residents in Barnsbury, London, Butler (2003: 2484) describes how the middle-classes value their co-located, working-class 'others' as "a kind of social wallpaper, but no more". In my view, gentrification research treats place in much the same manner. It is essentially something that is just/always there in the background but, as researchers, we choose not to interact with it (though see Davidson, 2009). Unwilling to understand who or what is already *in place*, we struggle to communicate the value of what is there.

Whilst researchers may recognise the existence of a 'false choice' for low-income communities (DeFilippis, 2004) it is nevertheless characterised as a false choice between gentrification and continued disinvestment and 'decay' and *not* gentrification and 'home'. If we are serious about confronting this false choice then we need to not only flag gentrification as a problem (Slater, 2006), we also need to do more to tease out places' existing strengths and qualities and help articulate alternative counter-representations rather than leaving them 'empty' or, worse still, adding to the already deafening chorus of voices that speak of decline and decay. This is not an argument in support of disinvestment. It is rather an exercise in looking deeper, in looking beyond the economic disinvestment to see what people are fighting for. These places may well be disinvested but the simple truth remains, people do still live in them and it is important to remind ourselves that such places have been abandoned "by capital, not the poor" (Blomley, 2004: 39), Places may have been long forsaken by capital but a strong sense of attachment and rootedness means that many local residents maintain an enduring commitment to them.

The housing and the neighbourhood environment may not be 'pretty'. Indeed, it might even be shocking to the middle-class sensibilities of policymakers, the media and certain academics, but, for many people, this is their 'home', a place of shelter and stability, a refuge from the predations of neoliberalism and a centre of meaning in their lives. Furthermore, as later chapters show, there are many who are willing to put up a determined fight for the places they call home. For Hooks, the existence of the 'homeplace' is an essential facet of oppositional struggle and resistance to economic and social domination:

> It is no accident that this homeplace [where Black women and men went to renew their spirits and recover themselves]...is always subject to violation and destruction because when a people no longer have the space to construct a homeplace, we cannot build a meaningful community of resistance (Hooks, 1990: 47 in Burton and Clark, 2005).

The question then arises: why does home (and place) attract so little interest from gentrification scholars? In response, I offer some tentative explanations, some of which I have already touched upon. Firstly, Smith's rent-gap thesis, brilliant as it is, has tended to encourage research, often quantitative, that examines inner-urban neighbourhoods as sites that are vulnerable to gentrification rather than places where people currently live – as home. Seen through the lens of the rent-gap, places are

reduced essentially to the single dimension of actual and potential economic returns. For Smith, "[G]entrification is a structural product of the land and housing markets" (1979: 546). All the critical attention is therefore focused on 'production-side' explanations, on larger economic structures and processes rather than, for example, individuals' long-standing relationships with place. As a product of larger economic forces, uneven development and gentrification seemingly becomes inexorable, unstoppable.

Secondly, matters concerning people and their relationships with place lie very much within the purview of humanistic geography. But this sub-field of geographic enquiry has long struggled to break free of its early reputation for being apolitical and somewhat self-absorbed. Indeed, Smith's rent-gap theory formed part of a larger body of Marxist-inspired work that was, in part, developed in reaction to some of the more maligned aspects of humanistic geography. Moreover, methods and concepts from humanist geography have also contributed to the development of cultural, consumption-side explanations of gentrification (see, for example Ley, 1996). It is therefore not surprising that many critical gentrification researchers, schooled in the political economy of gentrification, have shown a reluctance to engage with, say, the major works of Tuan (1974; 1977) or Relph (1976) which do not seem to have immediate critical relevance.

Thirdly, as noted above, working-class places have been ignored because of the more general shift away from the study of the working-class experience of displacement noted by Slater (2006), the "near-complete neglect of the fate of the occupants pushed aside and out by urban redevelopment" (Wacquant, 2008: 198). To survey much of the latest research on gentrification, it would seem that the middle class is "the only class in town" with the working-class reduced to a shifting, phantasmagorical, non-presence (Watt, 2008a). Cast out of their homes they have also become the outcasts of gentrification research, with researchers reluctant to "take[s] the trouble to find and listen to the people most at risk of displacement" (Slater *et al*, 2004: 1142). Wacquant sees this "literal and figurative effacing" as a product of three related developments: the "broader pattern of invisibility of the working class in the public sphere and social inquiry over the past two decades"; "the growing heteronomy of urban research...to the concerns and outlook of city rulers" and; "the shifting role of the state" from welfare provider to a supplier of services that support business and the middle-class (2008: 199). Within the context of the growing corporatisation of the academy, social research has become increasingly wedded to the priorities and objectives of policy-makers and major research funders (Allen, 2005; Wacquant, 2008). The interests of the working class have all but slipped from view.

3.12 Summary

This chapter has outlined some of the work in humanistic geography that began to deepen our understanding and appreciation of some foundational geographical concepts such as place and home from the 1970s onwards. In particular, the chapter has demonstrated how the home and surrounding neighbourhood constitute an essential material, economic, social and emotional 'resource' for residents. A sense of social and geographical familiarity - is an important, if intangible – and therefore

largely unrecognised - resource. Similarly, in challenging material conditions, a sense of place rooted in history and collective experience may constitute "an important non-material resource, which is called upon by the local residents in their struggle to cope with precariousness..." (Corcoran, 2002: 49). In the US, several scholars have drawn attention to the importance of geographically anchored 'home-places' in the everyday lives of low-income African-American families (Burton and Clark, 2005; Hooks, 1990; Stack, 1996). The home-place not only provides "a refuge from the daily barrage of life in poverty", (Burton and Clark, 2005:170), eliciting feelings of safety, commitment and rootedness, it also offers a sense of empowerment and the possibility of social defiance and resistance:

> Historically, African-American people believed that the construction of a homeplace, however fragile and tenuous (the slave hut, the wooden shack), had a radical political dimension. Despite the brutal reality of racial apartheid, of domination, one's homeplace was the one site where one could freely confront the issue of humanization, where one could resist. (Hooks, 1990: 42)

Home, then, can provide a starting point for resisting gentrification but the chapter has highlighted how much gentrification research has tended to overlook who or what is already *in place*, preferring to focus its attention on displacement. The problem, as Davidson (2009) notes, is that, to date, arguments about the *volume* of displacement arising from gentrification have frequently deflected attention from the real essence of what is at stake. Readings of displacement "as a purely (abstract) spatial process", he argues, tell us little about why displacement matters. This "general failure to understand lived space in its entire dimensions", Davidson argues, "represents a particularly significant problem for critical commentary" and he further suggests "that we need to (re)incorporate an understanding of place into our understanding of displacement" (2009: 226). Developing this more emplaced perspective has been the central purpose of this chapter.

Critical research on displacement is vitally important but it should also be accompanied by complementary work that establishes and communicates the value and importance of existing homes and neighbourhoods. Gentrification research needs to rediscover, revive and nurture the geographical roots from which it has itself been torn and better understand people's attachment to place and the harms that arise from losing one's place. The thesis therefore seeks to begin to reclaim place for critical gentrification research; otherwise, developers and master-planners will perennially see nothing but 'empty' spaces upon which they will be free to indulge their wildest *tabula rasa* visions.

Chapter 4

Housing, urban policy and gentrification
in Britain and the US, 1945-1997

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to place HMR in a broader historical context by tracing the origins and development of post-war housing and urban policy. Focusing mainly on the British experience, some key approaches and events are examined alongside evolving forms and geographies of gentrification in order to highlight not only the state's growing role in gentrification but also the recurrent theme of working-class displacement as a feature – if not objective - of urban policy. This sets the scene for subsequent discussion of HMR as an intervention that, whilst departing from earlier approaches in several important respects, also includes significant elements of them. But this is the subject of the next chapter. For now, the present chapter examines the co-evolution of urban policy and gentrification up to 1997, when New Labour was elected to office.

Up until the 1970s, urban policy and gentrification initially developed along quite different trajectories. In Britain, 'urban policy' was emerging as part of a larger political agenda around issues of inner-city poverty and issues of racial integration. Chastened by the riots in a large number of US cities, Britain's first attempt at urban policy – the Urban Programme, launched in 1968 – "was a direct response to fears about racial tensions in British cities..." (Cochrane, 2007: 27). To some extent, it also represented "...part of a last ditch attempt to save the Keynesian welfare state – finding ways of integrating, and managing sections of the community that were previously excluded..." (Cochrane, 2007: 24).

At around the same time that the Wilson government was developing its nascent urban policy, gentrification was still a relatively rare phenomenon. As Smith notes, with respect to London: "1960s gentrification was a marginal oddity in the Islington housing market – a quaint urban sport of the hipper professional classes unafraid to rub shoulders with the unwashed masses" (2002: 439). Of course, this is not to deny that the state (in both the US and the UK) was involved in changing the urban landscape over the same period. Suburbanisation, urban renewal and 'slum' clearance all helped to create the conditions for subsequent inner-city disinvestment, spatially uneven development and the emergence of rent gaps (Smith, 1979, 1996). But in the main, gentrification was not yet a deliberate objective of policy.

Things began to change in the 1970s, however, and by the 1980s there had been a decisive shift in urban policy away from matters of welfare and social reproduction

to concerns related to cities' economic competitiveness, with city governments adopting a much more entrepreneurial stance (Harvey, 1989a). The nature of the shift is captured by Jessop (1997: 40): "the city is being reimagined or reimaged – as an economic, political and cultural entity which must seek to undertake entrepreneurial activities to enhance its competitiveness". With the city reconceptualised as a 'growth machine' (Logan and Molotch, 1987), the well-being of citizens was seen to be best assured by economic success rather than welfare provision with the benefits of such growth somehow trickling down to those with little wealth.

In Britain, this re-orientation towards the market and the growing influence of the private sector in urban policy was exemplified both by the Thatcher government's creation of the Urban Development Corporations and their adoption of a property-led approach to urban regeneration. Nowhere was this new approach more evident than in the London Docklands where the state played a fundamental role in subsidising and legitimising the area's gentrification (Smith, 1989). Where Britain and the US provided very different contexts for urban redevelopment projects, urban governments in both countries were expected to work much more closely with the private sector and establish and maintain the conditions under which private capital could thrive. Overall, the period was marked by the "integration of gentrification into a wider range of economic and cultural processes at the global and national scales" (Hackworth and Smith, 2001: 468). Gentrification was no longer "a sideshow in the city but a major component of the urban imaginary" (Ley, 2003) and one that has now become firmly embedded in the cultural psyche of urban residents, policy-makers, city planners and, not least, private developers.

4.2 Defining urban policy

In opening this discussion, it is perhaps worthwhile to consider what is meant by 'urban policy'. Blackman adopts a broad definition: "Urban policy is essentially about the welfare of local residents in an urban society" (1995: 5) which suggests that it is an intrinsically positive, progressive undertaking. But he later qualifies this by adding "it cannot be *assumed* that urban policy necessarily increases urban well-being. Its impact should always be analysed critically and the programmes which result from urban policy initiatives monitored and evaluated in terms of benefits and costs" (Blackman, 1995: 13, original emphasis). Cochrane's reading of Blackman is that "urban policy is best understood as all aspects of public policy that affect people living in cities" (2007: 10).

Elsewhere, Fainstein and Fainstein retain this broad view but add some elaboration, arguing that urban policy is "state activity affecting the use of space and the built environment relative to the process of accumulation and the social occupation of space relative to the distribution of consumption opportunities" (1982: 16). This definition reminds us how cities are at once sites of accumulation but also locales of social reproduction, assemblages of hard infrastructure and fleshy corporeality. With urban policy constantly tacking between an emphasis on the physical or social dimensions of the urban, there has been a perennial tension between policy that seeks

to support the "function of urban areas as residential areas for the mass of the population" and that which promotes the "use of urban space as a vehicle for accumulation" (Fainstein and Fainstein, 1982: 9)

Urban policy is something that academics discuss, inform, evaluate and reflect upon. They agonise over how it should be defined. It is something apprehended cognitively and, mostly, from a distance. This is different from how low income households have tended to experience urban policy. This chapter suggests that, for much of the post-war period, low income people encountered urban policy in the implacable, non-negotiable form of a bulldozer, as the subjects of successive planning and housing 'experiments' in which they were constantly being shunted around in the manner first described by Engels (1935).

4.3 1945-1951 Post-war reconstruction

For much of this period, well into the 1970s, in fact,' urban' policy, as such, was focused on social reproduction (Smith, 2002). Britons emerged from the war and the 1930s Depression with an appetite for social reform and a 'never again' attitude towards war and the mass unemployment, desperate poverty and poor housing that had preceded it (Hennessy, 2008; Kynaston, 2007). There was also, as Atkinson and Moon highlight, "a war-induced perception of the effectiveness of concerted collective action", a sense that this better post-war world – the 'New Jerusalem' – "could be attained by *planning, co-operation* and *state involvement...*" (1994: 22, original emphasis). This desire for change and greater interventionism ensured a landslide victory for Labour who, drawing heavily on the work of Beveridge (1942) and Keynes (1936), quickly set about implementing a new political, social and economic settlement that included full employment, the nationalisation of key industries and a comprehensive 'cradle to grave' system of welfare. A combination of Keynesian macro-economic management, the mixed economy and a universal welfare state would provide the basis of the Labour-Conservative 'Butskellite' consensus that lasted until the mid-1970s.

Despite the euphoria of the Labour victory, however, in the years immediately following the war, the Attlee government faced the daunting but urgent task of rebuilding bomb-damaged cities and reviving an exhausted economy. Pre-war housing shortages were exacerbated by the wartime cessation of house-building, worsening conditions of disrepair and bomb damage. Intensive bombing in London and other major cities had destroyed around 200,000 houses and left an additional 500,000 uninhabitable (Donnison, 1967). With the added pressures of a post-war baby boom, Power (2007) suggests that there was a shortfall of around two million dwellings. Given this pressing need for reconstruction, what we see after the war is an overwhelming emphasis on *physical* (re)development to address issues of housing quality, new construction and problems associated with unplanned urban growth (Atkinson and Moon, 1994).

Despite the gravity of the housing problem, however, some saw tremendous opportunities amid the ruins. The devastated centres of Britain's cities provided a

nascent planning profession with a landmark opportunity to demonstrate its capabilities for planned development. Although the new government attempted to make good many of the dwellings that suffered lesser damage, however, it was the planners' preference for clear, unencumbered sites - the 'tabulae rasae' – so beloved of Le Corbusier - that ultimately won out, with new housing proposed on both bomb-damaged and greenfield sites (Atkinson and Moon, 1994).

The 1947 Town and Country Planning Act introduced a comprehensive, formalised system of land-use planning with the aims of preventing urban sprawl, controlling new development and dispersing people and economic activity from the older, over-populated, congested urban cores. This planned decentralisation reflected long-established anti-urban sentiments within the planning profession that stemmed from Howard's Garden City Movement (Atkinson and Moon, 1994). Patrick Abercrombie's *Greater London Plan* "was the epitome of the ambitious new approach, with its futuristic vision of a massive 'Green Belt' encircling London and the construction of eight New Towns outside it to house almost a million people out of the capital" (Power, 2007: 58). Thus, by 1951, we can already identify the beginning of a significant movement of the working-class from urban centres. This out-movement would grow and accelerate with the later 'slum' clearances.

4.5 1951-69: 'the era of the bulldozer'[6]

With housing issues still very dominant, the Conservatives won the 1951 election with a pledge to build 300,000 houses per year - twice the actual figure achieved by Labour in the preceding year (Malpass, 2005). Inevitably, a building programme of this magnitude generated a massive demand for land and the slum clearances that were instituted from the mid-1950s onwards, ostensibly in response to poor housing conditions, were arguably as much about releasing inner-urban land for new (council) housing and city centre redevelopment schemes. As in the late 1990s, the scarcity of suitable sites within cities was fast becoming a major constraint to continued housing growth:

> The post-war building boom had already gobbled up so much of the available land within cities that the shortage of space was becoming an insurmountable barrier to much new building. The resistance of outer boroughs and county councils to overspill council housing, swayed by a mix of snobbery, environmental concerns and social dislocation, put a counter-pressure on local authorities to tackle the slums within their own boundaries to create the space for new homes. (Power: 2007)

A national programme of slum clearance had originally been introduced in the inter-war period by the Housing Act, 1930. Estimates from two years earlier suggested that there were "at least one million unfit and two million overcrowded pre-First World War houses almost entirely within inner cities" (Power, 2007: 45). Proposing "a vigorous campaign of slum clearance...to make sure that the evil be remedied" (MoH, 1933: 1), the Act gave local authorities powers to declare clearance areas and

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[6] Carmon, 1999

demolish housing that was deemed 'unfit', that is, "in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation" (Housing Act, 1930). Councils received direct subsidies for each dwelling they demolished and they were made statutorily responsible for re-housing displaced tenants, receiving additional subsidy for each displacee in an effort to reduce over-crowding (Power, 2007). They were also required "to produce estimates of slums remaining in their areas, together with five-year plans for clearance" (Malpass, 2005: 42) and, by 1939, around a third of a million houses had been demolished.

Faced with an urgent housing crisis, the Attlee government had demolished relatively few houses so it fell to the Conservatives to continue the programme that had been introduced before the war. The Housing Repairs and Rents Act, 1954, re-launched mass demolition in earnest, initiating what would become the "largest clearance programme in the Western world" (Power, 1993). The scale of housing clearance and displacement was breath-taking: "Between 1955 and 1976, *around two million homes were demolished*, over 20% of pre-1914 dwellings, which were the main target. *Around eight million people were displaced*" (Power, 2007: 61, emphasis added).

For some, however, particularly those who were re-housed in the earliest phases of clearance, displacement was not an entirely negative experience. As Malpass observes:

> ...a new council house was something to be prized; the post-war estates consisted mainly of good quality, two-storey cottage style houses...[and]...had physical and social characteristics that made them desirable places to live...As a result, people moving into new council houses in the early 1950s saw this sector very differently from the way it is generally perceived today; they were likely to be moving from old, rundown, private rented accommodation, probably shared with their in-laws. Having their own kitchen and bathroom, with constant hot water...was a genuinely positive experience (2005: 83)

By the late 1950s, however, the sheer scale of the Conservative house-building programme required a reduction in the unit cost of new dwellings and a commensurate reduction in their size and/or quality of construction: "the delicate shield constructed by Aneurin Bevan around levels of investment and standards in council housing was quickly shattered" (Cole and Furbey, 1994: 69). Not only was the so-called 'people's house' – a standard three-bedroom house - some 15% smaller than those built in the 1940s (Lund, 2006), it also formed a lower proportion of total output as two-bedroom houses and flats were being built in ever larger numbers. The twin focus on output and lower costs also led to the proliferation of industrialised building techniques and non-traditional, system-built housing such as high-rise flats, which met councils' demands to provide more dwellings as cheaply and quickly as possible, whilst also attracting higher rates of subsidy.

The real turning point, as Power (2007) suggests, came with the introduction of a 'storey height subsidy' in 1956, whereby councils received progressively more money the higher they built. The long-term effects were disastrous. Presented with the 'blank slates' of cleared sites where they could trial the ideas of Le Corbusier and

the Modern Movement, architects and planners set about creating novel, experimental and often brutally insensitive forms of mass housing "that broke with urban traditions, tore apart street patterns and obliterated homes, fields, workplaces, services and social networks" (*ibid*: 61). Within the space of a decade, "council homes went from being the crowning glory of the welfare state to mass-produced barracks" (Hanley, 2008: 103), with flats (both high-rise and low-rise) accounting for around 50 per cent of all the new council housing that was constructed in the mid-1960s (Dunleavy, 1981).

With millions of working-class households being uprooted from long-established communities and re-housed to new deck access/high-rise estates, the now classic sociological study, *Family and Kinship in East London* (Young and Willmott, 1957), documented the damaging effects of slum clearance and population dispersal on the working-class families and wider communities of Bethnal Green in London's East End. Bethnal Green was the kind of place where " 'you knew everybody, grew up with everybody, everybody recognised you' ; when people talked about 'moving away' they were referring to locations that were no more than ten minutes' walk away" (Young and Willmott, 1957: 102). The strong social connections that they found were "reinforced by the physical form of the densely-packed streets" (Young and Willmott, 1992: xxvi) and they demonstrated how slum clearance was not just demolishing houses but also breaking up extended families, dis-locating communities and destroying traditional working-class ways of life. Overturning conventional depictions of the inhabitants and life of areas that were officially designated as 'slums', Young and Willmott's work provided a much-needed corrective to the dominant negative representations that were articulated by planners and frequently used to justify clearance. Wilfred Burns, the City Planning Officer for Newcastle, who would later become President of the RTPI and Chief Planner at the Department of the Environment, was also the eponymous 'evangelistic bureaucrat' of Gower-Davies' book (Gower-Davies, 1972) which examined the comprehensive redevelopment of Newcastle's Rye Hill in the late 1960s. Given Burns' status and his subsequent ascendancy to the heights of the 1960s planning profession, we can assert that his views are reasonably representative of planners from that era. Those inhabiting the clearance areas, he argued, were, in effect, a 'separate race' who lacked the ability to reflect on their 'miserable' condition and needed to be broken up for their own good:

> In a huge city, it is a fairly common observation that the dwellers in a slum are almost a separate race of people, with different values, aspirations and ways of living... One result of slum clearance is that a considerable movement of people takes place over long distances, with devastating effects on the social groupings built up over the years. But one might argue, this is a good thing when we are dealing with people who have no initiative or civic pride. The task, surely is to break up such groupings even though the people seem to be satisfied with their miserable environment and seem to enjoy an extrovert social life in their own locality (Burns, 1963: 93-4)

Planners, quite simply, could not be bothered to look beneath the 'surface'. Indoctrinated with a rampant physical determinism, "planners mistakenly assumed that the physical deterioration of a neighbourhood implied a corresponding social

decay of the community" (Halpern, 1995: 165). Decisions to demolish were often based on fleeting, highly subjective visual impressions underlain by class prejudice:

> The assumption was that, in order to determine whether an area should be demolished or not, sufficient *could* be learned from a brief visit and from a moving vehicle (Dennis, 1970: 365, original emphasis).

The 'thick description' of Young and Willmott's detailed, ethnographic account provided a stunning counterpoint to such cursory and prejudiced analyses: "the voices they found described a world rich in social relationships, networks of dependence and mutual support that were central to the people's resilience in facing the adversity of insecure and low-paid employment" (Bunting, 2007). As Power notes, *Family and Kinship* revealed the "inner dynamism" and hidden strengths and qualities of such areas that were not readily apparent to the casual observer or planner: "Even under the hammer, older communities often felt welcoming and homely places in spite of the long-run decay and thorough neglect. By-law streets were full of pubs, shops and workshops, a real mix of enterprises and supports, often in front rooms and back yards" (2007: 49). Young and Willmott's research captured something of the *genius loci* of a working class community, the intangible yet vital 'spirit of place' that is so often overlooked in planners' quick windshield surveys or in their desk-bound considerations and calculations. There was more to these communities than met the eye:

> Yet even when the town planners have set themselves to create communities anew as well as houses, they have still put their faith in buildings, sometimes speaking as though all that was necessary for neighbourliness was a neighbourhood unit, for community spirit a community centre. If this were so, then there would be no harm in shifting people around the country, for what is lost could soon be regained by skilful architecture and design. But there is surely more to a community than that. (1957: 198)

In other words, communities could not just be summarily uprooted, shifted around and set down in a strange, unfamiliar habitat. The social networks that Young and Willmott observed, depended upon a familiar and recognisable, if humble, environment, what Hester (1982) later termed as a 'sacred structure' – "the settings for the community's daily routine", a collection of unremarkable yet collectively valued places and landmarks that were essential to the social life of the community but effectively invisible to the eyes of professional planners trained to 'see like a state' (Scott, 1998).

From a more practical perspective, communities could not be relocated *en masse* because the time lag between the designation of a clearance area, its subsequent demolition and the completion of replacement units could take ten years or more (Power, 2007). Faced with blighted surroundings, worsening states of disrepair, a lack of interim accommodation and a life that was effectively placed 'on hold', many people simply drifted away elsewhere, unable to wait such lengths of time. Some died whilst they were waiting to move in:

> By the time the new houses had been built, even where there was an attempt to 'keep the community together', many had died or moved on. In the Byker

Estate of Newcastle, only one in five of the tenants displaced by demolition survived long enough to move into the new estate, even though the architect, Ralph Erskine, was deeply committed to re-housing the existing community on site and himself lived in the new Byker Estate while it was being built to ensure that the community would be allowed to survive. (Power, 2007: 64)

If such rates of attrition were being observed in those areas where there was a concerted effort to re-house the community together, one might reasonably speculate that in areas where there was less emphasis on retention and/or a greater distance of displacement, the prospects of a community surviving the re-location would be considerably less.

For those who made it to the new estates, further challenges awaited. Removed from the social and psychological supports of wider family, friends and a familiar environment, many people struggled to adjust. It was not always the 'positive experience' described by Malpass above. As Halpern reports:

> Much to the disappointment of the planners and politicians involved, moving people out of slums into new and relatively high quality housing estates did not necessarily lead to high levels of satisfaction and sometimes appeared to result in elevated rates of mental ill-health and the so-called 'New Town blues' (1995: 158)

The emotional distress and disorientation of being unmoored from one's close social networks and the difficulties of adapting to the comparative isolation of the new estates were a common theme in Young and Wilmott's interviews. For example, one housewife who had left Bethnal Green for a new semi-detached house on the 'Greenleigh' Estate in South Essex was deeply upset by the move: "When I first came, I cried for weeks, it was so lonely" (Young and Willmott, 1957: 122). The new estates "replaced an urban environment at the human scale [with] a monolithic and impersonal one" (Young and Willmott, 1992: xxiii). Moreover, those forced to relocate were also confronted with higher rents and travel to work costs. Such was the yearning for the old neighbourhood, "a sizeable minority of migrants attempted to move back to the slums which they had left, despite the fact that this involved moving back to housing of a much poorer physical standard" (Halpern, 1995: 158). A study by Cullingworth (1959) of families relocated from Salford to new suburban housing estates in Worsley reported several similar findings. For example, at the time of the survey, 10% of the households relocated to Worsley had already moved back to Salford and 17% of the households surveyed wished to return to Salford. Most residents now faced a much lengthier and more expensive journey to work and, not least, rents on the new estates were, on average, some *300% higher* than households had paid in their previous accommodation.[7]

Reflecting on the effects of slum clearance and decentralisation in the new introduction to the 1992 edition of their book, Young and Wilmott (1992) remain steadfastly critical of processes they unapologetically describe as a form of 'collective madness'. Comparing figures for Bethnal Green from the 1981 Census with the 1951 Census, they acknowledge the progress achieved in terms of physical

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[7] See McGonigle and Kirby (1936) for a discussion of the health effects of these higher housing costs.

housing conditions, noting the reduction in overcrowding and the considerable improvements in amenities. But they also report a near-halving of the area's population that speaks of a much greater loss that is not easily captured by quantitative data, namely, the destruction and dispersal of a strong community, the breakdown of an array of informal social support networks and the disappearance of a way of life, with all the immeasurable (and therefore unreported) social, economic and emotional costs for the affected individuals and families, if not wider society.

"Neither Young nor Willmott", as Topalov (2003: 218) notes, "had the usual academic background and credentials". But this was no bad thing because it effectively meant that they went into the field with few pre-conceptions of what they would find. In contrast, "the many earlier monographs on, and surveys of, poor, deteriorated, ethnic, or working-class inner-city areas" showed an overriding "concern with personal demoralization and urban deterioration [that] had prevented scientists from seeing such places as 'neighborhoods,' 'communities,' quartiers, or 'villages'" (Topalov, 2003: 222). Approaching their research much like ethnographers, Topalov describes how Young and Willmott (along with their American and French contemporaries, Gans and Coing) found that they were:

> ...dealing with natural social units closely knit by internal social ties, as hidden in the vast metropolis as tiny settlements in the countryside. Those villages had been there a long time, which allowed a set of customs to take shape over several generations. There dwelled ordinary people, workers and their families: the culture of the village, traditional by definition, was that of the working class. (2003: 215)

But, as Bunting (2007) emphasises, "the book [*Family and Kinship*]was more than ethnography; it was intended as a stark warning of how a bureaucratic, centralised planning system could override the needs of the people it was intended to serve". Such warnings continue to have relevance today, especially given the harsh context of a neoliberal urbanism where urban governance – including the planning system - is much more sympathetic to private sector interests and the needs of the affluent (see Chapter 10, this volume).

4.6 Urban renewal in the US: the Federal bulldozer[8]

Across the Atlantic, the drive to modernise the major US cities involved similar processes of urban redevelopment and dislocation, alongside a massive suburbanisation of employment and population. This was the era of urban renewal, of figures like Robert Moses, the infamous 'master builder' and 'power broker' (Caro, 1974). Running an urban motorway through the Bronx, Moses, a professed admirer of Baron Haussmann's boulevardisation of Paris (Moses, 1942), had little sympathy for those who stood in the way of his 'grands projets': "You can draw any kind of picture you like on a clean slate ... but when you build in an overbuilt metropolis, you have to hack your way with a meat ax" (Moses, 1970).

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[8] Anderson (1964)

The different nature of US urban governance, its financing and the influence of business and major corporations meant that, from the very start, urban renewal in the US was much more closely tied to corporate and development interests than was the case in British cities: "Urban renewal owes its origins to downtown merchants, banks, large corporations, newspaper publishers, realtors, and other institutions with substantial business and property interests in the central part of the city" (Weiss, 1985: 54). Initiated by the 1949 Housing Act, which had the aim of providing "a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family", the federal urban renewal programme provided city authorities with funding and powers of eminent domain (the US equivalent of compulsory purchase) to enable them:

> ...to condemn slum neighbourhoods, tear down the buildings, and resell the cleared land to private developers at a reduced price. In addition to relocating the slum dwellers in 'decent, safe and sanitary housing', the programme was intended to stimulate large-scale private rebuilding, add new tax revenues to the dwindling coffers of the cities, revitalise their downtown areas, and halt the exodus of middle-class whites to the suburbs (Gans, 1965: 29)

Basing their schema mostly on the US experience of gentrification, Hackworth and Smith therefore contend that the first wave of gentrification was marked by substantial levels of state involvement, as they explain:

> Disinvested inner-city housing within the older north eastern cities of the USA...became a target for reinvestment...as local and national governments sought to counteract the private-market economic decline of central city neighbourhoods. Governments were aggressive in helping gentrification because the prospect of inner-city investment (without state insurance of some form) was still very risky. (2001: 466)

Confirming Hackworth and Smith's interpretation, Gotham (2005: 1101) sees the 'first wave' of gentrification as being inextricably tied with the urban renewal programme, describing it as "an outgrowth of the Housing Acts of 1949 and 1954". In contrast to post-war urban redevelopment in the UK which frequently involved the *in situ* replacement of low income housing with low-rent council housing, US real-estate developers "had little interest in maintaining public housing programmes" (Goodman, 1972: 100) and the US authorities were, in most cases, keen to displace low income residents from potentially valuable land in urban centres: "Urban renewal agencies in many cities demolished whole communities inhabited by low-income people in order to provide land for private development of office buildings, sports arenas, hotels, trade centres and high income luxury buildings" (Weiss, 1985: 253). Porteous and Smith (2001: 108) note that: "many renewal sites were chosen not because they were the slums most in need of renewal, but because they offered the best sites for luxury housing...Concern for uplifting the conditions of the poor was merely a smokescreen to produce cheap land for the property machine". In effect, the two Housing Acts "had become a welfare program for the wealthy, a means of enriching private developers and downtown property owners" (Teaford, 2000: 445). This was not lost on local people who were concerned about the prospective embourgeoisement of their neighbourhoods. The comments of two residents of Philadelphia's Society Hill are sufficient: "Criticizing the absence of

moderate-rent housing in the Society Hill proposal, one resident complained, "What we have here is a plan for an area of wealthy poodled people," and a local shopkeeper argued, "All we'd have here are bluebloods and executives" (Teaford, 1990: 154 cited in Teaford, 2000).

Urban renewal provided, quite literally, the opportunity to start over, to re-build parts of the city and, importantly, to plan, design and build it for a different class of people. Goodman, for example, highlights the architectural profession's excitement at the possibility of a reversal of the trend to middle-class suburbanisation and the prospect of a "new clientele that would replace the poor" (1972: 101), a new, more discerning clientele for whom "aesthetics and 'culture' would be important". This certainly sounds familiar (see for example, Ley, 1996; Zukin, 1995) and is reinforced by the extract Goodman cites, taken from a 1961 book commissioned by the American Institute of Architects to commemorate its 100th anniversary. It sets out a vision, however crassly, for the gentrification of the American city:

> For the individuals with individuality the centre might be a Mecca if it could ever arise. But as it was, the central city was not rising in this form. Instead it was becoming a place for a few very rich people who sent their children out of town to grow up, and a great many very poor who were far from urbane and would escape to the periphery as soon as their personal economics permitted. If they could be poured out of the central city and the non-suburbanites who lived in the suburbs be brought back to town there might yet be an elegant and urbane civilization in some American cities which would lift the level of the whole civilisation. (Burchard and Bush-Brown, 1961: 501, cited in Goodman, 1972)

If the 'very poor who were far from urbane' were in need of being 'poured out of the central city' in order to fulfil the modernising vision, then those who were poor *and* black were even less welcome. Unlike Britain, where the issue of race did not become a policy concern until the mid-1960s, US urban renewal could from the start be understood as being, in no small part, 'racially motivated'. Invoking a phrase that was in common usage throughout the period, urban renewal invariably meant 'Negro removal' (Fullilove, 2004). The federal government provided cities with money to clear away 'urban blight' but, "more often than not, the part of the city the businessmen thought was blighted was the part where black people lived" (*ibid*: 20). Gotham (2002: 88) therefore urges scholars of the period to always consider "the racial interests of the key actors involved in the formulation and implementation of urban renewal". Citing the earlier work of Greer (1965) which shows that around 70 per cent of the dwelling units condemned for urban renewal projects were occupied by Black residents, Gotham asserts that, "In many cities, including San Francisco, Chicago, and New York, Blacks bore the burden of the dislocating effects of urban renewal" (2002: 88). Separately, Fullilove (2004: 20) estimates that urban renewal demolished around 1,600 black neighbourhoods and "disabled powerful mechanisms of community functioning", leading to an array of social, economic, cultural, political and emotional losses. The effects of this, she argues, are still being felt in contemporary Black America.

To summarise, if you were poor and/or black you were unlikely to have seen much benefit from urban renewal. This comes as little surprise if we recall Engels (1935) prescient observations on the limits of the bourgeoisie's response to the perennial housing question. In the last two centuries, 'urban renewal', in whatever form, has simply shifted the housing problem around:

> In reality the bourgeoisie has only one method of solving the housing question after its fashion-that is to say, of solving it in such a way that the solution continually reproduces the question anew. This method is called "Haussmann."... the practice which has now become general of making breaches in the working class quarters of our big towns, and particularly in those which are centrally situated, quite apart from whether this is done from considerations of public health and for beautifying the town, or owing to the demand for big centrally situated business premises, or owing to traffic requirements, such as the laying down of railways, streets, etc. No matter how different the reasons may be, the result is everywhere the same: the scandalous alleys and lanes disappear to the accompaniment of lavish self-praise from the bourgeoisie on account of this tremendous success, but they appear again immediately somewhere else and often in the immediate neighbourhood... the infamous holes and cellars in which the capitalist mode of production confines our workers night after night, are not abolished; they are merely shifted elsewhere! (Engels, 1935: 23)

Research by Gans (1965), for example, examining urban renewal in 41 US cities, found that 60 per cent of those displaced were simply moved to other 'slums'. Marris takes a similar view, noting that relocation "provided only marginally better housing, in very similar neighbourhoods, at higher rents" (1969: 123). Those relocated from Boston's West End, one of the areas that received greatest attention from researchers, faced average rent increases of 73 per cent (Hartman, 1964). As Fullilove highlights, "Rather than providing decent homes and suitable living environments, urban renewal created a massive housing crisis" (2005, 59). By 1967, only 107,000 new homes had been built in the urban renewal areas compared to the 400,000 homes that had been demolished; furthermore, "of those built, only 11,000, or less than *3 per cent* of those destroyed, were public housing for poor people" (Goodman, 1972: 104, original emphasis). Perhaps the most telling observation about urban renewal, however, is the fact that only 0.5 per cent of federal urban renewal expenditures were allocated to the relocation of families and individuals (Porteous and Smith, 2001: 108).

4.7 From clearance to rehabilitation

Whilst it is difficult to gauge the precise effects of landmark studies such as *Family and Kinship* or *The Urban Villagers* (Gans, 1962) on policy, these works must certainly have added to the growing doubts about the efficacy of the respective British and US approaches to urban redevelopment. By the mid-1960s, it was becoming apparent that the 'physical approach' to urban policy was not working (Atkinson and Moon, 1994). In Britain, despite ten years of demolition, the 1965

national survey of housing fitness found that there were still some 824,000 'slum' homes; by 1967, this figure had grown to around two million (Power, 2007). The government claimed that the larger figure was the result of more rigorous and standardised techniques of data collection but Power (*ibid*) argues that it was simply a reflection of the need to free up more sites for rebuilding. The definitions of unfitness employed were anything but robust and consistent: "decisions were not based on the structure or space within homes but increasingly on their occupants and their plumbing" (Power, 2007: 62). The government's determination to press ahead with further demolition took local clearance programmes into areas of progressively better quality housing where the majority of properties were structurally sound (Power, *ibid*) and rates of home ownership were higher (Malpass, 2005). Inevitably, clearance then began to meet resistance from "people who did not see themselves living in slums, or even in areas that should be redeveloped" (Malpass, 2005: 94). These protests coincided with the economic crisis of 1967 when the Wilson government was forced to devalue sterling. In the context of the need for expenditure restraint, the government was forced to revisit its major budget headings and the housing programme was an obvious target for cuts. This called for a major rethink of the clearance and rebuilding approach that had begun in the 1930s and accelerated under post-war Labour and Conservative governments.

The 1968 White Paper, *Old Houses into New Homes* and the subsequent Housing Act of 1969 shifted the emphasis of policy from clearance towards the rehabilitation of existing housing. The 1969 Act introduced the idea of General Improvement Areas with government subsidy made available for environmental upgrading, traffic calming and external improvements to housing; it also strengthened and expanded existing arrangements for discretionary housing improvement grants for landlords and home-owners living in these areas (Power, 1993). Improvement grants, it should be noted, had first been introduced in 1949 but had initially made little impact (Malpass, 2005). However, such schemes became increasingly popular as levels of owner-occupation increased on the back of economic growth and full employment. Legislative changes in the major Housing Acts of 1954, 1959 and 1964 not only extended the financial assistance available for basic amenities and improvements, they also made it easier to obtain mortgage finance for older properties (Malpass, 2005; Power, 1993; Williams, 1976). This is where we see the beginnings of gentrification in parts of London - the incipient, classic form of gentrification observed by Glass in Islington. Private landlords quickly found it "more profitable and a lot easier to make money by selling out into owner-occupation" (Power, 1993: 206) and it was during this period that the notorious practice of 'winkling' emerged, whereby unscrupulous landlords sought to realise the 'value gap', that is, the difference in the value of properties with controlled tenants and the value of identical properties with vacant possession (Hamnett and Randolph, 1986). As Lees *et al* explain, with reference to Barnsbury, Islington:

> The value gap became important in Barnsbury in the late 1950s and especially the 1960s, for landlords were getting a decreasing return on their rented property (due to new rent control and occupancy regulations) and developers were realising capital gains of £20,000 or so by buying up rented property, evicting the tenants, and selling it in a vacant state (2008: 13)

'Winkling' refers to the range of tactics that landlords employed to pressure tenants into moving. These tactics included cash bribes, harassment and threats of violence (Lees *et al*, 2008; Power, 1973; Power, 1993). But it was not just private landlords who engaged in dubious practices. As Lees *et al* (2008) report, the Greater London Council employed its own brand of 'welfare winkling' by re-housing tenants in poor quality, short-life accommodation and then buying up the houses they had formerly occupied at minimal cost, improving them and then either re-letting them to high-income tenants or selling them on at a much higher price.

The government had introduced improvement grants to raise standards in older housing and shift the emphasis of policy from clearance to rehabilitation. Although there had been no explicit intention to encourage gentrification, this was the outcome in some areas. Rather than improving the housing conditions of working-class residents living in the poorest quality housing, the matched nature of the grant system meant that grants tended to be restricted to the more affluent (Crosland, 1971; Hamnett, 1973). Duncan (1974) notes how studies of Huddersfield, inner London and Bristol all indicated that most grants went to "the better-quality housing areas of the inner-city". Instead of improving housing conditions for their tenants, many landlords, as noted above, simply used the grants to upgrade and prepare their properties for re-sale to wealthier incomers who could afford to buy, thereby precipitating processes of eviction, displacement and gentrification. Such was the concern about the maldistribution of improvement grants, a House of Commons Expenditure Committee on House Improvement Grants was established to examine who the grants were being paid to and the wider effects on the housing stock. In evidence to the Committee, the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI, 1973), emphasised that:

> ...the problem of 'gentrification'...poses important questions about what and who the present legislation is for? Is it intended to upgrade existing areas of substandard housing or is it to improve the conditions of the existing residents of these areas? This becomes an urgent problem when those tenants displaced as a result of improvement, by the need for vacant possession by landlords or higher rents, suffer a decline in their housing standards.

For many low-income households, the shift towards housing rehabilitation merely replaced the threat of the bulldozer with the threat of gentrification. As Hamnett asserts:

> Renovation, then, is almost always associated with gentrification. It is the physical expression of a social process and it is helped in this to a very large degree by the provisions of the 1969 Housing Act, the purpose of which legislation was to supplement the moribund level of new housing construction, by raising the standard of the existing housing stock. In this it has been notably successful. Where it has been far less successful has been in the improvement of conditions for the original residents who are often displaced in the process of improvement. (1973: 252)

The Conservative government of 1970-74 continued the shift towards rehabilitation that had been initiated by the 1969 Housing Act. The turnaround in thinking was made clear in the White Paper, *Towards Better Homes*:

The Government believes that in the majority of cases it is no longer preferable to attempt to solve the problems arising from bad housing by schemes of widespread, comprehensive development. Such an approach often involves massive and unacceptable disruption of communities and leaves vast areas of our cities standing derelict and devastated for far too long. Regardless of the financial compensation they receive, many people suffer distress when their homes are compulsorily acquired. Increasing local opposition to redevelopment proposals is largely attributable to people's understandable preference for the familiar and, in many ways, more convenient environment in which they have lived for years. Large-scale redevelopment frequently diminishes rather than widens the choice available to people in terms of the style of houses, their form of tenure, and their price. (HMSO, 1973: para. 15)

At the same time, the White Paper also acknowledged and sought to resolve some of the failings of the grants scheme, proposing "a sensitive application of improvement policies...to avoid hardship and the abuse of grants" (1973: 9). The proposals were duly adopted by the new Labour government and incorporated into its 1974 Housing Act. As per the White Paper, the measures enacted were designed to better target grants towards low-income home-owners and prevent abuses of the system by landlords and developers. Previously, landlords or owners who had benefitted from improvement grants had been able to re-sell their properties without any form of restriction.

The shift to improvement led to the designation of several hundred General Improvement Areas and Housing Action Areas which briefly transformed the scale of urban policy from the macro (macho?) focus of, say, the Abercrombie Plan, to the micro-level of the neighbourhood *a la* Jacobs (1961). Things had already begun to move in this direction with the introduction of the area-based Urban Programme and the twelve Community Development Projects that were set up by the Wilson government in the late 1960s, largely in response to fears about the potential consequences of deepening racial tensions in several urban areas (Cochrane, 2007). Amid demands for greater public participation in the planning system (see Skeffington, 1969), the smaller-scale, area-based nature of housing improvement was also conducive to a more grass-roots, community-oriented approach to housing that involved the formation of housing cooperatives, tenant management organisations and innovative, community-based housing associations (Power, 2007). It was as if the lifting of clearance orders had released a suppressed, irresistible energy that had for years lain dormant: "A whole movement for the renewal of our cities within existing communities was unleashed...Urban recovery for the first time in maybe 60 years actually seemed possible." (Power, 2007: 80).

For much of the post-war period, urban policy, as it was, exhibited some strong anti-urban tendencies. Existing urban communities were deemed to have little value and policies of mass clearance and population decentralisation had encouraged (or forced) people to leave cities for the suburbs or satellite New Towns. In the rush to clear, little attention had been paid to the benefits of living in the inner-city, despite the protestations of those being uprooted and the evidence of, for example, Young

and Willmott (1957). The comparative lull in activity that attended the shift to improvement therefore provided a moment to pause and reflect on the possibilities of urban life and to appreciate both the value of urban communities and the need to leave them relatively undisturbed. Those residents who had vehemently resisted the demolition of their homes and neighbourhoods understood the value of living in the inner-city, as did growing numbers of first-wave gentrifiers.

But the mood of optimism described above was relatively short-lived. By the mid-1970s, the acknowledgement that many long-standing urban problems had not been eradicated created considerable frustration. Whilst the 'physical' approach had done much to improve housing conditions and address the problem of housing shortages, successive governments were still faced with persistent problems of urban poverty, inequalities in health and education outcomes and emergent issues around race and the assimilation of immigrants from the New Commonwealth (Atkinson and Moon, 1994). More generally, there was concern that the old certainties of economic growth and full employment were fast disappearing as Britain, along with other developed nations, experienced the worst economic crisis since the war, a crisis that "went beyond mere material factors to the very heart of the post-war settlement leading, first, to a questioning and then to a loss of faith in the established modes of thinking and practice in government" (Atkinson and Moon, 1994: 62). The oil-price shock of 1973 and the subsequent worldwide recession led to desperate problems in the domestic economy, with unemployment rising to over one million at the same time that inflation was pushing above 25 per cent, a combination of conditions that was hitherto unprecedented and not readily amenable to traditional Keynesian deficit-budgeting.

This loss of faith in 'big' government and Keynesian economic management, combined with the pressing need to cut public spending, provided the perfect conditions for the ascendancy of the New Right which emphasised "the virtues of a minimal state, individual liberty, choice, the free market and the entrepreneurial spirit" (Atkinson and Moon, 1994: 62). As part of this shift in philosophy, the consensus around urban policy would also be questioned, then dissolved and re-launched with a new set of values and objectives. As the then Labour Environment Secretary, Tony Crosland, famously announced in a speech setting out curbs on local government spending, "For the next few years times will not be normal... for the time being at least, the party is over..." (Crosland, 1975).

The publication of the Labour government's White Paper, *Policy for the Inner Cities* (HMSO, 1977), the first ever comprehensive policy statement on urban issues, marked a watershed in British urban policy. Atkinson and Moon described it as "the first serious attempt by a government...to understand the nature and causes of Britain's urban problems" (1994: 66). Where the late 1960's Urban Programme had spearheaded an area-based approach to urban problems that assumed urban poverty was the result of individual and community failings – the so-called 'social pathology' approach – the White Paper presented "a much more valid diagnosis of the problem" which recognised that "urban decline and urban poverty had *structural causes located in economic, social and political relations which originated outside the areas concerned*" (Atkinson and Moon: 1994: 75; 72 original emphasis). There was, for the first time, an acknowledgement that the complex problems facing urban areas could no longer be solved by local authorities alone. The White Paper

suggested that there was a need for much greater co-ordination of effort, both nationally and locally, to bring about the required economic, physical and social improvements in inner urban areas. Thus, whilst local authorities should continue to lead local regeneration initiatives, they were also expected to enter into partnership arrangements with national government, other public bodies, voluntary organisations and, crucially, the private sector: "urban regeneration was to be a partnership between public and private sectors in a way that earlier approaches had never been" (Atkinson and Moon: 1994: 73). Long before Harvey (1989a) would highlight the shift from managerialism to entrepreneurialism in urban governance, the White Paper was urging local authorities to become more "entrepreneurial in attraction of industry and commerce" (HMSO, 1977: 8). The influence of new thinking about the respective roles of the state and private sector was evident throughout the document:

> We should note the emphasis on the private sector, the stress on creating an infrastructure conducive to private-sector led growth, and on the need for local government to relax its planning controls and take a much more sympathetic view of the needs of business (Atkinson and Moon, 1994: 73)

Anticipating major themes of the Thatcher governments' approach to urban regeneration, the White Paper stated that:

> Local authorities now need...to stimulate investment by the private sector...The resources and energies of small and medium size firms are essential if real progress is to be made and the diversity and vitality, for so long a characteristic of inner cities is to be restored (HMSO, 1977: 9)

In many respects, the White Paper's proposals exemplified what several commentators saw as "a systematic shift from people-based and community-oriented or welfarist approaches...towards a more explicitly economic and property-led focus..." (Cochrane, 2007: 86), where the public sector's role was "to provide the conditions...in which the private sector could flourish" (Atkinson and Moon, 1994: 70). Underlying this shift was the basic idea that the well-being of citizens was best assured by economic success rather than welfare provision, with the benefits of such growth somehow trickling down to those with little wealth. Consequently, the welfare state, one of the cornerstones of the post-war settlement, "now came to be depicted as a burden on the economy, no longer part of the solution but part of the problem to be tackled" (Malpass, 2005: 102).

4.8 1979-1991 – 'anchoring gentrification'[9]

Pacione (2009) characterises the period from 1979 to 1991 as the 'entrepreneurial' phase of British post-war urban policy. With the election of the Thatcher government, cities, and the problems facing them, were recast primarily in economic terms. The 'urban problem' as such, was redefined as an issue of economic decline resulting from poor economic competitiveness, with private enterprise both 'crowded out' by an over-sized, over-grown public sector and challenged by obstructive local

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[9] Hackworth and Smith, 2001

authorities – particularly the Labour-dominated metropolitan councils - that were generally regarded as being unsympathetic to business and overly wedded to stifling bureaucratic practices and excessive, petty regulations. The Thatcherite solution aimed to cut through all this by 'rolling back the frontiers of the state' and exposing Britiain's industries, cities and people to competitive market forces (Pacione, 2009). This dramatic transformation was to be achieved by a combination of lower public spending, tax cuts, tax breaks, deregulation, privatisation and efforts to reduce the power of organised labour. Where, for many years, people had turned increasingly to the state to provide solutions, finance and services, Thatcherism encouraged people to look to the market, if not themselves. As Cochrane notes:

> Private initiative was seen as the answer to a range of social and – above all – economic problems, and the state was seen as the barrier. At the core of this analysis was the view that welfare could only be delivered through economic success. The role of urban policy was to assist with wealth creation and emphasis was placed on the (re) creation of markets in inner urban areas – making those areas work productively again as sources of profitable production (2007: 89)

Social considerations took second place to the primacy of economic and physical regeneration: targeting initiatives on poverty neighbourhoods would achieve very little if cities lacked a strong economy. Economic development was the new principal objective of urban policy: "economic success would provide jobs and redevelopment in ways that would transform the inner cities" (Cochrane, 2007: 88). Some observers, however, were not convinced that the market would necessarily work in the interests of the inner-city unemployed: "...the jobs it creates will be the ones that meet its needs, not those of the inner cities" (Edwards, 1989: 82)

In seeking to eliminate the barriers that were seen to be hindering free enterprise, it was inevitable that the planning system would come under close scrutiny from a new government sceptical of most forms of state intervention (Cullingworth and Nadin, 2006). Planning encapsulated several attributes and value positions that were anathema to New Right thinking. Planning was regarded as an essentially regulatory endeavour administered by professional bureaucrats who were not particularly sympathetic to business; it formed an integral part of the post-war settlement; and it was concerned with trying to safeguard collective – rather than individual – values expressed through the public interest (Thornley, 1993). Equally, however, Lawless (1983) reminds us that there was also a contrary view that the system should not be radically overhauled since it was already hugely slanted towards the interests of the Conservative-voting middle-classes. Thornley (1993: 3) points to a similar argument from Reade (1987), who highlights how planning "kept up market values in expensive residential areas, kept working-class housing and other undesirable development out of 'commuter country' and protected rural villages". These commentators suggest that the Conservatives' much vaunted antipathy towards planning was more rhetorical than real, arguing that the Conservative government's planning reforms proceeded in a relatively piecemeal, incremental fashion that was shaped primarily by pragmatist concerns. That said, the 1980 Local Government, Planning and Land Act introduced two initiatives – Enterprise Zones and the Urban Development Corporations– that perfectly embodied the government's desired change of direction.

The original conceptualisation of the government's Enterprise Zones can be traced back to Peter Hall (1977). Alarmed by the continuing decline of Britain's inner cities and the failure of several, essentially welfarist, urban policy initiatives, Hall was in favour of "a radical free market strategy" and advocated the creation of zones in inner-city areas "...where planning, employment, welfare, pollution, health and safety, and taxation legislation was significantly relaxed" (Atkinson and Moon, 1994: 139-40). As he put it:

> Small selected areas of inner cities would simply be thrown open to all kinds of initiative, with minimal control. In other words we would create the Hong Kong of the 1950s and 1960s inside inner Liverpool and inner Glasgow (Hall, 1977 cited in Hall, 1982)

In the event, the government designated twenty-five Enterprise Zones but these fell far short of Hall's original vision of unbridled free market enclaves. Nevertheless, the businesses located in these zones enjoyed several tax concessions - including exemption from business rates – along with a simplified planning regime (Cochrane, 2007). A major review by the National Audit Office, however, dismissed the initiative as a costly failure which had created very few new jobs (NAO, 1990). But, as Cochrane argues, focusing on their impact on the ground deflects attention from their real symbolic value: "enterprise zones were as important for the ideological message they carried as in any practical implications they had as they were implemented" (2007: 94). Rather like the 'beachheads' of new-build gentrification described by Davidson and Lees (2005) or Berry's (1985) 'islands of renewal', enterprise zones demonstrated how it was possible to take the torch of Thatcherism deep into the shadowy heartlands of municipal socialism to establish shining beacons of private enterprise: *"Là où il y a les ténèbres, que je mette votre lumière"* [10].

With regard to profile, expenditure and impact, however, the enterprise zones were massively overshadowed by the Urban Development Corporations, described by Parkinson and Evans (1990: 66) as "The initiative which most dramatically articulates the government's vision – the jewel in the crown of Mrs Thatcher's urban strategy". 'Jewel in the crown' was perhaps too fine a description for this aggressive, 'in-your-face' display of neo-liberal urbanism that was intent on making Thatcherism visible in the built environment and stamping the values of 'privatism' (Barnekov *et al*, 1989) on the urban landscape, especially those landscapes that were administered by increasingly left-leaning Labour metropolitan councils. Taking large areas of urban land out of local authorities' jurisdiction, Michael Heseltine, then Environment Secretary, was characteristically forthright: "we took their [council] powers away because they were making such as mess of it. They are the people who have got it all wrong...UDCs do things and they are free from the delays of the democratic process" (Hansard, 1987, cited in Imrie and Thomas, 1999).

As Tallon (2009: 52) describes:

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[10] The literal translation is 'where there is darkness, let me put your light'. The line is taken from the original Prayer of St Francis of Assisi, which Mrs Thatcher paraphrased in her famous speech on taking office in 1979.

UDCs were government agencies or quangos, implanted directly upon designated areas and were responsible for the regeneration of these areas. They were run by appointed boards consisting largely of representatives from the local business community and typically exhibited little representation from the local resident community. They aimed to encourage the private sector back to run-down inner-city areas through a market-oriented and property-led approach.

The first two UDCs were established in London Docklands (LDDC) and Merseyside in 1981, followed by nine more in 1987-88 and a further two in 1992 (Atkinson and Moon, 1994). Specifically, UDCs were expected to regenerate their designated areas by:

> ...bringing land and buildings into effective use, encouraging the development of existing and new industry and commerce, creating an attractive environment and ensuring that housing and social facilities are available to encourage people to live and work in the area (LGPLA, 1980: s.136)

To achieve these aims, the UDCs were given an impressive range of powers "to acquire, hold, manage, reclaim and dispose of land and other property" (Tallon, 2009: 52). Usurping the traditional role of the local planning authority, the UDCs also controlled all development, infrastructure and other works in their designated zones, becoming, in effect, the planning and highways authority (Atkinson and Moon, 1994). Not least, the UDCs were also vested with a general power "to do anything necessary or expedient" that was pursuant to their objectives (LGPLA, 1980). Their omnipotence in acquiring and assembling land and buildings was aided significantly by extensive compulsory purchase powers, as Imrie and Thomas (1997) describe in relation to the displacement of small businesses by the Cardiff Bay UDC. Nevertheless, despite the rhetoric surrounding the rolling back of the frontiers of the state, "UDCs were far from the laissez-faire, de-bureaucratised organisations that they were purported to be under the 1980 Act" (Imrie and Thomas, 1999: 29).

The largest (in budgetary terms) and perhaps most controversial UDC was the LDDC, which polarised opinion "between those who pointed to a blueprint for successful free-market inner city regneration comprising commerical, office and housing development, and those who viewed it as the architectural embodiment of Thatcherism including fortified capitalist enclaves" (Tallon, 2009: 58). The LDDC is also of further interest because it exemplifies the manner in which second-wave gentrification was proceeding in the UK, as well as providing a template for subsequent interventions. HMR schemes, it could be argued, are in many ways akin to UDCs but with a housing focus and greater involvement from the respective local authorities and communities.

Then, as now, however, it was possible to observe the inherent weaknesses and dangers of a regeneration strategy predicated almost entirely on the expectation of rising property values. In London, for example, "the collapse of Olympia and York in London Docklands still stands as a symbol of the vicissitudes of property-based

regeneration" (Imrie and Thomas, 1999: 19). For an all too brief interlude, property-led regeneration was temporarily discredited.

Another massive change that occurred during this era was the introduction of the Right to Buy (RTB) housing policy. In a move that might be characterised as an indirect form of state-led gentrification, the 1980 Housing Act introduced measures that permitted sitting council tenants to purchase their houses from local authorities at a discounted rate. But this policy of housing privatisation, which proved hugely successful, is rarely analysed alongside, or understood as, gentrification because it did not generate direct displacement in the conventional sense (see for example Hamnett, 2009). Such an omission needs challenging since it is problematic for two main reasons. Firstly, as Slater (2009; 2010) argues, a broader, more comprehensive, definition of gentrification would necessarily include 'exclusionary displacement', *contra* Hamnett (2009). From a situation where several million social rented properties were, in theory, available at an affordable rent to all eligible households registered on local housing waiting lists, the Right to Buy suddenly excluded those on waiting lists and innumerable other potential but currently unformed households from living in those houses: "...the cumulative effect of sales is seen through lost relets and reduced access to social rented housing" (Jones and Murie, 2006: 77). The change in class composition might not have been immediate but would have occurred over time, as the original occupiers moved or died (see, for example, Chaney and Sherwood, 2000, for an account of the impact of RTB in rural areas). In this way, millions of former council houses became instantly subject to gentrification through exclusionary displacement. Nevertheless, most scholars' refusal to acknowledge anything other than direct displacement has restricted discussion of the RTB policy and its impact on gentrification.

The second reason why RTB should merit the attention of gentrification scholars stems from its wider socio-cultural impact. At a stroke, pretty much the entire council housing stock was effectively commodified. Extending the aspiration of home ownership to working-class households, RTB was "a major step towards creating a nation of homeowners and establishing a property owning population" (Jones and Murie, 2006: 2). In the context of a broader possessive individualism, this popularisation of owner-occupation "transformed housing in Britain and completely changed the manner in which the main housing tenures are perceived" (King, 2010: 1). Moreover the shifts it engendered are essentially irreversible. As King remarks:

> Even if the RTB was to be abolished forthwith, its effects could not be undone. Over 2.5 million households have become owner occupiers and their dwellings are now integrated into housing markets. This has changed the landscape of Britain in a physical sense but also, and more importantly, culturally. Owner occupation is now so ingrained as the 'natural' tenure that any other form of tenure is almost unthinkable to a majority of households" (King, 2010: 8)

With this shift to owner-occupation, the wealth of more and more households became tied to the housing market and their fortunes linked, quite literally, to house price fluctuations. For those new owner-occupier households created by RTB,

house price inflation and, implicitly, gentrification, suddenly became a good thing: just as owner-occupation was naturalised so, arguably, was gentrification.

4.9 1991-1997 The Major years

The economic recession of 1989-91 exposed the limitations of the property-led approach to regeneration (see for example Imrie and Thomas, 1993; Turok, 1992) and the Audit Commission's (1989) comprehensive and wide-ranging review of post-1979 urban policy, was unusually scathing in its criticism of the poor coordination and labyrinthine complexity of a plethora of urban initiatives and funding streams. Furthermore, in focusing mostly on physical regeneration, the 1980s style property-led approach had failed to address the rapidly deteriorating economic and social conditions that attended the Thatcherite-assisted deindustrialisation of urban Britain. The change in Conservative leadership in November 1990 provided an opportunity for the government to rethink urban policy and several authors identify 1991 as the year which saw a distinct shift in approach and the beginning of a period that would extend beyond the Major government and well into into Blair's first term (Pacione, 2009; Tallon, 2009). "The key problems for the [Major] government", as Tallon (2009: 66) notes, "were how to ensure excluded communities benefited from urban regeneration, and how to address the incoherent 'patchwork quilt' of area-based initiatives and levels of governance involved in urban policy", a failing that had been roundly criticised in the Audit Commission's authoritative 1989 report.

The Major government's approach to urban policy was distinguished by: the introduction of the principle of competitive bidding for regeneration funding; the rationalisation of the various regeneration funding streams; and a much stronger commitment to involving local communities in the regeneration process (Oatley, 1998). These principles informed the two flagship policies that were introduced, namely City Challenge, announced in 1991, and the Single Regeneration Budget that was launched in 1993. As Tallon recounts:

> Policies moved away from two-way public private partnerships based on property-led regeneration...[to]...three-way multi-sectoral partnerships between the public, private, and community organisations and voluntary sector (2009: 66)

This attempt to incorporate the relevant communities through local partnership agreements, the arrangements for which formed part of the bidding process, was seen as the main achievement of Major's urban policy reforms (see for example Davoudi, 1995; Hambleton and Thomas, 1995). But not all commentators saw it in this way and there was continuing criticism in relation to: the limited monies that were available for urban regeneration; the actual levels of community involvment; and, once again, poor co-ordination of the different strands of urban policy (Tallon, 2009).

On reflection, on the back of deindustrialisation, mass unemployment and reduced investment in public services and urban infrastructures, Conservative urban policy failed to address increasing levels of poverty and social inequality (Gordon *et al*,

2000). Ideologically-driven property-led regeneration had crashed spectacularly as a result of the early-1990s recession and the oft-cited 'trickledown effects' never materialised. Furthermore, the continuing long-term residualisation of council housing (Forrest and Murie, 1990), accelerated by the introduction of the Right to Buy policy, meant that economic and social problems such as low educational achievement, unemployment, crime, ill-health and poor housing conditions were increasingly co-located and geographically concentrated in inner-city and peripheral council estates, creating forms of multiple disadvantage and exclusion that were not easily addressed through conventional physical approaches to regeneration. Thus, despite decades of different urban policy interventions, by the time New Labour came to power, "British cities were characterised by stark inequalities between rich and poor neighbourhoods" (Imrie and Raco, 2003: 4).

4.10 Summary

This chapter has highlighted how a combination of social and economic changes in cities have all helped to create rent gaps in working class neighbourhoods located close to city centres. Urban policy and housing interventions have variously ameliorated or inadvertently compounded these processes. In the UK, gentrification was, for a long time, something that occurred alongside urban policy or as the unintended consequence of housing improvement initiatives. It only really became a specific goal of urban policy in the Thatcher era, as part of the 'second wave' of gentrification. Urban policy in itself, investing in some areas and not others, has, over time, also contributed to uneven development and helped to create the conditions for the third wave of gentrification that began in the mid-1990s and, ultimately, HMR.

The creation of rent gaps in central neighbourhoods has, in many major cities, led to significant pressures to evict the working class residents from these inner areas. The state has sometimes resisted this as a result of political pressure and/or because of adverse economic conditions. At other times, however, the chapter highlights how the state has supported the displacement and erasure of working class communities under pressure from a growing professional middle-class and property capital.

Working class residents have therefore borne the brunt of many of the social, economic and political changes that have impacted British and US cities in the post-war era. Whilst there were certainly major differences between the US and Britain with regard to some of the drivers of urban redevelopment, the respective historical and political contexts and, not least, the relative strengths of different stakeholders, the outcomes for those at the sharp end of the processes in both countries were broadly similar. The individual and social impacts of the US urban renewal programme were comparable to those that Young and Willmott (1957) found amongst the people displaced by the clearance of the densely-packed Victorian terraced streets of Bethnal Green (see, for example, Berman, 1996; Fried, 1963; Fullilove, 2004; Gans, 1962; Goodman, 1972; Hartman, 1964; Jacobs, 1961). Chapter 11 demonstrates continuity with the various accounts of the emotional trauma, social dislocation and general sense of loss induced by the destruction of

one's home and neighbourhood - the impacts Fullilove (2004) characterises as 'root shock' – that were being documented in the 1960s.

Chapter 5

New Labour, the 'Social Investment State', Urban Renaissance and Housing Market Renewal

There's a quiet revolution taking place in our leading cities. Places that were once the engine room of the industrial revolution, employing millions in mills, factories, ports and shipyards, are learning new ways to create wealth in a global economy where brain has replaced brawn (Prescott, 2004: 12).

Our task is to allow more people to become middle class (Blair, 1996)

5.1 Introduction

Continuing the story of British urban policy from 1997 onwards, the main task of this chapter is to examine the genesis and development of HMR from the late 1990s up until the 2008 financial crisis, an event that marked the beginning of the end for HMR. In order to understand the emergence of HMR, the chapter begins with an overview of some key moments in the development of New Labour's approach to urban policy, focusing specifically on social exclusion and neighbourhood renewal, urban renaissance and 'place-shaping'. Viewing cities in a much more positive light than its predecessors, the new government envisaged Britain's major towns and cities playing a much stronger role in securing the nation's economic prosperity. With the government seeking to raise productivity and improve economic competitiveness through the development of a 'knowledge-driven economy' (see DTI, 1998), urban policy under New Labour, it is argued, was concerned primarily with improving cities' competitiveness and, particularly, their abilities to attract capital and skilled labour that were/are increasingly mobile.

The chapter contends that HMR and the other key elements of New Labour's package of urban polices – including those directed at addressing social exclusion - are best understood with respect to this competitiveness agenda and the development of a 'social investment state' (CSJ, 1994; Giddens, 1998; Dobrowolsky, 2002; Lister, 2003) that seeks to prepare people and communities for the challenges of competing in a "globalised knowledge economy where success is predicated on the existence of a highly adaptable, skilled and educated workforce" (Perkins *et al*, 2004: 2). From this perspective, the government's commitment to tackling social exclusion does not spring from a concern with the welfare of the excluded individuals *per se* but rather the potential impact on competitiveness and the loss of output to the wider economy. In a similar vein, the chapter argues that HMR was in no way addressed to the needs of existing residents who lived in the places that came to be designated as HMR areas. Rather, the socially constructed phenomenon of 'low demand' housing was only a 'problem' insofar as it compromised a city/sub-region's ability to present a high-quality 'housing offer' that would be attractive to potential residents, especially

those working in the fast-expanding creative and knowledge sectors of the economy (see, for example Lee and Murie, 2004; Ove Arup/Innovacion, 2006). Thus, in many respects, despite the many proclamations of the 'New Politics, New Britain,' characterised by a 'Third Way' that would "transcend both old-style social democracy and neoliberalism" (Giddens, 1998: 26), New Labour's approach to urban policy and its planning and welfare reforms, directed primarily at making both people and places more 'competitive', effectively continued the policies introduced by the Conservatives. Indeed, HMR, it will be argued, went much further and, as Powell (2000) has described it in relation to other areas of policy, it could be said to have 'out-Toried the Tories' (Powell, 2000) in terms of the harm it visited upon working-class people.

Having outlined New Labour's approach to urban policy, the next section examines the background to HMR, its introduction in 2002 and its subsequent development, charting the shift from initial concerns with the 'problem' of 'low demand' housing to the subsequent emphasis on the production or 'shaping' of "places capable of attracting and retaining the human capital central to competitiveness" (Lee *et al*, 2009: 269), of which a quality 'housing offer' was (and is) deemed a vital component. The travel and impact of the ideas of Richard Florida (2002; 2005) on the so-called 'creative class' are shown to have especial relevance here. Thus, from the early 'evidence' that suggested 'low demand' was an out-of-control, – almost viral – phenomenon that would, without intervention, lead to Detroit-like levels of housing abandonment (Nevin, 2007a), HMR "was quickly absorbed into a set of agendas around the competitive city, the needs of a creative and knowledge economy and governance arrangements for city regions" (Ferrari and Lee, 2010: 15). The thesis maintains, however, that HMR, with the explicit, stated objective of raising local house prices, was, from the outset, a vehicle for new-build gentrification, creating both direct and indirect forms of displacement.

5.2 New Labour, the economy and the 'social investment state'

Coming after eighteen long years of Conservative rule and four successive election defeats, the Labour Party's landslide victory in the 1997 General Election is often seen as a decisive, watershed moment in British politics. But, for many commentators, the expected changes in policy did not go as far as they had hoped and New Labour was frequently criticised for retaining disagreeable aspects of Conservative policy (see for example Hall, 1998; Lister, 2000; Powell, 2000; Smith, 2001). Indeed, as Jessop contends, "In many ways, rather than repealing the changes of the Thatcher years, Labour took the neo-liberal transformation of Britain yet a step further" (2002: 1). In his introduction to the 1997 manifesto, Blair was happy to concede the following: "Some things the Conservatives got right. We will not change them. It is where they got things wrong that we will make change" (Labour Party, 1997). One area where New Labour did depart significantly from both its immediate and more distant predecessors was in its positive attitude towards Britain's cities or, at least, their economic *potential*. Where post-war urban policy in Britain was long dominated by a negative, anti-urbanism (Cochrane, 2007), New Labour took a somewhat different perspective that was more focused on urban

possibilities and opportunities. In order to better understand this enthusiasm for the city and, indeed, the government's apparently contradictory approach to urban policy, it is necessary to first back-track a little and briefly examine New Labour's perspective on the economy and welfare reform.

When John Smith became leader in 1992, Labour had lost four successive elections. If it was to win more votes, Smith quickly decided that Labour would have to reconcile itself to the new Conservative-shaped economic, social and political landscapes. This would necessarily involve a significant broadening of the Party's appeal beyond its traditional working class voters; but, at the same time, it could not go so far so as to risk their desertion. Thus began the uneasy 'double-shuffle' of trying to appeal to 'middle England' floating voters whilst retaining its long-suffering, core support (Hall, 2003). In 1992, as part of this process of modernisation, Smith established the Commission for Social Justice, an independent, semi-official, policy review/development committee, to conduct a review of public policies in the fields of employment, taxation and social welfare and produce recommendations for reform.

The Commission published several reports, the main one being *Social Justice: Strategies for National Renewal* (CSJ, 1994). This presented three possible choices or strategies for social and economic policy under a future Labour government: a Britain of 'Levellers', 'Deregulators' or 'Investors' (CSJ, 1994). The key elements of these potential approaches are usefully summarised by Powell (2000) and reproduced in the table below.

Table 1: Dimensions of the Third Way (reproduced from Powell, 2000: 42)

Dimension	Old Left	Third Way	New Right
Approach	Leveller	Investor	Deregulator
Outcome	Equality	Inclusion	Inequality
Citizenship	Rights	Both	Responsibilities
Mixed economy of welfare	State	Public/private civil society	Private
Mode	Command and control	Co-operation/ partnership	Competition
Accountability	Central state/ upwards/national	Both?	Market/ downwards/local
Social expenditure	High	Pragmatic	Low

Seeking to jettison dearly-held Labour values on the (re)distribution of wealth and equality of outcome and ruling out the more extreme free market fantasies of the 'Deregulators' who "dream of a future in...which there is no limit to how high

earnings at the top will rise—and no limit to how low wages at the bottom will fall" (CSJ, 1994: 43), the Commission's preferred option was that of an 'Investor's Britain' "combining the ethics of community with the dynamics of a market economy" (*ibid*. 104). This middling approach is close to Giddens' view of the Third Way 'social investment state' which advocates:

> [I]nvestment in human capital wherever possible, rather than the direct provision of economic maintenance. In place of the welfare state we should put the social investment state, operating in the context of a positive welfare society (Giddens, 1998: 117 cited in Powell, 2000)

In the social investment state, the welfare state takes a more active, preventive role in mobilising human potential and equipping people for the 'modern world', providing "security through investment in and redistribution of opportunities rather than just...income" (Lister, 2003: 429). The CSJ report argued that the welfare state must be transformed "from a safety net in times of trouble to a springboard for economic opportunity" where "paid work for a fair wage is the most secure and sustainable way out of poverty" (1994: iii). As Timmins puts it, "The aim was to offer 'a hand-up, not a hand-out' " (1994).

Behind this shift from 'cradle-to-grave' welfare to 'cradle-to-job' work-fare, Perkins *et al* point out, was government's recognition "of the need to respond to a radically changed economic and social order" (2004: 2). Recognising that the new economy demands a higher level of skills, along with greater flexibility and adaptability, Blair and Schroder (1999: np) declared that "The most important task of modernisation is to invest in human capital: to make the individual and businesses fit for the knowledge-based economy of the future...[G]overnments have a responsibility to put in place a framework that enables individuals to enhance their qualifications and to fulfil their potential". Gordon Brown's 2002 Comprehensive Spending statement offers a succinct summary of the 'social investment state' in a global economy:

> [The] role of Government is—by expanding educational, employment and economic opportunity, and by encouraging stronger communities— to enable and empower people to make globalisation work for their families and their future (Brown, 2002, cited in Lister, 2003)

In short, as Macleavy (2008: 1659) has argued, many of New Labour's welfare reforms can more properly be understood as mechanisms for instilling "neoliberal values and social practices in policy subjects". To summarise, the CSJ believed that the Investor's welfare state should encourage 'self-help' and 'self-reliance', instead of fostering 'dependency'. Applied to New Labour's urban policy, "the focus is not on providing support for those who are victims of urban processes; but on finding ways of strengthening the competitiveness of key cities and sectors within them" (Cochrane, 2007: 96).

The other side of the social investment state, of course, is a successful, competitive economy. For many on the Left, it was Blair's approach to the economy that suggested he had "sold Labour's soul to the neo-liberal devil" (Driver and Martell, 1998: 2). Infamously, Blair won the 1995 vote to redraft Clause IV of the Party's

constitution. With the original 1918 text consigned to history, the new Clause IV, in typically Blairite 'double-speak', committed the Party to work for "a dynamic economy, serving the public interest, in which the enterprise of the market and the rigour of competition are joined with the forces of partnership and co-operation to produce the wealth the nation needs and the opportunity for all to work and prosper" (Labour Party, 1995). Labour's new-found enthusiasm for competitive markets was re-iterated in its 1997 election manifesto and, once in office, the new government quickly published its White Paper on Competitiveness (DTI, 1998), a document that Cruddas describes as "the definitive neoclassical testimony to the New Labour project" (2008: 146). The essence of the White Paper, which focused almost exclusively on the need for Britain to develop a knowledge-driven economy, was captured by Blair's foreword:

> The modern world is swept by change. New technologies emerge constantly, new markets are opening up. There are new competitors but also great new opportunities. Our success depends on how well we exploit our most valuable assets: our knowledge, skills, and creativity. These are the key to designing high-value goods and services and advanced business practices. They are at the heart of a modern, knowledge driven economy. (DTI, 1998: np)

Assuming an increasingly Thatcherite tone, Blair continued: "The Government must promote competition, stimulating enterprise, flexibility and innovation by opening markets...[I]n Government, in business, in our universities and throughout society we must do much more to foster a new entrepreneurial spirit". Distancing New Labour from past associations with the industrial working class, the White Paper noted how "the generation and exploitation of knowledge has come to play the predominant part in the creation of wealth" (DTI, 1998: 3).

The government's commitment to the 'new supply-side agenda' of 'flexible' markets and its silent retreat from full employment and the Keynesian welfare state is again reiterated in a 1999 speech that Blair gave jointly with German Chancellor Schroder:

> Having the same job for life is a thing of the past...To achieve higher growth and more jobs in today's world, economies must be adaptable: flexible markets are a modern social democratic aim...To make the European economy more dynamic, we also need to make it more flexible...Product, capital and labour markets must all be flexible. (Blair and Schroder, 1999: np)

Whilst the social investment state is busily engaged in the task of reproducing the entrepreneurial "citizen-workers of the future" (Lister, 2003), Blair and Schroder's words are concurrently a wake-up call to those economies, cities, neighbourhoods and people who, for whatever reason, currently lack the requisite 'flexibility'. In this way, the government cleverly shifts responsibility from itself onto the shoulders of others. Cities, firms, households and individuals are therefore responsibilised into making themselves competitive and adaptable. It then becomes possible for dominant interests to construct those who struggle to adapt or who resist the call to flexibility as standing in the way of 'progress' or 'growth' (see Chapter 9 this volume). Thus, from the early CSJ days, Smith declares that "The scourges of poverty, unemployment and low skills are barriers, not only to opportunities for people, *but to the creation of a dynamic and prosperous society* (CSJ, 1994:

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foreword, emphasis added). The point was reinforced by Mandelson when he announced the government's decision to establish the SEU: "a permanently excluded underclass actually hinders flexibility rather than enhancing it" (1997: 7). In essence, the gist of their argument is that social exclusion is not a problem in itself but rather becomes problematic when it stymies the quest for economic growth. Tackling social exclusion – through, for example, education or neighbourhood renewal – therefore becomes a means of strengthening competitiveness. As the CSJ report stated: "High investment—in skills, research, technology, childcare and community development—is the last and first step" in a "virtuous circle of sustainable growth" (1994: 103). Indeed, the CSJ's main insight was the recognition that, in an Investor's Britain, competitiveness and the welfare state were not in tension, that is , they did not stand in opposition to each other but were, rather, interdependent: "it is through investment that economic and social policy are inextricably linked" (CSJ, 1994: 97). Consequently, there was a realisation that "the welfare state could be a help, not a hindrance, to economic development" (Driver and Martell, 1998: 106). Furthermore, the relationship was a reciprocal one: "Social justice is good for business; and a successful economy is good for social justice" (Driver and Martell, 2006: 45).

Thus, under New Labour, the competitive economy and the social investment state are interdependent and work in concert. Equipped with this understanding, the main elements of New Labour's urban policy begin to fall into place and the apparent contradictions become much less discernible. Neighbourhood renewal, urban renaissance, HMR, the Sustainable Communities Plan, the Mixed Communities Initiative and 'place-shaping' can no longer be understood as a disparate, essentially pragmatic selection of initiatives, that is, the 'jackdaw' assemblage of policies noted by Powell (2000). Instead, they demand to be approached as integral parts of a structured, coherent programme. New Labour's incessant use of the phrase 'what works', a reference to the ostensibly pragmatic, non-ideological, problem-solving nature of their approach, can therefore be understood as a political manoeuvre. It not only diverts attention from the need for more systemic structural change (Lister, 2001), it also distracts us from the question which should be being asked: 'working towards what?' New Labour's pragmatism was an 'ideological pragmatism' (Lister, 2001) that was more feigned than real. As Hall suggests:

> Pragmatism is the crafty, incremental implementation of a strategic programme - being flexible about the way you push it through, giving ground when the opposition is hot, tactically revising your formulations when necessary...It requires modestly shifting the emphases to catch the current political wind, saying what will keep traditional 'heartland' supporters happy...whilst always returning to an inflexible ideological base-line...[A]t the strategic level, the project returns to its watch-words: 'wealth-creation', 'reform' and 'modernisation'. There is a dominant strategy or logic at work here, and fundamentally it is neo-liberal in character (2003: np).

5.3 Urban policy under New Labour: cities for the many *and* the few?[11]

For those whose lives and communities were incalculably, sometimes irreparably, damaged by the neoliberal offensive that began in 1979, Blair and New Labour seemed to offer a way forward and expectations for the new government ran high. Whilst the 'New Politics'and 'New Britain' trumpeted in the official rhetoric might have been over-optimistic and exaggerated, the 1997 election result offered a glimmer of hope for those people living in communities that had long been marginalised and neglected by the Tories. Blair's victory speech promised 'a Britain renewed...where we build a nation united, with common purpose, shared values, with no-one shut out or excluded" (Blair, 1997a). A few weeks later, the Aylesbury Estate in south London became the venue for the new Prime Minister's first public speech. The location had huge symbolic significance, as Blair made clear:

> I have chosen this housing estate to deliver my first speech as Prime Minister for a very simple reason. For 18 years, the poorest people in our country have been forgotten by government. They have been left out of growing prosperity, told that they were not needed, ignored by the Government except for the purpose of blaming them. I want that to change. There will be no forgotten people in the Britain I want to build. (Blair, 1997b)

In the same speech, Blair went on to highlight " the desperate need for urban regeneration" and Peter Mandelson, then Minister without Portfolio, duly announced that it was the government's intention to establish a new Unit within the Cabinet Office to develop, coordinate and oversee the government's policies for tackling social exclusion (Mandelson, 1997). The Unit's first report, *Bringing Britain Together: A National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal*, analysed the nature and extent of the problems confronting "the worst estates" and included a frank assessment of the failings of past urban policies. Although there had been many initiatives aimed at addressing the changing 'urban problem', as Chapter 4 demonstrated, the report suggested that such efforts were compromised by the same, recurring issues:

> [T]he absence of effective national policies to deal with the structural causes of decline; a tendency to parachute solutions in from outside, rather than engaging local communities; and too much emphasis on physical renewal instead of better opportunities for local people. Above all, a joined up problem has never been addressed in a joined up way. Problems have fallen through the cracks between Whitehall departments, or between central and local government. And at the neighbourhood level, there has been no one in charge of pulling together all the things that need to go right at the same time. (SEU, 1998: 9)

The report went on to demonstrate the need for a coherent, 'joined-up', neighbourhood-level approach to regeneration that would endeavour to "bridge the

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[11] See Amin et al (2000)

gap between the poorest neighbourhoods and the rest of Britain." (SEU, 1998: 1). But the government's vision for a New Britain apparently went way beyond the 'worst estates'. As Amin *et al* (2000: v) observe, "Labour's return to power in 1997 heralded a long-overdue recognition of the centrality of cities in national, economic, social and cultural life. The government saw the sense of making cities more liveable and sustainable, reducing social polarisation and exclusion within them and improving their economic potential". The promise of a broader 'urban renaissance' quickly became another strand of New Labour's urban policy. These twin ambitions, requiring investment "in people, not just buildings" (SEU, 1998: Summary), led to a proliferation of pilot schemes, initiatives and evaluations, producing what Jones and Ward describe as an "Amazonian jungle of institutions, policies, programmes and acronyms" (2002, 473). Table 2 (below) shows the bewildering array of urban regeneration strategies, funding regimes and initiatives introduced by Labour governments since 1997, along with the complexity of the associated delivery mechanisms.

Despite the government's intention to learn from past mistakes and ensure that urban policy would be implemented in a more co-ordinated, 'joined-up' fashion, the Regeneration Minister, Lord Rooker, was later forced to concede that communities were suffering 'initiative overload' and struggling to make sense of the various government schemes, some of which overlapped in terms of their aims and/or geographic coverage: "I freely admit and accept that the access to various streams of funding to localities is complicated for people to understand. It can appear like a bowl of spaghetti" (Hansard, 2003). Meanwhile, academic commentators had also begun to draw attention to the apparent contradictions and tensions between the 'urban renaissance agenda' and the 'neighbourhood renewal agenda':

> We have Rogers on the 'urban', the Social Exclusion Unit on poor
> 'neighbourhoods' and the local government White Paper on local
> 'governance'. The consequence of this is to provide one set of policies for
> the urban middle classes, one for the urban poor, and another for the partial
> reform of the political establishment governing both (Amin *et al*, 2000: vii)

Table 2: Urban regeneration under New Labour, 1997-2009

Machinery of government	• DETR/ODPM/CLG (1997-2009) • Social Exclusion Unit (1997) • Neighbourhood Renewal Unit (2001) • Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (1998) • Urban Policy Unit (2001) • Academy for Sustainable Communities (2005)
Key documents/strategies	• Bringing Britain Together (1998) • Urban Task Force Report (1999) • National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal (2001) • Urban White Paper (2000) • Sustainable Communities Plan (2003) • Egan Review (Skills for Sustainable Communities (2004) • Making it Happen: The Northern Way (2004) • Sustainable Communities: Homes for All (2005) • Sustainable Communities: People, Places & Prosperity (2005) • Sustainable Communities Act (2007) • Planning for a Sustainable Future White Paper (2007) • Prosperous Places: Taking Forward the Sub-National Review of Economic Development and Regeneration (2008) • Transforming Places, Changing Lives: A Framework for Regeneration (2008) • Communities in Control White Paper (2008) • Local Democracy, Economic Development & Construction Bill (2009) • Social Mobility White Paper (2009)
Delivery agencies	• Regional Development Agencies • Local Strategic Partnerships • Urban Development Corporations • Urban Regeneration Companies • City Region Partnerships • Homes and Communities Agency
Funding regimes	• Single Regeneration Budget (Rounds 6&7) • Neighbourhood Renewal Fund • Safe and Stronger Communities Fund • Area- Based Regeneration Grant • Working Neighbourhoods Fund • Empowerment Fund
Regeneration initiatives	• New Deal for Communities Partnerships • Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders • Neighbourhood Wardens Scheme • The Liveability Fund • Local Enterprise Growth Initiative • Housing Market Renewal Pathfinders

(Source: Shaw and Robinson, 2010)

Several observers expressed their frustration at the failure of the Urban White Paper to even identify, let alone address, these tensions (Cochrane, 2007; Colomb, 2007; Holden and Iveson, 2003). Similarly, Lees worried that the "government's urban renaissance initiatives...are likely to come unstuck due to the mismatch between their inevitably class-dividing effects and the socially just, mixed and inclusive city that is

the government's ostensible objective" (2003c: 62). The problem, it would seem, is that commitments to tackling social exclusion *and* delivering an urban renaissance appear to be somewhat at odds with one another. But, in the context of the preceding discussion about the social investment state, one can take a different view. Urban policy under New Labour was driven essentially by an entrepreneurial agenda that acknowledged and responded to a new social and global economic order in which people and places were required to be more competitive. In particular, tackling social exclusion was just as much a part of this "new supply-side agenda for the left" (Blair and Schroder, 1999) as its commitment to creating the conditions, skills and infrastructure that would support the knowledge economy. Neighbourhood renewal and urban renaissance were effectively two sides of the same coin. Nevertheless, Fairclough, observing that New Labour was an enthusiastic convert to 'globalisation', notes that, "There are winners and losers in globalisation...and New Labour basically backs the winners (despite its claim to 'tackle' the 'social exclusion' of the losers) (2000: viii). The 'creative class', the subject of the following section, might readily be understood as one of the groups that have done rather well out of globalisation.

5.4 Urban renaissance and the 'creative class'

Less than a year after taking office, the Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott invited the architect Richard Rogers, "an evangelist of urban renaissance" (DETR, 1999: iv) to chair an Urban Task Force (UTF), comprising experts from both public and private sectors. The principal aim of the UTF was to "identify causes of urban decline in England and recommend practical solutions to bring people back into our cities, towns and urban neighbourhoods" (DETR, 1999: 1). The UTF's report, *Towards an Urban Renaissance* (DETR, 1999), commonly known as the Rogers Report, attracted favourable comments from scholars who were encouraged by its new-found enthusiasm for cities:

> Richard Rogers' Report is wonderfully enthusiastic about cities and their potential...There is much here to be welcomed. In the wake of a long history of English anti-urbanism, the positive tone on urban possibility is overdue. Against the commonly held dystopian view of cities as sources of economic, social and environmental decline, the 90% of England's population who live and work in the urban areas are promised a better future...the Rogers Report comes as a breath of fresh air (Amin *et al*, 2000: 1-2).

Despite such praise, however, these comments were tempered by concerns about certain aspects of the vision projected by the UTF report: "To approach something as complex as policy for cities it is necessary to have a framing *vision*: of what and who cities are for, and what kinds of societies they might most democratically embody" (Amin *et al*, 2000: v, original emphasis). Asking "the question of who urban regeneration is actually for?", New Labour's 'rediscovery' of the urban was perhaps less innocent and progressive than it might have initially appeared, being principally focused on cities' economic potential in a competitive, global economy rather than any reinvigorated notion of people's 'right to the city': "The 'technology of renewal' involves the actual reshaping of the residential, commercial and public

spaces of the inner city in favour of specific socioeconomic groups and the needs of the 'knowledge economy' " (Amin *et al.* 2000: 23, vi). Rather than creating a city for 'the many', New Labour's vision of reshaping the city was limited to "a narrow definition of international competitiveness based around the notion of the global economy, composed of informatics, intangible goods, and fast-acting knowledge workers" (Amin *et al*, 2000: 9).

In the context of major social and economic developments including, for example, the shift to a post-industrial knowledge economy (Bell, 1973, Giddens, 1971; Touraine, 1971), increasing levels of globalisation (Dicken, 2003), the emergence of a web-enabled 'network society' (Castells, 1996) and Porter's work on competitive advantage (1995; 1998), cities were rediscovering their economic roots and increasingly being recast as potential "drivers of national economic prosperity and competitiveness" (Cochrane, 2007: 96). The Rogers Report highlights the importance of urban areas to the economy and begins to outline how this role might be strengthened:

> In England, urban areas provide for 91% of the total economic output and 89% of all the jobs. Maintaining and improving the economic strength of our towns and cities is therefore critical to the competitive performance of the country as a whole. The future economic success of urban areas is itself dependent upon their ability to carve out a competitive role within the knowledge-based economy. This means providing an attractive location for investment. (DETR, 1999: 7)

Anticipating the subsequent development of a housing/residential 'offer', the report also notes how several northern cities were "enjoying an influx of new residents into their centres, attracted by both homes and neighbourhoods which have begun to offer a competitive package of 'goods'"(DETR, 1999: 12). The Urban White Paper (UWP), the Blair government's response to the Rogers Report, makes an essentially similar argument:

> The economy relies on the economic performance of our towns and cities... If we are to attract and retain jobs and investment we must offer the facilities, the skilled and adaptable workforce, the public services and an urban environment to match the best in the world. (DETR, 2000: para 1.21)

Together, the Rogers Report and the UWP provided the initial, outline framework for an epochal, turn of the millennium urban competitiveness agenda that would be built around the growth of the knowledge economy and the (middle-class) preferences and needs of the mobile, highly educated, often professionally qualified, staff working in that particular sector. Anticipating Richard Florida's 'creative class' thesis (2002, 2005), the objective of this urban renaissance was 'to construct new sustainable urban realms, founded upon the principles of social mixing, sustainability, connectivity, higher densities, walkability, and high quality streetscapes with the express aim of attracting the suburban knowledge and service industrial demographic back to the city" (Rogers and Coaffee, 2005: 323).

Urban renaissance appeared alongside, and became part of, a new phase of gentrification, much of it encouraged, if not managed and financed, by the state

(Hackworth and Smith, 2001). After the hiatus of the early-1990s recession, this third-wave gentrification was picking up speed in the US, Europe and beyond (Atkinson and Bridge, 2005; Smith, 2002). Barcelona, headed by a nominally Leftist mayor and one of the cities visited by Rogers and his Task Force, received glowing praise in the UTF (1999) report as the "most compact and vibrant European city" and a "model of urban regeneration". In 1999, Barcelona was the first ever city to be awarded the RIBA Gold Medal. The RIBA jury citation proclaimed that: 'the character of Barcelona, though changed, is more distinct than ever and ready for the global age in which cities as much as nations are in direct competition for jobs and investment' (Kelly, 1999: 9). Balibrea (2004) suggests that the UTF's vision for urban renaissance in English cities was very much based on the 'Barcelona model', as did *The Observer*: "Each of the target cities will be encouraged to sell themselves as exciting and stylish places to live and work, mirroring the success of the Catalan urban regeneration" (Wintour and Thorpe, 1999 cited in Balibrea, 2004). Yet what the Barcelona model provides, arguably, is a model of state-led gentrification (see for example Degen, 2008; McNeill, 2003; Vicario and Monje, 2005). As Balibrea notes in relation to the city's 'improved' neighbourhoods:

> Many inhabitants of these neighbourhoods or their children have de facto been expelled from their historic communities, unable to afford the escalating prices of new residences in their now improved areas, or forced out of buildings expropriated for demolition. By working ideologically as a rhetorical instrument for generating consensus and consent on the part of the population, the process of monumentalizing the outskirts and of improving public spaces around the city has, paradoxically, facilitated the transition to a situation of progressive gentrification, privatization and more and more restricted access to public spaces (2004: 213-14).

Exported to the UK, the base gentrifying instincts of urban renaissance are "assiduously hidden in the verbiage of the British Labour government"(Smith, 2002: 440) although, as below, the colonialist 'frontier' imagery of courageous 'pioneers' is sometimes more explicit. Finding "clear evidence of housing abandonment within some towns and cities", the UTF report suggests that:

> A shift in approach could open up real potential for repopulating inner areas. We can:
>
> • use regeneration projects to attract 'urban pioneers' back into city centres and gradually spread into the surrounding emptying neighbourhoods;
>
> • incentivise social housing tenants who are under-occupying properties to move into smaller properties, where possible, in the same neighbourhood, to free up larger housing to attract families back. (DETR, 1999: 172).

Yet gentrification appears to be a word that is banned from the renaissance/regeneration lexicon:

> It is a policy language that never uses the word 'gentrification' and thus consistently deflects criticism and resistance. Terms like urban renaissance, urban revitalisation, urban regeneration and urban sustainability are used

instead, avoiding the class constitution of the processes involved and neutralising the negative image that the process of gentrification brings with it (Lees, 2008: 2452).

The UTF report and, to a lesser degree, the UWP, highlight the extent to which gentrification "has become fully and affirmatively incorporated into public policy" where it is now no longer seen as a problem but as a solution (Lees and Ley, 2008: 2380; see also Slater: 2006, 2008). These documents, two of the most significant official statements on British urban policy for decades, served to underscore the then incipient trend for what is euphemistically termed 'city living', setting out a vision of urban renaissance and articulating the government's rationale for concentrating new residential development on brownfield sites in urban centres. Reviewing the content and language of the two documents, Lees (2003c) notes how both call for a move 'back to the city', offer a 'new vision for urban living' and prescribe middle-class oriented lifestyles and high-end retail and residential developments that collectively amount to archetypal 'textbook gentrification'. Urban renaissance (read gentrification) is promoted as "the blueprint for a civilised city life...the medicine for decaying inner cities" (Lees, 2000: 391). Both documents adroitly avoid any direct reference to gentrification *per se*, but their vision of urban renaissance is aimed squarely at the middle-classes, reaching out both to those who have forsaken urban centres for the higher quality housing and schooling of the suburbs but also particularly to those younger, educated, highly mobile, affluent professionals working in the 'knowledge economy' and the corporate and financial sectors. Given the UTF report's insistence on the emerging primacy of the knowledge economy, the success or failure of cities will rest much on their ability to provide a quality of life and a rounded package of work, educational, housing, social and recreational opportunities – an attractive 'offer' – that will appeal to the rising stars of the new knowledge economy: "In the 21st century, it is the skilled worker, as well as the global company, who will be footloose. Cities must work hard to attract and retain both" (DETR, 1999: 42).

Towards an Urban Renaissance and the Urban White Paper anticipated several of the themes highlighted in Richard Florida's influential work, *The Rise of the Creative Class* (2002). Florida's work, which has attracted considerable interest from policymakers in cities worldwide, argued that creativity and creative individuals or 'talent' are playing an increasingly important role in the economic and social development of cities, if not entire regions: "regional economic growth is driven by the location choices of creative people – the holders of creative capital – who prefer places that are diverse, tolerant and open to new ideas" (Florida, 2002, p. 223). In essence, cities are presented with a stark choice: "Be creative – or die" (Dreher, 2002: 1 cited in Peck, 2005). In Florida's view, then, "*place* rather than corporation [is] the key economic organising principle" (Cochrane, 2007: 110, emphasis added) because buzzing, 'hip' places that are open to new ideas will ultimately attract creative people, the 'lifeblood' of the new economy. As Baris (2003: 42, cited in Peck, 2005) observes "the old mode of people moving to follow jobs is turned on its head" and cities "must restructure themselves for the creative class's needs much as companies have already done". Consequently, urban policy-makers and planners are now paying much greater attention to improving what Florida terms 'quality of place'. Within this, town planning - increasingly understood as 'place-shaping' - has assumed a more prominent role:

> ...spatial planning has become a means of mobilising and coordinating an area's physical, cultural and social assets to produce a competitive 'place offer' that will attract or, rather, 'wow' knowledge firms and workers to relocate to that particular place. That is to say, planning is now yoked to the task of creating a spectacular urban landscape and an intense, high quality lifestyle experience for a select group (Allen and Crookes, 2009: 458)

But this "new urban glamour policy" (Edwards, 1997: 826) conceals a darker side. Where urban policy once sought, however ineffectively, to be inclusive, we now find instead an embourgeoisement of urban space, with residential, retail and leisure landscapes being (re)designed specifically to attract workers in the creative/knowledge sectors of the economy but simultaneously repel, prohibit, exclude, displace or make less visible those who do not qualify as the 'right sort' (Harvey, 1989b).   Writing on the US experience, Wyly and Hammel observe how the local state and local capital now combine their coercive powers to create 'safe', gentrified enclaves that exclude the poor through "the spatial policies of squatter evictions, aggressive privatization of public spaces, rampant proliferation of security and surveillance technologies, 'broken windows' - inspired sciences of crime mapping and policing strategies, and the vicious use of panhandling laws and other anti-homeless policies" (2002: 4).   Such policies and practices, one might add, are increasingly encountered in British towns and cities (see for example Coleman and Sim, 2000; Coleman *et al*, 2002).   Though much-vaunted by Florida (2002), the qualities of tolerance of others and acceptance of difference, it would seem, only go so far.

The important question, however, is where are all the incoming knowledge economy workers going to live? In this new, highly competitive, inter-city 'war for talent' (Florida, 2003), housing – specifically the sort of housing favoured by the creative class - has come to assume considerable importance. A city's housing market or, to be more precise, the quality of its 'residential offer', now constitutes a core component of its overall place 'offer':

> Good quality aspirational housing is increasingly a driver of economic success rather than a consequence of it. Cities that want to be in a position to adjust most effectively to the knowledge economy are those cities which provide attractive places for middle and higher income households to live (Lee and Murie, 2004: 243).

Warming to Florida's vision, Lee and Murie (*op cit*) contend that the bulk of the existing housing stock in the former industrial cities of northern England and the Midlands, which was built mainly for the working classes and the needs of the "*old economy*" (original emphasis) is anachronistic and not at all appropriate to the needs and aspirations of the creative class. As they put it: "the housing legacy is a drag on the realization of the knowledge economy" (2004: 242). Their arguments neatly embody the 'end of history' narrative (Allen, 2008a), whereby terraced housing is deemed 'obsolete' and 'unsuitable for modern living' (Nevin *et al*, 2001). This has become part of the justification for HMR and Lee and Murie reach similar conclusions about what should be done. Carefully omitting any mention of gentrification, they argue that "efforts should be made to develop a 'creative class'

infrastructure" (2004: 244) and they look forward to the creatives' colonisation of the country's former industrial heartlands:

> The failing housing markets of the Midlands and North of England could be significantly restructured in order to make them more attractive to middle and higher income groups and logically to set off a process of economic revival which could benefit lower income groups and those who are unable to exercise choice in the housing market (Lee and Murie, 2004: 243).

Decades of experience have demonstrated that the 'trickle-down' effect is highly uncertain and the options of those who are currently least able to exercise choice in the housing market are unlikely to be improved by gentrification. This aside, however, the issue of greatest concern is the extent to which the sorts of arguments made by Florida (2002) and Lee and Murie (2004) have come to be taken up by policymakers in the north of England. 'Quality of place' and the notion of 'residential offer' have been a strong theme in much of the work produced and commissioned by the Northern Way secretariat[12] (see Ove Arup/ Innovacion, 2006), cascading down to the three northern regions' Regional Housing Strategies and several city-region housing strategies (see, for example AGMA, 2010). The following extract exemplifies the Northern Way's ambitions:

> "...residential offer is an important component of quality of place, and that quality of place is an important consideration for home-movers in key groups that help to drive the economy: recent graduates, family builders and knowledge economy workers (including senior executives and those in creative industries). Whilst recognising the need to raise the quality of all places in the Northern regions, *the Northern Way's focus is on creating the places that can help to attract those key groups that are necessary to drive economic growth*" (Ove Arup/ Innovacion, 2006: i, emphasis added)

One also finds clear evidence of the 'end of history' narrative:

> "A fundamental issue is for policy to recognise the need for the North to readjust its housing stock to one that responds to the economic challenges of the 21st century, making it competitive. In simplistic terms, whilst the North still has a significant stock of housing intended for accommodating the workforce of an early 20th century industrial economy, it is positioned poorly in terms of a residential offer attractive for the workers that will drive a post-industrial 21st century economy. (Ove Arup/ Innovacion, 2006: 7)

Quite what this means for those still occupying such housing or those who are deemed to be relatively unimportant to the new economy is unclear. Reading the extract above, one is left with the impression that much of the North's working-class housing and its people belong to another era. They are, in effect, seen as an anachronism, rendered obsolete by the new economy and therefore, presumably,

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[12] The Northern Way initiative was launched in February 2004 under the umbrella of the Labour Government's Sustainable Communities agenda. Its purpose was to transform the economic performance of the three Northern regions to close the output gap with the English average. The future of the initiative is uncertain but it may disappear when the Regional Development Agencies are abolished in March 2012

dispensable. It is then but a short step to begin to argue that working-class (often terraced) housing and its inhabitants should be swept away - cleared – to make space for new housing that will appeal to those key groups identified above. This sort of thinking provides the rationale for HMR.

5.5 Urban renaissance and brownfield land

In the short to medium-term, the amount of urban land suitable for new residential development is relatively fixed. As part of its efforts to promote an urban renaissance, the Blair government introduced a target in February 1998 requiring 60% of all new housing development to be built on brownfield land. This notwithstanding, the Environment, Transport and Regional Affairs Parliamentary Committee said that it was:

> ...very concerned about problems of land assembly and the failure to bring brownfield land into use for housing. The traditional way of dealing with these problems is the compulsory purchase order which has been little used in recent years. It is slow. A streamlined compulsory purchase order would be very helpful and is urgently required..." (House of Commons, 1998).

Devoting an entire chapter to *Managing the Land Supply,* the UTF report argues that:

> We need to make it easier to recycle previously developed land so that a greater proportion of new development flows to our urban areas. One of the ways of achieving this is to reduce the barriers to assembling existing sites and buildings that need to be redeveloped. Land ownership constraints should not be allowed to atrophy the urban environment. This means streamlining procedures and providing the human and financial resources necessary to keep our urban land markets fluid and flexible.

As Edwards (2009) notes, citing Doak and Karadimitriou (2007), by the late 1990s, "the issue was becoming one of how to generate or reclassify enough land as 'brownfield' to satisfy developers' demand". In buoyant property markets such as London and the South East, brownfield redevelopment meant that developers and builders could exploit massive rent gaps. As the 1998 DETR Select Committee reported:

> The House Builders Federation told us that London represented the most profitable residential market: 'If you look at some of the sites which are being developed in London today, I would actually say that [brownfield sites] are the most profitable because they have the biggest margin. They have the biggest margins because in the last year you have seen an enormous influx of all kinds of people wanting to buy into the London market and it has been immensely profitable to specialise in certain parts of that market. If you look at the results of certain public companies who have specialised entirely in that area, they are making bigger margins than any other developers.' (House of Commons, 1998: para. 159)

In the north, however, where the potential ground rents were lower, sustaining similar profit margins would be dependent on government subsidy: "Witnesses told us that building more homes on brownfield sites in areas of low demand and\or very high costs, was dependent on the funds the Government was prepared to commit to solving the problem" (House of Commons, 1998: para. 159). Remediating former industrial land, for example, can be extremely costly and house-builders will often demand public subsidies to develop such areas (see, for example, House of Commons, 1998).

The cheaper, more straightforward, alternative, of course, is to build on residential land, to in-fill or, preferably, to actively produce larger sites through the demolition of existing housing. But government and developers cannot simply set about demolishing houses without proper justification. A problem needs to be formulated to justify a policy of mass demolition on a scale that will satisfy developers' demand for residential brownfield land. This demand, of course, is itself partly a product of the government's ambitions for urban renaissance and its targets for the delightfully euphemistic 'recycling' of urban land. Back in 2002, Smith was already alert to the possibility that the target will, no doubt, be "aimed at older urban areas that have undergone sustained disinvestment" (2002: 444). Indeed, it is at this juncture that Housing Market Renewal emerges, with talk of the need for demolition on a massive scale. As the opening paragraph to the influential M62 study states:

> This study was commissioned by the Housing Corporation, the 18 local authorities who administer the M62 Corridor, the National Housing Federation, *the National House Builders Federation* and a number of RSLs. These agencies were responding to changes in local housing markets which were characterised by *strong demand for newly built accommodation for sale* and increases in vacancies and turnover in the social rented and owner-occupied terraced sectors (Nevin *et al*, 2001: vi, emphasis added)

Just to emphasise this, the National House Builders Federation (NHBF), with an obvious interest in opening up parcels of brownfield land in urban areas, was involved in part-funding the research that eventually led to the establishment of the HMR programme. Moreover, the extract draws attention to the fact that whilst there were increases in vacancies and turnover in areas of social rented and terraced housing, this was occurring alongside strong demand for new-build, 'contemporary'-style housing. So, from the NHBF perspective, the strong demand for new housing in urban areas in the late 1990s was not being met because there was a lack of suitable, cheap, brownfield land. The most suitable – profitable - land (i.e. residential land that does not require extensive decontamination treatment) was occupied by areas of council housing and/or terraced housing. The preferred solution for the NHBF would therefore have been the clearance of large areas of inner-urban land. This, of course, is more or less what happened, albeit obscured by arguments about low demand, housing market failure and an attendant programme of refurbishment that sought to distract attention from demolition.

5.6 Urban regeneration and compulsory purchase

The discussion above illustrates how the Blair government's desire for urban renaissance and, specifically, its targets for new housing on brownfield sites, had created increased demand for urban land suitable for residential development. It was inevitable therefore that the system of compulsory purchase would come under close scrutiny from a government intent on facilitating a 'move back to the city' and developers seeking out profitable development sites, all shored up by entrepreneurial local authorities who were keen to attract new investors and wealthier residents. In written evidence to the 1998 House of Commons DETR Select Committee, the DETR noted that

> Those whose interests lie in urban regeneration and the improvement of run down areas of housing believe that their ability to achieve these ends is hampered by inadequate powers to acquire land by compulsion...[They] complain that compulsory purchase procedures are bureaucratic, inefficient and uncertain as to the eventual outcome (DETR, 1998)

The present system of compulsory purchase can be traced back to the growth of the railways in the mid-nineteenth century (Hawkins, 2005). The system has since formed an integral part of urbanisation and the expansion of the welfare state, as growing cities required land for housing, schools, roads and other infrastructure and services. The 1960s slum clearances, for example, made extensive use of CPOs and houses were condemned largely on the basis of criteria related to 'fitness', that is, they were deemed 'unfit for human habitation'. At a time when most people were private tenants, with many living in extremely poor housing conditions, support for CPOs was stronger (see Yelling, 2000). Many people welcomed the opportunity to move to new council housing. Nevertheless, the process of mass clearance and dislocation was often a brutal, bruising experience for those who were affected.

With economic recession and the shift from housing clearance to refurbishment described in Chapter 4, there was generally much less use of CPOs through the 1970s. With the introduction of the Urban Development Corporations, however, CPOs were 'dusted off' to clear the last vestiges of manufacturing industry from the urban cores to make way for shiny new offices, retail developments and *private* housing. Of course, all this was stalled by the early 1990s recession but developers had had a taste of the huge rent-gaps that could be exploited through re-development on urban sites that had been cleared with the aid of CPOs.

Distracting attention with its emphasis on urbanity and talk of designer enclaves "filled with entertainment, media and creative businesses, hotels, housing, shops and visitor attractions" (DETR, 1999: 65, cited in Lees, 2003c), the Rogers Report also had much to say about compulsory purchase and its role in delivering an urban renaissance. Whilst it may speak of a change in 'urban attitudes' and a 'renaissance' – a cultural/intellectual shift - that seems to float above the earthy materiality of the urban, the means of achieving this enhanced urbanity were much more old-fashioned and down to earth. It is not so much 'pacification by cappuccino' (Zukin, 1995) as 'renaissance by bulldozer'. The terms 'compulsory purchase' and 'CPO' make a total of around 40 appearances in the report. Rogers further reiterated the need for a more streamlined system of compulsory purchase as well as recommending the

creation of 'Urban Priority Areas' that would enjoy a reduced regulatory framework with respect to planning and CPOs.

Ministers accepted the need to review CPO laws and commissioned a fundamental review of the laws and procedures relating to the compulsory acquisition of land as part of the wider programme for modernising the planning system. A Compulsory Purchase Policy Review Advisory Group, comprising academics, lawyers, professionals and others with a direct interest in these matters, was therefore set up to develop recommendations and consolidate the existing laws, practice and guidance changes will be convened to assist officials in the review.

Nevin *et al* were also highlighting the need for change to the CPO system in their influential M62 study. For example: "Compulsory Purchase Orders are protracted and the inability to take action relating to obsolescence rather [than] unfitness will inhibit effective intervention in the North West (2001: 58). The Empty Homes Select Committee added further weight to the argument for change:

> One of the biggest issues facing local authorities wishing to undertake housing market renewal is site assembly. Unless an authority is redeveloping one of its own estates, the site is usually in multiple ownership. Compulsory purchase is frequently required. (HMSO, 2002b: para.122)

Many of the local authorities submitting evidence to the inquiry reported that they found CPOs slow and expensive and they often lacked people with the skills to progress them. As part of the inquiry, the Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott was asked:

> Do you not think...that it would be sensible to beef up what the powers are as far as compulsory purchase is concerned?

> Mr Prescott: I think that is a very important point. Nick [Raynsford] is very much involved in the review of compulsory purchase. It is something that any of us looking at urban development in towns and cities know is a very tiresome and difficult problem. Perhaps Nick could give you an idea of how far we have advanced on making those changes in compulsory purchase or making it more effective for local authorities and private bodies to be able to do something in the towns where with private properties there it is difficult to deal with at the moment. (House of Commons, 2001: Q6)

Given that the forcible acquisition of people's homes and their removal is such a 'very tiresome and difficult problem', one of the Committee's key recommendations in this area was that, in order to simplify matters, the government's "new compulsory purchase legislation should include housing regeneration and renewal as one of the purposes for which compulsory purchase can be used" (HMSO, 2002b: para. 123).

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, enacted in 2004, therefore simplified and streamlined the arrangements for compulsory purchase. The justification for the changes was set out in the Regulatory Impact Assessment that accompanied the original Bill:

By clarifying the basis for justifying the compulsory acquisition of land, the proposals in the Bill are intended to encourage authorities to make greater use of their powers and to reduce the time taken in following through the necessary statutory procedures. In this way they should make land assembly simpler and quicker and will mark a major step towards facilitating land assembly for regeneration (cited in Elvin, 2004).

5.7 Housing Market Renewal

This is a convenient point to turn the discussion to Housing Market Renewal. Introduced by the Blair government in 2002, ostensibly in response to the late-1990s phenomena of 'low demand' housing and 'housing market failure' (Cole and Nevin, 2004), the HMR programme was initially set to run for 15-20 yrs but was recently wound up (April, 2011) as part of the Coalition's budget cuts. As this thesis will demonstrate, however, the implementation of HMR represents the latest and perhaps most ambitious, if aggressive and harmful, mobilisation of the urban policy-cum-gentrification agenda that has yet been attempted by an English government. Re-scaling state-led, new-build gentrification from the neighbourhood to the sub-regional level, the nine original designated Pathfinder areas were home to around 1,860,000 people and incorporated a total of just over 846,000 houses and flats, of which around 61,000 were vacant. The Northern Way Strategy document initially suggested that there were plans to demolish around 167, 000 of these dwellings, adding "this is well below the rate required...and housing supply needs to be downsized" (Northern Way, 2005). This figure, in fact, was later revised down to 57,000 (Audit Commission, 2006). For comparison, the US Hope VI programme, which is focused on 'severely distressed' public sector housing, had, by 2004, seen the demolition of around 63,000 dwellings across the US (Popkin *et al*, 2004).

The initial justification for HMR was very much based around New Labour's early concerns around housing and social exclusion (Ferrari and Lee, 2010). The central issue, in the late 1990s at least, was an apparent problem of unpopular and 'low demand' housing (Bramley, 2000; Goodchild *et al*, 2002; Keenan *et al*, 1999; Murie *et al*, 1998; Nevin *et al*, 2001; Power and Mumford, 1999; SEU, 1999). The problem of empty properties has, by tradition, been viewed as an issue for the social housing sector (Lund, 2006). By the late 1990s, however, there was increasing evidence of 'low demand' and occasionally, abandonment, in areas of private housing in conurbations across the North and Midlands, with pre-1919 terraced housing constituting the bulk of these properties (Murie *et al*, 1998; Nevin *et al*, 2001; SEU, 1999).

Low demand is variously defined and Ferrari and Lee (2010: 24), who had extensive involvement in the initial research and ongoing evaluation around HMR[13], concede "that there was some confusion over what the problem of 'low demand' really was". Thus, for example: "low demand is an imprecise concept but generally refers to a situation of sustained disequilibrium where in spite of falling prices there remains a

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[13] See for example Nevin et al (2001), Ferrari et al (2003) and Leather et al (2007, 2009)

mismatch between supply and demand" (Gibb and Kearns, 2001: 3). Power and Mumford offer the following interpretation, "low demand describes housing which few people want to move into, or remain living in...It applies to areas where overall demand is low relative to supply, suggesting an emerging surplus of housing. The areas affected can be small neighbourhoods, estates, cities..." (1999: vii). Officially, ODPM defined low demand areas as "neighbourhoods of at least 50 dwellings where private sector housing is predominant and one or more of the following symptoms apply: private property values are low and/or falling in absolute terms, high private sector void rate, high turnover of population, significant incidence of long term voids or abandoned property, visibly high incidence of properties for sale/let" (ODPM, 2002: 22). The Government's White Paper *Sustainable Communities: Homes for all* (ODPM, 2005a: 49) described how problems of low demand might come about: "All regions have areas where housing is unpopular. Problems arise where there are simply too many houses for the number of households. Properties fall empty, encouraging vandalism and crime; reinforcing the spiral of decline as the area becomes a less attractive place to live. The value of homes falls, and people become trapped in neighbourhoods in decline."

In previous decades, 'difficult to let' social housing had been attributed to local, micro-level factors such as stock condition, size or type (Ferrari and Lee, 2010). But, at the end of the 1990s, the emerging research on low demand suggested that the problem was much more widespread, with Bramley *et al* (2000) reporting that some 61% of local authorities were experiencing low demand in social housing estates and a further 22% were reporting similar problems in areas of private sector housing. They estimated that around 850,000 dwellings were affected by low demand, with the bulk of these located in the north of England and the West Midlands. Whilst some of the micro-level problems of housing condition and anti-social behaviour were still seen as relevant, the apparent scale of the problem pointed at deeper structural causes beyond individual neighbourhoods, with research highlighting factors such as, ironically, population loss resulting from earlier phases of planned decentralisation and slum clearance, more recent trends in suburbanisation, economic changes such as the decline in traditional male employment in manufacturing and mining and changing housing aspirations that had led to the residualisation of social housing (Bramley *et al*, 2000; Nevin *et al*, 2001; Webster, 1998).

In North West England, the so-called 'M62 study' (Nevin *et al*, 2001), commissioned by the recently constituted North West Housing Forum[14] to examine changing housing markets and the prevalence of low demand in Manchester, Liverpool and the M62 corridor, confirmed the scale of the problem in this part of the region. The M62 study included a quantitative predictive risk index that attempted to map and model areas at risk of low demand. Interestingly, Nevin *et al* (1999: 6) had earlier rejected such an approach: "The difficulty of determining the viability and sustainability of housing areas should be recognised from the outset. The task cannot be reduced to a technical exercise alone in which areas are ranked and reduced to an index score on an agreed scale". Nevertheless, constructing a risk

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[14] This coalition-lobby group was formed in 1999 and included the Housing Corporation, the 18 local authorities who administer the M62 Corridor, the National Housing Federation, the National House Builders Federation and a number of RSLs.

index that "combined five indicators of factors known to be associated with low demand" (Ferrari and Lee, 2010: 50), the M62 study mapped the areas 'at risk' of low and changing demand and highlighted "clear spatial concentrations at the core of the Greater Manchester conurbation... and in the Merseyside inner core centred on the City of Liverpool" (Nevin *et al*, 2001: vii). Most of the housing at risk was social housing though there was some evidence of problems across all tenures (Nevin *et al op cit*). In total, the study indicated that, across the area, there were some 280,000 households at risk of low or changing demand, comprising a population of around 690,000 people. Given such numbers, Nevin *et al* (2001: 115) suggested that large scale intervention was essential if the government was to meet some of its key social and economic objectives:

> Three key policy objectives of central government are: to reduce the extent and severity of social exclusion for Britain's most deprived populations, to secure an urban renaissance in towns and cities and to ensure that development has sustainable outcomes. All three objectives are closely related, and in practice none of them will be achieved if housing market restructuring is not incorporated in to regeneration programmes.

Invoking what they described as "the British tradition of public intervention in failing housing markets established in the 1930s and the 1960s through local authorities and New Town Development Corporations", (2001: 10), Nevin *et al* recommended that "The government's approach to regeneration should incorporate the focus on the management and regeneration of small neighbourhoods into a much larger spatial framework, which seeks to renew housing markets" (2001: viii). In particular, they also introduced the neologism of 'Housing Market Renewal' to the urban policy lexicon, recommending that:

> Government should create a new Housing Market Renewal Fund to finance the long term strategies to renew the housing markets in the areas worst affected by change. This fund would facilitate the improvement of substandard housing, clearance of obsolete housing and the land assembly necessary for redevelopment. This fund should be targeted at falling housing markets rather than local authority areas. This will require a new approach to inter-authority co-operation in Greater Manchester and Merseyside. (Nevin *et al*, 2001: viii)

Cole and Nevin define market renewal as:

> "...a philosophy that integrates housing, planning and regeneration strategies to produce a process of renewal that reverses the negative socioeconomic trends that cause decline of housing markets within a sub-region. The approach attempts to restore choice and balance in housing markets that have become increasingly ill-suited to the preferences and aspirations of existing residents or potential incoming households. (2004: 9)

What was unusual about the genesis of HMR, Webb (2010: 2) suggests, was that, "compared with the many other area-based initiatives operating in the UK [which] have tended to be designed by central government and passed to local authorities and/or partnerships for local negotiation and delivery...the HMR concept was

promoted fiercely to the centre by a wide range of local institutions. Academics had a key role in this process, providing 'factual' material as well as arguments in support of the initiative". Looking back, Cole and Nevin (2004: 11) suggest that the M62 study was a crucial moment in raising the profile of the issue, both regionally and nationally:

> A clear message from this research was that, because of large-scale risk associated with multi-tenure neighbourhoods in the core of the older urban areas, and given the scale of the problem, a new approach to regeneration and renewal would be needed. The research on the M62 Corridor started the debate about the need for the creation of Housing Market renewal areas and a Housing Market Renewal Fund to facilitate holistic regeneration in the older industrial centres.

Thereafter, things moved remarkably swiftly. The coalition lobby for HMR, which had now grown to include the National Housing Federation, the Chartered Institute of Housing, the Core Cities and three Regional Housing Boards commissioned Nevin to write a submission to the 2003-06 Comprehensive Spending Review. The submission argued for the introduction of a Housing Market Renewal Fund of £6-8 billion over 10-20 years (Nevin, 2001). At much the same time, as Cole (2008) describes, concerned northern MPs were also able to get the Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions (DTLR) Select Committee to conduct an inquiry into Empty Homes. As well as considering a range of oral and written evidence from academics, senior housing officials, community groups and members of the public, the cross-party committee, chaperoned by Cole and Nevin, conducted a two-day visit to the North West, taking in areas of low-demand housing in Liverpool, Manchester and Burnley This is described in the Annex to the Select Committee's main report (see HMSO, 2002a).

Reporting on how they were 'shocked' by the 'desolation' that they saw on this visit, the Select Committee recommended that:

> Radical intervention is needed in some inner urban areas where the housing market has collapsed to make them attractive to a broad mix of existing and potential residents. The housing market renewal approach needed to achieve this must be on a large, conurbation-wide scale. It will take a long time and so must be started as soon as possible and will require significant additional funding, of the order of hundreds of millions of pounds per annum. (HMSO, 2002b: 7)

In order to address the current surplus of empty properties, the Committee further warned that "A significant amount of demolition and rebuilding will be required" (HMSO, 2002b: np). The Government agreed: "The scale and severity of the problem warrants a step change in our approach. We agree with the Committee that far-reaching measures, involving tough choices, are needed to secure a lasting future for the areas affected" (DTLR, 2002: 5). But the Government also glimpsed a possible 'silver-lining' amid the 'tough choices' and demolition, adding that "the problem of market collapse is also a unique opportunity. It gives us the chance to restructure and rebuild our cities for the twenty-first century. We must now seize that opportunity" (DTLR, 2002: 5). Not long after, Stephen Byers, the Secretary of State

for Transport, Local Government and the Regions announced the setting up of Market Renewal Pathfinders in the nine areas indicated below in Figure 2(below).

Figure 2: Map showing the nine original HMR Pathfinder areas, 2002

1	Newcastle Gateshead (Bridging NewcastleGateshead)
2	Merseyside (NewHeartlands)
3	East Lancashire (Elevate)
4	Oldham and Rochdale (Partners in Action)
5	Manchester Salford
6	South Yorkshire (Transform)
7	Hull and East Riding of Yorkshire (Gateway)
8	North Staffordshire (Renew)
9	Birmingham & Sandwell (Urban Living)
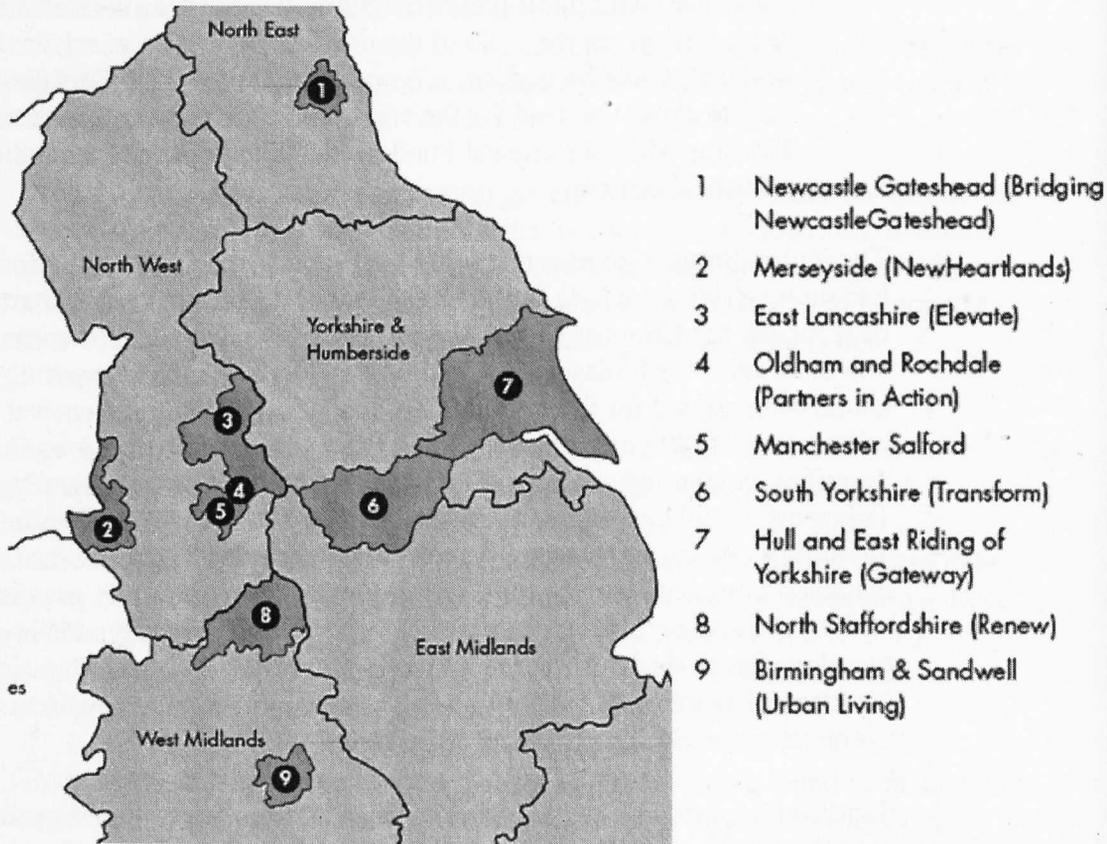
Source: NAO (2007)

The HMR Pathfinder partnerships were established to coordinate "radical and sustained action to replace obsolete housing with modern sustainable accommodation, through demolition and new building or refurbishment. This will mean a better mix of homes, and sometimes fewer homes" (ODPM, 2003). Between 2002 and 2008, overall responsibility for the administration of the HMR programme rested with ODPM and then DCLG. During this period, spending on the programme amounted to £1.2 billion. The 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review re-affirmed the Government's commitment to the programme, when a further £1 billion was budgeted for the period 2008-11. From December 2008, responsibility for the programme shifted to the newly created Homes and Communities Agency.

Following the Government's announcement on the establishment of the HMR programme and the creation of the nine Pathfinder partnerships, the Government allocated £2.66m to each partnership for initial research and set-up costs. As Cole and Nevin (2004) report, in order to receive this money, each Pathfinder had to:

- agree the boundary of the Pathfinder area with ODPM officials

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- nominate a lead local authority from the partnership to be the Accountable Body for the Housing Market Renewal Fund
- set milestones in relation to the development of the HMR strategy (the 'prospectus')

- set up a joint, non-statutory Partnership Board with 'appropriate' governance arrangements.

The Pathfinder Boards were made up of nominated members from local authorities and other key regional and local stakeholders and had responsibility for approving the HMR strategy, managing the overall direction of the local programme and monitoring progress against targets. The Boards were not legal entities and relied upon the constituent local authorities to take certain types of decision and to exercise their powers of compulsory purchase. The local authority partners also had responsibility for the day-to-day administration of the programme in their area and every authority quickly established their own specialist in-house HMR teams that were mainly comprised of housing officers, planners and community workers.

The boundaries of the HMR area within each partnership were determined by a combination of quantitative analysis, politics and local knowledge. Cole and Nevin note that:

> The boundaries for the HMR areas did not follow established administrative contours but were largely shaped by the scale and incidence of market failure, as identified through the raft of studies by CURS ... The HMR programme was shaped according to a much more 'bottom-up' process in which the results of data analysis defined the territory, though this was then followed by local negotiations with ODPM over the precise delineations of the HMR areas (2004: 14).

The HMR 'philosophy' was predicated on an integrated, holistic approach to the economy, environment and housing at the sub-regional level (Cole and Nevin, 2004). HMR represented a 're-scaled' approach to housing policy that sought to transcend artificial local authority boundaries and look outwards to take in the entire sub-region (Ferrari and Lee, 2010). Consequently, the boundaries of the Pathfinder areas were constructed to reflect the operation of sub-regional housing markets rather than local administrative boundaries. Each Pathfinder therefore covered more than one local authority area. As Ferrari and Lee note: "The geographical 'footprint' of the original Pathfinders demonstrated a high degree of correlation with those areas identified as 'at risk' in the CURS reports on changing demand.

Intuitively, given the early arguments that were made about the general prevalence of 'low demand' across northern England, one would expect the Pathfinders to each be dealing with broadly similar situations of 'low demand'. But, in actuality, the term 'low demand' covers a range of housing market conditions (see Table 3 below). Encompassing areas with different functions, problems and trajectories (Ferrari and Lee, 2010), each Pathfinder area faced a unique set of circumstances. These differences influenced the particular approach taken in each area.

Table 3: Key statistics for the nine original Pathfinder areas, 2001

	Area (ha)	Persons	Household spaces	Pathfinder vacancy rate, %	Regional vacancy rate, %
B'ham-Sandwell	3,295	152, 354	60,631	5.5	3.1
North Staffs	5,612	146, 637	67,896	5.6	3.1
Merseyside	5,402	246,464	118,345	7.3	4.2
Mcr-Salford	6,379	240,370	116,243	11.8	4.2
Oldham-Rochdale	4,946	183,143	77,106	5.8	4.2
East Lancashire	8,818	206,770	89,870	8.9	4.2
South Yorks	14,286	297,887	131,461	4.8	3.9
Humberside	6,847	241,412	110,538	6.5	3.9
N/castle-Gateshead	3,685	154,790	74,035	7.1	4.0
All Pathfinders	59,271	1,869,827	846,125	7.5	

Source: Leather *et al*, 2007

Firstly, Table 3 highlights some significant differences in the size and scale of intervention between the different Pathfinder areas. Urban Living, the Birmingham-Sandwell HMR Pathfinder, for example, covered the smallest areal extent and enclosed the lowest number of household spaces; Transform South Yorkshire (TSY), by contrast was the largest of the Pathfinders, whether this is measured by area, total population or dwellings. Containing over 130,000 homes, TSY's area of intervention accounted for around 25% of all households in the county. But this does not necessarily mean that it faced the most serious housing 'problem'. The statistic that merits closest attention here is the vacancy rate. Achieving a reduction in vacancy rates was a key objective of the Pathfinder programme: one of the main targets set out in the Government's five-year plan, *Sustainable Communities: Homes for All* (ODPM, 2005a) was to close the gap in vacancy rates between the Pathfinder areas and their respective regions by a third by 2010. Drawing on 2001 Census data, the table shows that the vacancy rate ranged from 11.8% in Manchester-Salford to 4.8% in South Yorkshire. This latter figure was only slightly in excess of the national figure of 3.8%, suggesting that the problem of 'low demand' housing was less severe there than elsewhere. There was also considerable variation in the vacancy rates within each Pathfinder area, especially at Census Output Area level (Leather *et al*, 2007).

Whilst there are no explicit targets for HMR with respect to tenure mix, the achievement of more 'balanced' communities formed another central objective of the programme: "Planning for, establishing and sustaining an *appropriate* tenure mix for localities within pathfinder areas is a difficult process but one that is central to housing market restructuring" (Audit Commission, 2006: 40, emphasis added). Table 4 shows the tenure mix across the Pathfinders.

Table 4: Housing tenure across the Pathfinders (%)

Pathfinder	Owner-occupied	Private tenants	Social rented		
			LA	HA	Total (LA+HA)
Bham-Sandwell	48.7	15.1	22.6	13.6	36.2
North Staffs	53.2	13.4	25.4	8	33.4
Merseyside	41.7	19.5	17	21.8	38.8
Mcr-Salford	36.0	20.7	31.3	12	43.3
Oldham-Rochdale	53.1	11.3	28	7.5	35.5
East Lancashire	64.6	15.8	10.9	8.8	19.7
South Yorks	48.2	8.8	38.1	5	43.1
Humberside	52	14.6	28.1	5.3	33.4
Newcastle-Gateshead	39.9	13	39.4	7.7	47.1
All Pathfinders	48.1	14.8	27.1	10	37.1
England and Wales	68.9	11.9	13.2	5.9	19.1

Source: Leather *et al*, 2007

Table 4 shows that, across the Pathfinder areas, 48% of housing is owner-occupied. This compares to 68% for England and Wales. Conversely, levels of social housing are generally much higher in the Pathfinder areas and one might infer that the more 'appropriate' mix highlighted by the Audit Commission means higher levels of owner-occupation. Newcastle-Gateshead had the highest level of social housing (LA+HA) at 47.1%, followed by Manchester-Salford (43.3%) and South Yorkshire (43.1%). The corresponding figures for all Pathfinders and England and Wales were 37% and 19% respectively. High levels of private-rented accommodation and absentee landlords have also been correlated with low demand housing. Manchester-Salford had the largest proportion of private rented sector housing, a rate that was double the national average.

Given these wide variations, the HMR partnerships were allowed considerable autonomy in terms of developing interventions that would address the peculiar, local manifestations of the low demand problem. Although they were, of course, subject to Audit Commission inspection, they were given the flexibility to develop strategies according to the specific set of circumstances that they faced: "there was not, for example, any presumption that each Pathfinder area should receive a broadly similar scale of resources, deliver the programme in a similar way or have the same objectives. This is in sharp contrast to many other regeneration programmes that have been replete with guidance notes, templates and regulatory advice from the outset" (Cole and Nevin, 2004: 23). The HMR partnerships were, as Cole and Nevin put it, given "mandate to experiment" (2004: 23, 240).

In addition to the headline targets of house prices and vacancies, the 'measures of success' for HMR comprised a number of core performance indicators that were limited to, for example: levered private sector funds; housing units refurbished; housing units demolished and net change in the housing stock by tenure.

Table 5 (below) shows the respective numbers of houses that were refurbished, demolished and built in all Pathfinder areas over the lifetime of the programme. Clearly, housing refurbishment formed the bulk of the programme and official responses to HMR critics would repeatedly make reference to this point. There is however no data on, for example, how many of these refurbished households were empty and what proportion of them were re-let once they had been refurbished.

Table 5: Total number of houses refurbished, demolished and built, (all Pathfinder areas, 2002-2011)
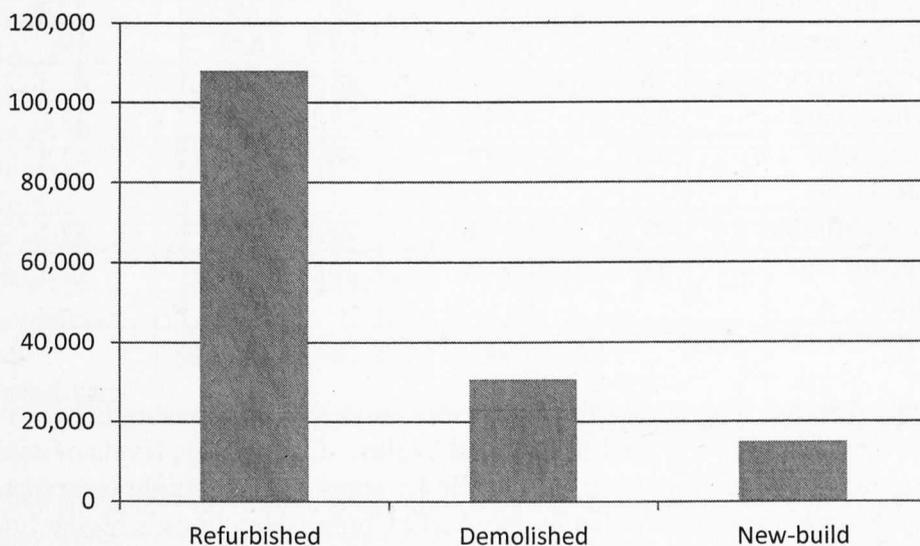
Source: Audit Commission, 2011

Whilst we know that HMR demolished a reported 30,987 properties between 2002 and 2011 (Audit Commission, 2011) there are no supplementary figures to indicate how many of these dwellings were occupied prior to demolition. Assuming an average 7.5% vacancy rate across the Pathfinder areas, we can crudely estimate direct displacement at 28,600 households.[15] Whilst it should be stressed that this figure is an estimate, it is useful for demonstrating the additional housing market pressures created by demolition (see also Crump, 2002; National Housing Law Project, 2002). Thus, in the context of a tight housing market, demolition has not only resulted in the loss of 30,987 affordable dwellings, it has also, at least hypothetically, increased demand for the remaining affordable housing since all the 28,600 displaced households needed to be re-housed. In terms of *exclusionary displacement*, the combination of demolition and re-housing equates to a loss of nearly 60,000 dwellings from the 'pool' of affordable housing that is notionally

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[15] Leather et al, 2007, Table 2.6 (p.22)

available to low-income households. This change in the pool of affordable housing post-demolition can be expressed hypothetically as follows:

$$A_2 = [A_1 - (d + r)] + [0.3(n)]$$

where A_2 = post-demolition pool of affordable housing (no. of dwellings)
A_1 = pre-demolition pool of affordable housing
d = number of units demolished
r = number of displaced households re-housed
n = number of new-build units (note that new-build is usually at lower density, ie n < d) 0.3 represents the negotiable 30% affordable housing requirement for new developments and is usually a maximum figure

Substituting the actual figures for d and n (Audit Commission, 2011) and our estimate of r into the equation, we get: $A_2 = [A_1 - (30,987 + 28,600)] + [0.3(15,780)]$, giving a notional reduction of 54,853 from the stock of affordable dwellings.

It can be seen that in hypothetical situations where *all* of the houses to be demolished are occupied, then d = r, that is, all households will require replacement housing. The reduction in affordable housing from demolition can then be given as A_1 - 2d. This might be termed the 'double whammy' of exclusionary displacement, whereby the impact of direct displacement is effectively doubled. In practice, of course, a small proportion of dwellings will be vacant and we can say that, generally, r < d. Nonetheless, this brief aside demonstrates how direct displacement has a cumulative, 'multiplier' effect with respect to exclusionary displacement from local affordable housing, in both the social and private sectors. This is further compounded by HMR's objective of raising local house prices which has created additional exclusionary displacement in adjoining areas by generally elevating house prices beyond the means of local people (see Leather *et al*, 2009). Nor do these raw figures include nearby households that left the Pathfinder intervention area as a result of 'displacement pressure' or what might be understood as out-migration arising from the *fear* of displacement (Doucet, 2009; Newman and Wyly, 2006).

The point here is that we do not even know the total *number* of households that were displaced by HMR-related acquisitions, let alone *where* they went. This fact that there are no official figures available for the number of households that were directly displaced by HMR speaks volumes about the nature and motives of the programme. Nor do we know the former and present tenure status of those displaced, although my analysis of 2003-2008 data presented by Ferrari and Lee (2010) indicates that in the 55% of instances where the tenure of demolished houses was reported, 68% of all houses demolished across the Pathfinder areas were social rented (see Appendix 1)[16] For comparison, the proportion of housing across the Pathfinder areas that was social rented was 38%. In the Transform South Yorkshire Pathfinder, *92%* of the houses demolished between 2003 and 2008 were social rented homes.

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[16] The tenure split for demolished homes is not reported in the two National Evaluations of HMR.

Cole and Nevin, who are often described as the 'architects' of HMR, argue that "many aspects of the HMR programme are distinctive and innovative" (2004: 4). But HMR was not entirely original. Stuart Cameron's (2003) account of the rise and ultimate fall of Newcastle's *Going for Growth* programme, describes a strategy of displacement, demolition and new-build development that appears markedly similar to the HMR model of redevelopment.

Invoking Hall's general distinction between 'inward-looking' and 'outward-facing' approaches to regeneration (1997), Cole and Nevin go on to emphasise HMR's capacity for "looking outwards and making connections...to nearby areas of growth and economic vitality" (2004: 24) rather than the traditional introspection of neighbourhood renewal that tends to focus on dynamics, resources and priorities *within* neighbourhoods. We might say that their disdain for the conventional 'sticking plaster' approach to renewal (Cole and Flint, 2007: 12) is akin to the 'shaming' of the 'inside game' described by Imbroscio (2006), that is, the move by many US scholars to denigrate the inward-looking, community development approach. What the outward-looking approach says, in effect, is that there is little of value that resides within the extant community: it might as well be demolished in preparation for the more connected newcomers. Cole and Nevin's commitment to qualities of 'connectedness' that extend and reach beyond the immediate neighbourhood also provides the opening for Allen (2008a) to begin to distinguish between the different modes of being that middle- and working-class people have towards housing, which I discuss below. Lastly, having to look outside for 'resources' also goes against the basic, broader objective of creating self-reliant, self-sufficient, sustainable communities (ODPM, 2003).

One of the objectives for HMR that was set out in *Sustainable Communities: Homes for all* (ODPM, 2005a) was "to reconnect Pathfinder areas with neighbouring functioning housing markets". An additional, complementary objective (*op cit*, emphasis added) "was to close the gap between the level of vacancies and *house values* in Pathfinder areas by a third compared to their regions". That is, part of the task of creating a sustainable community is not only to reduce the level of empty homes; it also demands *higher* house prices that are closer to the regional average value! In evidence to the Select Committee on Empty Homes and Low Demand Pathfinders, the Regeneration Minister, Lord Rooker (ODPM, 2005b, np, emphasis added), notes that:

> This [housing market renewal] is not like other housing renewal programmes. It is quite different, in the sense that there is one key ingredient, that it is an avowed policy intention to raise property values. That has never been a specific policy intent in any other housing renewal programme in my experience in your House, so nearly 30 years. It came as a spin-off, inevitably, but in this case it is about *intention*.

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5.8 HMR as a form of new-build gentrification

Smith is of the view that gentrification "has become the central goal of British urban policy" (2002: 439). From the perspective of gentrification research, HMR offers a fascinating topic for study that opens up several new lines of analytical enquiry. Through the demolition of existing housing, HMR sought to raise local house prices and create space for 'contemporary' new-build housing that would attract a different socio-demographic mix. In this way, HMR reduced the pool of market and/or social housing that was affordable to local people. Prior to rising house prices and affordability concerns, this crude reduction in the low-cost housing supply was viewed perversely as a positive outcome of the programme. But HMR's use of demolition also produced direct displacement. This dispels the emerging notion that the effects of new-build gentrification are limited to secondary forms of displacement (see for example Davidson and Lees, 2005). Indeed, much like HOPE VI, the very success of HMR as an urban regeneration model was considerably dependent upon the displacement of a significant number of existing residents in order to: (a) assemble large areas of land that will be attractive to developers; and (b) change the social mix of the area. HMR was certainly not confined to small 'in-fill' sites or isolated pockets of derelict urban land. Sweeping across entire sub-regions, HMR represented new-build gentrification over a wide scale and constituted a prime example of the scaling-up of 'the new urban colonialism' (Atkinson and Bridge, 2005). HMR could be likened to a form of 'internal imperialism' (Walker, 2004) where space is opened up for conquest (Clark, 2005). In a similar vein, it might be said to warrant the label of 'accumulation by dispossession':

> By this I mean the continuation and proliferation of accumulation practices that Marx had treated of as "primitive" or "original" during the rise of capitalism. These include the commodification and privatization of land and the forceful expulsion of peasant populations...[and] colonial, neo-colonial and imperial processes of appropriation of assets...particularly of land...The state, with its monopoly of violence and definitions of legality, plays a crucial role in both backing and promoting these processes and in many instances has resorted to violence (Harvey, 2006: 153)

With many HMR schemes being implemented in areas of social housing, HMR contributed to the privatisation of some of those estates where right to buy struggled to take hold. Moreover, in areas of private housing, the use of compulsory purchase, legitimated by reference to the public interest, exemplifies accumulation by dispossession: following Harvey (2006) it is a means of redistributing assets from the masses to wealthier interests such as developers. This (enforced) transfer, effectively from one private entity to another, Christophers (2010) argues, is only made possible by state intervention. In the US, Harvey (2008: 35) sees dispossession at work in the manner in which:

> ...the government's right of eminent domain has been abused in order to displace established residents in reasonable housing in favour of higher-order land uses, such as condominiums and box stores. When this was challenged in the US Supreme Court, the justices ruled that it was constitutional for local

jurisdictions to behave in this way in order to increase their property-tax base.

For Gibson (2010: 149) the Kelo case (Susette Kelo v City of New London, 2005) appeared to demonstrate unashamedly "that nurturing capital accumulation, via coercive means if necessary, was not only a legitimate goal of government, but in fact the state's most solemn duty".

Those academics who have been centrally involved in the research and discussions that led to the establishment of HMR and in its ongoing development and evaluation maintain that gentrification was never and has never been an explicit or implicit objective of the programme (Cole, 2008; Nevin and Leather, 2009; Ferrari and Lee, 2010; Nevin, 2010). Lord Rooker (2004, 2005), the Minister responsible for overseeing the implementation of HMR has also challenged any such conceptualisations. But as I describe below and in subsequent chapters, the evidence for HMR being understood as a form of new-build gentrification is unequivocal. As Stuart Cameron attests:

> What housing market renewal does promise, whether explicitly or implicitly, which is new in UK urban regeneration policy is engineered gentrification and the replacement of a substantial part of the existing population by households with higher incomes and social status. (2006: 14)

If gentrification is understood as "the production of urban space for progressively more affluent users" (Hackworth, 2002: 815), then this observation from Allen would suggest that HMR is well within the scope of Hackworth's definition:

> The purpose of this mass demolition programme is to provide large parcels of land to developers, who will be charged with the task of creating an inner-urban dwellingscape that is attractive to middle-class house purchasers (2008a: 123)

HMR represents an aggressive mutation of state-subsidised, new-build gentrification that produces space for more affluent users in three ways. Firstly, HMR directly displaces incumbent residents through its large-scale programme of housing clearance. Secondly, using Marcuse's typology of displacement, HMR also creates exclusionary displacement. Thirdly, again invoking Marcuse (1986), the erasure of the places to which working-class people are biographically, culturally and emotionally attached creates 'displacement pressure': HMR demolishes homes, gardens, workplaces, public spaces, shops, cafes, pubs and clubs in order to assemble parcels of land that will be of sufficient size and convenient location to interest developers.

Examining the minutes of the 2002 Select Committee on Empty Homes, as well as subsequent Parliamentary papers it is evident that most MPs appear to be favourably pre-disposed toward gentrification. For example, Christine Russell, a member of the Transport, Local Government and the Regions Select Committee, asked this question as part of the Committee's 2002 inquiry into Empty Homes:

We have seen in Manchester, Liverpool and other cities that there has been no difficulty in encouraging young professionals to move into the heart of the city. How can we persuade these young professionals to move into some of these unpopular neighbourhoods and make a commitment to those areas? We have been told that it would be desirable to achieve a real social mix in those communities. How are we going to do that?

Eamonn Boylan (Director, Manchester Housing): The question is not so much how do we encourage them to move into low demand neighbourhoods but is it possible for us to effect the necessary changes so that they can make that the logical choice?

A few minutes later, Helen Jackson MP, interjected with this question: "Are there ways in which you feel the current system of compulsory purchase orders, in developing those neighbourhood renewals, could be eased or changed to make that job more easy?" (House of Commons, 2001). Furthermore, in a subsequent Select Committee inquiry, John Pugh MP asked: "Is there not a good deal of thought put in by the Government on how we attract new residents into these areas? Is it not a reasonable assumption that some gentrification is both desirable and to be encouraged?" (House of Commons, 2002).

With respect to the four 'tests' of gentrification advanced by Davidson and Lees (2005), HMR could be said to meet all of their criteria. It certainly involves the 'reinvestment of capital'. HMR was formulated as a 10-15 year programme and, by 2011 the Pathfinder partnerships had benefited from £2.2bn of public spending and a further £1bn of additional investment from other public and private partners. Complaining about the risks of building in 'low demand' areas, house-builders were heavily subsidised. In Parkside, for example, whilst NMBC spent £14 million on acquisition, compensation and demolition, the cleared land was subsequently sold to a developer for just over £1million.

Secondly, HMR involves the 'social upgrading of locale by incoming high-income groups'. It is primarily concerned with creating sustainable communities that are characterised by a 'better' – i.e. more middle-class – mix. The term 'transformation' pervades the HMR literature and some of the Pathfinder Partnerships have been named with visions of transformational change in mind. Thus, we encounter, for example, *Elevate East Lancashire*, *Transform South Yorkshire*, Merseyside's *New Heartlands* and Birmingham-Sandwell's *Urban Living*. As well as raising local house prices to bring them more into line with the regional average, Liverpool City Council's objectives for the HMR intervention area (Green, 2006) hoped to:

- Increase owner occupation from 50% to 60%;

- Increase Council Tax bands C and above from 19% to 30%; and

- Decrease Council Tax bands A and B from 81% to 70%.

With respect to social upgrading, the baseline evaluation of HMR (Leather *et al*, 2007) presented an ominous series of 'spider diagrams' that compared each Housing Market Renewal Area's (HMRA) occupational profile with that of their 'parent'

city-regions, using the Standard Occupational Classification schema[17]. Leather *et al* report that: "One of the most notable features apparent in the data is the net deficit in higher order occupations across the majority of the HMRAs in comparison to their City Regions" (2007: 79). In other words, Leather *et al* are suggesting that there are too many people employed in 'lower order occupations' and not enough in the 'higher' categories, relative to the 'parent' city-region. Implicitly, such areas are construed as being ripe for, or at least in need of, gentrification.

The figure below, reproduced from the HMR Baseline Evaluation, compares the occupational profile for the Oldham-Rochdale HMRA with that of the Manchester city-region. The white space between the red line and the blue area shows where the Pathfinder has proportionately more people employed in 'lower' SOCs compared to the city-region. Where the blue-shaded area extends outwards beyond the red line the HMRA falls short of the city-region average, i.e. it shows a deficit of workers in higher SOCs. These diagrams provide one of the clearest visual expressions of HMR's ambitions for gentrification, representing, in effect, what one might term 'gentrification possibility frontiers'.

Figure 3: Comparison of Standard Occupational Classifications for the Oldham-Rochdale HMR area and the Manchester city-region
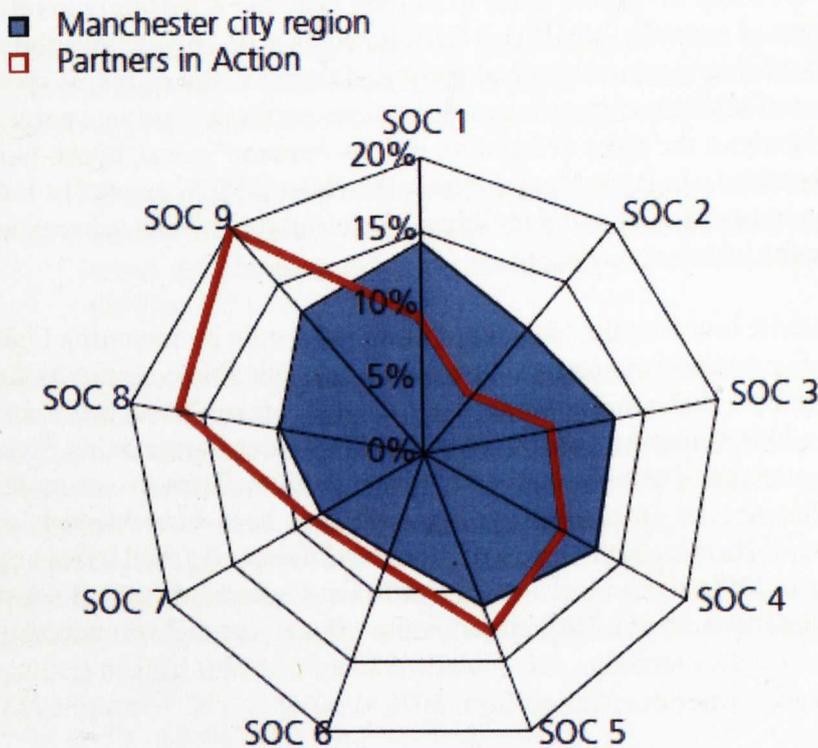
Source: Leather *et al*, 2007: 177

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[17] In essence, the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) is made up of nine broadly defined occupational categories that represent a gradual reduction in requisite levels of training and education from 1 through 9. For example, SOC 1 is 'Managers and Senior Officials'; SOC2 is 'Professional Occupations' and SOC9 is described as 'Elementary Occupations' involving unskilled work.

Thirdly, as Allen and Crookes (2009: 456), have observed, HMR further involves 'landscape change' in the form of 'place-shaping':

> 'Place shaping' is integral to the demolition and redevelopment of [working class] neighbourhoods because it is infused with ideas about developing 'exciting' new dwelling-scapes that will attract 'contemporary' housing consumers who would otherwise not chose to live in them...'[P]lace shaping'...contributes to the 'transformational' regeneration of Northern neighbourhoods by providing 'new' and 'exciting' dwelling-scapes in place of 'rows upon rows' of 'outdated' and 'obsolete' terraced housing.

Fourthly, and crucially, the demolition of housing that would otherwise have been occupied produces *direct* displacement. With the twin objectives of removing the 'surplus' of affordable properties by demolition and raising local house prices, HMR also leads to what Marcuse (1986) has termed 'exclusionary displacement' whereby other low-income households are denied potential affordable housing opportunities. Through demolition and the need to re-house the forcibly displaced household, two such opportunities are lost. *Twice over*, "the second household, therefore, is excluded from living where it would otherwise have lived" (Marcuse, 1986: 206).

In addition, the long lead-time of demolition schemes also tends to result in another form of secondary displacement: what Marcuse (1986) terms as 'displacement pressure', that is, the pressure exerted on remaining residents as a result of diminished (public) services, the outward movement of neighbours and, invariably, rising levels of crime and arson. This displacement pressure was evident in all of the research sites. Indeed, many objectors argued that the 'tinning up'- the boarding up - of empty homes without any attempt to re-let them was a deliberate strategy to exert greater pressure on the remaining residents. Chapter 9, which looks at the culture and 'tactics' of Northerly's HMR team, develops some of these arguments further. Displacement pressure is, in effect, operationalised through a long-term campaign of 'attrition' that begins with the very first rumours of demolition.

In terms of quantifying the direct displacement from HMR, estimates from 2006 suggested that, over its lifetime, the HMR programme as planned would demolish over 57,000 dwellings (Audit Commission, 2006). In the event, around 31,000 houses were demolished (Audit Commission, 2011). Whilst there are no published figures on the proportion of houses that were occupied, it is possible to estimate that at least 20,000 households were directly displaced by the programme, given the average rates of housing vacancy in the HMR areas. Note additionally that it was not part of HMR policy that displaced households should automatically enjoy a 'right of return'.

Johnstone and MacLeod (2006) develop these arguments further, contending that HMR exhibits many of the characteristics of Smith's revanchist city thesis (1996). Observing the struggle for Tompkins Square Park in the late 1980s and the introduction of zero-tolerance policing and campaigns to rid the streets of homeless people under Mayor Rudy Giuliani in the 1990s, Smith sensed that the frontiers of gentrification were becoming more dangerous for those who were seen to be in the wrong place. This revanchist urbanism "embodies a revengeful and reactionary

viciousness against various populations accused of "stealing" the city from the white upper classes" (1996: xix). As part of this revenge, gentrification represented an "attempt to retake the city from the working class (Slater, 2004: 1192). "[A] desperate defense of a challenged phalanx of privileges, cloaked in the populist language of civic morality, family values and neighborhood security" Smith argued that the "revanchist city expresses a race/class/gender terror felt by middle- and ruling-class whites... It portends a vicious reaction against minorities, the working class, homeless people, the unemployed, women, gays and lesbians, immigrants (1996: 207).

Applying the revanchist city discourse to New York's Lower Park Slope and Toronto's South Parkdale, Slater (2004) found that the specific geographical and temporal contexts of each neighbourhood meant the discourse was not perfectly applicable to either case; though nor, indeed, was the alternative 'emancipatory city' thesis (Caulfield, 1989; 1994). Similarly, this contingent 'geography of gentrification' is evident in the work by Uitermark and Duyvendak (2008), who differentiate between a 'heavy-handed' US-style revanchism and a milder European version. Writing in 2003, Atkinson found some elements of revanchism at work in the management and surveillance of public spaces in British cities but felt that revenge was perhaps too strong a word.

But HMR, a form of gentrification-by-bulldozer, is different again. Using the example of the *Bridging Newcastle-Gateshead* Pathfinder, Cameron and Coaffee (2006) found that HMR met three tests of revanchist urbanism insofar as it involved: (1) gentrification with displacement of the poor; (2) civilising measures to encourage middle class 'colonisation'; and (3) the political agenda of the removal of council housing that was also evident in the objectives of Liverpool's housing strategy, as noted above. Smith has argued that: "British revanchism, courtesy of urban "regeneration," victimises people on the basis of their class by evicting them from the local housing markets" (2009: 14). Echoing Graham's (2004) notion of a continuum between violence and urban planning, Smith continues:

> To be fair, the so-called urban regeneration policies of the same Blair government that tried to regenerate Baghdad and Basra by means of deadly and destructive military force are surely a softer and gentler revanchism. Winkling people out with promises of new housing – real or imagined – in the neighbourhood or in far distant estates is very different from bombing them out at the direct cost of their lives. But the ideological connection that justifies both state manoeuvres is similar. Some people are held to be in the wrong place at the wrong time, and this judgement is rarely if ever cavilled against the ruling class (2009: 15).

Despite these arguments, however, Brendan Nevin (2010) remains unconvinced. Using Liverpool as an example, he again denies that HMR constitutes a form of gentrification:

> The conclusions and arguments which have been developed by some academics and social commentators who are opposed to Housing Market Renewal are heavily reliant upon imposing the concept of 'gentrification' upon

the current housing renewal programmes in Liverpool, without the use of an evidential base to support the imposition (2010: 717).

Significantly, he makes his argument without ever defining gentrification or using the term displacement. Nowhere does he attempt to examine what became of those displaced by the programme in Liverpool. This is to be expected since he disagrees with those who believe that "there should be less discussion about the...causes of gentrification and more emphasis on its effects" (*op. cit.*: 717). Rather, in an effort to put Liverpool's HMR programme into historical context, he re-hashes low demand arguments that he made in the late 1990s. Those displaced by HMR are effectively rendered invisible and inconsequential (see also Cole, 2008). In a telling extract, Nevin (2010: 729) argues that:

> The price of new-build stock in inner Liverpool is very low compared to national and local averages. The Land Registry records show that the average price of new-build sold in the older inner core (245 sales) in 2007 was £126 000, compared to an average of £162 762 for new-build across Liverpool, and £134 991 for all sales. It remains to be seen if a new-build with the right profile is being achieved to retain the most aspirational, given that the average prices are very low (for example, it would be unusual to be able to purchase an ex-council house in London for this average price). A survey of residents of new-build dwellings (Ecotec, 2008) highlighted that residents of newly-built dwellings were more likely to have managerial or professional occupations than the national average (31 per cent compared to 28 per cent, reflecting the fact that part of the sample was located in the city centre)

Responding to this extract, let us look first at the price of new-build housing. Crucially, Nevin fails to relate this to local incomes and affordability ratios. As Allen (2008c) has argued, this level of purchase price might be affordable to a dual-income couple each earning the city average income of £22,000: such a couple, he calculates, could, at a multiple of 3.5 x joint incomes, purchase a house for £154,000. Thus, "Insofar as housing market renewal seeks to attract incomers into the neighbourhoods designated for redevelopment, the figures stack up" (Allen, 2008c: 27). But, as Allen (*op cit*, 18) further contends, of much greater relevance is the fact that in one of the neighbourhoods where HMR was, quite literally, *taking place*, "57% of households have a household income of less than £10,000 per annum and a further 16% of less than £15,000 per annum". Given these *household* incomes, 73% of existing residents would be unable to afford the average new-build price at a 3.5x multiple of household income. So, the price of new-build stock may, as Nevin suggests, be 'very low compared to national and local averages' but it is still over *eight* times the household income of 73% of existing residents living in one of Liverpool's HMR areas. This seriously undermines Nevin's claim that there is "no evidence currently available that shows that the implementation of the Housing Market Renewal Programme is leading to the systematic gentrification of inner city Liverpool" (2010: 729).

Secondly, Nevin, quoting an Ecotec survey, suggests that gentrification is not taking place because the 31% of residents of new-build properties in Liverpool who are in managerial or professional occupations is only marginally higher than the national average of 28%. But again, if we compare this with the relevant HMR area figure

...have now resorted to blight and abandonment in order to pressure local residents into selling. They then claim home owners have 'volunteered' to sell the property and were happy to do so. In this context it is not surprising that Saltwell and Bensham's own example of blight, Armstrong Street is boarded up and owned entirely by the Council. Some properties have sat there unoccupied since 2002. Cynical residents suspect the Council of little more than property speculation waiting for rising land values to net them a tidy profit. (http://www1.sbresidents.org/2006_11_01_archive.html)

Finally, Nevin's rather curious conclusion indicates that his understanding of gentrification is still rooted in classic, early 1970's conceptualisations of the phenomenon:

> [G]entrification of inner-city neighbourhoods in Liverpool is hard to find. This conclusion echoes that of previous research in Liverpool into the impact of refurbishment programmes in the inner city, which found that as a result of public sector investment 'During the three years there was a general shift to owner occupation . . . but gentrification *as found in London* was not apparent' (Shelter, 1972, p. 181) (Nevin, 2010: 729, emphasis added).

The various manifestations of gentrification, its forms, geographies and its understanding, have moved on considerably from the 1970s. Nevin's conclusion here seems to suggest that his understanding of the phenomenon remains tied to earlier, dated, conceptualisations. This may partly explain why he struggles to see gentrification in the context of Liverpool's HMR programme.

Elsewhere, Nevin's evidence to the Liverpool Edge Lane (No.2) Inquiry revealed that 50% of the housing in the 'order lands'[18] was social housing. This is significant, since arguments about *market failure* become much less relevant when most of the housing being demolished is social housing. I noted above that 68% of the houses demolished across the HMR areas (where tenure was reported) were social rented properties. These figures put HMR closer to HOPE VI in terms of its underlying rationale of 'deconcentrating poverty', that is, we can additionally interpret HMR as an attempt to facilitate gentrification by reducing local concentrations of social housing.

5.9 Resistance to HMR

In concluding this chapter it is important to note that the seemingly inexorable progression towards the creation of empty space under HMR has not gone unchallenged. The alarming scale and 'violence' of 'transformational' change provoked often bitter resistance from local residents who have been determined to stay put and challenge the demolition of their homes and the dissolution of their communities, as the testimonies of many CPO objectors such as Elijah Debnam and Elizabeth Pascoe confirm (see Chapters 9-10, this volume). Their dogged

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[18] Households covered by the Compulsory Purchase Orders

which suggests that just over 16% of *existing* residents of the *New Heartlands* intervention area are in professional or managerial occupations (see Leather *et al,* 2007), the figure of 31% looks much higher. Following Davidson and Lees' (2005) framework, it suggests that social upgrading *was* occurring.

Thirdly, Nevin appears to unintentionally reveal that those residents removed by HMR are being displaced to nearby areas, leading to a reduction in the vacancy rates of these adjoining areas and a tightening housing market:

> Outside the city centre the vacancy rates in the inner core of Liverpool, which were not designated as an intervention area, fell from 8.5 per cent in 2001 to 5.9 per cent in 2007. This fall is significant as it suggests that the policy of intervening in the most distressed neighbourhoods and increasing vacancies in these areas in advance of clearance has increased demand in adjacent neighbourhoods. This *spatially displaced demand* has very different causes to that identified by Hamnett (2009) in London, this being driven by public sector intervention rather than the pressures arising from globalisation. (Nevin, 2010: 727, emphasis added)

Spatially displaced demand driven by public sector intervention. Is that not an alternative definition of displacement brought about by state-led gentrification? In the above extract, Nevin also seems to imply that there was a deliberate policy of "increasing vacancies in these [the worst neighbourhoods] in advance of clearance". This would tend to confirm many of the Liverpool objectors' arguments about social housing being held vacant as a deliberate blighting strategy. For example, In its written evidence to the 2005 ODPM Select Committee on Empty Homes and Low Demand Pathfinders, the Merseyside Civic Society suggested that Liverpool City Council and social landlords were keeping properties empty in order to "reinforce the impression of decline" and depress local house prices further so that development sites could be acquired at the lowest possible cost:

> We are concerned that owner-occupiers...are losing out as a consequence of a well-established pattern of behaviour that is widely demonstrated by registered social landlords and the local authority in 'problem' areas in which they have failed to re-invest in their own properties. They next proceed to systematically pull out, or terminate the leases of, the occupants of their properties before boarding them up, thus reinforcing the impression of decline and dereliction. This has an immediate blighting effect on the area and, in particular, on the values of the sometimes isolated owner-occupied properties that remain...The whole enterprise smacks of a conspiracy between the RSLs and local authority to 'carve up' the local property market between themselves with no opportunity for the local community and affected residents to have a say in how the future of 'their' area is to be determined (Merseyside Civic Society, 2005: np)

Similar tactics were reported in the North East. Saltwell and Bensham Residents' Association, a Gateshead-based anti-demolition group, suggested that many councils:

determination to confront the formidable power wielded by the public-private partners involved in HMR exposes the vacuity and arrogance of claims that suggest an absence of confrontation (see for example Cole, 2008 and Boddy, 2007).

With little evidence, Boddy makes a rather bold – and inaccurate - claim about the general experience of new-build 'redevelopment' (as he calls it) across the UK: "In the absence of displacement and overt conflict over space, new residential development in the UK at least has not provided any real focus for politicisation" (2007: 103). This has certainly not been the case in the Pathfinder areas. Rather, HMR precipitated the formation of countless, local anti-demolition groups and provided the catalyst for the development of a campaigning, umbrella organisation, *Homes Under Threat* (HUT)[19]. Over the duration of the programme, there were at least 12 local public inquiries and six subsequent High Court appeals. In some areas, such as Middlesbrough and Liverpool, HMR dominated political debate and local election campaigns and some local councillors resigned their seats in protest.

At the national level, Jayne Kennedy, the Liverpool MP who described HMR as a form of 'social engineering', was subsequently removed from her position as a junior Government Minister. HMR has also been the subject of two Commons Select Committee inquiries and attracted attention from the National Audit Office and the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee, both of whom issued highly critical reports (NAO, 2007; PAC, 2008). Since the publication of these reports it is noteworthy that the previous Government took steps to depoliticise the programme by transferring responsibility for its management to the new Homes and Communities Agency, such that there was no longer direct accountability to Parliament through a Minister. The national heritage body, SAVE, has also been vociferous in its opposition to the Programme (see Wilkinson, 2006). In urban scholarship, HMR has been the subject of ongoing, heated and acrimonious exchanges between pro-HMR, policy-relevant researchers and a small number of critical scholars who have been concerned about the programme's impacts upon working-class people and places (see for example Allen, 2008a, 2009a, 2010; Flint, 2011; Nevin, 2010; Sprigings, 2010).

With regard to HMR then, it would seem that Hackworth's fears that gentrification is "less resisted than ever before" (2002: 839) were not exactly borne out: the implementation of HMR almost everywhere encountered strong resistance from local residents. Whilst local residents like Mr Debnam might be unfamiliar with the term 'gentrification' and are therefore disinclined to use it in plain conversation, my experience is that they certainly describe processes that are akin to gentrification when they discuss what they are fighting against.

5.10 Summary

Reviewing the evidence presented in this chapter, it can be argued that HMR constitutes the apotheosis of the gradual, progressive synthesis of urban policy and

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[19] See http://www.fightforourhomes.com

gentrification that was documented in Chapter 4. In particular, the discussion has shown how HMR emerged as the outcome of New Labour arguments around the social investment state and competitive urban economies, along with its commitment to urban renaissance and the creative class, as part of its broader enthusiasm for a middle-class return to the city.

Consequently, under HMR, the working classes and terraced housing have both come to represent the antithesis of the contemporary image that northern cities and towns would like to project (Allen and Crookes, 2009). The 'architects' of HMR have therefore come to regard terraced housing as an 'obsolete' form of housing that has 'reached the end of its life' because it was built for an industrial working class and is therefore 'not suited to a modern knowledge economy' (Nevin, 2006). Like the classic gentrifiers or 'urban pioneers' that preceded them, it is now local authorities that "seek to scrub the city clean of its working-class geography and history" (Smith, 1996: 25) in order to present an alternative image that is more consistent with the contemporary knowledge economy.

Following Smith (1979), the HMR areas can be characterised as classic 'rent-gap' territory – devalorised, centrally-located land, buildings and dwellings where the potential returns that could be realised through redevelopment greatly exceed the actual returns or 'capitalised ground rent' derived from the present use of a particular parcel of land. New Labour's enthusiasm for urban renaissance and its commitment to new development on inner-urban, brownfield sites, coupled with an unprecedented increase in house prices pushed these potential returns – the 'potential ground rent' - higher and higher. Paradoxically, for all the dissatisfaction expressed in regard to policy-makers' reluctance to engage with gentrification research (see for example, Lees,2003a), HMR, it would seem, represents a clear application of Smith's rent-gap thesis: alongside its questionable public policy objectives, HMR effectively assisted developers to create and exploit rent-gaps in many of the major urban areas of northern England. These rent gaps were greatest in areas of social housing and, to some extent, the media's attention to *owner-occupiers'* opposition to HMR served to deflect attention from the disproportionate demolition of social housing that was proceeding quietly in the background: housing *market* failure was something of a misnomer. The HMR literature has been largely silent in regard to both the government's brownfield targets and the tenure status of the houses that were demolished.

In short, the chapter has demonstrated how HMR is a form of state-led, new-build gentrification that can be understood by reference to both production and consumption-side explanations. It also highlights the changing role of the state in gentrification, where willing assistance from government, in the form of tax incentives, property acquisition, clearance and all the other difficult tasks generally associated with site assembly, has served to bring down developers' costs and risks, thereby helping to create new rent-gaps.

Overall, the issues raised in this chapter suggest that HMR takes the urban policy/gentrification nexus to new extremes. As the following chapters demonstrate, HMR represented a much more aggressive, more 'muscular' form of gentrification. Compared with 'conventional' forms of gentrification that involve the restoration and upgrading of individual dwellings and/or entire neighbourhoods, the state's

direct involvement in demolition and displacement gives HMR a much more uncompromising, aggressive and brutal character. Re-taking the city through the forcible removal and displacement of working-class people and the razing of their former homes, it represents a much harder-edged, more destructive style of gentrification. Eschewing euphemism, I use the term 'gentrification-by-bulldozer' throughout in order to retain a sense of the violence of the processes associated with HMR.

Summary of Part I

For an area of scholarly endeavour whose main concern is the class transformation of place, the preceding chapters show that gentrification research tells us remarkably little about working-class homes and neighbourhoods and the lives of the people that live in them. As Slater attests:

> ...there is next to nothing published on the experiences of non-gentrifying groups living in the neighbourhoods into which the much-researched cosmopolitan middle classes are arriving en masse. (2006: 743)

Given how little we know about these neighbourhoods and how little we speak up for them, they might, to all intents and purposes, just as well be empty. Focused on the motives and lifestyles of incoming, middle-class gentrifiers, the lens of gentrification research produces working-class places as sites of disinvestment and displacement but little more. In an epistemological sense, at least, the presumption of emptiness that we find in the emerging research on new-build gentrification could just as easily be applied to gentrification research generally. Rather than apprehending working-class neighbourhoods as *human* geographers with a passion for people's relationships with place we approach them almost as dour practitioners of the 'dismal science', seeing them only for what they lack rather than what they have or have the potential to be: we only see the glass half-empty, so to speak.

It is perhaps worth noting here that several gentrification scholars have long been calling for a *geography* of gentrification (see for example Clark, 2005; Lees, 2000; Ley, 1996; Slater, 2004). But where they have been concerned principally with developing comparative geographies, that is, in understanding how gentrification plays out in different places and its different dynamics and trajectories, my interest here relates more to the basic geographical concept of place *per se* and, in particular, the experiential understanding of place that derives from humanistic geography. Rather than beginning with displacement, my critical geography of Housing Market Renewal, as I have outlined above, begins from the emplaced, meaningful position of 'home', "an exemplary kind of place where people feel a sense of attachment and rootedness" (Cresswell, 2004: 24).

The problem remains, however, if you attempt to move in the opposite direction and seek to present a more positive account of working-class places, one soon encounters charges of romanticising poverty, as I have found on several occasions. This is why the main insights from Allen's (2008a) book are so important. It is therefore vital that scholars follow Allen's lead and attempt to understand working-class people's

relationship to housing on its own terms, rather than through the dominant middle-class lens that constructs housing within a competitive space of positions. It is, in short, about developing the view from below. Part II details the methodological approach that was adopted in order to research this view from below.

PART II

RESEARCH AIMS AND METHODS

Chapter 6

Research Aims and Methods

> In Cape Town I had had the great fortune immediately to encounter Victor Wessels... He befriended me and challenged me to, damn it, *do* something: 'Are you indeed a so called scholar? Then write your best contribution to our struggle.' (Western, 1999: 425)

> Geographers read too many books and not enough people's faces. (Bunge, 1974: 487)

6.1 Introduction

In several respects, this thesis is very different to that which was anticipated back in 2004, when it was first commissioned as a collaborative ESRC CASE 1+3 PhD studentship between the University of Sheffield's Department of Town and Regional Planning and Northerly Metropolitan Borough Council's Strategic Housing Unit.[20] This is not unusual in research that involves an ethnographic approach, as this did. As Hammersley notes, in relation to 'research design', whilst ethnographers begin with an interest in some particular area of social life, they "typically employ a relatively open-ended approach...their orientation is an exploratory one" (2007: 3). Thus, events and experiences that transpired in the field, mediated by my positionality, changed my attitudes not only to the research, but also to bigger questions such as the production of knowledge and the broader role of the academy in contemporary society. These insights, in turn, filtered back into my research practice and the development of the research itself. As Hammersley confirms:

> It is expected that the initial interests and questions that motivated the research will be refined, and perhaps even transformed, over the course of the research; and that this may take a considerable amount of time. Eventually, through this process, the inquiry will become progressively more clearly focused on a specific set of research questions, and this will then allow the strategic collection of data to pursue answers to those questions more effectively (2007: 3)

Given the twists and turns in my research, I felt that it was important, as part of this chapter, to provide an overview of some of the key influences and moments that shaped its evolution. The chapter is therefore divided into four sections. The first section presents the research aims and questions. In the second section, I then proceed to chart the 'evolution' of the fieldwork over time. As part of this, I reflect

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[20] My detailed research proposal was submitted in September 2005 and the fieldwork began in earnest in November 2005 and continued until June 2007, additionally taking in the Liverpool Edge Lane inquiry in January 2008.

upon some of the ethical issues that arose in the course of doing research on a politically polarised and highly emotive topic, issues that were further complicated by the fact that my research was being part-funded (25%) by Northerly Council as a collaborative CASE studentship. The third section details the different methods that comprised the flexible, multi-locale, ethnographic case-study approach. This includes some pertinent observations on the selection and application of the methods, along with some comments on their strengths and weaknesses. In the final section, I briefly relate the selected methods back to the research questions

6.2 Research aims and questions

HMR has been one of the most controversial urban regeneration programmes of recent years and has polarised opinion between those who see it as a necessary response to the problem of 'low demand' housing and the problems arising from concentrations of vacant properties and those who see it as a form of 'social cleansing' (Clover, 2007; Kennedy, 2007) or state-led gentrification (Allen, 2008a, Cameron, 2006). However, whilst the HMR programme was of similar scale to HOPE VI, (Nevin and Leather, 2009), it has received much less scholarly attention than its US equivalent[21]. Incorporating the biggest programme of housing clearance since the early 1970s, the resulting direct displacement of residents distinguishes HMR and similar demolition-led schemes from other forms of new-build gentrification which have generally presumed an absence of direct displacement and associated conflict (Davidson and Lees, 2005; Davidson, 2008; Lees *et al*, 2008). In contrast, the demolition proposals under HMR generated considerable opposition from local residents who did not wish to move (see for example Allen, 2008a; Leather *et al*, 2007; Minton, 2009). Encountering determined resistance from local residents, councils in many of the HMR areas made increased use of long-neglected compulsory purchase powers. These compulsory purchase orders were, in turn, met with formal objections from the affected residents, thereby precipitating a number of public inquiries.

In the course of doing the research for this thesis, I attended three of these public inquiries - two in Liverpool and one in Oldham. The first inquiry I attended, which commenced in July 2006, considered the evidence for and against the compulsory purchase of over 500 houses in three different areas of Liverpool. It was an intensely emotional experience. Talking to residents who were objecting to the CPOs and seeing things through their eyes you begin to understand just what is at stake. Yet the city council seemed unable – or unwilling – to grasp the enormity of what they were doing. The following comment, from the written evidence submitted by the Council's Assistant Director of Housing epitomised this lack of insight: "Several of the objections are *simply* that residents do not want to leave their homes and their communities or feel that their businesses will be left out of pocket by the CPO process" (Green, 2006, emphasis added). As I argued in my evidence to the inquiry, regardless of compensation, losing one's home, community and/or livelihood is anything but a simple matter (Crookes, 2006).

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[21] An admittedly crude comparison via Google Scholar produced 3,230 results for HOPE VI and 722 results that included the term "housing market renewal".

At the same time, I was deeply troubled by the inherent inequality of the inquiry proceedings. Amply resourced via public money and represented by two highly regarded London-based barristers, the Council was able to compile a substantive and coherent case and call several witnesses who were experts in planning, regeneration and the dynamics of the local housing market. Across the floor, the objectors, by comparison, were at a considerable disadvantage. They had no professional legal representation, no prior experience of the public inquiry process, no funds to secure the services of expert witnesses and no administrative support to manage, let alone read and challenge, the hundreds of documents presented to the inquiry.

Furthermore, as a critical, ethically-conscious, early-career researcher, I was appalled at how social science and some of its practitioners had abrogated their responsibilities to the people that were losing their homes. Some fifty years ago, slum clearance in the UK and US urban renewal provided a catalyst for some of the classic studies of the loss and destruction visited upon working class neighbourhoods (see for example Fried, 1963; Gans, 1962; Young and Willmott, 1957). Such critical, angry accounts have been much less forthcoming in the contemporary era. With a few honourable exceptions, such as Allen (2008a, 2008b, 2009a), Cameron (2006) and Webb (2010), few scholars have been prepared to speak out against HMR. Instead, reflecting a broader shift away from critical scholarship and a move towards 'evidence-based policy', "most members of the academy have been too busy providing 'research and intelligence for HMR partnerships to have given any critical thought to it" (Allen, 2008a: 196).

The most troubling aspect of the inquiry, however, was my dawning recognition of the fact that, despite years of theoretical refinement and sophistication, forty years of gentrification research actually offered very little practical support or inspiration to those who were fighting for their homes[22]. One becomes acutely aware of this upon taking the witness stand at the inquiry to present 'evidence' in support of your objection. As Lees *et al* remark: "Theoretical purity in the pages of academic journals, text *con* text jousting with charming, erudite wit is one thing; the lives of the poor and working classes whose homes, communities, and lives are gentrified are another matter entirely" (2008: 76).

Attending the Liverpool *New Heartlands* inquiry therefore constituted a revelatory, watershed moment in my research, raising an array of theoretical, ethical and methodological questions. Foremost amongst these was the basic question, who or what is gentrification research for? Van Weesep (1994) and Lees (2003a) talk of the need to develop a conversation between gentrification research and policy but what of the urgent need for a dialogue between research and those most at risk of being exposed to the harmful effects of gentrification? 'Relevance' does not just mean being relevant to policy and the needs of policy-makers. In the context of the increasing commodification of urban research (Allen and Imrie, 2010), surely the question should be, how can (critical) gentrification researchers make their work more relevant to those people being displaced as opposed to the more powerful groups who are overseeing or doing the displacing?

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[22] Hartman *et al*'s *Displacement: How to Fight It* (1982) is one notable exception.

This thesis therefore represents an attempt to correct the balance in the scholarly register and add to the few existing critical accounts by providing a view of gentrification-by-bulldozer from below. It is about giving voice and form to people and places that have effectively been written off by HMR and similar schemes as dispensable. Recalling the 'insider-outsider' dichotomy described earlier, the strong, local opposition to demolition across the intervention areas suggests that these homes and places mattered to the people that lived there. But how did they matter? What were they afraid of losing and leaving? How did the state try to wrest their homes and places from their grasp? For those who were forced to leave, what was lost?

The research detailed in this thesis focuses primarily on the perspectives and interests of existing residents of areas of northern England that were facing demolition as a result of HMR and similar housing-led regeneration schemes. Drawing on fieldwork that took place between November 2005 and June 2007, the overall aims of this thesis are to: contribute to knowledge and understanding of HMR within the broader context of gentrification research; further highlight the potential for an emplaced perspective on gentrification and displacement; and theorise gentrification-induced displacement as a form of social harm.

Developing a critical account of the regeneration of Parkside and the broader HMR programme as examples of a particular form of new-build gentrification that involves housing demolition and the direct displacement of existing residents, the thesis addresses these research questions:

1. What was the meaning of place and home for those residents living in areas threatened with demolition? What does home mean to people living in areas threatened with demolition? What was the nature of people's attachments to place? Why did people resist demolition? How does tenure make a difference? What were people fighting for and against? What did they like or dislike about where they lived? What were their views on the objectives and implementation of such schemes?

2. How did the state take people's homes in HMR areas? What tactics were employed by local authorities to dispossess people of their homes? How is demolition legitimised? How have residents resisted these tactics? How does state-led gentrification translate into local government culture? How do officials justify their work? How should we theorise compulsory purchase in gentrification research? Broadly, how does the state turn place into space?

3. What were the individual and social impacts of housing demolition and displacement? Where did people move to? How were people affected by moving? What were the main challenges in moving somewhere else? Did displacees receive adequate compensation? What did people miss about their former homes and neighbourhoods? How could we reconceptualise gentrification as a form of social harm?

The main premise for these questions is that a more informed understanding of incumbent working class residents' experience of home and place will ultimately lead to a better appreciation of the losses arising from displacement and the

development of new, more effective modes of resistance to gentrification in scholarship, policy and 'on the ground'. Politically, a stronger assertion of the value of home and an epistemological and empirical commitment to privileging emplacement over displacement would also enable critical researchers to mount a better challenge to the aforementioned 'false choice' and raise the prospect of possible alternatives to gentrification. It would enable us, for example, to begin to confront the 'problem' orientation or 'deficit' ('glass half-empty') perspective of policy-makers with an 'assets-based' ('glass half-full') approach to disinvested communities (see for example Kretzmann and McKnight, 1993) that builds upon people's place attachments rather than beginning with the *tabula rasa* of a master-plan that essentially communicates the message that there is nothing there that has value.

6.3 Evolution of the research

The research presented here began life as a study of trust and relationship-building between Northerly Metropolitan Borough Council and the residents of Parkside, a small, well-defined area of owner-occupied and privately-rented, pre-1919 terraced housing in central Northerly, comprising around 520 houses. Since the 1960s, the area had been the subject of several urban regeneration and housing improvement programmes, none of which were seen to have been very successful (UoS/NMBC, 2004). The Council was therefore anxious to implement a more comprehensive redevelopment plan that would achieve lasting, 'transformational' change. But its initial plans to demolish all of the houses in the area had been scaled back due to opposition from local residents.

It should be noted that back in 2004, the word 'demolition' did not evoke the strong emotional reaction in me that it does now. In the first instance I had no direct experience of housing demolition. Of course, I knew that the 1960s slum clearance programmes had led to the break-up of close-knit, working-class communities but my uninformed view was that this was more than offset by the general improvement in people's housing conditions. Nor was I fully aware of the emerging controversy surrounding the recently introduced HMR programme. The Parkside project, as I later learnt, anyway pre-dated HMR and was administratively, financially and spatially distinct from it. A newcomer to the study of urban planning, unversed in the critical literature on urban regeneration and gentrification, I assumed regeneration to be a largely progressive endeavour that was undertaken in the public interest. Moreover, after several years working as a local government officer I retained a strong public service ethos and clung initially to the view that local authorities were generally well-meaning.

Thus, whilst I may have flinched at the mention of demolition as it appeared in the studentship's *Information for Applicants*, as I momentarily pictured the 1960's clearances, my initial assessment of the project's aims and its ethical implications was largely positive. My assumptions, though rather naive, were based largely on the information that was sent out with the application form for the studentship. My assumptions went something like this: (a) all the people living in the area suffered

unbearably poor housing conditions; (b) the project was concerned with improving people's housing conditions (c) any development proposals would be subject to proper public consultation (d) anyone losing their home would be able to return to the area and move into a replacement home of comparable size etc or receive satisfactory financial compensation; and (e) all of the residents would ultimately secure better quality housing. This was my view at the start; my experience in the field, however, quickly overturned these assumptions.

As I found, the Council's plans for the area, first mooted around 2000, proved hugely unpopular with residents and, after several years of negotiation, little progress had been made towards agreeing a way forward:

> The local authority has been frustrated in its efforts to implement a regeneration strategy for the Parkside because of a lack of understanding of the social and cultural dynamics of the area and of the people who live there. In addition, they have found it difficult to engage with the community and to engender a level of trust that will allow progress to be made in working together towards a solution of the apparently intractable problems of the neighbourhood (UoS/NMBC, 2004: 3)

The Council attributed the slow progress primarily to a lack of trust, with its inability to win and sustain the trust of the community further compounded by its limited knowledge of the area and its people. Without trust, there could be no agreement from the community and, if community support was not forthcoming there would be no funding for the scheme. The Blair government's emphasis on consultation and partnership working meant that the Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber would only continue to finance the scheme if there was firm evidence of community support. So, from NMBC's perspective, the community's lack of trust constituted a serious threat to its ambitious regeneration plans. By 2004, the Council's negotiations with residents had reached something of an impasse. Trust came to be seen as *the* central issue in reaching agreement on the plans.

But how does a local authority establish and build a trusting relationship with local people in the context of a deeply contested regeneration scheme? The Council's response was to approach the University to develop a collaborative Doctoral research project that would investigate how and where trust was being generated or eroded in the multiplicity of relationships – the 'micro-spaces' - between the Council and Parkside' residents. In addition, by gaining a 'thick' understanding of the social dynamics of the Parkside, an inner-urban, deprived area of *private* housing, it was hoped that the research would also improve the Council's understanding of similar areas in Northerly. The results of this work would then be used to inform and improve the Council's approach to communication and relationship-building so that it could better engage local people in future regeneration schemes (UoS/NMBC, 2004).

The bulk of the fieldwork for this research took place between November 2005 and June 2007, although I began attending the weekly meetings of the Parkside Focus Group from October 2004 onwards. The Focus Group was a group of residents that had initially come together to represent the community and challenge the Council's demolition proposals with a single, unified 'voice'. Asking initial, tentative

questions, it quickly became clear that trust was very much as subsidiary matter as compared to residents' concerns about demolition and, if it came to it, re-housing. For most of them, it was not so much a question of trust but rather an issue of accepting, rejecting or challenging the Council's proposal to demolish their house. I therefore felt, from a very early stage in the research, that NMBC had, to some extent, mis-specified the nature of the problem they faced. So, in my view, at least in the context of this particular regeneration scheme, a focus on trust might prove to be something of an empirical non-starter.

In the event, trust (or the lack of it) did come up in some of my interviews with Parkside residents but it was by no means the most salient issue. Rather, what quickly became apparent was the dramatic divergence of views between officials and local residents on the nature and value of the Parkside as a place to live. Where many residents spoke warmly of the Parkside as 'home', a meaningful *place* that was rich with personal memories and recollections, officers tended to describe the area in abstract or negative terms, invoking images of decay, disorder, abandonment and emptiness (see Chapter 8 this volume). The Council failed to allow for the possibility that some people might ascribe different meanings to the place or, at least, it did so only very grudgingly, as this passage suggests:

> Parkside is an area that suffers from acute housing stress, social and spatial segregation and isolation, community fragmentation, anti-social behaviour and entrenched mistrust of the local authority...Yet, despite this burden of deprivation, there appears to be a clear sense of community identity and a commitment to the locality (at least among some of the residents) (UoS/NMBC, 2004: 2)

Mostly, officers were so convinced of the rightness of their view of the area as hopeless and in need of clearance that they simply failed to see how anyone could possibly relate to it in any other way and they proceeded to underestimate the strength of many residents' attachment to the area and thereby misunderstand the nature of residents' opposition. As I conducted my early fieldwork, it therefore became clear that the Council's problems stemmed not so much from a lack of trust but rather from the sheer incompatibility of two very different perspectives on the place and its meaning.

In addition, the more time that I spent with residents and officers, the more my initial assumptions regarding demolition began to unravel. Thus, where I had first understood the Parkside project as a progressive endeavour that would improve residents' housing conditions and general well-being, greater contact both with those who had either lost their homes or were threatened with demolition and those who were promulgating the demolition projects began to radically change my view. A deep scepticism quickly replaced my initial naiveté. Indeed, it occurred to me that my research might, in fact, have been conceived as a classic piece of ethnographic research in the colonialist tradition of understanding the culture and social dynamics of a group in order to better 'know thy enemy'. Citing Pratt (1992), Herbert reminds us that ethnography has often served as "a handmaiden to broader colonialist projects that inventory oppressed groups as a means of controlling them" (2000: 562).

My concerns and doubts and, not least, my growing sympathies for residents, began to surface in my conversations with council officers, culminating in an instruction from a senior council officer that I should refrain from interviewing residents of Hilltop, an estate where the Council was encountering fierce and determined opposition to its demolition proposals. Staring me in the eye, the officer stated curtly: "I know you've got an agenda. I don't want you going down there and putting things in people's heads that aren't already there". By 'putting things in people's heads', I presumed the officer meant that I might give the embattled residents more information about their legal rights and make them aware of possibilities for formal opposition, through, for example, a public inquiry.[23] With the scheme already attracting adverse publicity, the Council did not want the extra administrative burden, financial cost and additional publicity that a public inquiry would bring.

Having been told in no uncertain terms that I should not speak to any of the residents and not wishing to 'rock the boat' and go against the officer's instruction for fear of jeopardising not only my access to council resources (funding, people, internal meetings, documents) but the entire research project, my studentship and, indeed, my Department's continuing relationship with a funder that had part-funded two previous CASE studentships, I resisted confrontation and backed down. In effect, on this particular occasion, I subordinated myself to the 'disciplinary gaze' of the three parties (NMBC, the University and the ESRC) who were instrumental to my research funding (see Allen, 2005; Allen and Imrie, 2010, Beaumont *et al*, 2005 and Wacquant, 2004 for a critical discussion of the social relations and politics of funded research). Smith (2008: 195), drawing attention to the politics of research funding in a sympathetic response to Slater (2006), is entirely accurate when he remarks that: "A postgraduate attempting to fulfil this policy requirement by advocating 'policy' that the anti-gentrification movement (rather than the state) might wish to implement would reasonably be concerned about the fate of his or her grant proposal". That was exactly the position I found myself in, though it only strengthened my determination to cultivate more subtle, everyday forms of resistance in my Parkside research. This began with very small gestures, for example, helping residents to get to meetings, drawing attention to useful websites and publications, copying articles and book chapters, raising people's awareness about developments in other demolition areas and generally striving to share the benefits of my privileged access to the academy. This was how my research started to open the way to more outspoken opposition to HMR and a more action-oriented approach, albeit at a 'safe' remove from my Northerly case-study. At the same time, however, I made Hilltop my second substantive case-study, substituting other methods in place of interviews with residents: as Tonkiss (2000) puts it, "there are different ways of making streets tell".

Both chastened and angered by this exclusionary gate-keeping, I determined to shift the empirical focus of my work toward demolition and relevant issues of home, attachment to place and the impacts of losing home. Outside Northerly, I began to attend events that were organised by activists and residents opposed to HMR and became a member of the Homes Under Threat (HUT) electronic mailing list. My

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[23] Note that the option of a public inquiry is not open to social housing tenants as the authority does not have to make recourse to a CPO to 'acquire' a socially rented property. It can simply issue a notice of its intention to evict.

research began to probe the nature of the differences between residents' ('insiders') views of HMR areas and the representations articulated by 'outsiders' who had a professional interest in the regeneration of these areas, such as planners, urban designers and housing officers.

Much of the implementation of housing demolition programmes, I found, was concerned with matters of 'site assembly', that is, essentially, the task of getting people out of their homes and clearing spaces. This can be achieved by 'agreement' with the owner-occupier or landlord or by legal means and, of course, all sorts of tactics in between: what we might politely refer to as 'statecraft' or, in darker moments, 'winkling'[24]. In Northerly, for example, the Council was loath to resort to its statutory powers of compulsory purchase for reasons noted above. A single objection would be enough to trigger a public inquiry. After the initial stand-off in Parkside, all but two of the 270+ houses acquired by the Council for demolition were acquired by agreement; compulsory purchase orders (CPOs) have been similarly absent from Northerly's HMR schemes. In Liverpool, by contrast, the *New Heartlands* HMR Partnership demonstrated a greater readiness to use its CPO powers right from the start. This led to several major public inquiries where the CPOs were bitterly contested by local residents (see Chapter 10 this volume and Allen, 2008a).

Given my burgeoning interest in how the state takes people's homes, compulsory purchase public inquiries presented an unparalleled opportunity to expand the research to follow what happened when agreement was not possible, to examine the role of CPOs in new-build gentrification and, not least, bring out the stories of those objecting to them. Using the HUT network I sought for details of forthcoming inquiries and eventually ended up attending the three inquiries in Liverpool and Oldham. These inquiries, chosen principally on the grounds of practical convenience (timing and commuting considerations), provided an insight into what happens when the different perspectives on place become fixed, entrenched and projected into a formal, quasi-judicial setting. Inquiries of this nature, Hajer (2003) notes, are "a particularly rich source of research data". An inquiry represents, quite literally, a 'trial by space' (Lefebvre, 1991) where conflicting perspectives on place and space are brought to a head in an asymmetric contest, with residents' use values (home) confronting the dominant rationality of exchange value. In this 'courtroom' atmosphere I was able to observe the 'place/space war' in microcosm and witness how the state sanitises violent dispossession through procedural performance, claims to fairness, policy-based 'evidence', the payment of barristers' fees and the invocation of the public interest. For researchers unable to stomach the sight of publicly funded bulldozers destroying people's homes, public inquiries present the next best opportunity to observe the state-led gentrification machine in the raw, without the 'sugar-coating' of 'renaissance, 'regeneration' or 'transformation'. One sees the brutal process by which the state wrests homes from people who do not want to go   It also provides the researcher with a rare opportunity to intervene directly and participate in the fight for people's 'right to place' (Imbroscio, 2004), for their 'right to the city'. Rarely is the gentrification researcher in such a position: mostly, they arrive too late.

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[24] I place agreement in scare quotes because residents don't usually have much choice in the matter but rather come to an agreement under duress as more homes around them are acquired and boarded up or demolished.

The first inquiry I attended was convened to consider the evidence for and against the compulsory purchase of over 500 houses in three Liverpool neighbourhoods. My attendance at this inquiry was to prove the turning point in my research. As the inquiry progressed I began to talk to the objectors about the proceedings; they were curious to know who I was, what I was doing there and, most importantly, whether or not I would be willing to help them.

Unlike the Council, which was able to draw upon considerable financial and professional resources to promote and argue its case, the objectors had no such resources. They were just ordinary members of the public who happened to live in the way of the city's Pathfinder programme. They had no professional legal representation, no prior experience of the public inquiry process, no administrative support and no funds to secure the services of expert witnesses who could promote their interests. It was this experience that really fixed my views on demolition and HMR more generally. Sensing the immense mental, physical and financial stresses that the objectors were being placed under as they faced the prospect of being forced from their homes against their will, I began to doubt all that I had learnt about 'distance' and 'objectivity' and it was at this point that I took the step of declaring myself a 'non-statutory objector' and duly set about the task of drafting a written submission to the inquiry.

Here, on paper, at a temporal and emotional distance from the 'heat' of the inquiry, this simple act of resistance now appears extremely small and inconsequential but, at the time, I was totally consumed by its methodological and ethical implications. Whilst I felt I was at a 'safe' distance from the social relations of my research in Northerly, so as to be able to take up this oppositional stance, it still felt like I had crossed some imaginary boundary that kept apart my professional life as a researcher from my everyday life as a citizen. Temporarily disclaiming all connections to the University, the ESRC and NMBC, I departed the 'research bubble', bypassed 'third space' (Routledge, 1996) and went boldly into 'activism'. Quite simply, it felt like the right thing to do, the fulfilment of my commitment toward socially progressive research that was done for and with fellow members of the working-class. I also tried to rationalise my actions by reference to the social activism that pervades Hartman's work (summarised in Hartman, 2002) and the growing literature on critical/public geography (see for example Blomley, 1994; Ward, 2006), and more engaged, participatory forms of research (see for example Fuller, 1999; Kindon *et al*, 2008). What critical gentrification researcher, I asked, would have sat back and not taken the chance to intervene and try and prevent displacement? Standing-by as an onlooker was not an option. If some researchers could bring themselves to do policy-relevant research that indirectly contributed to the demolition of people's homes and, worse, receive payment to verbally substantiate their claims in a public inquiry, just metres from those who stood to lose their homes, then why should I have any qualms about taking sides? I intervened again at the Edge Lane inquiry, this time giving verbal evidence and submitting to cross-examination by the proponents' barrister. I chose, however, not to intervene in the Oldham inquiry, seeing that the objectors had secured formal legal representation and were able to call upon expert witnesses to support their case, though I did later provide a witness statement to their 2008 High Court appeal.

Reading this from a detached position of quiet contemplation, some might say that by becoming engaged in residents' struggles I had gone way too far beyond the expected boundaries, that I had broken the academic canons of objectivity and detachment, that I had, to all intents and purposes, 'gone native', taking up a position that conflicted with - indeed, was in direct opposition to – the interests of my CASE sponsor. Some readers and observers might argue that my involvement in residents' struggles – my partiality - compromised my ability to say anything meaningful about HMR as a researcher. Certainly, I have been deeply involved in residents' struggles in Liverpool and Oldham but in no way do I feel that this should invalidate my research or my ability to comment on the issues. If anything, such involvement, I would argue, has only served to strengthen the value of my research to the people concerned, to the academy and, even, to NMBC.

Furthermore, by giving verbal evidence at the Edge Lane inquiry and subjecting myself to cross-examination by the opponents' barrister, I gained an extraordinary insight into how it feels to be on the receiving end of the agents of a wrathful state intent on domicide. Although my experience was in no way equivalent to the trauma felt by those who actually face the very real possibility of losing their home, this first-hand exposure nevertheless jolted me to a totally different level of understanding and empathy for the residents and their situation. Sitting in the 'witness box', so to speak, produces a very different research experience (and 'data') than that which comes from observing passively from the sidelines and my research was that much richer for it. From a theoretical perspective, my close involvement in residents' struggles represented an attempt to generate a more engaged, less distanced account of the working-class experience of gentrification (see Allen, 2008a; Slater, 2010), whilst also highlighting the potential for the development of a more action-oriented approach to gentrification research.

Most importantly, however, my interventions, both major and minor, were the product of strong moral and ethical imperatives and an intense feeling of reciprocity, that is, the sense of one's obligation to 'give something back' to those involved in the research (Herman and Mattingly, 1999). To have done nothing, to have simply stood by and to have coolly observed and recorded the inquiry proceedings from afar would have constituted a neglect of my responsibilities as a critical social scientist and a rejection of my 'being-for-others' as a fellow citizen of the many ordinary people who stood to lose their homes. Doing nothing would, in my view, have been deeply unethical. As Fuller (1999) has argued, following Blomley (1994), academic disengagement from helping people in such struggles is tantamount to being complicit in their oppression.

6.4 Researching 'gentrification by bulldozer'

The principal method used in this research is the ethnographic case study, extended to three different settings, namely: a community that was subject to a housing demolition programme (Parkside); a local authority workplace (NMBC's Private Sector Housing and HMR teams); and three public inquiries that had been convened to consider neighbourhood-scale compulsory purchase orders. Rather than being

mutually exclusive, these case-studies offered complementarity and the ethnographic approach provided the flexibility necessary to explore and move between different themes and settings. As Franklin notes, "ethnographers include any form of data and analysis that throws light on their research object" (1990: 93). Within a broad, ethnographic framework, my fieldwork was guided by a flexible, pragmatic, sometimes opportunistic, approach that invoked a range of methods in order to triangulate the data collected. The key elements of ethnographic research and the specific methods that I employed within this are described below.

6.4.1 Using ethnography to research the 'view from below'

Inspired by the classic, humanist ethnographies of Ley (1974), Rowles (1978) and Western (1981), the methodological approach described in this thesis represents a modest attempt to begin to address more recent concerns about an 'ethnographic void' in urban geography that were first raised by Jackson (1999) and later developed by Lees (2003d). For Jackson, the work of Dear and Flusty (1998) and the emergent 'Los Angeles School' constituted a postmodern urbanism that passed over the "actual living residents of Los Angeles ... with apparent disdain" (1999: 400). In particular, their work eschewed up-close, engaged ethnographic fieldwork for secondary, campus-based analyses, where "Dear and Flusty simply 'read off' a series of meanings from the urban environment, leading to an exaggeration of the power of academic interpretation and diminishing the agency of 'ordinary people' " (Jackson, 1999: 401). Other scholars, frustrated by the proliferation of discursive and representational analyses, have argued that much contemporary urban geography fails to engage with matters of class, inequality and poverty and 'tell it as it is' (see, for example, Mohan, 1996; Dorling and Shaw, 2002; Hamnett, 2003).

This research adopted a flexible, ethnographic case study approach in an attempt to 'get closer' and articulate not only "*a view of displacement 'from below'* " (Slater, 2010: 176, original emphasis) but also a more generalised, bottom-up view of *place* that would make visible and real the *actually existing* people, homes and places - that have been effaced from recent scholarship on gentrification. As Lees attests:

> The attractions of an ethnographic approach (which covers most of the methods used in 'new' urban geography) are numerous. It addresses the richness and complexity of human life and gets us closer to understanding the ways people interpret and experience the world (2003d: 110).

Giddens notes how "...a particular piece of social research is ethnographic [if] it is written with the aim of describing a given cultural milieu to others who are unfamiliar with it" (1984: 285). The research here, then, is best described as an ethnography of ordinary people that were living in areas threatened with demolition, who were fighting demolition or who were losing (and had lost) their homes as a result of HMR and similar schemes. In examining this particular cultural milieu, ethnography is *the* methodology of choice: ethnographic methods are particularly well-suited to understanding people's complex relationships with, and attachments to, place. As Ley observes:

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The geographer's charge to interpret the complex relations of people and place requires a methodology of engagement not detachment, of informal dialogue as well as formal documentation. There is both an ontological and epistemological requirement that place as a human construction be granted more respect and complexity than the profile it displays from the pages of the census (1988: 126)

Ethnographic research came to prominence in geography in the 1970s as humanist geographers turned their attention to the everyday human experience of space and place (see for example Ley, 1974; Relph, 1976; Rowles, 1978; Tuan, 1974; 1975; 1977). Whilst Cloke *et al* (2004: 172) contend that humanistic geography remained "a largely reflexive philosophical exercise" they nevertheless maintain that humanistic geography:

> ...made its most significant contribution to human geography not in directing the attention of a few researchers to the deepest phenomenological and existential connections people have with their places, but in sensitising numerous researchers...to the everyday and yet often quite intimate attachments all sorts of people (and not just philosophically inclined scholars) have to the places that encircle them (Cloke *et al*, 1991: 81)

This everyday, intimate, yet taken for granted attachment to place, is exactly what this research sought to uncover. As Buttimer highlights, these meanings "are often not brought to consciousness *until they are threatened*: normally, they are part of the fabric of everyday life and its taken-for-granted routines" (*ibid*.: 167 emphasis added). Similarly, Relph (1976) notes how existential or lived space is culturally defined and therefore not readily understood by cultural outsiders. Getting closer to this 'insider' level of understanding requires the researcher to get 'close' to a particular group or groups of people in order to be able to see things as they do, striving for a level of insight and involvement that is akin to Relph's 'empathetic insider'. Advocating the wider use of ethnography in human geography, Herbert contends that: "No other methodology enables a researcher to explore the complex connections that social groups establish with one another and with the places they inhabit, cultivate, promote, defend, dominate and love" (2000: 564).

Ethnography is commonly associated with traditional anthropological fieldwork where Western researchers would venture far afield, typically spending a year or longer living in non-Western, isolated, rural communities (Jackson, 1983). Whilst there, they would learn local languages, observe and participate in day-to-day activities, enter into conversations about these activities with local people and take notes of what they saw and heard (Cloke et al, 2004). They might also make sketches or take photographs to record things that could not easily be verbalised.

During the twentieth century, anthropological ethnography provided a model for some strands of research within Western urban sociology, influencing the Chicago School and informing the work of, for example, Whyte (1943), Gans (1962) and Young and Willmott (1957) who produced rich and detailed accounts of urban life in particular settings. Although ethnography is an underused methodology in geography (Herbert, 2000), the 1970s humanistic ethnographies of Ley (1974),

Rowles (1978) and Western (1981) are now widely regarded as classics in the discipline (see, for example, Cloke et al, 2004).

As Herbert (2000) notes, the overall aim of such extended and intensive work is to understand and communicate people's 'worldview', 'way of life' or 'culture'. Ethnography typically takes a "phenomenologically oriented research approach" that privileges "the emic perspective – the insider's or native's perspective of reality" rather than the etic perspective, that is, the external social scientific perspective on reality (Fetterman, 1998: 21).

Atkinson and Hammersley contend that ethnography has a complex history which means that it is difficult to present a single, standard definition:

> Over the course of time, and in each of the various disciplinary contexts mentioned, its sense has been reinterpreted and recontextualized in various ways, in order to deal with particular circumstances. Part of this remoulding has arisen from the fact that ethnography has been associated with, and also put in opposition to, various other methodological approaches. Furthermore, it has been influenced by a range of theoretical ideas... (2007: 2)

Nevertheless, Atkinson and Hammersley do attempt a broad definition that captures the essence of the breadth, diversity and flexibility of the ethnographic approach adopted for this research:

> In terms of data collection, ethnography usually involves the researcher participating, overtly or covertly, in people's daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, and/or asking questions through informal and formal interviews, collecting documents and artefacts – in fact, gathering whatever data are available to throw light on the issues that are the emerging focus of inquiry (ibid: 3).

Furthermore, it is possible to identify a number of characteristics that are common to ethnographic research. These include the following[25]:

(1) It treats people as knowledgeable, situated agents from whom researchers can learn a great deal about how the world is seen, lived and works in and through 'real' places, communities and people.

(2) It is an extended, detailed, 'immersive', inductive methodology intended to allow grounded social orders, worldviews and ways of life gradually to become apparent. The focus is usually on a few cases, generally fairly small-scale, perhaps a single setting or group of people. This is to facilitate in-depth study.

(3) Data collection is, for the most part, relatively 'unstructured' - ethnography can involve a 'shamelessly eclectic' and 'methodologically opportunist' combination of research methods but, at its core, there must be an extended period of 'participant observation' research (Jackson, 1985: 169). Data are

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[25] Adapted from Atkinson and Hammersley (2007) and Cloke et al (2004)

gathered from a range of sources, including documentary evidence of various kinds, but participant observation, informal conversations and/or semi-structured interviews are usually the main ones

(4) Participant observation uniquely involves studying both what people say they do and why, and what they are seen to do and say to others about this.

(5) The analysis of data involves interpretation of the meanings, functions, and consequences of human actions and institutional practices, and how these are implicated in local, and perhaps also wider, contexts. What are produced, for the most part, are verbal descriptions, explanations, and theories; quantification and statistical analysis play a subordinate role at most.

(6) Ethnography involves a recognition that its main research tool is the researcher and the ways in which he or she is used to acting in more familiar circumstances and learns to act in the often strange and strained circumstances of his or her research settings.

Given the unstructured, sometimes uncertain, nature of ethnographic fieldwork, such research can be very demanding, requiring the researcher to make a multitude of decisions in relation to the choice of setting, issues about what and whom they should observe and/or who they should speak to. There are also issues of negotiating access to different settings and people and maintaining relations over lengthy periods of time: "novice ethnographers must recognize, develop, complement and sometimes unlearn existing attitudes, habits, sentiments, emotions, senses, skills and preferences" (Cloke et al, 2004: 170). Spending time in the field can also generate a considerable volume of data in different formats, necessitating equally lengthy periods of time spent in compiling, coding and analysing one's data.

Despite these demands and the need for a wide range of methodological skills, ethnography is often regarded (or dismissed) as something that is very close to everyday forms of human interaction: "...as a set of methods, ethnography is not far removed from the means that we all use in everyday life to make sense of our surroundings, of other people's actions, and perhaps even of what we do ourselves" (Atkinson and Hammersley, 2007: 5). Herbert argues that "all humans are ethnographers whenever they enter a new social scene; one moves from outsider to insider as one comprehends the world from the insider's point of view" (2000: 556). But there is an important difference:

> What is distinctive is that it involves a more deliberate and systematic approach than is common for most of us most of the time, one in which data are specifically sought to illuminate research questions, and are carefully recorded; and where the process of analysis draws on previous studies and involves intense reflection, including the critical assessment of competing interpretations. What is involved here, then, is a significant development of the ordinary modes of making sense of the social world that we all use in our mundane lives, in a manner that is attuned to the specific purposes of producing research knowledge (Atkinson and Hammersley, 2007: 5).

...it is made to appear that the four roles can be sharply distinguished and that the field worker will find himself cast in one and only one position, with its opportunities and limitations as indicated... the practising field worker may well find his position and activities shifting through time from one to another of these theoretical points, even as he continues observing the same human organisation (Junker, 1960: 38)

The research eventually led me to adopt a range of observational roles in the three different research settings. Whilst I took more of a participant role in both the community and public inquiry settings, in the milieu of the local authority setting I maintained greater distance and adopted a more passive 'observer as participant' role. Elsewhere, I refer to this more detached stance as 'non-participant observation'

In the community settings (Parkside and Hilltop), my personal circumstances made it impractical to commit to living in the respective neighbourhoods so I had to find alternative ways of experiencing and observing life in the area. As I discussed earlier, the collaborative nature of the studentship proved invaluable in terms of facilitating my access both to the community and to the council officers who were involved in the regeneration project. Entering the field is a key moment in conducting ethnographic research and much of the methods literature dwells on matters of 'access' (to participants and research settings) as a significant problem (see, for example, Atkinson and Hammersley, 2007; Crang and Cook, 2007; Longhurst, 2003). However, by the time I began my fieldwork in earnest in November 2005, I had already been attending meetings of the PFG and the joint NMBC/residents Task Group on a regular basis so I was well known to key residents and key regeneration officers.

Through my new contacts, I quickly learnt that there was a twice-weekly housing advice surgery for Parkside residents who needed to move as a result of the scheduled demolition. These were held at No. 2 [*name of*] Street, a Council-owned end-terrace in Parkside that had been converted for office use. Staffed by the Council's Parkside project officer, the 'surgery' was held every Tuesday and Thursday afternoon and residents would 'drop-in' for re-housing advice, informal meetings and often, a cup of tea and a chat. It was, from my perspective, the best I could hope for and, with Council approval and residents' consent, I spent the next eighteen months attending and observing as many of these sessions as I could, all the time making myself better-known to local residents. On afternoons when there were few clients, 2 [*name of street*] provided a base from where I could 'explore' the neighbourhood without attracting too much suspicion. In addition, it also provided a convenient place to interview residents if they did not want to be interviewed in their homes.

As noted above, I was also introduced to the Parkside Focus Group, a group of residents that had initially come together to challenge the Council's demolition proposals and which now provided a conduit between the wider community and the Council in the ongoing negotiations over the future plans for the area. Though some of its members were initially wary of my presence, I was eventually 'accepted' and became a regular attendee at the group's fortnightly meetings. The frequently lively

In short, Atkinson and Hammersley conclude that, "there is an important sense in which ethnography is not just a set of methods but rather a particular mode of looking, listening, and thinking about social phenomena. In short, it displays a distinctive analytic mentality" (2007: 231).

6.4.2 Participant observation

Participant observation is the principal, preferred method for conducting ethnographic research. Where interviews, as a stand-alone method, are often fleeting encounters that involve the researcher entering the life of an individual (and maybe their neighbourhood or workplace) for nothing more than an hour or two, participant observation suggests a much deeper involvement in the life of the community in which the researcher is interested. Bogdan describes participant observation as "Research characterised by a prolonged period of intense social interaction between the researcher and the subjects, in the milieu of the latter, during which time data, in the form of field notes, are unobtrusively and systematically collected" (1972: 3).

Participant observation demands close, ongoing observation of a group *in situ*: "it involves researchers moving between *participating in* a community – by deliberately immersing themselves in its everyday rhythms and routines, developing relationships with people who can show and tell them what is 'going on' there...- and *observing* a community" (Cook, 2005: 127, original emphasis). For Becker, the participant observer "watches the people he is studying to see what situations they ordinarily meet and how they behave in them. He enters into conversation with some or all of the participants in these situations and discovers their interpretations of the events he has observed" (1958: 652). In short, participant observation involves spending extended periods of time within particular communities "in order to understand how they work *'from the inside'*" (Cook, 2005: 127, emphasis added). But, in addition to entering the life of a community, the ethnographer is also expected to maintain "a professional distance that allows adequate observation and recording of data" (Fetterman, 1998: 35). In effect, the participant observer must perform the role of 'stranger' *and* 'friend' (see Powdermaker, 1966)

Within the broad framework of 'participant observation, several authors have suggested that the researcher can adopt a number of roles depending on the extent to which they are incorporated into the group that is being studied (Gold, 1958; Junker, 1960). Gold, for example, developed a typology that identified four distinct roles within the spectrum of participant observation: complete participant; participant as observer; observer as participant; and the complete observer role. As Atkinson and Hammersley note, "In the 'complete participant' role, the ethnographer's activities are wholly concealed. Here the researcher may try to 'pass' as an ordinary participant in a scene...or will join covertly an organization or group" (2007: 82). Conversely, "the 'complete observer' has no contact at all with those he or she is observing" (ibid: 84). The 'participant as observer' is more fully integrated into the life of the group than the 'observer as participant', who has only minimal involvement in the social setting being studied. My engagement switched between the two mid-way positions, depending on the requirements of the setting (see Wardaugh, 2000). As Junker argued, the roles identified by Gold are ideal types that sit on a continuum rather than being mutually exclusive:

discussions, gossip and humour provided an additional means of getting to know the people and the life of the place.

The second setting for my research comprised periods of non-participant observation in two different workplaces *within* NMBC. Commencing in October 2006, I spent a month in the Private Sector Housing Team, followed by a month in the main office of the Council's HMR Pathfinder team. My case-study of the Hilltop HMR scheme (Chapter 9) draws on non-participant observation of the HMR team and relevant community meetings, along with documentary analysis.

The third locale for my research consisted of the three public inquiries that I attended and observed. From a methodological perspective, such inquiries are under-researched yet offer an unparalleled opportunity to observe how state-led gentrification is promoted and resisted, providing a wealth of official documents, written evidence and oral testimony and argumentation. Attending each inquiry in its entirety, this amounted to a total of around 40 days of intensive participant observation. The material from the public inquiries is based upon field-notes taken from my observations of the inquiries, documentary analysis, informal conversations with objectors and three interviews with key objectors. Specifically, over the duration of the public inquiries I heard the testimonies of 54 people who stood to lose their homes, along with verbal submissions from 33 'expert' witnesses that were called by the proponents[26].

Putting myself forward as a non-statutory objector in two of the inquiries, my direct involvement in residents' struggles was of considerable methodological, empirical and theoretical value. From a methodological perspective I could not hope to fully understand residents' experiences of HMR, their fears and the nature of their resistance without getting close to them and assisting them in their anti-demolition campaigns.

'Being there' (Borneman and Hammoudi, 2009) and being in the 'thick of it', I would suggest, makes an inestimable difference to the nature and quality of the research. The experience of being at a public inquiry, of directly witnessing a process by which people stood to lose their homes, makes for a totally different research encounter and a humbling, unsettling experience that puts state-led, or for that matter, any form of gentrification into much sharper focus, exposing it for what it is. It is precisely, in my view, the kind of perspective that is so lacking from most contemporary accounts of gentrification. Talking only to gentrifiers or planners it would be difficult to conceive of gentrification as a form of state-assisted theft, as accumulation by dispossession. In a public inquiry setting, however, where you are face-to-face not only with the proponents but also those who have most to lose from gentrification, that is exactly how you come to see it.

Despite these considerable strengths and advantages, participant observation is often criticised on three main grounds: subjectivity; reliability and the representativeness or generalisability of findings. The nature of these criticisms is outlined by Cohen and Manion:

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[26] I use the term 'expert' loosely. Local residents arguably have greater claims to being experts with regard to their homes and neighbourhoods than distanced researchers.

The accounts that typically emerge from participant observation are often described as subjective, biased, impressionistic, idiosyncratic and lacking in precise quantifiable measures that are the hallmark of survey research and experimentation (1994: 110)

I have already touched on some of these issues in the preceding section and elsewhere in the thesis. In relation to the issue of subjectivity, I would counter such criticism by making the general point that all research is, to some extent, biased. Every piece of research is, in the end, a form of position-taking: all knowledge is situated (Haraway, 1988). Cook and Crang suggest that:

The task for all researchers is to recognise and come to terms with their/our partial and situated 'subjectivity' rather than aspire to an impossibly distanced 'objectivity'. Once this is done, 'subjectivity' is much less a problem and much more a resource for deeper understanding (2007: 13).

Objectivity, then, is little more than a 'scientific attitude' that legitimises itself through objectification, distancing and detached contemplation (Allen, 2009a). As Saugeres argues, objectivity is actually a 'rhetorical construct...used to legitimise and justify institutional practices and the epistemologies they produce (1999: 95). The quest for objectivity obscures and maintains powerful interests: "...under an illusion of rigour, expertise and objectivity, those in powerful positions create a hierarchical situation in which they become the voice of authority" (Saugeres, 1999: 96). Moreover, if being 'objective' obscures the social inequalities and relations of material practices then we should surely strive to work from other positions that actively challenge or reject it as a research norm (Harding, 1987). Following Harvey (1973) and Beaumont *et al* (2005), if geography is to challenge the status quo that the objective practice of social science perpetuates, if it is to address matters of inequality, it simply can not remain 'objective'.

With respect to 'reliability', this notion has a different set of meanings in ethnographic research. In positivist epistemology, reliability is essentially concerned with issues of measurement and replicability. In the present research, my concerns over reliability were more about the extent to which the data and my interpretations of it constituted a 'true' reflection of the meanings of those involved in the research. Being immersed in the different research settings, this was something I could check on a daily basis by talking to those around me. Furthermore, as Franklin argues:

In answering positivist critics' questions concerning the validity, representativeness and reliability of their descriptions and analyses, ethnographers ultimately rely on the notion of plausibility and the generation of hypotheses based on intense observation rather than on scientific canon (1990: 95).

6.4.3 Semi-structured interviews

In the context of ethnographic research, "interviews explain and put into a larger context what the ethnographer sees and experiences" (Fetterman, 1998: 37). Using semi structured interviews within the context of a broader ethnographic approach permits the researcher to query, develop and check data that has already been generated by participant observation. It also means that the researcher generally comes to the interview with a greater understanding of the social context of which the interviewee is a member. This should hopefully ensure that the researcher approaches the interview with an informed, more focused set of questions than would otherwise be the case; he or she should also be better attuned to respondents' local references and/or the details and nuances of their responses.

"The interview is probably the most commonly used qualitative technique" (Kitchin and Tate, 2000: 215). As we know from our daily lives, "Talking with people is an excellent way of gathering information" (Longhurst, 2003: 118). Frequently described as "conversations with a purpose" (Burgess, 1984: 102), interviews are by no means the straightforward and unproblematic research technique that they initially appear. Interviews are definitely not a soft option: "they need to be thoroughly prepared, carefully undertaken and then painstakingly transcribed and interpreted" (Cloke *et al*, 2004: 151).

There are several different types of interview. Attempting to be as informal as possible and striving for a more equal relationship between the interviewer and interviewee, this research used the looser, more informal style of semi-structured interviews, where "the interviewer is freer to probe beyond the answers...and thus enter into a dialogue with the interviewee" (May, 2001: 123).

As McDowell (1994) points out, the efficacy of the interview can depend on many, sometimes very mundane, factors. One must consider several complex issues ranging from, for example, ethics, 'social distance' and positionality, to more practical considerations of recruiting participants and recording their responses to prepared questions. It also requires the maintenance of careful self-presentation, appropriate to the interviewee and one's setting. For example, with Parkside residents I downplayed my 'researcher' identity and used my broadly similar, northern, working-class, cultural background to establish a friendlier, more informal encounter; with officers I generally maintained a more professional identity and persona.

In recruiting interviewees, my initial aim was to recruit a 'representative' sample that would reflect the potential diversity of opinion about the area. Details of the research and my contact details were sent to around 300 households with a PFG newsletter but very few people responded to this. I also introduced myself to residents at the bi-weekly housing advice surgeries and invited them to take part in the research as interviewees. My initial aspiration for 'representativeness' quickly gave way to more pragmatic concerns. In particular, by the time I began my fieldwork, residents were already leaving Parkside and I was keen to ensure that I got to speak to some of the remaining residents before they left. I also found that those who are in the process of being displaced - people who are busy and stressed trying to find somewhere new in an over-heated housing market (as it was in 2005-07), do not always take kindly to well-meaning researchers, especially if they are

being funded by the authority that is contributing to their upheaval: many people had far more urgent concerns than my research.

Given these problems, I began by first interviewing several members of the PFG. Thereafter I used the technique of 'snowball sampling' to identify additional participants. All residents who took part in a 'formal', recorded interview received a £10 supermarket voucher. Whilst I had many shorter, informal conversations with residents, not all were prepared to speak to me 'on tape'. Some respondents were afraid that they might lose their entitlement to compensation payments if they were seen to be critical of the Council's scheme and its implementation. Whilst the interviewees may not have been statistically representative, I did endeavour, however, to strike a balance between residents who were strongly opposed to the demolition, those who were staying and having their homes refurbished and those who had already moved.

Choosing and phrasing effective questions can be one of the most difficult aspects of interviewing. Adopting a 'grounded' approach (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), I developed my questions by first spending time observing and talking to people in the area, before developing specific questions. Generally, participants were asked about how long they had lived in the area, what the liked/didn't like about the area, personally salient features of the area and neighbourhood change. Probing a little deeper, I asked how the place structured and impacted on their daily life and what, if any, emotional significance it had – what did the place *mean* to them?

Whilst the methods textbooks such as Arksey and Knight (1999), Mason (1996) and Denzin and Lincoln (2000), are useful for the more prosaic tasks of constructing a balanced and engaging interview schedule, with relevant, precisely-worded, unambiguous, open-ended questions, they are less useful in other respects. For example, how should one approach the conduct of the interview? How sympathetic or distant should the researcher (appear to) be? These were questions that were only answered by the actual practice of doing interviews.

In terms of developing a comfortable setting for the conversation, how should one 'strike the right note' and establish and maintain "a suitable 'social distance' – neither over-familiar or too detached" (McDowell, 2001: 93). Whilst I rejected the search for essentialist truth in favour of a desire to hear the world through different voices (Crang, 1992), I nevertheless experienced sharp pangs of what can only be termed as 'objective, scientific researcher conscience', periodic, sub-conscious reminders of the need to hang back, to not become too emotionally involved in the intensely emotional matter of the demolition of the interviewee's home and their surrounding neighbourhood. But this was frequently offset by countervailing thoughts of the need to show greater empathy, to not appear too remote and insensitive, both as a fellow human being, but also, somewhat less nobly, as the traveller-interviewer ever keen to 'travel to new lands' and take the story that bit further (see Fuller, 1999). Establishing rapport was often a difficult balancing act between the two extremes.

Where interviewees consented, the interviews were tape-recorded rather than manually noted. Rather than scribbling, head-down, I preferred recording the interviews as I could better listen and relate to the interviewee and gauge their non-

verbal cues at the same time. Furthermore, as Valentine (1997: 123) observes, "a tape also produces a more accurate and detailed record of the conversation (including capturing all the nuances of sarcasm, humour and so on)" and, one might add, it additionally captures pauses and significant silences in the conversation.

Interviewing officers presented fewer practical problems, largely because of my NMBC-funded studentship status. In interviewing council officers, my intention was to get the 'outsider's perspective and get behind the negative representations of Parkside, recognising that the discursive construction of the area does not happen spontaneously. Discourses do not simply float in the ether (Fairclough, 1992) waiting for an opportune moment to present themselves; they are, rather, produced by real people such as planners, housing officers and their regeneration colleagues who author authoritative documents, plans, GIS maps, tables and crime pattern analyses. As I discuss below, analysis of discourse is useful in examining how places and spaces are constructed but such analyses are strengthened by speaking directly to the very people whose 'assumptive worlds' (Young, 1977) determine what gets written, omitted or represented in graphical form.

The venue chosen for the interview can affect the nature and tone of the discussion (Denzin, 1970). Interviews with residents took place in their homes, at 2 [name of] Street, in my car and, on two occasions, walking around the neighbourhood. Interviews with officers usually took place in meeting rooms though some were conducted in open-plan offices. Some interviewees may be uncomfortable in an unfamiliar setting or, paradoxically, they may feel more at ease and say things they might not otherwise reveal in more familiar surroundings (see for example Elwood and Martin, 2000; Hoong Sin, 2003). Certain people, women or the elderly, for example are unlikely to warm to the idea of a relative stranger conducting an interview in their home; some officers might have felt uncomfortable being interviewed in front of colleagues. The participants were therefore asked to select their preferred interview location with the suggestion that they identify venues which are both convenient and unoppressive, that is, places where they would feel comfortable answering my questions. Interviews held on participants' 'home territory', that is, in their home or office, alter the power-relations in the encounter; they are places to which the researcher has been invited, where they are, in essence, an outsider. This reversal of the traditional power-relations of the researcher-participant relationship places certain constraints on the researcher's expected role and behaviour: I became a guest and was expected to behave as such.

All of the interviews were audio-recorded and fully transcribed. In total, I conducted 51 individual and group interviews with 59 people as follows:

Table 6: Summary of interviews conducted

	Northerly Parkside	Northerly Hilltop	Public inquiries
Residents	15	0	3
Displaced residents	10	0	-
Council officers	12	17	-
Councillors	1	1	-

To summarise, the issue with interviewing, as with much social research, is that codes of conduct and practice manuals are all very well, but reality is invariably more difficult, messy and unpredictable: "interviewing is a chancy business – sometimes it works and sometimes it does not" (McDowell, 2001: 94). The interview is, above all, a social encounter: "who we are and what we present of ourselves affects our interviewees' ability and willingness to tell various sorts of stories" (*op.cit.* : 94).

6.4.4 Discourse analysis

The 'discursive turn' in geography (see, for example, Lees, 2002; 2004; Rydin, 2005) which formed part of the broader discursive turn across the social sciences, has not been without criticism. Hastings (1999), for example, notes how critiques of culturalist perspectives on geography are slowly finding a new target in the shape of discourse analysis. These critiques have expressed concern at how the culturalist approach has sidelined real people with real problems (see for example Badcock, 1996; Hamnett, 2003; Philo, 2000; Lees, 2003d). But these critiques should confront the fact that, in many respects, it is the way places and spaces are being discursively constructed and represented that is causing the problems for real people: the immaterial realm also demands our attention. Thus, whilst Lees (2003d) rightly draws attention to the 'ethnographic void' in urban geography, her other work (see for example Lees, 2002; Lees, 2003c) recognises, as Philo suggests, the need to take both the immaterial and material seriously and highlight "the ways in which immaterial cultural processes become implicated in political-economic spaces" (Philo, 2000: 32). Indeed, whilst Lees (2002: 104, 109) notes a "simultaneous embracing of, yet withdrawal from, this cultural turn", she concludes that "Urban geographers are now quite comfortable with the cultural turn and are, for the most part, working astride material and immaterial urban worlds."

Places and spaces are constructed materially, socially, emotionally *and* discursively: "Discursive struggles over representation are as fiercely fought and just as fundamental to the activities of place construction as bricks and mortar" (Harvey, 1996: 322). This is just as relevant for the activities that support the creative *destruction* of place (see for example Beauregard, 1993; Mele, 2000a; Mele, 2000b). As Graham notes: "Cities are destroyed, unmade and annihilated *discursively* and through symbolic violence, as well as through bombs, planes and terrorist acts" (2004: 44, original emphasis). Following Wacquant (1999; 2008), I would argue that some prior process of 'territorial stigmatisation' is a prerequisite of gentrification by bulldozer.

My interest here, then, is concerned with understanding how HMR legitimises demolition by constructing lived-in homes and places not only as abnormal or 'other' but, more to the point, as so lacking in worth or 'value' that their only future lies in their eradication. Any understanding of HMR, I contend, would be incomplete without some form of documentary/discourse analysis. Language, as Fairclough (2000) has written, was crucial to the politics of New Labour and HMR was no exception to this. Leather *et al* (2007), for example, claim that the evidence

base for HMR surpasses that of any previous regeneration programme. But this evidence has mostly, uncritically, pointed towards demolition as the preferred, if only, solution. In other words, there is a particular, purposeful script or 'storyline' running through all this 'evidence' that builds upon a particular problematisation of the 'situation'. As Hajer argues, "whether or not a situation is perceived as a political problem depends on the narrative in which it is discussed" (1993: 44). Policy-making, he argues, is as much about the creation – the social construction – of problems as it is about solutions: "policies are not only devised to solve problems, problems also have to be devised to be able to create policies" (Hajer, 1993: 15).

Political problems, Hajer affirms, are socially constructed. Using the example of acid rain, his argument is that:

> Whether or not a situation is perceived as a political problem depends on the narrative in which it is discussed. To be sure, large groups of dead trees as such are not a social construct; *the point is how one makes sense of dead trees.* In this respect there are many possible realities. One may see dead trees as the product of natural stress caused by drought, cold, or wind, or one may see them as victims of pollution. The acid rain narrative labels the dead trees as victims of pollution, and thus dead trees become a political problem (Hajer, 1993: 44, emphasis added).

One could apply a similar argument to the phenomenon of empty and/or low-priced housing in the urban landscape. Like the problematisation of Hajer's dead trees, areas of 'low demand' housing do not just exist materially in the world, they also have to be socially constructed as problematic. There might, at any one time, be several competing explanations for this phenomenon. Hajer's (1993) framework of discourse analysis demonstrates how particular narratives, however questionable, gain prominence within policy-making and come to dominate the 'discursive space', while other understandings are marginalised or discredited.

Extending Hajer's discursive analytical framework to the housing field, Jacobs *et al* (2003: 430) argue that three conditions are necessary for a housing phenomenon to be accepted and acted upon as a 'problem': "First, a convincing narrative needs to be deployed to tell a plausible story of a social problem. Second, a coalition of support has to be constructed, and finally this coalition needs to ensure that institutional measures are implemented". With regard to the first condition, Hajer (1993: 56) invokes the concept of a 'story-line' as:

> ...a generative sort of narrative that allows actors to draw upon various discursive categories to give meaning to specific physical or social phenomena. The key function of story-lines is that they suggest unity in the bewildering variety of separate discursive component parts of a problem... The underlying assumption is that people do not draw on comprehensive discursive systems for their cognition, rather these are evoked through story-lines...Political change may therefore well take place through the emergence of new story-lines that re-order understandings. Finding the appropriate story-line becomes an important form of agency.

In this way, "the emergence of a new policy discourse like [low demand and HMR] may actually alter the individual perception of problems and possibilities and thus create space for the formation of new, unexpected political coalitions" (Hajer, 1993: 59) as exemplified by the emergence of the North West Housing Forum and its collective support for HMR. Politics can then be seen "as a struggle for discursive hegemony in which actors try to secure support for their definition of reality" (*ibid*: 59).

Thus, using an approach based on Hajer's (1995) conceptual apparatus of 'story-lines' and 'discourse coalitions', I analysed an extensive corpus of HMR texts to understand how academics, policy-makers, the housing lobby and the media constructed a problem, a credible, *spatial* story-line that would serve to legitimise a 'new' approach to urban regeneration that involved the demolition of tens of thousands of occupied, perfectly habitable houses and their replacement with a smaller number of new, more expensive homes. This is the subject of Chapter 8.

6.4.5 Other methods

Postal questionnaire to displaced Parkside residents

Gentrification researchers have long complained of the difficulties of tracing displacees (Atkinson, 2000; Newman and Wyly, 2006). Fortuitously, NMBC kept administrative records of the first destination address of the people who had contacted the council for advice and support on relocation and I was able to send a two-page questionnaire (see Appendix 2) to these former residents.

The 'movers questionnaire', as it was described by council officers (with no hint of the word 'displacees'), was drafted and agreed in consultation with officers in Parkside's Private Sector Housing Team. To some extent, I was therefore restricted as to precisely what and how much I could ask; officers were also keen to limit the questions to one double-sided A4 sheet. With the heading 'Private Sector Housing Team – [Parkside] Regeneration Questionnaire', it was sent out in July 2007 to the 149 head of households who had moved between mid-2004 and July 2007 and for whom the council had kept records, with a pre-paid envelope addressed to myself at the University of Sheffield. Respondents could complete the questionnaire anonymously though they were also given the option of including their contact details in the event that they wanted to further discuss their experience in an interview.[27] Thirty-four completed questionnaires were returned, a 23% response rate. This level of response is typical (Haralambos and Holborn, 1990). The completed questionnaires were analysed independently of the Council. Seven respondents expressed an interest in being interviewed. The findings from these interviews are reported in Chapter 11. The profile of the questionnaire respondents is summarised in Table 7 (below)

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[27] All sheets were coded so that I could identify the former and current tenure status of respondents. Potential interviewees were also offered a £15 voucher for their participation.

Table 7: Profile of questionnaire respondents

Age of respondent	Length of residence in Parkside	Tenure				
		Parkside		Current		
				Owner-occ	Private tenant	Social tenant
20-29 – 5 30-39 – 4 40-49 – 7 50-59 – 6 60-69 – 4 70+ - 3 Not given - 5	< 1 year – 1 1-5 years – 11 6-10 years – 2 > 10 years – 19 Not given - 1	Owner-occupier	18	12	0	6
		Private tenant	13	0	4	9
		Social tenant	2	0	1	1

Desk-based analysis of displacees' destinations

By way of further analysis, I was also able to make use of an address file supplied by NMBC that provided anonymised data on the origin and destination addresses and housing tenures of 149 households that had been displaced from Parkside between 2004 and 2007.[28]   This allowed me to conduct a rudimentary desk-based analysis of displacees' first destinations in terms of, for example, their distance moved and changes in tenure status. Using CLG's Indices of Multiple Deprivation at output area level – the lowest level at which Census data is collected – I was also able to compare the level of deprivation in displacees' new neighbourhoods with the stated overall figure for Parkside. This enabled me to make a fairly crude assessment of whether households had moved to areas with higher or lower levels of deprivation. I then compare these findings with the results of other similar studies from the US such as Goetz (2003) and Kleit et al (2010) and, more pertinently, a Relocation Survey that was produced for New Heartlands (Ecotec, 2009). The results of this analysis are reported in Chapter 11.

6.5 Summary

The material presented in the thesis is therefore based on data generated by ethnographic research in three different settings: Parkside, Northerly's HMR team and three HMR-related public inquiries in North West England. These ethnographic case-studies combined intermittent periods of community and workplace participant observation with semi-structured interviews, discourse analysis, a postal questionnaire and some basic, GIS-assisted analysis of displaced residents' first destinations on leaving Parkside.

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[28]Although some 250 houses were demolished in Parkside, Northerly MBC held records of first destinations only for the 149 households who approached NMBC for relocation assistance. Those who did not seek assistance to move or who moved in the early planning phase of the scheme were not included in the records.

In this final section, I return to and re-present the research questions and discuss how the chosen methods relate to each question.

1. What was the meaning of place and home for those residents living in areas threatened with demolition?

There are a number of issues here that make an ethnographic approach the most suitable for uncovering people's place meanings and their respective relationships with home. Firstly, as I have argued, absent the threat of loss, home and attachment to place are mostly taken for granted. Such meanings are often only revealed when the stability of home is under threat. These place meanings and attachment may also be rather complex. At the same time, however, disinvested places are often represented in simple, stereotyped terms, as an outsider might see them.

Addressing this research question and dealing with the points above clearly requires an in-depth, extended but intensive approach that requires the researcher to see the place as insiders see it at crucial moments of threat and potential instability. Like Young and Willmott (1957), Gans (1962) and Ley (1972), an ethnographic approach allows the researcher to access this insider perspective and "understand the 'human experience of space and place' and the often taken for granted, 'geographies of the lifeworld'" (Cloke et al, 2004: 172). At the same time, ethnography yields rich, detailed and systematic insights – "thick descriptions" (Geertz, 1973) - that could help to challenge existing ways of seeing such places.

For the present research, understanding the complexity of these people-place relationships required an ethnographic approach that combined long periods of participant observation in the community with 25 in-depth interviews with local residents. Unfortunately, for reasons given earlier, this was only possible in the Parkside case-study. However, the public inquiries also provided additional opportunities to hear the testimonies of 54 objectors who were threatened with losing their homes via compulsory purchase: the meaning of home and its material and psycho-social benefits proved to be central themes in many of these testimonies.

2. How did the state take people's homes in HMR areas?

This is a difficult, complex question to answer because it involves a range of structures, processes and individuals at different levels. Understanding how the state takes people's homes requires, at the very least, an appreciation of policy, discourse, territorial stigmatisation, bureaucratic practices in local authorities, public consultation processes and, ultimately the system of compulsory purchase. Drawing on the findings that were emerging from the research, I summarised these various practices into a three-fold model of discourse, attrition and compulsion.
These strategies are not necessarily sequential or mutually exclusive but tend to work in concert. All of them, for example, may utilise territorial stigmatisation to a greater or lesser degree. Each may be necessary but insufficient on its own.

Each of the state strategies that I identified demands a particular methodological approach and/or analysis of a particular setting. Understanding how the state takes

homes via discourse would naturally lend itself to the Hajerian form of discourse analysis I outlined in the previous section.

Attrition is less straightforward because it partly works through texts but also through talk and practices. Operationalising attrition requires, in effect, a cultural system. In terms of understanding the culture of the HMR team, the research question can be addressed, to some extent, through participant observation: one can observe the formal procedures and meetings that are put in place to organise and manage processes of land assembly and clearance. But workplace ethnographies also present an additional set of issues in the form of professional and organisational codes, protocols and bureaucratic procedures, meaning that people may be reluctant to speak candidly to a researcher in the presence of other staff. Thus, individual interviews where the interviewees were guaranteed assurances of anonymity provided a useful complementary method in this situation. The author conducted interviews with 29 officers from NMBC.

The other point to note here is that much of the work of a local authority is encapsulated and processed through written documents, plans and reports, that is, a body of work that again lends itself to discourse analysis. Participant observation of public inquiry proceedings and discursive analysis of the written documentation submitted to the inquiries were therefore the preferred approaches for understanding how the state used its powers of compulsory purchase to take people's homes.

3. What were the individual and social impacts of housing demolition and displacement?

Porter (2009b) writes about the invisibility of people who suffer displacement as a result of planning and urban regeneration schemes. This is echoed by Wyly *et al* (2010: 2620):

> One of the most effective tactics of neoliberalism involves the statistical disappearance of its costs and victims. Yet even if the 'numbers' often are made to mislead, we have a responsibility to engage rigorously with the data at hand and highlight what is missing. Our evidence helps to re-place displacement, and to make it visible.

There is, in short, a dearth of both quantitative and qualitative data on displacement. This research therefore attempts to make best use of the limited quantitative data that was 'at hand', such as, for example, the address file provided by NMBC. But data on, for example, how many people were displaced or where they moved to tells us little about the nature of the challenges they faced. As Slater notes, "*asking people about their experiences of displacement* is just as important as asking how many people have been displaced" (2008: 218, original emphasis). Answering this research question therefore combines a number of methods – a postal questionnaire, GIS analysis, interviews and some participant observation – in order to get an overall sense of the experience of displacees and an understanding of the impacts in specific areas of their lives.

PART III

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Overview of Part III

Part III comprises five chapters of findings and analysis, along with a final chapter which concludes the thesis. In setting out the structure of Part III, the most important thing to remember is the oft-overlooked point that emplacement - the condition of being *in situ,* of being settled – precedes displacement. In the context of a major scheme of housing demolition, the aim of Chapter 7, 'Home and emplacement in Parkside', is to understand the life and social relations that are already in place. The chapter first outlines the broader context for urban regeneration in Northerly and Parkside, before moving on to examine residents' views on living in Parkside, focusing particularly on their perspectives on home, sense of place, neighbouring and, for some, the prospect of being forced to move. When 'outsiders' such as council officers discuss Parkside they invariably describe it as 'deprived', 'disadvantaged', an area of low housing demand, a place without a future that is in desperate need of redevelopment. But, for residents, Parkside is home. This chapter therefore presents this alternative view, the insiders' view or what might be termed 'the view from below', a perspective that is rarely encountered in official reports or scholarly publications.

Chapter 8, 'Demolition by discourse' is the first of three closely related chapters that analyse the strategies and tactics that are employed by the state to displace, evict, force out or, rather more euphemistically, 'winkle', households out of their settled emplacement. The strategies detailed in each chapter – respectively discourse, attrition, and compulsion - do not necessarily occur in that sequence. Nor are they mutually exclusive: they are, rather, interdependent and should be understood collectively. Analytically, however, it makes sense to distinguish between them. That said, discursive strategies of territorial stigmatisation often constitute the first line of attack in a longer campaign, an initial verbal bombardment that is intended to 'soften' the 'enemy' positions. Such tactics were observed in Northerly, Liverpool and Oldham and the chapter draws upon my analysis of documents published in each area, as well as national-level publications. Drawing insights from each area together, the chapter tries to demonstrate how 'areas of low housing demand' were stereotyped, stigmatised and constructed as 'problem places' or 'empty spaces' in order to legitimise demolition.

Chapter 9 extends the concept of 'attrition', well known in physical geography, to human geography and the specific context of households in neighbourhoods threatened with and experiencing housing demolition. The concept is akin to Marcuse's (1986) notion of displacement pressure. Instead of focusing on how residents experience, resist and succumb to such pressure, however, this chapter looks at the statecraft of attrition by exploring the culture of Northerly's HMR team

and the practices it employed in seeking to clear the Hilltop estate of its residents. It makes for sometimes chilling reading.

Chapter 10, 'Compulsion' examines the use of compulsory purchase in HMR areas by analysing the proceedings of three public inquiries, two in Liverpool and one in Oldham. Whilst there is an acknowledgment that compulsory purchase can, in certain circumstances, be used positively to achieve socially progressive goals, the argument here is that the use of CPOs for site assembly under HMR constituted a form of state violence or 'theft'. This argument is developed by reference to the evidence and testimonies of key participants – officials and residents - in the respective public inquiries.

Individuals and families were displaced from their homes as a result of the deployment of the strategies and tactics discussed in chapters 8 to 10. Chapter 11 therefore reverts back to analysing the 'view from below', that is, the perspectives of those who were forced to leave. Combining mainly qualitative data with some numerical data, this final empirical chapter addresses my third research question. Given the relatively advanced progress of the demolition programme in Parkside, the chapter focuses largely on the experience of some of those displaced from the area and the impact the enforced move has had on various aspects of people's lives.

In the classic tradition of participant observation, chapters 7, 10 and 11 provide readers with a vivid impression of 'being there', to respectively give a sense of what it is like to live in Parkside, to resist demolition and object to a CPO, and experience the trauma of displacement.

By way of conclusion, Chapter 12 revisits the research questions , suggests ways forward for critical gentrification research, and explores some possibilities for resisting 'gentrification by bulldozer'.

Chapter 7

Home and emplacement: living in Parkside

By 2010 we want people to be queuing up to live here, not queuing up to leave.
(Northerly New Deal for Communities vision, NNDC, 2004)

Plate 4: Parkside, 20 July 2005 (author's photo).

7.1 Introduction

If you approach the town of Northerly by road, from the motorway, Parkside is the first neighbourhood that you see. Originally built to house workers in Northerly's engineering and railway plants, Parkside comprised five, long, parallel streets of Victorian terraced housing. Built in 1889, two years after Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee, and appropriately named Jubilee Terrace, the hard-worn, soot-blackened houses that were most visible to car users entering Northerly spoke of the town's gritty, industrial past. As Short (1999: 45) highlights, "To be seen as industrial is to be associated with the old, the polluted, the out of date. A persistent strand of urban

(re)presentations has been the reconstruction of the image of the industrial city" to the point where cities can proudly announce "Look, no more factories!" As Allen and Crookes wryly suggest, the equivalent ambition for housing might be couched in terms of "Look, no more terraced houses!" (2009: 462).

Certainly, to the casual, passing gaze, the houses might have appeared shabby and run-down, but they were also people's homes. Two entire streets and one side of another have now been demolished. But Parkside residents did not leave their homes quietly. From the moment that NMBC's proposals for the demolition of housing were first mooted, it took around five years and eleven successive plans for residents and the Council to agree a compromise that proposed the demolition of 270 houses and the retention of the remaining 250 houses. Even then, however, of the 166 households that responded to the Council's consultation survey, barely over half were in favour of demolition. Moreover, several residents said that many people only voted for demolition because they were effectively forced into doing so: "the councillors were virtually saying if this didn't happen council money would stop coming into the district and then demolition would be enforced with all of the streets" (Sandra, interview, 2006). Losing half of the houses in the area was obviously preferable to losing all of them. This reluctant compromise and the fact that it took five years to get there does not exactly support the assertion that people were desperately 'queuing up to leave' as the NDC's vision statement suggested. It rather suggests the opposite, that people were, in fact, attached to the terraced houses and the neighbourhood they called 'home'.

Respecting Tuan's assertion that "place is pause" (1977: 6), the purpose of this chapter is to begin the presentation of the empirical material with a pause that shifts our attention to the settled situation and conditions that are antecedent to the act of disturbance. Before proceeding with the analysis of how HMR produces space, this chapter seeks to consider the nature of emplacement, of dwelling, of being-at-home in Parkside. Beginning with a short introduction to Northerly and Parkside, it then briefly examines the NMBC view of Parkside and key aspects of the redevelopment proposals. The remainder of the chapter details residents' sense of place, their place-meanings, their attachment to home and to Parkside and some of their concerns about the prospect of literally losing their place.

It is also important to note here that had I asked these questions at any other time I might have got very different answers. With the threat of demolition and displacement hanging over them, the meaning of home loomed large in respondents' consciousness. As I discussed in Chapter 3, at most other times, as King (2004) suggests, home is largely taken for granted.

7.2 Northerly – from coal to cool?

Northerly is a town of some 250,000 people in the north of England. It grew rapidly in the 19th century, with most of the population employed in heavy engineering and the growing railway industry. Large numbers of terraced houses were built in the

central area of Northerly in the late Victorian period to accommodate the rapidly growing population. A 15-20 minute walk from the town centre, the houses in Parkside were built as part of this rapid urbanisation. In the 20th century, coal-mining became the major source of employment in the area and there was significant in-migration from other parts of the UK. In common with the rest of the country, the post-war period saw further suburban housing growth, the clearance of sub-standard housing from in and around the town centre and the construction of several large municipal housing estates, including a high-rise estate on an area of cleared land close to the town centre.

From the 1980s onwards, the Thatcher government's programme of pit closures led to high levels of unemployment in the town, peaking at 18.6% in 1986 against a national figure of around 12% (Audit Commission, 2003). It took a long time for the local economy to recover from this and unemployment, though much lower than it was, still remains above the national average. Continued high levels of deprivation in Northerly place it within the forty most deprived local authorities (out of 354 areas) and the Borough "continues to suffer from pockets of severe deprivation – areas with a high incidence of poor housing, high levels of worklessness, and low levels of qualifications in the resident population" (NMBC, 2007).

The current Local Development Framework (LDF) suggests that "Northerly is now re-inventing itself in the service and tertiary industries...to redefine its role and hierarchy within the region" (NMBC, 2010). Moreover, Northerly is "entering a new and extremely exciting era of positive change and growth. Major new investment is looking for a home in the Borough" (NMBC, 2003: 3). The long-term vision for the Borough is global in its ambitions:

> By 2025, Northerly will be a city of international significance able to attract and retain a growing population with world-class skills in the creative and technological industries that drive the regional economy" (NMBC, 2007)

The Borough's current Economic Strategy (NMBC, 2007) appears to have been influenced heavily by Florida's (2002) 'creative class' theory. The strategy notes that:

> Cities are now widely recognised as the drivers of economic growth and in an increasingly global economy, competition between cities and larger towns to attract businesses is intensifying. To be successful in this highly competitive environment, Northerly needs to ensure that it has a strong offer to businesses across a range of factors.

In 2003, NMBC commissioned the production of an 'Urban Renaissance Masterplan' to "deliver an urban renaissance in Northerly" and "foster a dynamic urban core" (NMBC, 2003). The Masterplan proposals, now stalled, included plans to restore the town's riverside areas "to create a very high quality, mixed use development that includes residential, commercial and leisure accommodation" (NMBC, 2007). There were also plans for a new cultural quarter that would include a new performance venue, hotel and restaurants. In addition, "the enhancement of exhibition and conference facilities, a 4* business class hotel and luxury apartments forms an important part of the town's revival" (NMBC, 2007). Key challenges for

Northerly, the Borough Economic Strategy argued, include "a shortage of executive housing" and "a town centre that lacks a higher-end restaurant offer and 'buzz factor'" (NMBC, 2007).

More importantly, however:

> ...future growth of the economy is dependent upon higher qualified and skilled employees and unless Northerly can make significant progress on these elements its economy will continue to lag behind the national average...The creation of higher-value added jobs is of paramount importance. It should lead to a lasting dynamic which sees the growth of higher-end leisure services in the town centre and the creation of an environment which is more attractive to highly skilled mobile workers

With local authorities falling over one another to 'court' these 'highly skilled mobile workers', to attract what Florida (2002) describes as 'talent', a 'quality housing offer' suddenly becomes of paramount importance:

> Housing has a profound impact on a city's ability to attract and retain talent...It is clear that the Borough will not achieve its 2025 vision without linking its economic growth plans with those for its Housing offer, both in the amount of new Housing, and the type of Housing the Borough's future residents will demand. Our plans set out what housing will be needed in the Borough if we are to realise the ambition of being a city of international significance. Our housing offer must be able to attract new businesses to locate here and ensure that their staff will be able to find good quality, affordable housing in decent neighbourhoods (NMBC, 2005).

To this end, the housing chapter of the LDF's Core Strategy is meant to "ensure that enough houses are built within Northerly, of the right type and in the right place. This is essential to improving Northerly's economy, by retaining and attracting entrepreneurs, skilled workers and graduates..." (NMBC, 2010: 56).

These themes were reinforced in the Sub-regional Housing Strategy. For example: "There is a requirement for a modern, dynamic mix of urban centre residential accommodation for young single people who want to live in the urban centre" and, rather more ominously, *The challenge is to create the land to accommodate new residential development in the city centre*" (Sub-regional housing body, 2005, emphasis added). This is where Parkside enters the picture.

7.3 Parkside

The Parkside redevelopment scheme preceded HMR and was conceived, developed, financed and implemented entirely separately from Northerly's HMR programme. It was also geographically distinct. HMR covered the former coal-mining communities in the west of the Borough, some eight miles from the centre of Northerly. Parkside, by contrast, is an inner-urban area located just over half of a mile south of Northerly town centre. Proposals for developing Parkside were first discussed in 1999, some three years prior to the introduction of HMR and the

scheme was financed with the support of Regional Housing Board monies and managed by NMBC's Private Sector Housing Team, rather than the HMR team which was formed only in 2005. Consequently, whilst the official view of the housing problems in Parkside was similar to the rationale for HMR intervention ("it shares many of the symptoms of low demand such as high vacancy levels, high turnover, low or falling house prices and various socio-economic problems"[29]), it was the impetus of urban renaissance in Northerly town centre, rather than HMR, that provided the context within which the proposals for Parkside were forged.

In the next section, I describe what might be summarised as the official or outsider's view of Parkside and outline the rationale for the scheme. This includes a brief history of the area, details of the scheme and the official justification for it. I do not devote too much time to this, however, as I do not wish to give these official accounts of the area more weight than they already have. Their arguments are, in any event, similar to those advanced in the next two chapters that examine, respectively, the discursive strategies and practices of attrition that HMR has used to displace people from their homes.

Notwithstanding its recent history, the 'longue durée' of Parkside, like that of many other residential areas, is relatively ordinary and uneventful. Like many inner-urban areas in England, the neighbourhood comprises Victorian terraced housing where all of the houses open directly onto the pavement; all have yards and/or small gardens at the rear, backed by alleyways running along the length of each terrace.

Despite its location close to the centre of Northerly, the area is actually quite isolated and relatively inaccessible. In the 1960s, the main road immediately to the north of Parkside was widened to a dual-carriageway to accommodate the new town-centre bypass. This project necessitated the clearance of many residential and commercial properties, including most of the local shops, and is viewed as a significant contributory factor in the area's initial demise (Parkside Focus Group, 2003). The new road effectively severed the area from the town centre and the larger community of which Parkside had been a part. As one resident put it: "This took the heart out of the area, making it into a dormitory district rather than a fully contained area or 'village'" (Joe, interview, 11 January 2006).

This busy dual carriageway now presents a formidable physical barrier for residents wishing to access local services and Northerly town centre. Vehicular access to the neighbourhood is also poor, comprising a service road parallel to the Ring Road, to which there is a single access/egress point. To the east, the neighbourhood is adjoined by a council estate; to the south and west, the surrounding small/medium-sized light industry reinforces the sense of isolation. In short, Parkside forms a distinct, physically-bounded, if relatively isolated, neighbourhood that sits (uncomfortably) between some of the Borough's latest flagship developments. As the Master-planners' Design Guide (2005) noted:

> The area is surrounded by the Borough's largest transformational projects; the Transport Interchange...the community football stadium, the [name of] leisure development and [name of new retail development]. Located off the [name of

[29] *Neighbourhood Renewal Assessment for Parkside,* 2003, Volume 1, p18

motorway], the area occupies a significant position on the main corridor into the town centre.

Caught in the middle of all this new, 'transformational' development, Parkside was always going to be under development pressure. As Larry observed: "I don't think they [NMBC] will be happy until they've got all the land right up to the motorway…this is what I say…we're the wrong side of the dual carriageway" (interview, 2006). Significantly, Parkside's location also meant that it was the first housing visible to those approaching Northerly from the motorway: "what you've got there is…one of the gateways into the town, so you've got an area that was looking particularly bad" (Head of Private Sector Housing, interview, 2006). Zukin (1995: 7) notes how "the look and feel of cities reflect decisions about what – and who – should be visible and what should not". Such 'impression management' is one of the key concerns of 'place-shaping' (Allen and Crookes, 2009). Directly adjacent to one of the principal and busiest 'gateways' into the town, officers felt that Parkside gave the wrong first impression of a town with international aspirations: "it's a very visible side of the Borough, it's the first thing you see when you come into town, it's important we have flagship sites to promote Northerly in a positive way" (Neighbourhood Manager, interview, 2007).

According to the supporting policy documents, Parkside also displays many of the characteristics that are deemed typical of an area of low housing demand. Whilst the majority of properties are reasonably well-maintained, there are also a substantial number of empty houses and privately rented properties which are in a poor state of repair. Socially, the area is one of the most deprived in Northerly. The Northerly Public Health Information Unit divides the Borough into 88 communities: Parkside lies within the 'Central' community. Based on figures from the 2004 Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), Central had the fourth highest overall deprivation score out of the 88 communities and the highest deprivation score for crime (Northerly Public Health Information Unit, 2004). Nationally, the IMD scores show that the Super Output Area containing Parkside was ranked 460th most deprived out of 32, 482 Super Output Areas (ODPM, 2004a).

In 2001, the population of Parkside stood at around 850 people. It is notable that the table below (Table 8, overleaf) which appeared in a report to NMBC's Cabinet (NMBC, 2005) highlighted only those variables where the variations between Parkside and the Borough average were greatest, that is, it sought to foreground the area's differences as a place that was 'other'.

Table 8: Selected Census variables for Parkside and Northerly, 2001

	Parkside %	Northerly %
Single person household (not pensioner)	31.2	12.6
Private rented	30.9	5.8
No central heating	30.5	6.2
Born outside the UK	12.6	2.9
% unemployed	11.8	4.3

Source: NMBC, 2005

Ethnically, Parkside was already a very mixed community and the long-standing white working-class residents had made great efforts to integrate newcomers into the life of the community. The Council's Neighbourhood Manager for the area confirmed that she had been impressed by the quality of community relations in the area:

> You look at the issues for Central, they're not broken down on racial boundaries, they tend to be economic boundaries rather than anything else …and I think that is probably the best example of harmony that you've got, you've got a whole mix of different religious, cultural beliefs operating in that neighbourhood and I think in the past 18 months there's only been one problem where that's been manifested. I'm not saying there aren't tensions but they tend to be individual tensions rather than anything else. I'm not sure you'd get that level of accommodation in other areas.
>
> LC: Some of the residents have actually described it to me as a melting pot …
>
> N'hood Mgr: I think, certainly in Parkside...people should be commended in terms of their tolerance, there is something about an open acceptance of difference...it isn't across the whole of Central but it's certainly in those areas, it's very evident and that is something that perhaps we do need to, certainly it needs to be included in the area plan, about how we build on that" (interview, 2007).

Unfortunately, such positive assessments of the area were rare. On a visit to the area, one local councillor had suggested to his fellow councillors that an understanding of Parkside could be gleaned readily through a quick visual survey of the houses and streets, nothing more. As he put it: "Well, I really don't have to say anything because all you need do is just look down there to see the sort of problems that we're having" (interview, 2007). This visual impression would, it seems, give you all that you needed to know about Parkside and its people.

The NMBC view of the area was summarised in a rather insensitive newsletter that was circulated to Parkside residents in 2003: "It is one of the worst areas in Northerly for poor housing, housing market failure, crime and anti-social behaviour and is in one of the most deprived wards" (NMBC, 2003). As one officer remarked, "Tenants are not investing [in improvements to their homes] because they're

spending it [their income] on drugs" (field notes, June, 2006). The officer leading the project described Parkside as a "menacing, gloomy space...[that] could become quite an attractive, interesting main entrance to the town (interview, 2006). Another officer characterised it in these terms: "...it's obsolete housing that only the desperate and those who are trapped want. Effectively, it's the people with no choice left (interview, 2006).

Politically, the neighbourhood was, and continues to be, represented by the Parkside Focus Group (PFG). Formed in 2002 in response to the demolition proposals, the group meets on a weekly basis to monitor progress and identify issues related to the progress of the regeneration scheme. The Chair, Vice-Chair and one other member of the Group attend the monthly meetings of the Parkside Task Group. The Task Group, chaired by a Council Cabinet Member, is responsible for overseeing the neighbourhood's regeneration and comprises senior housing officers and environmental health officers, along with representatives of Northerly NDC and 'Metro' Police. The Task Group was established to develop a suitable regeneration plan for Parkside that would have overall resident approval.

As I described in Chapter 6, by late 2004 the Task Group and local residents finally agreed upon a compromise that would involve partial demolition and refurbishment rather than wholesale clearance. The current regeneration plan (version 11), costed at around £35m over five years, was approved by the Government Office for the region in December 2004. Table 9 (below) shows the split between demolition and refurbishment.

Table 9: Parkside Transformational Project: demolition, refurbishment and proposed new build

Total number of properties	*523*
Number of properties to be demolished	*271*
Number of properties retained & facelift	*252*
Number of retained properties improved to Decent Homes Standard	*Up to 252*
New homes to be built - for sale	*137*
Number of new homes to be built - affordable rent	*19*

Source: NMBC, 2005

The Parkside scheme would therefore involve a combination of demolition and external refurbishment work, along with some environmental improvements. Specifically:

> The project is intended to create a radical transformation of an area of pre-1919 terraced houses through selective demolition, area remodelling, home improvement, new build provision, environmental improvements with

improved use of public space and a cross tenure approach to area management with strong resident involvement. This is consistent with the New Deal for Communities team's vision that 'By 2010 we want people to be queuing up to live here, not queuing up to leave' (NMBC, 2004: 2).

The Masterplan was a little less coy about the underlying purpose of the scheme: "A key driver for the redevelopment of the area is to attract a more diverse population in terms of income, profession, age and size of family unit. For this to happen, it is vital that the scheme provides a wide range of house types" (NMBC and 'XYZ' consultants, 2005: 5)

7.4 Compensation arrangements in the Parkside scheme

The Parkside regeneration scheme pre-dated HMR and officers agreed, from an early stage that the compensation, particularly for owner-occupiers, should be quite generous, in order to garner resident support for the project:

LC: "Do you think the financial package in [Parkside] made a difference, because it was so generous?"

"Well I think that time will tell. I mean to be honest, it was generous but if you had not had a generous offer you might as well have packed up because Government Office were saying to us don't come to us with a scheme that doesn't have resident support. Quite clearly, the only way to get resident support was to have a fair scheme and I think you know I will be proved right... I mean, the Joseph Rowntree report[30], have you read that? It basically says, people are being short-changed...I mean the scheme that I put together, would I as a reasonable person accept it? The answer is yes. Was it so generous that people were making a profit? No. Was it for neighbourhood landlords to make money? No. Which group do you really want to try and help protect? The answer was owner-occupiers" (interview with Richard, Senior Housing Officer, NMBC).

Compared to residents living in Northerly's Pathfinder intervention areas, Parkside owner-occupiers could take advantage of a relatively generous compensation package that included: the market value of their home plus a 10% Home Loss Payment (see below); a disturbance allowance of up to £3,400 and a £20,000 relocation grant to use towards the purchase cost of a new house. Owner-occupiers living in Northerly's HMR areas, who were instead covered by the relocation packages agreed by the HMR partnership, were entitled to similar compensation with the significant exception of the £20,000 grant, although they could apply for a £20,000 relocation *loan*. As Dave, another NMBC officer put it with regard to the compensation being offered in Parkside: "Home appreciation loans are frowned upon. Not like grants. We've basically given everyone [owner-occupiers] a £20k gift!" (interview with Dave, Private Sector Housing, NMBC).

Richard felt that the generosity of the compensation for Parkside movers would avoid the problem of owner-occupiers becoming 'reluctant' council tenants. But

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[30] Cole and Flint, 2007

where owner-occupiers did move into social housing, Richard, alluding to exclusionary forms of displacement, suggested that the wider costs of such re-housing could be huge:

> "...you've the danger of creating reluctant council tenants with a cost to that. Northerly's got no stock surplus, you've got people that didn't want to be council tenants who've managed to be owner-occupiers at least marginally on their own, and without a generous, without a fair scheme, you would be forcing them into social housing, which they didn't want - who would want to? And, to create social housing for that person, for the rest of their lives, there's a cost, a huge cost...Far worse than that, they, because they would be priority with the clearance, they would be displacing somebody who really did want and need social housing, so there's a cost there as well. This other person or family might have even gone into bed and breakfast because they [the displaced Parkside household] were taking up that unit, which ordinarily they [the now excluded other household] would have had...I mean, if Northerly had surplus stock you could begin to think well this is a bit...but they hadn't, they'd got deficiencies, so you know if somebody could work out what is the cost of giving somebody social housing that didn't want it...err...y'know and of course the other thing they'd say is, yeah you're gonna give me the compensation but you're gonna have it all back in rent aren't you, which is true because they got a capital sum...you'd have a thirty grand capital sum so they'd be trickling it back paying full rent...so you'd have the seeds of deep resentment, so, thanks very much!" (interview with Richard, Senior Housing Officer, NMBC).

7.5 At home in Parkside

As noted in the introduction to this chapter, barely half of the residents who responded to the Council's decisive 2004 survey were in favour of the compromise plan that involved the demolition of 271 of the houses and the retention of the remaining 252 houses. The responses to the survey are summarised in Table 10 (see below).

Table 10: Summary of responses to the NMBC Parkside survey, 2004

| | | | STATUS IN SCHEME | | | | TENURE | | | |
| | Total | | Demolition | | Retained | | Owner | | Tenant | |
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Responses received	166		83	50	84	50	132	80	34	20
FOR	88	52	39	23	49	30	68	41	20	12
AGAINST	58	35	37	22	19	11	43	26	13	8
Undecided	22	13	7	4	15	9	21	13	1	1

Source: NMBC, 2005

At the time of the Council survey in 2004, around 80-90 of the 523 houses in Parkside were empty. Therefore, the total 166 responses to the survey represented a near 40% response rate. Looking more closely at the results of the survey, when the responses are split between those who stood to lose their homes and those whose homes were going to be retained, there are some marginal, if important, differences. Of those whose homes were going to be retained, 58% were in favour of the scheme going ahead. Conversely, of the responses received from those who stood to lose their homes, less than half (47%) were in favour of the scheme. With respect to tenure, a higher proportion of tenants than owner-occupiers were in favour of the scheme (59% compared to 52%), though we do not know how these responses were split across those living in houses that were due to be demolished or retained.

The Council's dystopian accounts of life in Parkside and the reported survey figures are also in sharp contrast to an earlier survey that was conducted by the Parkside Focus Group in 2003 (PFG, 2003). Based upon 198 responses, the resident-led survey indicated that:

- 75% of residents were happy living in Parkside;

- 80% were in favour of their houses being refurbished;

- 80% felt they had not been fully consulted on the future of the Parkside; and

- 100 people (52%) did not understand the options being offered by NMBC.

Conducted just one year prior to the 'official' Council survey, it appears that 75% of those who responded to the PFG resident-led survey were happy living in Parkside. Most were in favour of refurbishment and there was little enthusiasm for demolition. One of the residents who had been involved in producing and distributing the survey, confirmed this:

> Well, as a group we went to a terrific amount of trouble to go round with a questionnaire and we got the answers. People were strongly in favour of remaining where they were and we understood - we'd been led to understand - that the money could be spent in bringing the area up rather than knocking it down. I still feel sure that these houses could have been brought up to modern standards for less money than it's costing to buy them to knock them down (Joe, interview, 2006)

In the event, the Parkside demolition went ahead on the basis that just over half (52%) of the responses to the official survey were in support of clearance. This raises a number of critical issues. Firstly, residents informed me that they had been assured by a senior councillor that any scheme would only go ahead on the basis of there being overwhelming support from residents: "Promises made by the Leader that only an overwhelming vote for the acceptance of the plans would allow them to go forwards were shown to be false when the bid for funding was sent to government on a vote of 52%" (Joe, personal communication, 2006). Interviewees complained that, despite the close-run nature of the outcome (a matter of four or five votes) there was never any recourse to independent verification of the result. In addition, many residents told me that the results were never formally presented to them. Also of

concern is the fact that in 2003, 100 people who had replied to the resident-led survey indicated that they did not fully understand the options being offered by the Council.

As per the Focus Group's 2003 survey, most of the people that I interviewed in Parkside had many positive things to say about living in the area. It was, after all, the place where they had chosen to make their home. This is not to say that residents didn't have any concerns about living there since several of them did. But, following Vale's research with residents of public housing projects in Boston, one might say that "Most respondents seem to regard themselves as living in *communities with problems* rather than as *problem communities*" (1997: 173). I certainly did not get the sense that people felt 'trapped' or 'marooned', as officers routinely suggested.

In the main, Parkside residents mostly rejected the negative representations of their area. For example, the Chair of the Focus Group conceded that "it looks bad, but then you've only got to spend a day or two here to realise that it isn't but [council officers] don't have the time to do that" (Martin, interview, 2006). Another resident agreed:

> Well, I think they [NMBC] see it as bleak, but they want to see it as bleak, they don't want to see the good bits. I mean [in my street], I've had people come and visit me and they've said, 'Isn't it quiet?' And it is, it's quiet (Mary, interview, 2006)

Seen through residents' eyes, Parkside, as a place to live, was generally unproblematic and people would jump to its defence when it was denigrated by outsiders:

> We'd come to a meeting with NDC and Parkside was brought up with the NDC and this guy, I didn't know where he were from, he got up, he says my answer to Parkside is pull 'em all down because they're full o' druggies and all sorts...I says excuse me, and there's only me from Parkside there, I says excuse me, can I just ask a question, Chair, I says where are you from sir, he says [a wealthy suburb], ooh that got me and I says I'm from Parkside, I says I've lived there 38 years and I says you've not got a clue what you're talking about (Larry, interview, 2006)

These sentiments were echoed by Mary who had also lived in Parkside since the early 1970s:

> ...it's no worse than other areas, it's just no worse, you've got drug dealers at [name of wealthy suburb] they're everywhere, you don't have to be a poor class person to be a drug dealer, I mean some wealthy people are druggies aren't they?...[T]hey always look on this as a poor area, there's some better off people down here than what they know, but they're better off because they've stayed down here and lived within their means (interview, 2006).

Similarly, a young woman who visited the housing surgery for re-housing advice remarked that: "It's not as bad round here as people think it is. We've never had any

problems. By mistake, I once left the keys in the door but nobody broke in - nothing was touched. It's a good community". Moreover, when people did experience problems they often relied upon others within the community for emotional and/or material support to get through: "[there] are people that you know you can rely on and they know they can rely on you and I suppose it, it makes life look a little bit nicer than it does for other people, having people like that around you" (Martin, interview, 2006). Asked what was good about Parkside, Sandra immediately replied: "nice, friendly neighbours next door who I could rely on" (interview, 2006).

Several people suggested that the council and the local press had exaggerated, even sensationalised the problems in the area in order to respectively legitimise its demolition and sell newspapers. These were just two of the headlines from the front page of the local newspaper in 2006: "LIVES AT RISK AS YOBS GO WILD IN [PARKSIDE]" (29 June; and "RESIDENTS LEFT STRANDED IN THE 'BEIRUT OF [NORTHERLY]" (24 August). For journalists seeking a shorthand spatial stereotype, Beirut is frequently invoked as the archetypal city of ruins: it represents a classic example of the practice Wacquant (1997) describes as 'urban Orientalism'.

Walking through Parkside on a cold, dark January evening - the first time I'd visited at night - I certainly did not get the sense that I was walking through some sort of urban nightmare (Macek, 2006) as NMBC officers had intimated. What struck me more than anything was the ordinariness of the place:

> It's all so ordinary. What can I write? A cold January evening and people have got fires burning in their hearths – real fires where you can smell the smoke, mixed in with the warm, savoury aromas drifting over from the takeaways across the road. It's dark but people are taking their dogs for a walk and putting their bins out and their recycling boxes. People are coming home from work and presumably looking forward to getting in the warm and putting their feet up. A taxi driver is getting into his black cab ready for the night shift; his family are waving goodbye from the doorstep. With terraces like this you can easily see in people's living rooms as you walk past – your eyes can't but help be drawn to the brightness and the life within. People are eating dinner, reading the paper or settling down to watch TV. It looks like some kids are annoying their parents. You hear people laughing and arguing. It seems much like anywhere else really - not at all what I'd expected and prepared myself for. Officers had told me to 'watch my back' and they'd regaled me with tales of drug dealing and brutal violence. I wondered to myself had I come to the right place? (field notes, 25 January, 2006)

This was my view as an 'empathetic outsider' (Relph, 1976). In the remainder of the chapter I present a view of Parkside 'from below', that is, from the perspective of the people who were either still living there, in the process of leaving or who had already been displaced. The 'view from below' presented in this chapter is also meant to encourage a different way of looking and one that challenges the strong tendency to see Parkside through the myopic lens of urban regeneration and the medium of house prices.

Whilst recognising that 'home' and 'place' has many different meanings, following Porteous and Smith (2001), I focus on two: "home as centre – a place of refuge,

freedom, possession, shelter and security", and "home as identity – with themes of family, friends and community, attachment, rootedness, memory and nostalgia' (2001, 12). Here, I begin to try and unpick what is lost by focusing on how Parkside residents viewed 'home as centre', the idea that home is a place of shelter, a haven, a 'castle' even:

> I have lived here for nearly 40 years. I am lucky enough to live in a fairly large house with a good-sized garden...Like lots of other people, my home is my own little castle where I can relax, unwind and wish to remain (Sandra, interview, 2006)

Another woman who had been forced to leave Parkside as a result of the scheme conceded that Parkside was the first place she had really felt at home:

> Now I can honestly say that there are a lot of places where I've lived where I've dreaded going home, for various reasons. I have not wanted to go home because of where I was living or who I was living with. But that house ...it was my home, my safe place, in a place that I really liked...I don't recall having those kind of warm, cosy feelings, do you know what I mean? It had never happened to me before and to actually feel warm about going home...(Michelle, interview, 2006)

Michelle's comments also indicate how home becomes a place of safety and 'warmth' – a comforting, life-sustaining haven that one looks forward to returning to, especially after, for example, a serious, life-threatening illness:

> ...six and half years ago I contracted meningitis and I ended up in intensive care...they lost me twice...they had to jump start me a couple of times and after two and a half weeks I was fortunately well enough to be released from hospital. They wanted to release me into the care of somebody else, a relative or a friend or whatever. They didn't want to let me go back to my own house. But I felt that strongly about my home that I absolutely categorically refused to go to anyone else's house no matter how much they wanted me to. I wanted to be in my own home, in my own bed where I knew I was safe, secure, secluded, comfortable with all this light and nature around me. I wouldn't go to somebody else's house I felt that strongly about where I lived. You know, coming back from near-death and wanting to go back to your own house...

The familiar surroundings of home helped Michelle recover – indeed, it was the only place she wanted to be after having gone through such a traumatic experience. Another resident, who had moved to Northerly from London around fifteen years ago, described it in these terms:

> ... being comfortable where you are...makes it much better for you when you're going through other things in your life, like working, changing jobs, sort of things like that. If you've got a sense of comfort and safety - and that is to do with the people and friends in the area as well as everything else - then it means other things you do in life are much easier. You've got sort of a support network. You don't get that in a lot of places nowadays.

Interviewees also highlighted how living in Parkside also had several practical advantages. For one thing, housing in the area had always been relatively low-cost, providing people on low incomes with opportunities to buy or rent reasonable standard homes at affordable rates:

> I thought [the demolition proposals] were such a shame because the smaller houses in [name of streets] were very affordable. They could have been good starter homes for young folk, divorced people and those who are widowed. Because of how life is nowadays with more people living on their own through divorce and single mothers and such like, they would have been ideal. You know if you're down on your luck financially, things aren't going too well, you can say get a mortgage on something like that and it helps you feel more secure.

Joe, a retired tradesman, was being forced from his rented property where he had long enjoyed very low rental payments as a result of a long-standing controlled rent agreement. Uncertain about where he would go and how much rent he would have to pay in a different house, he found the prospect of moving deeply unsettling and unnerving:

> My home is marked for demolition, and I think that it is a disgrace that I should be forced to move home at the age of nearly 75 years. The council have paid scant notice to the feelings of residents forcing through their plans at any cost to the lives of residents... Promises that no one would lose out financially by the scheme are obviously not sustainable: I could not rent another identical property for less than two to three times what I pay now – this for the rest of my life – and I will lose the benefits of being in a protected private tenancy (Joe, personal communication, 2006)

Not only this, Joe, who did not own a car, would also lose the convenience that came with the neighbourhood's proximity to the town centre: "There's big advantages to people of living here because it's so close to the centre of town... if I lived elsewhere it'd take me so much longer to get there...when you live on your own you've got stuff to cart about and carry... it's much easier when you live near to the town centre (interview, 2006). Larry, a joiner who had lived in Parkside for the past forty years, took a similar view:

> I mean, one of the main reasons I like the area is that it's so handy for town. I've got the best thing in the world, you know: I've got a [working men's] club at the end of the road; it's handy for the motorway and the railway station. I'm happy where I am...I don't want to go out of town, I mean where else can I go, where else would I go from here?

As well as being close to town, Parkside residents were also close to several areas of open space and a new artificially created 50-acre lake. I asked another long-time resident, David, what he liked about the area. In addition to a continuing, if diminished, sense of community, he replied that: "I can still get me dogs out and go out on t'fields at t'bottom, they can't take that away. I can still walk down to the lakefront with me dogs...I like where it's situated, close to town, like I say, it's close

to the lake too. I'd hate to leave the area. I grew up here. What more can I say? It's my area and that's it" (interview, 2006).

Although the Council was citing poor housing conditions and limited housing choice as justifications for the demolition programme, few interviewees actually mentioned these matters without being prompted to do so. Indeed, *contra* these claimed defects, several interviewees valued terraced housing for a number of reasons, including, for example, its thermal qualities:

> LC: One of the things researchers keep saying is that terraced houses aren't suitable for modern living and people don't like them. How do you feel about them?
>
> Mr Harris: just because they're terraced doesn't mean they're necessarily bad. OK, a semi- may be a bit better... but you get lower heating bills in a terrace because of the heat from next door. I've lived in terraced all me life.

In a context of rising domestic fuel bills and deepening fuel poverty, such advantages should not be overlooked.

For David, terraced housing symbolised and encouraged a close, high-density, communal life that could not be found in the suburbs:

> It's what I'm used to. I'm used to a community where everyone lives close together. There's no way I'd move into a semi-detached at [name of suburb] where you know your neighbours but that's that, it wouldn't suit me at all. It just wouldn't suit me. It's not what I've been used to. If someone were to turn round to me and offer me a big detached house, you can have it, I'd tell them to stick it, I would...I'd rather stop down here.

This form of 'we-being', the working-class sense of 'being with others' noted by Allen (2008a) and, indeed, many earlier observers of working-class communities (see for example Hoggart, 1957; Young and Willmott, 1957) was important to many residents. For example:

> I used to have a well-paid job and people used to ask why do you live there when you could live where we live in [name of suburb] and my answer to them was always, do you know your neighbours? How well do you know your neighbours? And none of them did and that's the difference I suppose (Martin, interview).

Years before the Conservatives rediscovered the notion of community in David Cameron's much vaunted 'Big Society', one young woman noted how she and a group of neighbours had regularly swept the public areas around their houses and cleared litter from the streets in response to the apparent cessation of public services in the neighbourhood:

> The Council stopped coming down here. We used to get up and sweep it up, every day, that's how much we cared about this street looking good, we used

to sweep this street up...litter and everything, because we cared that much and everyone worked together.

Home is also a place of ontological security (Saunders, 1984). A recurrent theme in the Parkside interviews was that the affordability of the housing in the area had enabled many people to 'stand on their own two feet' and buy a home that met their needs without becoming excessively indebted. This was particularly the case for several female interviewees, whose homes in Parkside had been the first place they had lived after separating from former partners. Thus, for example:

> ...when I first bought that house I was on my own because my marriage had broke up...I lived down south so I came back here with the kids and I had enough money to pay cash for that house, that's why I were proud of it, because I'd done it myself, no help from any man, I'd done it myself, you know and it were lovely, really, really nice (interview, Mary, 2006).

Michelle described it in the following terms:

> I mean I'd never owned a property before living in Parkside, so purchasing a property when I'd never owned one in my life was a massive thing and I'd moved from sharing a house and always paying some form of rent into my own property. I knew that was the one, I knew as soon as I walked in, as soon as I saw the layout of the house, as soon as I saw the location and I'd met some of the neighbours. I knew that it was just perfect for me...(interview, 2006)

Familiarity with the area also gave people a sense of safety and security. Where outsiders were scared of walking through the area at night, residents had few concerns in this respect:

> Everybody used to say to me, you'd been out on the beer all night [in town], it was two o'clock in the morning and you're walking home? [tone of incredulity]. Well, yes, why shouldn't I. Parkside is safe. Now there are certain areas on the other side of the dual carriageway I wouldn't walk down but this side of the main road, definitely. I've never had any qualms about that. I've walked home quite a few times. (Vicky, interview, 2006)

Ironically, it was the Council that actually posed the biggest threat to people's safety and their ontological security (see Croall, 2009, for discussion on wider definitions of 'community safety').

In contrast to the material Allen (2008a) presents from his interviews with Kensington residents, the residents I interviewed in Parkside seemed more eager to talk about home in respect to the second theme of 'home as identity' and readily discussed issues related to place, memories, belonging and community. Where many of Allen's interviewees expressed notions of home that related to a basic 'reality principle', for Parkside residents, home was not just *somewhere* to live but rather *the* place where they lived, the focus of their lives, the base from which they daily went out into the world and returned. It was, in short, a place of intense meaning. The differences with Allen's findings might reflect the fact that my interviews were conducted mostly with people who had either lost or were at risk of losing their

homes. For people in such circumstances, the deeper meanings of home and the actual/potential impacts of losing home seemed to have acquired a more elevated position in their consciousness. Under normal circumstances, where there is little threat of losing one's home, these deeper meanings, King (2004) suggests, may be taken for granted. As per Allen (2008a), home is normally something that is 'just there' in one's daily life and its sustained presence means that it rarely crosses our minds. At the same time, however, the fact that comparatively few Parkside interviewees talked about home as refuge – as haven – might be indicative of the damage done to this particular sense of home by the threat or actualisation of demolition and forced displacement. Victims of a different manifestation of 'domestic' violence, home was no longer the secure, safe place that people once thought it was.

Nevertheless, for some interviewees, home remained the place where they could retreat from the world and be themselves. Thus: "I've been able to be me in my house" (Michelle, interview, 2006). For some, there was great excitement in being able to live independently, to test themselves, confront challenges and discover who they were: "It's shaped me, I've grown a lot stronger emotionally...I've not had to be so-and-so's partner, I mean I don't know if it'd have been different had I bought the property with someone but for me it was discovering who I was and everything about the house allowed that to happen, you know" (Michelle, interview, 2006). Over time, people developed a settled, synergistic relationship with their homes and the surrounding neighbourhoods, what we might call an 'accommodation': "It's the place where I have lived almost all of my life and it's the place where I feel most comfortable" (Joe, personal communication, 2006). I asked Joe how living in Parkside had shaped him as a person: "That's not easy to answer. I suppose living in this working class area has caused me to grow up with working class ideas and mores..."

Gradually, home became part of people's identity: "Home is where you spend a lot of time and you invest in it and home is, it's not just bricks and mortar, it's part of you..." (Chris, interview, 2007). Chris, a keen gardener and DIY enthusiast had 'invested' considerable energy in making his modest end-terrace a welcoming, homely place for him and his wife. Unhappy at work, where an indifferent management had dulled his initiative and enthusiasm, Chris had thrown all his energies into his home. For him, it represented his 'vision' and he proudly showed me the photographs he had taken before his home was demolished (see Plate 5 below). When I interviewed him, though some 18 months had elapsed since his move, his pain and anger was still very obvious. The Council had effectively taken away his life-sustaining vision.
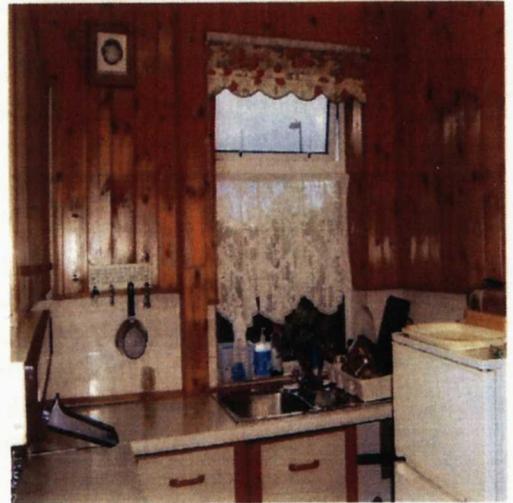
Plate 5: photos of 'Chris's' home, Parkside, before it was demolished

This notion of 'investment', not just in the narrow financial sense of mortgage or rental payments, but the personal and social investment of time spent relaxing, socialising, raising children, doing housework, gardening and/or handiwork and improvements, was mentioned by many of the interviewees. Over time, people effected a steady accretion of emotional investment in their homes. Following Tuan (1977), the daily experience of life lived in a relatively small space, eventually produced a place that was slowly built up through an everyday sedimentation of meaning. People's homes provided a very private, micro-scale, intensely personal geography known only to the inhabitants.

People had also 'invested' in important social relationships within the wider neighbourhood and, whilst recognising that Parkside did suffer some social problems, residents had acquired the requisite knowledge and supportive social networks to be able to comfortably deal with any problems that arose. It was frequently a case of 'better the devil you know'. One resident, who did not want to move, described it in the following terms: "Having lived in a community you have the local knowledge. You know who, where, what to avoid. You've formed the relationships. It's difficult to uproot and start all over again, you know, to begin again with new neighbours and such. You've already put the social investment in" (field notes, 12 January 2007). Parkside, it could be argued, already had a wealth of social capital, *contra* NMBC's rationale for the current research project. Looking at Parkside from a middle-class, outsider's perspective, however, council officials were incapable of seeing and/or understanding this existing social capital. Parkside simply had a different form of social organisation to that experienced by council officers. Understood on its own terms, however, Parkside made sense.

These long-term processes of emotional and social 'investment' are what make the idiosyncratic values that people attach to home so different from the mere exchange value that is reflected in the market price or rental level. Although Martin's house was not being demolished under the agreed masterplan, it had been scheduled for demolition in the original plans. I asked him how this had made him feel:

> It would just be, losing a bit of me if you like. I mean, you've seen the house, it's nothing special, I mean, it's a normal house like everything else, but [name of partner] and I put our life into this. I mean all our life together has been spent here. The garden, it's got all our pets in that have died over the years... it would genuinely be like losing a part of yourself and also, it doesn't matter how hard you try, when you sort of split physically from people, you do keep in contact for a while but those contacts become less and you lose that sense of friendship that you've got when you know that someone's round the corner. At the moment, I know if I rung any of them up and said I needed a hand, they'd be round. It's difficult if they live more than a walk away...so you lose that support network (interview, 2006).

Some of the interviewees had spent considerable time and money making their homes more liveable and engaging in a more overt form of place-making. It was

about imprinting their identity upon the dwelling space in order to better make it *their* home:

> ...many people say to me, my mate, for example, he says I can't understand you and your missus stopping where you are. I say, why? He says why don't you move, I mean a family could go in...I says, I've been in that house 38 years, I own that house, I've done everything in that home... I've done all t'work on it me-self, do you think I'm gonna gi' it up and start again...I've done it all for me family, I says, it's mine, I've done it, everything you see in this house is done by me. I'm happy with it...I've no rent, no mortgage, no overheads...They don't realise y'know...

The need to claim ownership of place was felt particularly strongly by Larry, given that he had twice been forced to move as a result of earlier urban regeneration schemes in the late 1960s and early-1970s:

> ...I've been down here thirty-eight years now and when they said they want 'em all down I thought 'Oh no, not again'. I've been through it twice before, right, I thought I don't want to make a third time of it. When things were coming out about what they were doing I didn't like the idea of having to move and pay rent or another mortgage. I thought, I've paid my dues, me and Christine are happy where we are. We could have moved years ago when t'kids were here but we stopped, we set us stall out and we want to stop here full stop. We didn't want to go anywhere...we're happy in us little box and that's it. It's our castle (Larry, interview, 2006).

The strength of Larry's opposition to NMBC's proprosals meant that he became closely involved in helping to establish the Parkside Focus Group in order to mount a more determined and organised resistance to the demolition plans.

Underlying much of the opposition to demolition, though often frequently difficult to articulate, were the personal geographies of home that were invisible to others and, most especially, NMBC: "they just see it as bricks and mortar but it's more than that" (Mary, interview, 2006). Martin struggled to express what was special about his home:

> I don't know, how can I put it, it's home. It's hard to say what makes it special. I mean it's where I met [name of partner], it's the first place, well, it's the only place I moved to when I moved up from London. But it always just, I felt welcome here from the first time I came and it's always felt like home.

Joe had moved to Parkside as a child, just before the outbreak of the Second World War. He was still living in the rented home that he had grown up in, which, as noted above, was now scheduled for demolition. Asked what his home meant to him, Joe replied: "yeah...well, it's home, you know, it's a place where I'm at home, it's the place where I've always lived".

Given the intensity of meaning of their home-places, Joe, Mary and Michelle all found the prospect and reality of moving most distressing. Their anguish is thrown into sharper relief when one asks the questions, 'for what' or, more pointedly, for

whom? Who was reaping the benefits from their upheaval? Given that Parkside residents prized the neighbourhood's proximity to town and its accessibility to the railway station and motorway network, many residents could see how the area would be attractive to developers: "I think [the development] is because of...where we are, I mean, we're close to where the stadium is going to be and a leisure park and then there's the new lake and what have you. I mean it's going to be big business soon isn't it" (Sandra, interview, 2006). Respondents were therefore quite cynical about the Council's motives: "...the first time that I met [name of scheme manager], one of his first comments was, 'Well, it doesn't look nice when they come off the motorway'" (interview, Larry, 2006). David took a similar view: "They needed some land. They created problems by announcing it a long while before they had any intention, so people got out and sold up cheap". Without using the actual term itself, people readily described a process of state-led gentrification:

> I think it's about money...they're wanting it to be like, you know like [nearby city] with flats, this, that and the other. Like the flats at [new waterfront development], they're a joke, the prices. And like they've gone up now and they're doing [name of town centre retail development], ooh, and we're getting a Debenhams and the Mayor's said that like he wants it to be an up and coming place, like, as good as a city. They're wanting it to look pretty, you know what I mean, they're wanting it to look this certain way to attract people to come and buy here, they don't want it like it is, it's all about money (Sally, interview, 2006)

7.6 Summary

In this chapter, residents' comments suggested that Parkside was frequently misunderstood and misrepresented by 'outsiders'. Many of the interviewees liked living in Parkside because of its convenience and affordability, whilst many had also developed strong attachments to their homes and the neighbourhood as a result of several years of residence. Some residents had lived there all their lives and Parkside was all they knew, it was what they were comfortable with – it was, in short, their home. People were very much rooted or emplaced and those who were being forced to move were deeply unsettled by the prospect of having to give up the homes and friendships that had long provided familiarity, reassurance, support and a degree of control over their lives. Echoing King's (2004) comments about home being the place where we most actively value inertia and the absence of 'transformation', people just wanted to be left alone to quietly get on with their lives without all the upheaval and distress of being forcibly displaced. As Joe told me, all he wanted was to be able to enjoy his retirement in peace, in the place where he had spent most of his life:

> Really we're not asking for anything from the government bar our basic pensions which we've worked all our lives for but we're not even asking. We're managing along nicely on our own, we're not making any demands...so why can't they just leave us alone? I don't think they've

looked into it really. They've not looked into any of the personal problems it causes...they just look it as lines on a map.

What this chapter demonstrates, I hope, is that in order to understand displacement fully, one needs to get a sense of what is at stake, of what is being lost by those most adversely affected. Critical gentrification research must further cure planners and policy-makers of their 'myopic' tendencies (see Porter, 2009a) by helping them to better 'see' what is already there. For now, however, having paused and established some sense of place, I must turn to examine the different approaches by which the state, in its determination to produce space, tries to wrest homes from people who are very much emplaced.

Chapter 8

HMR Part I: Demolition by discourse

Geography was not something already possessed by the earth but *an active writing of the earth by an expanding, centralizing imperial state*. It was not a noun but a verb, a *geo-graphing*, an earth-writing by ambitious endocolonising and exocolonizing states who sought to seize space and organise it to fit their own cultural visions and material interests" (O' Tuathail, 1996: 6, original emphasis)

8.1 Introduction

Language and 'spin' played a significant role in Labour's approach to government (see for example Fairclough, 2000; Hall, 2003; Levitas, 1998); it has also played an important role in HMR (see Allen, 2008a; Webb, 2010). As Tuan reminds us: "Words have consequence. Almost everything we say illuminates some object and casts shadow over others" (1991: 693). At the most basic level, the term 'Pathfinder' is perhaps suggestive of urban exploration, of creating 'legibility', of clearing a path (for gentrification?). In a similar manner, Goetz (2003) describes HOPE VI as 'clearing the way'. This chapter considers how language has been used to 'soften up' the 'targets' of HMR: language constitutes the first wave of assault on people's homes.

Where the previous chapter focused on issues of home, place and the development of affective bonds with place(s), this chapter, by contrast, is the first of three empirical chapters which are, in essence, concerned with practices of 'place-breaking' (Friedmann, 2007). In this particular context, 'place-breaking' might be understood as those processes by which meaningful places are turned into empty brownfield space for subsequent redevelopment. But the state cannot simply take away people's homes without proper justification. Following Hajer (1993) the state, in concert with its academic and private sector partners, must create a problem that is amenable to a particular form of intervention, i.e. demolition.

My argument in this chapter is that HMR was not the evidence-based policy that it is so often claimed to be (see for example Cole and Nevin, 2004; Leather *et al*, 2007; Ferrari and Lee, 2010) but rather a classic example of 'policy-based evidence', an exemplar of what Slater (2008) terms, 'decision-based evidence making'. In the context of the Blair government's target for building 60% of new homes on brownfield land, I argue that HMR could alternatively be understood as an attempt to create a problem of a particular nature and magnitude that would serve to legitimise the demolition of thousands of perfectly habitably homes in order to free up urban land for redevelopment. "Policy makers and practitioners argue that objective, academic evidence demonstrates the need for housing market renewal" but, as Webb (2010: 3) goes on to argue, "this evidence is actually the construct of a highly political environment and demonstrates the utility this evidence has for specific interests involved in urban renewal".

This is where Hajer's (1993; 1995) insights into how certain conceptions of a problem are constructed and privileged become particularly useful. Success in this argumentative 'game', that is, discursive dominance or hegemony, Hajer argues, is an essentially socio-cognitive product that is determined by credibility, acceptability or plausibility and trust. HMR emerged as a credible way forward largely as a result of the extensive programme of research that had been conducted by CURS in Liverpool and the North West. As Leather *et al* emphasise: "It is doubtful whether any previous regeneration programme has been developed from a sounder evidence base" (2007: viii). But all this evidence, arguably, was very much oriented towards demolition as the preferred way forward. Moreover, as I discuss later in the chapter, there are reasons to believe that the evidence may have been exaggerated. With that in mind and adopting Hajer's framework of discourse analysis (1993, 1995), the remainder of the chapter examines how demolition was legitimised through the construction of a low demand/housing market failure story-line that invoked recurrent spatial tropes, what we might after Bourdieu (2000) term as 'geo-doxa'.

8.2 The 'low demand'/housing market failure story-line

Telling policy problems as coherent narratives; as 'stories' with beginnings, middles and ends, with heroes, villains and innocent victims, Stone (1988) argues, is a powerful, 'emotionally compelling', instrument of policy making. One of the sub-regional HMR partnerships, *Transform South Yorkshire*, has itself made explicit reference to the use of a story-line to describe the development of its local HMR strategy: "A particular emphasis for the Transform research was the use of data to construct a narrative — a storyline - covering what happened in the area in the past and what this implies for the future." (Docs/odpm/odpm_comm_027421.pdf). The essence of the low demand storyline is perhaps best summarised in the introduction to the ODPM document (2005: 1):

> In the closing years of the last century and the first few years of this one, the prices of houses in parts of some of our northern cities and towns fell to prices well below their apparent worth. Those who could do so moved out. Homes were abandoned and some of the most disadvantaged in our society became trapped in neighbourhoods characterised by dereliction, crime, antisocial behaviour and poor services.

It emphasises an apparent spiral of decline involving abandonment, dereliction and crime. Anticipating the comments of some of the Northerly officers that I interviewed, the remaining residents are portrayed as 'trapped' victims of circumstances beyond their control. In this way, HMR is able to position itself as a heroic urban rescue mission with the incoming middle-classes in the vanguard.

The low demand story-line emerged in a series of research reports that examined the phenomenon in the specific context of North West England at the end of the 1990s (see for example Nevin *et al*, 2001). Critiquing this work, Allen (2008a) posits the existence of an 'end of history' discourse in relation to terraced housing that derives from the researchers' class-inflected, marketised view of housing as occupying a

'space of positions' within a competitive, sub-regional housing market. Webb (2010) similarly identifies a 'discourse of neighbourhood decline' that served a number of purposes:

> ...as well as giving low demand an area characteristic stretching beyond individual properties, it precludes the possible existence of a static and relatively benign form of low demand. When used in conjunction with the causalities of obsolescent housing it also results in an argument that certain areas are structurally and inherently uncompetitive (see Ferrari, 2007) as a consequence there is no chance of them improving in popularity without state assistance.

More worryingly, however:

> The uncritical adoption of the concepts of "structural competitive disadvantage" and "neighbourhood decline" is dangerous because it potentially justifies housing providers to undertake "pre-emptive strikes". It marginalizes the legitimacy of opposing perspectives and reconstructs residents' interests in line with the HMRI rationality (Webb, 2010: 10).

Allen (2008a) and Webb (2010) both make an important contribution to the idea that discourse has played a major role in the development of HMR and in enrolling support from a wide range of actors. My contribution, however, relates specifically to the *spatiality* of the HMR discourse. Developing Hajer's insight that policy-making is, in essence, a matter of problem-making, my argument is that the development of HMR has been concerned not just with the creation of a policy problem but, principally, the creation of *problem areas*. As Dikec has argued: "Social constructionist approaches, while helpfully focusing on the construction of urban problems and policy discourses, neglect the role space plays in such constructions" (2005: 6). Dikec takes the view that urban regeneration "is a place-making practice that spatially defines areas to be treated, associates problems with them, generates a certain discourse and proposes solutions accordingly" (2005: 41) and he is adamant that "any analysis of urban policy has to critically analyse the ways in which policies constitute their spaces of intervention" (2005: 7). In the case of HMR these problem areas would also, ideally, if not deliberately, correspond with those urban areas where rent gaps were high, though not necessarily at a maximum, mapping out the contours of different gentrification frontiers.

Creating 'problem spaces' or 'areas of low demand housing' not only serves to define and delineate the area of intervention, it also sets apart its inhabitants and their housing as somehow different - as 'other' - whilst simultaneously reinforcing the normality (read superiority) of those who possess representational authority. This powerful 'othering', or what Wacquant (1997) has elsewhere termed 'urban orientalism', is necessary because demolition is not just an act of physical destruction, it is also heavily symbolic. In particular, demolition suggests that the people and places being destroyed have no value or meaning and should simply be swept away. They are scripted as being out of place, like dirt (Douglas, 1966). Consequently, if demolition is to be legitimised, the state must first render such places as lacking value and work to demonise its inhabitants. In order to legitimise demolition, HMR, I argue, has, to varying degrees, employed three principal

discursive strategies, constructing: (1) problem places; (2) 'empty' spaces devoid of people; and (3) 'disaster zones'. These spatial tropes are explored below.

8.3 Problem places

Following Hajer (1993) and Dikec (2005), the research that informed HMR could be understood as the creation of problem places through statistical, linguistic and visual means. This research was concerned with identifying and spatially delineating those areas that were either experiencing 'low demand' or at risk of 'low demand'. It was about marking certain places, differentiating them as 'other' and separating them out from the norm. In the M62 study, this was achieved principally through the calculation of a standardised composite risk score for every Census enumeration district in the Merseyside/Lancashire, Greater Manchester M62 corridor area. This exercise produced the map below (Figure 4) which shows those areas that scored more than 1.51 (the median score) on the combined risk index. As Nevin *et al* explain "Whilst this is an arbitrary threshold, we wanted to focus on those parts of the M62 Corridor that have the highest coincidence of a range of factors associated with low or changing demand." (2001: 47)

Figure 4: Map of the areas at risk of low or changing demand in the Merseyside/Lancashire/Greater Manchester M62 corridor, 2001
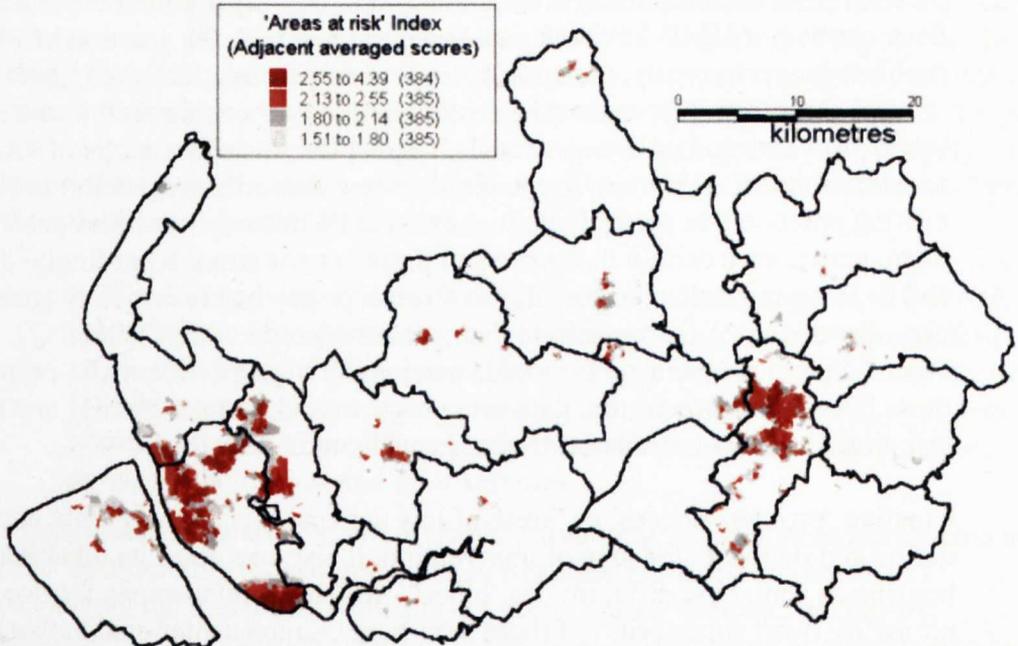
Source: Nevin *et al*, 2001: 48

With the enumeration districts with the highest risk scores presented in red (intuitively warning the reader of 'danger'), the map shows that the housing at risk of changing (low) demand was spatially concentrated in Manchester/Salford, inner

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Liverpool, Speke, Bootle and Knowsley. This modelled approach was later extended across England and provided the basis for the designation and delineation of the Pathfinder areas in 2002:

> The boundaries for the HMR areas did not follow established administrative contours but were largely shaped by the scale and incidence of market failure, as identified through the raft of studies by CURS ... The HMR programme was shaped according to a much more 'bottom-up' process in which the results of data analysis defined the territory... (Cole and Nevin, 2004: 19)

The drawing of the Pathfinder boundaries serves several rhetorical functions. This can be seen by examining the map of the *Transform South Yorkshire* HMR area (Figure 5, below)

Figure 5: Map of *Transform South Yorkshire* HMR programme area, by electoral ward
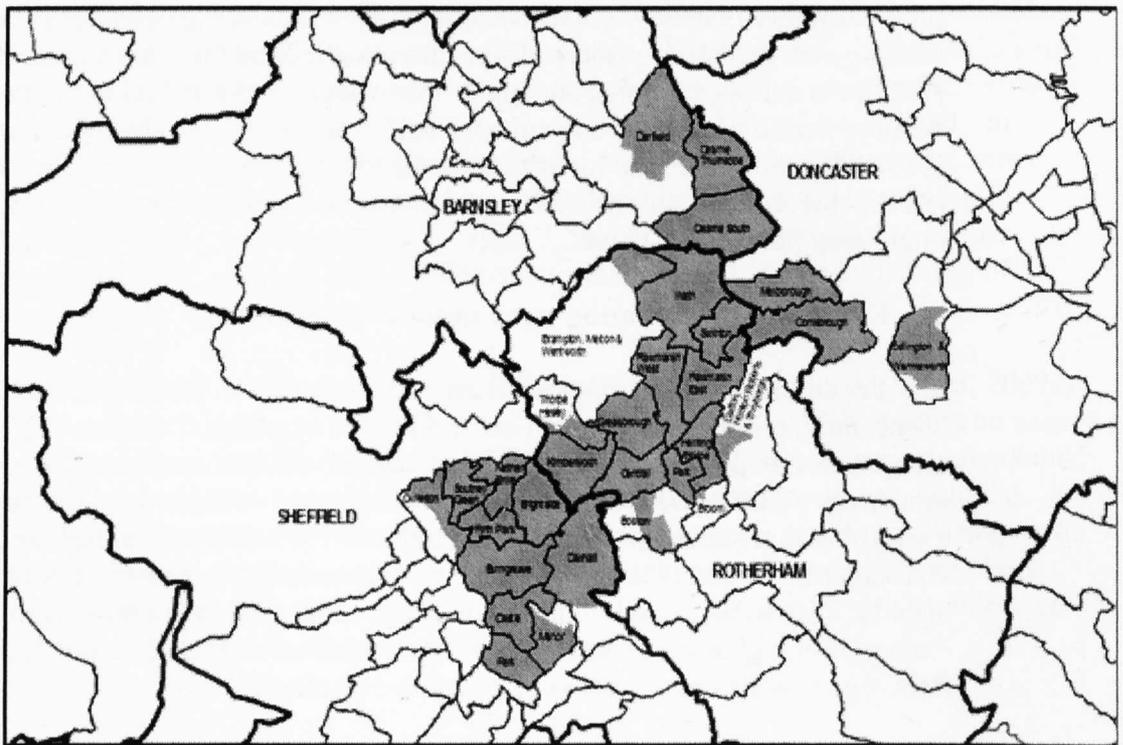
Source: Ferrari *et al*, 2003

The work of Harley (1988; 1989) and Pickles (1995) shows how maps frequently do powerful rhetorical work in very subtle ways: they are not simply innocent representations of reality. Ostensibly, the map shown above is fairly straightforward. The areas shaded grey are those electoral wards that have been included in the *Transform South Yorkshire* area of intervention, spanning Sheffield, Rotherham, Barnsley and Doncaster. But if we think about the map in a more reflexive and considered way, other subtle meanings come to light. Firstly, the delineation of an outer boundary and the shading establishes difference. It puts a boundary around the 'problem' and fixes it in space: "Discipline sometimes requires enclosure, the specification of a place heterogeneous to all others and closed in upon itself

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(Foucault, 1979: 141). The wards that are shaded are, in effect, 'othered' as being somehow different from their neighbours, as somehow abnormal. It also establishes a superior 'us' and an inferior 'them'. Putting a boundary around an area-based regeneration initiative is, in many ways, akin to a form of 'red-lining'.

The map also conveys the impression of a contiguous 'problem' zone that demands a 'joined-up', inter-authority response that goes beyond the conventional neighbourhood scale. Not only are entire wards affected but an entire sub-region. It adds value to the underlying statistical indices and tables by conveying visually the existence of a continuous zone – a problem that has an apparent geographic logic. It suggests a coherent problem that is amenable to bounded, area-based intervention. At the same time one also gets a sense of 'contagion' that must be contained and arrested.

In turn, the causality of the 'low demand' problem is assigned to the areas (the wards) themselves indicating that this is a problem that afflicts particular places – they are the problem rather than any wider structural inequalities in the economy. The uniform grey shading also serves to obscure all the other qualities of the places it encompasses: the HMR area simply becomes one big problem area. Yet it is highly unlikely that low demand would have been encountered uniformly across the shaded area. 'Blocking out' the HMR area of the map hides what's already there, adding to the impression that that is a regeneration space - a space for intervention – rather than an array of unique and interesting people and places.

8.4 Empty spaces: creating terra nullius

In order to construct an imagined terra nullius, the HMR story-line must empty places of meaning, people and value. This "politics of emptiness" (Allen, 2009c) is not altogether unexpected. As Lefebvre has argued, the abstract spaces of capitalist modernity – bureaucratisation and commodification – "make a tabula rasa out of everything that stands in their way" (Lefebvre, 1991: 285). Similarly, Porter notes how "Urban policy-makers in the UK are currently enthralled by the urban renaissance agenda. ...However, making those policy agendas work in practice requires that policy-makers re-imagine the places in their jurisdiction as essentially empty" (2009a: 139). Beauregard writes of a process of discursive displacement:

> Places are never emptied. Rather what occurs is a form of discursive displacement. Planners and designers substitute a professional narrative for a multitude of shared histories, collective remembrances, and personal experiences. Unwieldy stories about the place are suppressed and replaced by more actionable understandings." (2005: 54)

Thus, not only are residents physically displaced, they are first discursively displaced. Despite Liverpool being bestowed with European Capital of Culture Status in 2008 and recent population growth in central Manchester, the architects of HMR would have us believe that the two cities were akin to abandoned 'ghost-towns':

Both major centres contain considerable areas of derelict land and premises, and in some areas the roads, pavements and general environment reflect economic and social activity of a long gone era. Additionally the physical infrastructure of the core of the two conurbations was constructed for much larger populations raising issues relating to the sustainability of the neighbourhoods (Nevin *et al*, 2001: 7).

As Porter has argued in relation to the use of CPOs in Birmingham:

> ...to attract/developer interest, the council must create a 'blank slate' to offer to the market – a place with no memory, no people, no community, no spirit. Just a flat, uniform, empty patch of dirt, with all traces of earlier life expunged (except where they might usefully turn a profit) (2009a: 144).

Across the HMR 'grey' literature, one therefore finds that neighbourhoods are repeatedly characterised as de-populated, de-humanised space through a vocabulary of emptiness that speaks of, for example: 'voids'; 'abandonment'; 'brownfield sites'; 'land that is under-used"; and, at worst, 'zones of opportunity'. It is worth recalling here that the HMR areas were home to a total of nearly 1.9 million people! In compulsory purchase parlance too, neighbourhoods subject to CPO are described simply as the 'Order Lands', whilst incumbent residents' homes are reduced to numbered plots. As discussed in Chapter 3, the effacement and erasure of these places and their working-class residents is further assured by the invisibility of the working-class in urban research.

The myopia with which planners and developers see existing places (Porter, 2009a) is demonstrated by the photograph below (Plate 6, overleaf) which appears on page six of the Urban Task Force report (DETR, 1999). It is at first glance unremarkable, an aerial shot of East Manchester that shows a mix of urban land-uses, with the foreground dominated by what appears to be a large council estate comprising a mix of tower blocks and low-rise housing. The photograph is representative of many urban areas in the UK and therefore unexceptional. Until, that is, you trouble to re-read the caption that accompanies the photograph.

Plate 6: "East Manchester: Land going to waste (English Partnerships)"

East Manchester: Land going to waste (English Partnerships)

Source: DETR, 1999

Now, just to be clear, the caption is from the original report - it's not mine. According to *Google Scholar*, at the time of writing, the Rogers Report has been cited 457 times and further investigation reveals that none of these articles have cited the caption itself. All of those citing the report have quickly passed over it, perhaps not giving it a second glance. But there it is on page six in black and white: "East Manchester: Land going to waste". In my view, this choice of words is hugely revealing: this simple caption perhaps tells us more about English Partnerships (as was), the Rogers Report and its authors than all its 220-pages of text. Indeed, it tells us much in about how urban elites apprehend the urban realm in general. To my mind, it exudes a frustration that profits are going to waste, that potential ground rents are not being exploited as they should. In the picture, council housing and the thousands of lives, loves, joys and sorrows that it sustains - all the existing cultural landscape - in fact, is described unashamedly as *'Land going to waste'*. It does not represent highest and best use of the land. But English Partnerships and now its successor, the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), have been able to use their compulsory purchase powers to, in effect, force "the proper allocation of capital to land" (Harvey, 1982: 360), to ensure that land is 'recycled' in an efficient manner so as to extract maximum value. Under s.159 2(b) of the Leasehold Reform, Housing and Urban Regeneration Act (1993), the HCA, constituted as the local 'Urban Regeneration Agency' is able to acquire "land which is situated in an urban area and which is *under-used or ineffectively used*" (emphasis added). Anything below

'highest and best use' – such as inner-urban council housing - is therefore up for grabs: it is effectively 'land going to waste'.

Unfortunately, it is not clear whether English Partnerships penned the caption or merely provided the photograph. Nevertheless, one must ask did the authors of the report even *see* the council housing – or any of the existing activities - in the photograph? Or was it, in their eyes, an instant *tabula rasa*? Massey has previously described this affliction, peculiar to planners, developers and urban designers, in relation to the development of edge-of-town council estates in the 1960s: "The progressive planners, it has to be said, on occasions evinced an attitude redolent of that of English colonizers in Canada or Australia. They simply didn't see the existing inhabitants. Here was open space, ripe for development" (2002: 467)

8.5 Disaster zones

Problem places and empty spaces came crashing together in the conclusion to the report of the 2002 Select Committee on Empty Homes:

> We received many moving letters from those trapped in areas of low demand. They did not prepare us for the desolation that we saw on our visit to the North West. The rows of abandoned terraces, the broken windows and the burned out houses were shocking. There are 280,000 houses in and at risk of low demand in the M62 corridor alone. The already gigantic costs to individuals, communities and the businesses and public services working in those areas will be even greater if markets at risk collapse. (HMSO, 2002b: np)

There is no sense in which these areas might be people's homes. Instead, residents are again described as being trapped in conditions of abandonment and desolation, whose 'broken windows' (after Wilson and Kelling, 1982) signal that these are places that are no longer cared for. The 'burned-out houses' add to the sense of emptiness, of life disappeared. Berry's (1985) 'seas of decay' are brought to mind. If the members of the Select Committee were moved and shocked by what they saw, the report is keen to do the same for its readers, particularly those in government. With this in mind, the extract from the Select Committee report also stresses the scale of the issue with eye-popping numbers and 'gigantic costs', whilst also drawing attention to the urgency with which low demand should be addressed in order to prevent 'collapse'.

If policy-making is problem-making, the maxim 'the bigger the problem the better' rings true. Creating a large-scale (in this case sub-regional) 'disaster' scenario is certain to mobilise a large cross-section of interests and create the sort of powerful discourse coalition that ensured HMR was accelerated to the top of the political agenda (see Webb, 2010). The figures reported in the Northern Way Growth Strategy were suitably apocalyptic:

> The Centre for Urban and Regional Studies (CURS) estimates that around 1,500,000 homes are at risk and perhaps up to 400,000 should be replaced...

Based on current rates, over the next ten years some 167,000 homes will be cleared. This is well below the rate required. (Northern Way, 2005: 53)

'Disaster zones' also provide the poverty research industry with a steady stream of research income, from baseline evidence-gathering, development of recommendations, ongoing advice and, eventually, post-project evaluation.

Reiterating the trope of emptiness and de-population, Brendan Nevin included some big, jolting numbers in presenting his evidence to the Inspector at the Liverpool Edge Lane public inquiry in January, 2008 (see Nevin, 2007). He was subsequently questioned on this by one of the principal objectors, Bill Finlay:

> Finlay: Can you explain why, in a report about housing, you talk about population?
>
> Nevin: Why? Because it's so striking. To bring the magnitude of it to people's attention: an American style population loss... I think the housing market in Liverpool has increased exclusion...People have left the city and this has left behind a social and economic – I don't know how to say this – disaster area (field-notes, 15 January 2008).

In this brief exchange, we have 'American style population loss' leaving behind a 'disaster area'. Not surprisingly, this echoes the comments of the 2002 Select Committee to which Nevin and Ian Cole were 'specialist advisors'. Absent public sector intervention in the form of HMR, the Committee advanced its own alternative version of the 'false choice' between gentrification and continued disinvestment. It was, rather, a choice between HMR or a disaster zone: "The alternative is that our northern cities will consist of a city centre surrounded by a devastated no man's land encompassed in turn by suburbia" (HMSO, 2002b: para. 161). One sees repeated reference to Detroit, as an archetypal 'shrinking' city/disaster zone:

> What urban housing markets – particularly in the largest northern conurbations – were doing was a highly visible symptom of future outcomes for cities generally. The spectre of abandoned properties (as raised by Lowe *et al.*, 1998) recounted, albeit briefly, the potential of wholesale US-style urban abandonment of the sort that has been exemplified in response to structural changes in places like Detroit (Leather *et al*, 2007: 47)

Similarly, in an angry response to Jenkins (2007), Nevin retorts, "If readers wish to assess how the do-nothing option would work in practice, I recommend a trip to Chicago or Detroit, cities that have seen vast population loss and dereliction. Many of their neighbourhoods have been in decline for 50 years, and show no signs of recovery" (2007). Comparing the emergent situation in late-1990s northern England to Detroit was guaranteed to scare politicians into doing something.

Following Jacobs *et al* (2003) we can say that the 'low demand' story-line, invoking the spatial tropes of problem places, empty spaces and disaster zones, came to dominate the discursive space, establishing a inexorable path dependency for those places that were at risk of experiencing 'low demand'. This closed down the possibility of policy options other than demolition. There was no alternative: "What

would happen if we left them? Without our intervention these places are doomed" (interview, NMBC housing officer). Similarly, Jo Boaden, Director of the Newcastle-Gateshead Pathfinder, was adamant that the 15-year programme of the Pathfinder would be a success:

> Of course it's going to work. We're going to make it work; it's got to work. What's the alternative? Do we allow the urban core of our big, vibrant, Northern cities to decay? If we do nothing, we leave people in really awful situations. Negative equity, living in places that suffer from abandonment and neglect. It's a huge opportunity and so, absolutely, it will work.

One might say that the officers involved in HMR saw it as a 'huge opportunity', in the manner of, say, Brooks' (2005) infamous 'silver-lining' to Katrina, discussed in the introduction to the thesis. In northern England, the realisation of this silver-lining required a spatial story-line that positioned Liverpool and other northern conurbations as exemplar forms of urban dystopianism. Conceived in this way, HMR can be seen as a 'disaster recovery' programme (Allen and Crookes, 2008).

In order to ensure that the demolition option became the preferred option, evidence from the fieldwork for this research suggests that the housing disaster scenario was subject to some exaggeration. Whilst a comprehensive challenge to the quantitative evidence base for HMR was beyond the scope of this thesis, the discussion below highlights sources from three different Pathfinder areas which imply that the data on housing vacancies may have been exaggerated.

The first of these sources is Bill Finlay, a non-statutory objector who gave evidence (against Liverpool) at the second Edge Lane inquiry (Finlay, 2007). Finlay, a qualified planner, had been manager of Liverpool City Council's Research, Policy and Strategy Unit at the time the Council commissioned the CURS research team (led by Brendan Nevin) to conduct research into the sustainability of the city's neighbourhoods. Finlay recalled how his Unit had been involved in collating, geo-coding and 'cleaning' housing data for CURS; he also outlined his detailed knowledge of the housing vacancy data that was supplied to CURS and the systems and processes by which it was collected.

Finlay's written evidence describes how he and his colleagues became aware that the draft reports being produced by CURS were overstating the level of vacancies in the social rented sector: "We noticed that the volume of counts of vacant properties in the City was much higher than we would have expected it to be from the historical evidence that I had obtained at 31st April 1998." (2007: 45). Due investigation by Finlay and his staff traced the discrepancy back to an error in the way the housing 'void' data was being collected. Alerting the CURS research team to this discrepancy, "Peter Lee [CURS] told me he too had come to the same conclusion from his analysis of the data and had shared his concerns with Brendan Nevin, who had told him to "ignore it" (Finlay, 2007: 46). Despite the protestations of Finlay and his colleagues, CURS did not amend their research to incorporate the new data. The final reports from CURS therefore exaggerated the level of housing instability across the city. Finlay felt that this reluctance to admit the new data and amend the reports pointed to the possibility that larger forces were at work in the background and he

draws attention to the formation of the North West Housing Forum which became a lobby group for HMR (see Cole and Nevin, 2004; Webb, 2010).

Finlay's argument in the inquiry therefore amounted to the claim that "Liverpool City Council and its key housing partners developed and subsequently implemented policy from 1999 onwards...in the full knowledge that it rested upon data analysis which was unreliable" (2007: 5). Furthermore, his determination to pursue the matter and ensure that the corrected figures were used was not at all welcomed by the Council and he was temporarily suspended from his post.

The series of reports that CURS produced in Liverpool could be described as foundational insofar as they provided the basis for subsequent work in the North West and, eventually the rest of the north and West Midlands, work that quickly led to the establishment of HMR and the demolition of over 31,000 houses. Finlay's evidence, in my opinion, however, casts serious doubts over the integrity and accuracy of the CURS research. More significantly, it was not just Finlay who made such claims. His assertions are to some extent supported by Cameron (2006) who suggests that the CURS report on the North East housing market (Leather *et al*, 2002) may have over-played the severity of the low demand problem in the region. As one of his interviewees in a North East local authority attested: "no one agrees with the figures in that [CURS] report any more". Other interviews added further weight to these concerns: "Doubts were raised about the continued validity of [CURS] data on low demand and the interpretation of the problem it presented. In South Northumberland, too, it was suggested by an officer of a regeneration and economic development partnership that the CURS study overstated market failure..." (Cameron, 2006: 6). In Hilltop, as my own research shows (Chapter 9, this volume), it was the Council and the master-planning consultants that exaggerated the low demand problem: vacancy rates on the estate were actually less than half of the *national* average.

The other dimension to all this 'disaster zone' rhetoric, of course, is the competitive regime that determines the allocation of HMR funding. Since the introduction of SRB and City Challenge local authorities have had to compete with other authorities to secure regeneration monies. Bidding for regeneration funding demands that local authorities present the worst possible image. As Morrison notes:

> ...communities are bidding to be viewed as the 'worst off'. In this way, the competitive bidding system can be seen to discourage positive discourse and imagery about a place (2003: 150)

8.6 Summary

Territorial stigmatisation has played a key role in the formulation, development and implementation of HMR. The social construction of 'low demand' housing and 'housing market failure' was, I contend, essentially a way of legitimising the clearance and assembly of large sites to fulfil the demands of land-hungry developers. Where conventional forms of gentrification tend mostly to re-imagine places on an upwards trajectory, HMR and other forms of gentrification-by-

bulldozer must first represent places in ways that rule out the possibility of any solutions apart from demolition and redevelopment. Only then can those promoting redevelopment begin the task of re-valorising the site.

Thus, in the early years of the new Millennium, HMR provided policy-makers and developers with a comprehensive justificatory framework – a 'storyline' - that would permit them to demolish housing on a scale not seen since the 1960s. The story-line on which HMR rests is therefore fundamentally a *spatial* story-line that involves the territorial stigmatisation of places as a preface to demolition. In the context, of a broader 'end of history' discourse (Allen, 2008a), policy-relevant researchers and policy-makers have employed three overlapping discursive strategies, variously constructing 'problem places', 'empty' spaces devoid of people, and, extremely, 'disaster zones'. At the same time, the chapter has highlighted how these socio-spatial constructions have been subject to considerable exaggeration.

Klein's (2007) work has demonstrated how the state manufactures or uses 'disaster situations' to open up new markets for capital and Allen and Crookes (2008) argue that the founding 'architects' of HMR created the impression that housing markets in certain parts of northern cities had either failed or were on the verge of failure, thereby creating the potential for a 'housing market disaster'. HMR might therefore be understood as an exemplar form of Klein's 'disaster capitalism'.

In terms of the strategies and tactics that the state utilises to take people's homes, discourse is just one of several ways of exerting 'displacement pressure' and winkling people out of place. The two subsequent chapters analyse some of the other tactics that are employed alongside and in conjunction with territorial stigmatisation.

Chapter 9

Taking Home, Part II: Attrition

attrition, *n.*

a. The action or process of rubbing away, wearing or grinding down, by friction.

b. *Mil.* The wearing down of the enemy's strength and morale by unremitting harassment, esp. in phr. *war of attrition.*

(OED Online, accessed 18 January, 2011)

9.1 Introduction

This thesis conceptualises HMR as a long-term process of state-led gentrification-by-bulldozer that destroys working-class homes and communities to assemble land for new-build developments that will appeal to a more affluent population. This particular approach to accumulation by dispossession progresses through several, successive stages, from initial problem-framing to displacement, clearance and new-build redevelopment. Focusing primarily on the language of HMR, the previous chapter examined the creation of the 'low demand' storyline and the *discursive* effacement of working-class neighbourhoods as the first stage in this process - an initial attempt to 'soften up' or mute resistance. The subject of this chapter is the next stage in this process, that is, the local-level implementation of HMR. Looked at from below, implementation represents the point at which the low demand discourse suddenly becomes real and intrudes into people's lives, invading their lived spaces. The rhetorical clearing is the precursor to a process of real displacement and clearance.

Specifically, this chapter examines the implementation of HMR in Northerly, with particular reference to issues emerging out of NMBC's plans for the regeneration of the Hilltop estate. Bringing together data from several sources, including official documents, interviews and workplace participant observation in the NMBC Pathfinder Team, the chapter explores the *modus operandi* of HMR in Northerly.

The implementation stage of HMR is critical. Its successful implementation requires funding, direction and personnel. It requires an entire organisational infrastructure – a bureaucracy - underpinned by the emergence of shared values,

commitment and the development of an apposite culture and world-view: the HMR ontology we saw emerging in earlier chapters must also be reproduced at the local level. It is at this level where officers and consultants must ground the policy discourse and convert the will to transform into concrete plans that will deliver, at least in their eyes, physical (and social) transformation at the neighbourhood/project level. Housing demolition involves some of the most challenging work in local government. Dealing with opposition, overcoming people's natural resistance to the disruption of their lives and moving residents out constitute a large part of the labour of implementation. The crucial point is whether this is done with sensitivity, empathy and respect.

Some HMR partnerships, notably Merseyside *New Heartlands*, have shown much greater readiness to acquire properties for demolition by compulsory purchase rather than by agreement with the owner. Such 'head-on', confrontational approaches have often been counter-productive, however, insofar as they have frequently served to galvanise residents' determination to stay put. The exercise of CPO powers and resistance to them at planning inquiries forms the subject of Chapter 10. Elsewhere, other Pathfinders, averse to becoming embroiled in long, expensive and frequently acrimonious public inquiries, have tried to develop a less confrontational, 'softly-softly' approach. In particular, 'Metro' and its constituent Pathfinder authorities have been notable for their reluctance to take the CPO route. Such restraint is commendable, although the Strategic Housing Manager frequently expressed doubts about the merits of such a consensus-driven, dialogic approach. In such circumstances, reaching agreement could involve a considerable commitment of time and staff resources: "Demolition isn't easy. If we say it's going to take six months to do the consultation, double it" (field notes, October 2007). Whilst she was keen that the HMR team should develop good relations with residents, she conceded that the team had "got too much work to put in the time and relationship-building that trust demands" and, highlighting her recent experience, she half-seriously declared that: "Consultation is a waste of time. If we were to do it again I'd go for CPO straight away." (field notes, October 2007).

Ostensibly, where HMR was concerned with creating sustainable, 'mixed' communities, much of the work of the 20 or so local authority-based HMR teams was taken up with the daily grind of getting people to leave their homes for the purposes of 'site assembly'. Through a variety of formal and less formal practices, such teams have sought to 'winkle' people out of the way as quickly and assertively as possible and at the lowest financial cost. A more robust understanding of HMR therefore demands a critical analytical framework where implementation is understood not simply as a technical matter but as a form of 'statecraft' that involves the deployment a wide range of strategies, tactics and (dis)incentives to effect displacement. Some of these practices may be explicit, rooted in policy and formally documented. Others are less obvious and the term ' attrition' is introduced as a means of conceptualising some of the subtle, 'slow-burning', low-level practices and omissions that work to gradually 'encourage' people to leave. Being blunt, we might characterise these practices as professionalised winkling. Attrition, then, is essentially the enactment of 'displacement pressure' (Marcuse, 1986).

If it is accepted that the purpose of implementation is, crudely, *to produce empty space(s)*, then it follows that Neighbourhood Renewal Assessments, master-planning

and public consultation - key elements in implementing HMR – can no longer be understood simply as depoliticised, technical endeavours. They must rather be re-interpreted as instruments or tactics that seek to legitimise and effect the erasure of place. But not only does HMR envisage transformation in physical terms, it also seeks *social* transformation in the form of a different mix of residents. Thus, in the absence of a guaranteed right to return, public consultation on HMR must endeavour to get existing residents to support a future vision for their neighbourhood that does not necessarily include them. Those who face the prospect of demolition must suffer the costs of transformation whilst foregoing the projected benefits. Some may be happy to leave but, for many, it is a 'lose-lose' situation. 'Consultation' then becomes a matter of persuading residents of the merits of a plan that implicitly wants them out (Lupton, 2008). Close examination of the diverse and wide-ranging consultation undertaken in relation to the progression of the Hilltop scheme provides rich data on the troubling nature of consultation under HMR.

Within the broader aim of developing a better understanding of implementation as a process of 'removal' that forms part of a larger process of state-led gentrification, the principal objective of the chapter is to examine the early implementation of a specific 'redevelopment' project. Developing the concept of 'attrition' the case-study of the Hilltop estate shows how Northerly Council made sustained efforts to push through its transformational agenda in the face of strong, local opposition, highlighting a range of techniques that were employed to winkle residents out of their properties. Particular attention is paid to developments that followed the NMBC Cabinet's approval of the Hilltop scheme on 10 January 2007. This decision initiated a period of intense confrontation between the Council and residents with regard to the disputed levels of support for different options relating to the estate's future. As of Autumn, 2008, officers were still trying to work out a compromise between the masterplan's vision for change and the wishes of the majority of local people who had voted for less radical intervention and were keen to stay put.

To summarise, this chapter is essentially concerned with examining a culture and set of practices which are, it is argued, oriented ultimately towards the task of getting existing residents out and clearing spaces for new development. What the chapter describes, in effect, is a particular form of 'place-shaping' that facilitates the transition from working-class place to empty space to middle-class place.

9.2 Displacement by attrition: wearing and tearing the Hilltop Estate

9.2.1 Introduction

Humans have had experience of besieging places for several millennia. Over time, a range of tactics have emerged that combine the exploitation of psychological fears and physiological frailties with the simple passage of time. Such tactics are not entirely alien to the practice of urban planning. Indeed, as Graham notes, "the

division between urban planning geared towards urban growth and development, and that which focuses on attempts at place annihilation or attack, is not always clear" (2004: 33). As Berman argues, "One of the achievements of the great wave of modernisation that began in the late eighteenth century was to incorporate urbicide into the process of urban development...Its victims, along with their neighbourhoods and towns, vanish without a trace" (1996: 181 cited in Graham, 2004). Under the banner of transformational change, HMR, a particularly destructive, place-annihilating form of neoliberal urbanism, has been allowed to lay siege to places like the Hilltop estate. In the slow assault of Hilltop, the proven techniques of psychological warfare, time and the principle of 'divide and rule' have been joined by master-planning, 'consultation' and the not so subtle use of linguistic devices ('regeneration' rather than 'demolition') and local-level discursive strategies.

The essence of the Council's approach was summarised by a Parkside resident:

> I can't help but think that when the Council do not have their own way they remain quiet for a while and then continue to push, push, push what they prefer at a later date until they get the preferred results – when residents don't bother going to yet another consultation- thinking this will go on forever (Sandra, interview, 2006)

David, another Parkside resident was more succinct: "I think people get fed up because they'll only go so far" (interview, 2006).

I joined the HMR team just as NMBC's Cabinet was about to make a landmark decision about the first phase of the Hilltop scheme. On January 10th 2007, Cabinet approved the Hilltop masterplan as a guiding framework for the regeneration of the Hilltop Estate. In so doing, the Cabinet endorsed the masterplan's preferred approach (Option C) which recommended the clearance of the 360 houses on the estate, of which around 230 were social rented with the rest bought through Right to Buy, some of which were now being rented privately. These would be replaced by an unspecified, but smaller, number of new-build houses, the only condition being that any developer would have to include around 20% social housing in the new development. But clearly, given the lower housing density, the maximum number of social rented dwellings on the new development would be around 60 at most, compared to the original 230.

In particular, Cabinet gave specific approval for the first of the programme's five phases, which would involve the demolition of around 70 houses. The report submitted to the Cabinet indicated that 61% of all those consulted were in favour of Option C, the 'radical change' option (NMBC, 2007). This was how the different options were presented visually in the Masterplan:

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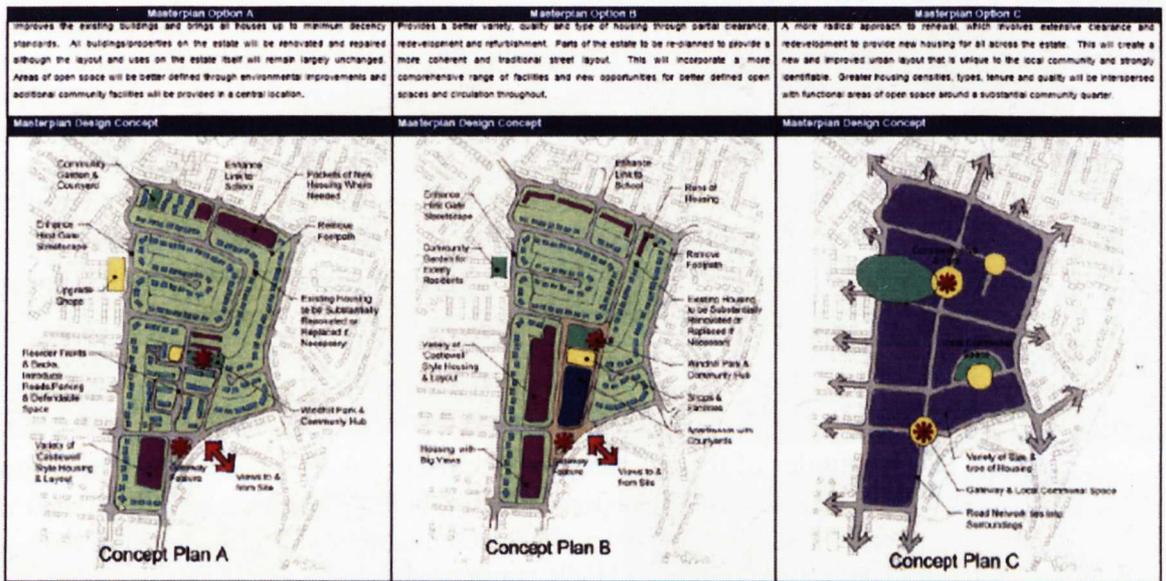
Figure 6: Proposed options for Hilltop – least change, moderate change and radical change (source: Hilltop Masterplan, 2005)

Now, imagine for a moment that you're a councillor reading through this Masterplan document. Where would your eyes be drawn to? I would argue that Plan C, the preferred option is given greater visual prominence than the others. It is not just the colour that stands out but the fact that it is also a block of colour. Having less detail and text than the other options, it is also easier on the eye. It is simple, lacks visual 'clutter' and has clear lines. The block arrangement gives the impression of a 'cleaner', more orderly layout, whereas in the more detailed plans, the finer detail gives the impression of a more chaotic, less accessible layout. Given the Masterplan's comments on Hilltop's isolation from adjoining neighbourhoods, the addition of numerous arrows also suggest that Plan C does a better job of connecting to other neighbourhoods. In addition, Plan C is also made more prominent through its slightly bigger size. Master-planners work with images so they obviously know how to attract attention through subtle visual devices.

The Cabinet decision was met with anger and disbelief from local residents. Some claimed that they had been misled by council officers who talked of regeneration but not demolition. Under the headline, *'Council used 'bullying' on homes plan'* a local newspaper reported that some residents claimed that they had been bullied into choosing the more radical option:

> They claim that they were not told that their houses would be completely demolished as part of the plans. [Name of councillor] said: "A lot of the feedback I've been getting is that a lot of residents didn't understand the officers meant total demolition and total rebuild and this has caused a lot of anger in the area. Our feedback was there was a lot of bullying in that process.

Such was the intensity of local feeling in the weeks following the Cabinet decision, council management recommended that officers should not attend scheduled public meetings due to fears over their personal safety. Under pressure from residents to re-do the consultation, NMBC eventually commissioned the Tenants' Participation and Advisory Service (TPAS), an independent consultative and advisory body, to

conduct an independent survey of residents' preferences. This produced a quite different set of results with majority support for refurbishment rather than demolition (TPAS, 2007). Nevertheless, regardless of this majority position, NMBC was still minded to undertake some demolition. Having reviewed the TPAS data at a finer, 'street-by-street' level, it identified pockets of support for demolition and argued that this fine-grain, targeted approach was more in line with the wishes of all residents (NMBC, 2008). More crudely, this 'patchwork' approach might be re-interpreted as a stealth strategy of deliberate blighting that involved boarding up and demolishing a number of houses around the area in the hope that those remaining will be encouraged to flee.

The remainder of the chapter takes a closer look at developments in Hilltop following the Cabinet decision. I begin, however, with a brief vignette that describes my introduction to the estate. The account is based on my field notes from the first week that I spent with the HMR team.

9.2.2 Would you live here?

I began my period of participant observation in the NMBC HMR Team on Monday 8 January 2007. On the Tuesday afternoon, there was something of a lull in activity so I took the opportunity to ask one of the officers directly, "I've been hearing a lot about Hilltop, what's it like?" The officer replied with the tone of someone in possession of scandalous gossip who was keen to share it with someone else, "Have you not been over there? You really have to see it to believe it..." Before he was able to finish another officer interrupted and joined in, eager to contribute, "yeah, the houses there are mingin'. I mean it. It's a real shit-hole" (field notes, 9 January 2007). The first officer continued, "the bathrooms on stilts...they're unbelievable. You have to see them".
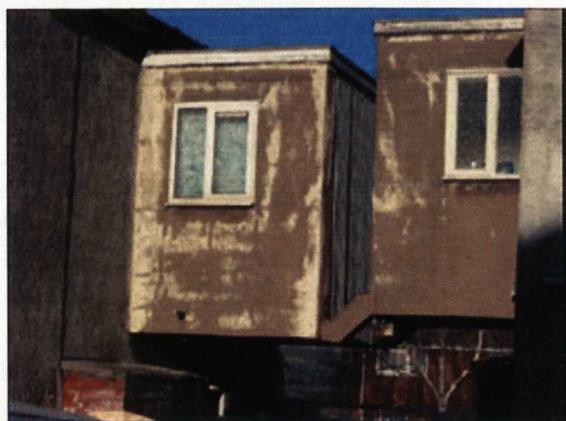
Plate 7: Images of housing in Hilltop, including the infamous stilted bathrooms.
(Source: Hilltop Masterplan, 2005)

Intrigued by officers' comments, I was subsequently given a 'tour' of the HMR-
funded regeneration areas by one of the Pathfinder officers. As we drove onto the
Hilltop estate, the officer turned to me and said, "Just take a look. I don't think I
need to say anything". As we drove very slowly around Hilltop Crescent, the officer
kept glancing across at me to gauge my response. I felt under considerable pressure
to conform to his perspective, to gawp, open-mouthed with incredulity at the houses
that were presented to me. This would surely be the reaction of any 'normal',
'respectable' person to this alleged spectacle of housing apocalypse. Consequently,
not wishing to be seen as somehow 'abnormal' at this early point in my research
with the Pathfinder team, I made several exaggerated attempts to appear suitably
shocked, raising my eyebrows and expressing mock surprise and horror as we
passed the houses. But in all honesty, apart from the unusual stilted bathrooms, what
I saw was very much like the council estate where I lived, neglected and untidy in
places perhaps, but generally quiet and unexceptional. Even after just a few days
with the HMR team, however, such was the prejudice and disdain directed towards
council tenants, I evaded any questions about my own tenure status. Anyway, few
people expect PhD students to live on council estates. So I went along with the
officer's expectations and tried to respond in an appropriate manner, that is, as
someone with similar, 'conventional' housing aspirations. We continued to drive
slowly around the crescent in silence, before pulling over to review the 'experience'.
The officer turned off the engine, "well, what do you think now you've seen it?" he
asked, clearly expecting a stunned response from me. I hesitated momentarily then

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replied, "Well, the stilted bathrooms are certainly different..." Before I could finish he rolled his eyes upwards: "Different??!!" he exclaimed, surprised and almost angry. The silence which followed was a little too uncomfortable and I interjected quickly, "Well, yeah, I don't think I've ever really seen anything like..." I tailed off. "Ermm – they're unique" I added. Clearly dissatisfied, even unsettled by my weak answer, he looked back down at the road in front of us, then slowly scanned the row of semis on each side, shaking his head disapprovingly. After a long pause, he turned back to me and asked, "Look at it, would you live here?" I said nothing, hoping my silence would register as quiet affirmation of the obvious disgust he had for the houses either side of us. Deep down, however, I wanted to retort, "Well actually I do live somewhere like this and regardless of how you might see it, it's not half as bad as you infer".

I present the above vignette as a means of demonstrating how HMR and other regeneration schemes compel us to look at places in a certain way. Following Allen (2008a), we are expected to view such neighbourhoods through the lens of normalised, conventional middle-class housing aspirations rather than seeing them on their own terms, as people's homes. From this perspective, social housing does not even make it onto the 'field' that constitutes the space of positions. In a context where owner-occupation is the norm, social housing becomes an aberration.

9.2.3 Traffic lights, 'playing God' and a marker pen

An internal meeting of some of the more senior Pathfinder officers, held on the day following the Cabinet decision, proved to be rather more disturbing. For my benefit, the meeting began with an explanation of the HMR team's 'traffic light' system of which I had seen mention in the minutes of a previous meeting between officers and key tenants' representatives:

> [Name of officer] passed a map round the group showing the breakdown of the streets on Hilltop with areas marked in green where tenants were in favour of the scheme and the red area where they were against. The majority wanted redevelopment in the area...We are looking at starting in one corner and when tenants see what is happening they will want it to move onto their properties. We are still a long way away from key decisions. However, consultation will involve everyone and will be brought to this meeting (Area steering group meeting, 18 July 2006)

Even here, in this short extract, it is possible to identify the mobilisation of several processes of attrition. The first might be described as 'divide and rule' and relates to the red-green 'traffic light system and its implications for phasing the implementation of the scheme. As In Liverpool and elsewhere, the 'elephant' of site assembly has to be broken down into manageable chunks or phases. Spatial and temporal phasing is akin to 'urban regeneration by a thousand cuts' - a sort of 'slow bleed' that allows the Council to focus its efforts on a small area in the hope that the blighting effects will spread to other areas. For maximum effect and least opposition from residents, the Hilltop scheme would commence 'in one corner' of the estate where residents were most supportive of 'redevelopment'. This might then achieve the next tactic of 'seeing is believing', the assumption that: 'when tenants see what is

happening they will want it to move onto their properties' (fieldnotes, January, 2007). Notwithstanding the fact that most people would be reluctant to embrace demolition in this manner ('they will want it to move onto their properties') the other implication of this sort of phasing is that the whole scheme develops a momentum of its own and becomes self-fulfilling as people begin to experience the reality of living in an area where more and more houses are being vacated, boarded-up and demolished. This is what Marcuse (1986) refers to as 'displacement pressure'. It is at this point where the classic 'fight or flight' decision kicks in and residents in the later phases may decide that they do not wish to live in a blighted area and 'vote with their feet'; owner occupiers may be rushed into negotiating sales prices that are lower than they would normally have accepted. "[I]f the flat next door's being set on fire and the kids are getting in are you going to move to somewhere you don't want because you can't stand the pressure? (interview, AHO, 2007). One sees a sort of creeping 'domino effect' at work, where demolition in one phase begins to generate intolerable conditions in later phases.

We also see the use of the term 'redevelopment'. This is an oft-used euphemism for demolition and my conversations with tenants' representatives and local officers who were not members of the HMR team suggested that whilst there was extensive reference to 'transformation', 'redevelopment' or 'regeneration', the word 'demolition' had hardly been mentioned in any of the consultation on the proposed scheme. This is how one resident described it in an interview with a local newspaper: "I think a lot of people were misled in the first consultation. People were being told 'redevelopment' - the word 'demolition' was never used - and so I think people took this as meaning 'refurbishment' " (local newspaper article, 24 October 2007). This misleading use of language, I might add, was noted by objectors at all of the public inquiries I attended and, not least, the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee in its 2008 review of HMR (PAC, 2008).

The meeting I attended was for officers only and it had been arranged fairly hastily to discuss the next steps following the momentous decision from Cabinet. My account of the meeting is based upon field notes that I made immediately after it had finished. The HMR Programme Manager began by reiterating the phased approach that had been agreed by Cabinet. Residents, however, were unaware of this phasing and, in particular, the residents whose homes were included in Phase 1 were not yet aware of the fact that they were part of an initial phase. The manager then started talking about the traffic light system. I asked her about this and she explained that the phasing was based on areas of 'least resistance' ('green') and 'hardcore opponents' ('red'). Leaving the 'red' areas until later in the process would provide the Council with the opportunity to demonstrate the benefits of the scheme to the more entrenched opponents who might then soften their opposition, if not change their minds. Unfortunately, for the Council, as one of the other officers noted, the houses occupying the corner of the 'site' (his word) that would make the most visible difference were owned by those most resistant to change.

The discussion then turned turns towards 'decanting', the preferred euphemism for displacement. Specifically, one of the officers asked how movements of residents from the first phase were going to be prioritised. At this point, the Programme Manager, now working with a large-scale plan of the estate, took out a red marker pen and commenced to mark up blocks of houses on the plan that were included in

the first phase. Decisions about who goes first were made rapidly on a fairly arbitrary basis and it occurred to me that, after all the hostility from residents, officers were actually quite enjoying this moment. 'Playing God' with the highlighter pen, the Programme Manager, a qualified planner, named one particular resident who had organised a petition against the demolition proposals. Pointing to the plan, she asked, "Is she in the first phase?" One of the officers nodded in agreement and, in reply, the Programme Manager said "Good, she can go first!" This was followed by a symbolic flourish of the highlighter pen as the Programme Manager made a strong point of deliberately putting a cross through the individual's house. All the officers who were present smiled at this.

Discussion then turned to informing residents of the decision to proceed with the first phase of the demolition. As the Programme Manager suggested cynically: "In the letter, put something like, "We value your involvement". All of the officers responded to this with laughter. This short meeting, where officers displayed a sickening indifference to residents' fates, constituted another eye-opening, if shocking, turning-point in my research. The Programme Manager unashamedly maintained this aggressive stance in a later interview: "I think [for] every scheme, there are people who don't support it, it's one of those things. I'm going to get her moved as soon as I can, get her out in one piece…she's top of our list [laughing]!"

9.2.4 Keep your enemies closer…

From being vehemently opposed to the scheme, the woman in question seemed to have a sudden, dramatic change of heart where she became very supportive of the Council's proposals. Indeed, she appeared in the widely circulated Pathfinder newsletter, where she was pictured smiling in her new council flat and extolling the virtues of her move. Months earlier, she and a neighbour had attended a meeting of the Council's relevant Scrutiny Committee, accusing the Council of lying: "[name of tenant] stated that Pathfinder had lied to them from the beginning about the amount of demolition on the Hilltop Estate" (Scrutiny Committee minutes, 29 January 2007). What could have prompted such a turnaround in attitude? A very important lesson that the Council had learnt from its experience in Parkside was the need to try and placate or 'neutralise' those who were the most strident opponents of the scheme, particularly if such individuals had the backing of the community. Thus, it was noticeable, for example, that the demolition proposals in Parkside stopped short of two particularly vociferous individuals, one of whom was the Chair of the Parkside residents' group. Two short blocks of terraces were therefore left standing where the others were demolished. The significance of this was not lost on those whose homes were being demolished:

> At end of the day, I'm going to say this because I feel very strongly about it, [name of Chair], he were glad he were re-elected on the Chair of the Focus Group because at the end of the day he were concerned about his house and if you notice they probably just stopped short of knocking his house down (interview, 2007)

Another interviewee was of the same opinion:

LC: You can refuse to answer this question - it might seem a little impertinent. But I mean, ermm, why do you think [name of Chair's] house is left standing? I mean there are some members of the group whose houses are staying, do you think they got favourable treatment?

Joe: No, I will answer it and no discredit to [name of Chair], but my answer is, yes, I do. There's no doubt about it, absolutely no doubt about it because not only [name of Chair's] but there's one chap across the road...who made a fuss at meetings and his house is left standing too and [name of another prominent resident], he lived in the same block as [name of Chair] too...

Those who 'made a fuss', it appears, were excused and excised from the demolition plans. In a similar manner, the Hilltop council tenant who was initially an outspoken critic of the scheme was, arguably, placated by being moved to a flat and area of her choice. Later invited to provide an account of her move, her positive comments may have influenced other stalwart opponents to soften their opposition. Of course, it also removes an important figurehead from the anti-demolition 'camp'. Attrition is all about sapping people's spirit of resistance.

9.2.5 Divide and rule

Apparent favouritism towards certain residents may also have had the effect of fomenting or deepening existing rifts among residents. Such divisions play into the hands of the Council, as the senior officer leading the Parkside scheme implied in these comments:

...how it started off there was a group of lead residents who were prior to the Parkside Focus Group, there was the Central ward Partnership people that were involved and then there were other factions in Parkside and another group or groups that were involved from the other side of the road and some who were anti-Northerly Council as well. [A]nd the thing was, or the good thing probably, or the bad thing, I don't know, was that they didn't get on with each other... (interview, 2006).

Tenants are also pitted against owner-occupiers who, invariably, though not always, have longer residence and more to lose financially. Those in favour of demolition rub up against those who are opposed: the Parkside Focus Group, for example, included residents from the three streets who were losing their homes and residents from the retained streets who would enjoy the benefits of external improvements to their homes, along with wider environmental improvements. The tensions arising from this would often be apparent in meetings of the Focus Group with those threatened with demolition often pushing for more determined opposition whilst the others exercised more moderate, restraining voices. Furthermore, as detailed below, in Hilltop, owner-occupiers who lived in adjacent areas and were unaffected by the scheme were included in the initial consultation. Such spatial and temporal phasing can also be exploited to create further divisions within the community.

9.2.6 The NMBC approach to consultation: communities in the lead or in the way?

The first thing to note about NMBC's approach to consultation in the Pathfinder areas is that it saw consultation more as a form of persuasion than a process for providing people with an opportunity to express their views. The comments below are taken from a report to Northerly's Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee:

> In some areas proposals developed by the master-planners have met with pockets of opposition...It is hoped that through the introduction of the demonstration projects and continued consultation, more residents will be encouraged to support the programme to the benefit of the whole community (Report to Scrutiny Committee, 27 February 2006).

Note also that those opposed to the programme are constructed as impeding prospective benefits to the whole community.

From its early experience in Parkside, where large public meetings had quickly become extremely adversarial, NMBC had moved away from holding such meetings in favour of one-to-one consultations with individual households. "We learnt not to do public meetings" as one senior NMBC officer put it (interview, 2006). But such an approach raises several issues. Where a public meeting provides for some degree of public scrutiny over what officers actually say, a one-to-one meeting offers no such opportunities. With no one else present, the resident has to take what the officer says in good faith. Unlike a public meeting which may generate minutes and press articles, unless the resident later comes forward, we have no third party evidence of what was said in a private meeting – the officers are not subject to the same levels of accountability. This absence of oversight is worrying on two counts because, firstly, officers were in the habit of stressing that the HMR schemes were effectively a one-off, 'now or never' opportunity and a 'no' vote would mean that the HMR funds would disappear elsewhere. This put residents under considerable pressure to vote in favour of the most radical option. Secondly, many residents did later come forward, claiming that they had been misinformed about the nature of the options they were voting for. Residents suggested that the different options had not been clearly explained: there was an emphasis on redevelopment rather than demolition and those who would be affected were given assurances that they would be able to move back. I asked a neighbourhood housing officer from the ALMO about this:

> LC: Do you think people understood what the options were when they were explained to them?

> ALMO officer: No, no I don't... you had Pathfinder officers going round and no disrespect to them [but]...I don't know whether the options were presented in a way to influence people. That's something we'll never know because we weren't part of the consultation. But it does make you wonder. I'd like to think not but when they [residents] come out and say well he told me my next door neighbour wanted to be knocked down and so-and-so over the road agreed with it, so I agreed with it...So I don't know...

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More generally, as one Parkside resident suggested, one-to-one meetings significantly change the power relations as there is no longer the unified opposition coming from a group of people: "...as individuals we would have had less clout that's for sure" (interview, Joe, 2006).

Ostensibly, 61% of households on the Hilltop estate voted for demolition but closer inspection of the figures revealed that this vote actually included a substantial number of adjacent owner-occupied households that were outside the scheme boundaries. Such households could likely anticipate higher values as a result of the demolition of Hilltop and the construction of new, owner-occupied properties close to their homes. Under pressure from local councillors, the HMR team agreed to commission TPAS to re-do the consultation. This excluded adjacent but unaffected households and produced a vote that was more or less the opposite of the first vote, with 60% of residents voting for decency works or partial demolition and refurbishment (see Table 11, below). Even with the bizarre inclusion of empty properties as a 'yes' vote in the 2007 survey, just 36% of households were in favour .

Table 11: Comparison of the results of Hilltop consultation on regeneration options Hilltop, 2005 and 2007 (Source: NMBC, 2005 and TPAS, 2007)

Option	NMBC 2005 % of respondents	TPAS 2007 % of respondents
A – decency works	19	45
B – partial demolition and refurbishment	6	15
C – extensive demolition and new-build	61	36
No works	9	-
No preference	5	4

The somewhat peculiar arithmetic of demolition-related consultation was also evident in Northerly's other Pathfinder schemes. At one location, comprising nearly 1500 homes, the Council suggested that their consultation had demonstrated that around 70% of those voting were in favour of more radical 'redevelopment' options, including demolition. But, given that only 70 questionnaires had been returned, those supporting demolition equated to just 3.5% of all households on the estate. Whilst officers would immediately point to the low response rate as providing strong evidence of apathy, many residents spoke of consultation fatigue and confusion as to what they were actually voting for and/or when it would happen. In Parkside too, there was a far from overwhelming 52% in support of demolition. One of the schemes at the centre of the New Heartlands public inquiry proceeded on the basis that it was supported by 51% of residents.

Notwithstanding these results, NMBC was undeterred and re-interpreted the results on a street-by-street basis to develop a new programme of selective demolition that reflected street-level rather than neighbourhood-wide preferences:

> The analysis above is based on overall 'estate' level scores, which clearly show only small relative differences between the two opposing options of refurbishment versus demolition. Therefore, analysis of the TPAS consultation exercise has also been undertaken on a 'street by street' basis. The reason for this is that this approach highlights distinct and majority differences of opinion and provides a sounder basis on which to base any proposed regeneration plans (NMBC, 2008)

Once again, the 'seeing is believing' manoeuvre comes to the fore:

> There is potential for this street by street phased approach to be used to demonstrate to local communities that new housing options are more attractive and viable than existing housing and thus communities may be encouraged over time to advocate for more proportions of retained stock to be subjected to demolition / redevelopment in the future (NMBC, 2008).

Through a long-term project-by-project approach (what amounts to attrition or deliberate blighting), NMBC held out the hope that a more radical scheme would be achievable:

> It is proposed that the most constructive way forward is to adopt a concentrated 'project by project' approach. By taking incremental steps in the implementation of regeneration, the opportunity to deliver a more radical scheme in the long term becomes a greater prospect (NMBC, 2008).

Under this new 'street by street' approach, Figure 7 illustrates how the properties shaded in blue would be demolished, along with the first phase, where demolition was already under way (shaded green):

Figure 7: revised demolition proposals for the Hilltop Estate

Source: NMBC

9.2.7 Over-stating low demand

The other disturbing aspect in all this was that Hilltop could not really be characterised as a low demand area. As part of my research I conducted a group interview with the Area Housing Officer and Estates Officer who had responsibilities for Hilltop. Both officers worked for Northerly's housing ALMO and were therefore not directly involved in HMR but they nevertheless had considerable working knowledge of the estate. Their view was that there were much worse estates in the Pathfinder area; Hilltop was actually a popular estate with many long-standing residents, low rates of turnover and very few vacancies. I asked them about this repeatedly:

AHO: Hilltop is not that bad. Like we said to you, those on stilts, they don't look very nice but we don't have a major problem letting them.

LC: And would you say it's fairly stable in terms of turnover of the people who live there? Have a lot of people lived there for a long time or...?

AHO: I wouldn't say there's that much of a turnover

EO: There isn't that much of a turnover and you do tend to get families staying in the area don't you. You'll get, say, a daughter lives six houses down from mum and Auntie lives just round the corner ...I find Hilltop is a community together like that, they tend to stay together

LC: Sorry to concentrate on this but one of the things in the Masterplan, it talks about low demand, basically that there are a lot of empty properties; people don't want to live there. Would you say that's true of Hilltop?

AHO/EO [together]: No, no

LC: So there aren't that many empty properties?

EO: I don't think there's any moreso than any of my other areas in [the Pathfinder area]

These officers' comments were verified in the Master-plan document which stated that the estate had a: "Low level of vacancies – *approximately 1.4% in comparison with the sub-regional average of 3.4%*" (NMBC *et al*, 2005: 12, emphasis added). This is hugely significant. It indicates that the vacancy rate at Hilltop was much lower than the Metro and all-Pathfinder average rates; indeed, it was actually half of the average vacancy rate for England (see Table 12, below). Yet, in clear contradiction of these reported vacancy figures, the introduction to the Master-plan had argued that the estate "exhibits some of the most acute signs of housing market decline and low demand in the housing market renewal area" (NMBC *et al*, 2005: 2).

Table 12: Vacancy rate in Hilltop compared with other areas

	Vacancy rate %
Hilltop estate	1.4
Metro Pathfinder area	4.8
All Pathfinders	7.5
Regional average	3.9
England	3.2

The Masterplan later adds that "Existing residents are hugely loyal to the estate due to social/community ties...If the estate was redeveloped with new homes then 86% of respondents would prefer to stay in Hilltop (NMBC *et al*, 2005: 14). At page 30 too, one of the strengths of Hilltop is seen as its "Desirability – People want to move into Hilltop, there are few empty properties". Elsewhere, minutes from one of the area-based Pathfinder meetings report that: "There are currently not many vacant properties in the area" (Area steering group meeting, 18 July 2006). This begs the question why has Hilltop been selected for demolition? Some clues can be found in the Master-plan:

> Occupying a good strategic location...the estate is situated on a steep slope and enjoys some of the best views of the [name of valley] countryside from almost every aspect around the site (NMBC *et al*, 2005: 2)

This is reiterated later in the document:

> Hilltop has a dramatic setting. Stunning views can be seen from many locations overlooking the countryside. The Master-plan has the opportunity to frame and use many of these to the best advantage. Hilltop itself is on a substantial slope, climbing from the south to a high point somewhere in Hilltop Crescent. Hilltop Avenue is where the hill is most dramatic and its best located houses offer views across the valley (NMBC *et al*, 2005: 27);

In short, Hilltop would provide developers with a very attractive site that the Council could clear relatively cheaply, given that most of the residents were council tenants with a relatively low proportion of owner-occupiers. Thus, the Hilltop scheme was never about low demand but rather about securing a prime piece of land with 'stunning views'. Goetz (2010) makes a similar argument with respect to the HOPE VI demolition of the Harbor View public housing project in Duluth, which was located on the hillside above downtown Duluth, affording impressive views of Duluth harbour and Lake Superior:

> Harbor View's advantages contributed to a significant sense of cynicism about the true motivations for the redevelopment. A number of residents felt that the HOPE VI project was simply a way to remove low-income people from a prime parcel of real estate. Some made reference to gentrification and what, from their point of view, was a barely-disguised attempt to take this land from them and hand it over to wealthier residents.

As one of Goetz's respondents remarked: "This whole HOPE VI project was and still is about money and the rich...Some greedy people decided that it was a choice area and decided to get rid of low-income families."

Goetz' example bears close resemblance to the situation at Hilltop. One can then begin to understand why NMBC was so keen to press ahead with Hilltop's demolition, despite considerable opposition from residents. This determination was manifest in some of the processes of attrition by which it attempted to winkle people out of place. Of course, if these different tactics don't work, the simple passage of time and the long-term physiological and mental strain upon residents facing a difficult present and uncertain future would obviously work in the Council's favour: the Council and its development partners simply had to bide their time. If they can't wait, however, displacing households then becomes a matter of enforced acquisition via compulsory purchase.

9.3 Summary

This chapter has demonstrated how the discourse and high-level objectives of HMR were translated into actual 'transformation' on the ground at local level. It has highlighted some of the practices by which local HMR teams attempt to 'wear out' the opposition to demolition through deliberate tactics of attrition, involving, for example, consultation, spatial and temporal phasing, misleading terminology and other forms of pressure. Residents were given the 'hard-sell' of HMR as a one-off opportunity. In one-to-one meetings *in their homes*, they were pressured into accepting more radical – transformational – solutions that would effect their displacement, all the time given assurances that they would be able to return to Hilltop.

The chapter also highlights, to some extent, the discrepancy between the rights of owners and tenants under HMR. The acquisition of owner-occupied properties will often necessitate the invocation of the acquiring authority's CPO powers to which owners are entitled to object. This, in turn, requires a public inquiry to determine whether or not the compulsory acquisition is in the public interest. Owners rarely win but at least the chance of a hearing, however unequal, is there. Tenants, however, have no such rights, as the AHO that I interviewed explained:

> We had a lady on [name of estate]. They're knocking down [name of estate] and she said she would only come out of there in a box…Unfortunately the whole block was emptied and she was the last one in there and she's been that poorly that she's now in residential care, so the block is going to be done…but that lady was just not shifting…what do you do with her…I mean if it's private you can stick a CPO on her but how do you tell this old woman that she's going come rain or shine?

Sticking CPOs on people, as this AHO so delightfully put it, is the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter 10

HMR Part III: Compulsion

Plate 8: Residents of Tunstall Street, Liverpool, protest against the Council's plans to demolish their homes (*photograph courtesy of Stephen Ord, Smithdown Against Demolition*)

...the house of every one is to him as his castle and fortress, as well for his defence against injury and violence as for his repose (Coke, 1604).

A man's home may be his castle, but that does not keep the government from taking it (Plager [Hendler v. United States, 1991] cited in Fee, 2006).

...the law itself becomes now the instrument of the theft of the people's land... and the operation goes on in a quiet, business-like way (Marx, 1967)

10.1 Introduction

Drawing on my experience of observing and participating in two public inquiries in Liverpool and one in Oldham, this chapter is concerned with what happened to those home-owners in HMR areas who determinedly 'stood their ground' and refused to leave their homes voluntarily. In such circumstances, the relevant local authorities, acting on behalf of the Pathfinder partnerships, invoked their powers of compulsory purchase in order to progress the task of site assembly and deliver a vacant site free of encumbrances.

"The 'system' of compulsory purchase", Roots (1999: 36) explains, "really comprises three distinct elements: powers, procedures and compensation...The power to acquire land compulsorily has to be provided by statute and is always ancillary to the primary functions of the body in question. When a body resolves to exercise such a power, it must then follow the procedures of the system...". The body exercising the power is usually a local authority though, as Hawkins (2005: 131) highlights:

> Urban development corporations made widespread use of CPO powers during their lifetimes and nowadays wide powers are available to English Partnerships [now the Homes and Communities Agency] and the [now abolished] Regional Development Agencies.

In promulgating the CPO, the 'acquiring authority' must advertise it in the local press and serve copies upon all parties who have legal interests in the land in question; they have 28 days to submit an objection. It should be noted here that the letters that are sent out to those affected are written in overly legalistic language that many people might struggle to understand. This was described by Stephen Ord (2006: 4) in his objection to the Liverpool New Heartlands CPO: "Even the initial letter states 'Must make a relevant objection as defined in section 13(6) of the Acquisition of Land Act 1981. (see part 3 of CPO for other conditions of this).' Even finding out what a 'relevant objection' was took me several weeks". Another objector, Mr Murphy (2006: 1) had only received the letter two days before the deadline:

> I have had to fight to have my documents served upon me as I was eliminated from the list of objectors for some reason and have only in the last ten days been included...I have now, on the 25th June been served with the Council's case documents, as it was delivered to a neighbour, who has since been on holiday, thus giving me 48 hrs to respond, this is clearly impossible and quite frankly unfair to expect it to be done.

Where there are objections, the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government directs a public inquiry to be held to hear evidence from both sides and determine whether or not the CPOs are in the public interest[31].The inquiry is held locally and conducted by a Planning Inspector who, at the end of the inquiry

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[31] Objectors with a legal interest in the affected land, known as the 'Order Lands' are known as 'statutory objectors'. Those objectors who have no legal interest in the land are known as non-statutory objectors.

produces a report to the Secretary of State with a recommendation to confirm, modify or reject the order (Roots, 1999). The final decision rests with the Secretary of State.

This chapter is split into four sections. It begins by examining compulsory purchase as a form of state violence. I then focus on the nature of public inquiries and look at some of the arguments that were advanced by the proponents and objectors in Liverpool and Oldham to respectively attack and defend the integrity of place and home. In an effort to try and crystallise some of the themes of the CPO/inquiry process I then focus on how the process and proceedings were viewed from the perspective of a single resident. There are many stories from the CPOs that could be told but I found the testimony of Elijah Debnam to be the most compelling. Following Hartman, Slater (2010) argues for the need to understand "displacement costs as emotional, psychological, individual and social". That is why I devote several pages to presenting Elijah's fight to remain in his home.

10.2 Property, state violence and Compulsory Purchase Orders

I first met Elijah Debnam at a public inquiry in Oldham in February 2007. An eighty-seven year-old veteran of the Second World War, retired railwayman and former NUR official, he was one of many residents fighting the demolition plans that were at the centre of the regeneration proposals for the inner-urban Oldham communities of Derker and Werneth. Designated as areas of housing market 'weakness' by the Oldham-Rochdale Housing Market Renewal Partnership, officials argued that the only way forward for these 'low demand' areas would be to replace much of the existing terraced housing with modern, 'aspirational' housing that would serve both to retain existing residents and attract newcomers to the area. In order to actualise this vision of a 'sustainable community', several hundred homes would first need to be demolished in order to make space for the new houses.

Seeing little chance of success in resisting the demolition plans, some people in the area agreed, with some reluctance, to 'voluntarily' sell their homes to the council. But many were not prepared to see their homes demolished and be forced into the difficult position of having to find somewhere else to live at the height of a housing market boom and take on new debt. Nor were they keen to suffer the stresses of moving and leave behind the supportive local networks of family, friends and neighbours. Confronted by a significant number of residents who were determined to stay put, Oldham Council served compulsory purchase orders on the remaining properties. These orders were met by 77 formal objections, which duly triggered a public inquiry to determine whether or not the acquisition of the properties would be in the public interest. It was at this inquiry that I began talking to Elijah, who stood to lose his 1930s terraced house and much more besides: the close neighbours who looked out for his welfare; financial certainty; the reassurance and comfort of a familiar environment and, not least, a home filled with memories, the site of most of his family life. Feeling settled and content, with the social and spatial patterns of his daily life now centred firmly upon his home, Elijah regarded compulsory purchase as a threat to his whole way of life. As he remarked to me at the inquiry, "This will be the end of my life if I have to go" (personal communication, 14 February 2007). All of the objectors held strong views but Elijah was particularly uncompromising in his

attitude towards the demolition proposals: "I'm not going... Some years ago I made the decision that I wanted to die here... if they want me out they'll have to carry me out in a wooden box" (field notes, 8 February 2007).

In order for the CPO to be confirmed, the council, as acquiring authority, must demonstrate that there is a compelling case in the public interest in order to justify the forced acquisition. But, as Allen and Marne argue, the idea of the public interest has been debased and "mobilised to legitimise policies that facilitate the pillaging and plundering of *inhabited* housing land from working class people and others (e.g. small and alternative businesses) by development interests" (2010: 58).

One begins to see how the violence of dispossession arising from what amounts to, in essence, a 'land grab', is legitimised and at the same time veiled by law, legal procedure and reference to the public interest. Box (1983) argues that the state uses its power to control the conceptualisation of crime to conceal and mystify its own propensity for violence and serious crime.

Using the term, 'legal violences', Blomley (2003: 121) argues that "violence plays an integral role in the legitimation, foundation, and operation of a regime of private property". Similarly, Imrie and Thomas, critiquing the compulsory purchase orders that were imposed upon small businesses in the regeneration of the Cardiff docks area, argued "that the legal discourses, practices and institutions of CPOs are powerful factors in perpetuating relations of social authority, power, exclusion and oppression" (1997: 1403). By invoking the public interest, and by routinising violence through the rational, socio-technical 'system' of compulsory purchase, public inquiries and evidence, it becomes possible to turn a blind eye to the reality of dispossession. Marx long ago highlighted "[the] stoical peace of mind with which the political economist regards the most shameless violation of the 'sacred rights of property' and the grossest acts of violence to persons, as soon as they are necessary to lay the foundations of the capitalistic mode of production" (1975: 717–718 cited in Blomley, 2007). As Blomley (2003: 130) argues, "violence provides a means through which property acts": "violence, whether threatened or implied, is one means through which law acts in the world. Violence is not aberrant, but central to law. It is not exceptional, but quotidian. Violence is not only a product of power, but also its vector". Citing Cover (1986), Blomley notes how "Law 'deals pain and death'...pointing us to the routine violences done with the active or tacit acquiescence of legal institutions and officials" (2003: 130).

But it is not necessary, Blomley (2003) argues, for violence to be physically enacted to have effect: implied violence, such as the mere threat of a CPO can be all that is needed. This threatened violence is an important weapon in the urban regeneration armoury. In evidence to the 1997-98 Environment, Transport and Regional Affairs Committee:

> English Partnerships considered that just having powers to compulsorily purchase land has been helpful for the Agency: they have rarely had to deploy them. Mr Dunnett of the Agency told us: "The fact that we have had them (CPO powers) has been extremely important and necessary when it came to the negotiation and discussion" (Cm 4080, 1998: para 167).

The Rogers Report further reminds us that "Compulsory purchase *and the threat of compulsory purchase* are powerful tools for securing urban regeneration (1999: 158, emphasis added). Similarly in Parkside, a report to NMBC's Cabinet noted that "The mention of compulsory purchase has been a sensitive issue with residents, but its use will only be used as an enforcement measure when negotiations fail to produce results" (NMBC, 2005: para.10). Clearly, for the besieged occupier, the imagined threat of CPO looms over any such negotiations.

Taking a long, hard look at CPOs, one could argue that the *threat* of using CPO powers constitutes a form of bullying. Furthermore, the confirmation of the orders could, *in certain circumstances*, be reconceptualised as an act of violence, a form of dispossession or, indeed, a form of theft. The dispossessed may get compensation but so do the victims of certain crimes.

This is not to say that compulsory purchase can always be characterised in this way. There are situations where CPOs are or have been used in a legitimate and progressive manner to overcome the obstruction and fragmentation of capitalist private property in pursuit of socially beneficial outcomes. In recent history, the taking of land and people's homes via compulsory purchase, however bureaucratic and insensitive it might have been, has frequently been done in the *public* interest, providing land for railways, hospitals, schools and new council housing. "The idea of the public interest", as Allen and Marne note, "was used in the nineteenth century to reign in some elements of the capitalist class (e.g. developers, landlords) in order to protect capitalism from itself. Thus its negative effects were felt within the capitalist class itself, whereas its positive effects were felt amongst the urban poor" (2010: 58). As Christophers (2010: 869) argues:

> ...acquisitions were typically not a question of the state simply easing the path of private capital accumulation. Compulsory purchase formed, rather, a linchpin of a progressive, Keynesian urban planning orthodoxy that did seek to advance the 'common interest', and which, as the 20th century wore on, increasingly saw the modernization of British cities as part-and-parcel of an emergent welfare state. This orthodoxy crystallized most significantly in the Town and Country Planning Act of 1947.

In the context of HMR, however, compulsory purchase takes on a rather different character where the public interest argument is advanced initially to secure land only for it then to be re-allocated to private development interests and house-builders.

In the US, the 2005 Supreme Court case of *Kelo v City of New London* has prompted much public and scholarly reflection on the use of eminent domain, the legal meaning of home and the determination of levels of 'just compensation' in relation to the loss of one's home through involuntary acquisition (see for example Byrne, 2005; Fennell, 2005; Garnett, 2006; Johnson, 2006). At issue, was the motivation behind the taking of Susette Kelo's home since the Takings Clause of the Fifth Amendment states that "private property [shall not] be taken for public use, without just compensation." (U.S. Const. art. V.), where public use refers to the use of the acquired land for, say, a road or rail scheme, that is, a *public* use. In this particular case, however, "unlike prior eminent domain decisions, the immediate beneficiaries

in *Kelo* were private interests: the public benefit was simply the localized trickle-down effects of economic redevelopment" (Blomley, 2007: 198).

In relation to *Kelo*, Grey (2007: 76) asks the following question:

> Was Susette Kelo's home being taken "for public use"? She of course denied that it was. But the City of New London prevailed in Connecticut's Supreme Courts and the matter then found its way to the Supreme Court of the United States. The City argued that the "public use" requirement was satisfied by the sheer fact that its development plan would rejuvenate the area, create thousands of new jobs and, most importantly, generate enormously more tax revenue for public coffers. Put bluntly, the more affluent users of the revitalised area would be able to pay higher taxes. On this analysis "public use" can be construed as meaning simply *public benefit* - an expansion or improvement of the tax base. Indeed, in the Supreme Court in Washington counsel for the City of New London openly agreed with the proposition that, on payment of due compensation, property may legitimately be taken from people who are paying less taxes and allocated to people who are likely to pay significantly more.

Reading these comments, there is little wonder that the *Kelo* case generated such controversy across the US:

> On this basis, as counsel for Susette Kelo rejoined, 'any city can take property anywhere within its borders for any private use that might make more money than what is there now.' In other words, nowhere is safe - any property which might be made more economically productive is 'up for grabs.' In the Kelo hearing Justice Scalia aptly vocalised the sentiments of Ms Kelo: 'She says I'll move if it's being taken for a public use, but by God, you are just giving it to some other private individual because that individual is going to pay more taxes.' " (Grey, 2007: 77)

In contrast, Tom Allen, observing *Kelo* from calmer English terrain, suggests that:

> ...one of the most interesting aspects of *Kelo v. City of New London* is the attention and debate that it has provoked. While land use and development are frequently matters of intense public interest and debate in England, it is safe to say that the focus does not usually fall on the use or abuse of the power of eminent domain. Indeed, recent revisions of the statutory law on compulsory purchase raised very little public debate. (Allen, T., 2008: 75)

Rather, those with interests in developing brownfield land in English cities, lobbied government for a 'watering-down' and streamlining of the CPO regulations and that is exactly what they got with the introduction of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act in 2004. There was no public outrage here. The subordination of the so-called 'public interest' in UK planning to private interests has been under way for some time (see for example Allen and Marne, 2010; Christophers, 2010; Gower-Davies, 1972; Monbiot, 2009; Glancey, 2010). Indeed, one might argue that homes and land in the UK have essentially been 'up for grabs' ever since the introduction of the Leasehold Reform Housing and Urban Development Act, 1993. Section 159 of

the Act authorises compulsory purchase of land which is "under-used or ineffectively used", a deliberately wide-ranging definition that could conceivably encompass much, if not most, urban land. It was this specific section of the Act that English Partnerships invoked to dispossess Liz Pascoe and her neighbours of their homes in Edge Lane, Liverpool. Christophers (2010: 866) argues that this private-public-private transfer amounts to a privatisation of the public interest:

> The argument being used to justify the transfer of land is that it generates a set of public benefits that outweigh the infringement of existing property rights. And the fact that the transfer in question represents, in the first instance, a public appropriation of private property (the council being the CPO applicant) lends the public interest argument a seeming credibility. But the key point, surely, is that the transfer into council hands would represent only a temporary means to a very different end, for once acquired the land would immediately be passed on to a private entity. The intended transfer is actually therefore a 'private-public-private' one - increasingly referred to in the legal literature (e.g. Cohen, 2006; Scott, 2003) as a "public-private taking" - and its cardinal feature is that for the end-to-end private-private transfer to happen without the voluntary consent of the first of the two private actors, state intervention is required. `Public interest' or `the social', in other words, is ultimately being invoked in the service specifically of private capital; it is, in this sense, being privatized.

So can compulsory purchase under HMR be characterised as a form of theft? One of the residents' groups fighting the *New Heartlands* CPO in Liverpool certainly viewed it in these terms:

> We are a new group formed to fight for better homes and community facilities in our area. We are not against new homes being built, for those that want them, but they don't need to be built on the rubble of the homes of the people that don't want, or can't afford [the new homes]. We are against the *theft* and demolition of decent homes, and profiteering by the private sector. (SAD, 2006, emphasis added)

In other countries, legal scholars have come forward to argue that the practice of 'eminent domain' (the equivalent of CPO), especially where it is done for the benefit of private interests as in *Kelo*, is not only unconstitutional but also akin to 'government theft' (Burkard, 2005; Whitehead and Hardin, 2005). In Australia, Reale (2009) writes of 'assisted theft' both in relation to *Kelo* and the Australian case of *Griffiths v Minister for Lands, Planning and Environment*.

The discussion above indicates that there is some evidence to suggest that the forcible taking of people's homes could, in certain situations, be conceptualised as a form of theft. But the planning/development 'growth machine' and HMR are able to erect three defences against such charges: the weight of law, the 'public interest' and the payment of compensation, which was discussed earlier in Chapter 3. In the first instance, the fact that compulsory purchase is based in law works to close down this line of argument. As Blomley (2003: 123) notes:

...law itself requires the construction of a constitutive outside with reference to, and against which, it sets itself apart. And violence is integral to this construction. Waldenfels (1991, 100) identifies "the great divorce" between reason and violence".

Law, then, equated with reason, constitutes itself as the antithesis of violence. As Imrie and Thomas (1997: 1402) argue:

> Anglo-American law and legal systems tend to be characterised by a legal formalism which asserts that law is rational, ordered and closed (to socio-political influences)...This upholds the notion that law is beyond reproach in occupying a higher, sanctifed, playing-field where it operates to ensure just and equitable outcomes (for all involved). In turn, legal mechanisms, like CPOs, tend to be conceived of, in such views, as a technical process within which decisions are typically made by reference to universal rules or norms.

It is therefore unsurprising that public inquiries have many similarities with courtroom proceedings. Not only do they incorporate a 'judge' in the form of the presiding planning inspector, they also include barristers, 'witnesses', 'evidence', cross-examination and the esoteric language of adversarial legal skirmishing. This is exactly the image that the planning system wants to convey to all involved. It is hugely symbolic: it is done in this way so that everyone understands the weight of the law is behind the public inquiry and any acquisition of land that is done in its name. One is therefore inclined to assume that the proceedings will be characterised by a basic fairness. Presented in this way, the public inquiry is also in keeping with Article 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights and the right to a fair hearing. Note, however, that unlike conventional legal proceedings the public inquiry does not have the benefit of a jury system; the result of the inquiry is determined by the Inspector alone, who makes his/her recommendation to the Secretary of State on the basis of the evidence they have heard. Whilst society can entrust decisions about the guilt or innocence of a criminal to twelve jurors, effectively giving them the ability to remove that individual's liberty, matters relating to the appropriation of people's homes and the removal of their 'right to place' (Imbroscio, 2004) are decided by a single individual who is steeped in a planning system that is predisposed to change and 'progress'. Matters relating to land, it would seem, are too important to be left to the 'common people' lest they decide against the powerful. Juries tend to take a dim view of theft. As Gower-Davies remarks, "...the veto on redevelopment schemes, whether undertaken for reasons of profit or for reasons of public interest, lies where it has always lain: with the possessors of large amounts of power, wealth and influence (Gower-Davies, 1972: 228).

But the law is also a commodity: legal expertise is bought and sold. The argument about basic fairness quickly breaks down as those with bigger pockets – the proponents of the CPO - are placed at a considerable advantage in arguing their case. At the same time, however, their fall-back position lies in being able to justify their actions with reference to a perennially ill-defined 'public interest':

> The benefits that accrue to these development (and other powerful) interests as a result of policy interventions that facilitate the pillaging of land are

therefore obscured by the way urban elites promote the idea that their activities are undertaken in the 'public interest' and 'in the name of the people' (Allen and Marne, 2010: 58)

This invocation of the public interest argument invariably serves to stymie all critical debate.

10.3 The public inquiry

As I noted earlier, a CPO public inquiry is a highly technical, quasi-judicial affair. Overseen by a Planning Inspector, it is highly adversarial with the space of the inquiry room split between the proponents (the promoters of the CPO) and the objectors who stand to lose their homes or small businesses. Whilst the legal representation for the acquiring authority is funded out of the local authority's budget, objectors, in contrast, must apply for Legal Aid and there is no certainty that they will receive funding. This disparity in legal representation – formally known as 'inequality of arms' - has long been a feature of such inquiries (see Imrie and Thomas, 1997).

The objectors in Liverpool, for example, living with all the anxiety of a CPO hanging over their heads and with no experience, legal representation or administrative support, faced an eminent barrister with a first-class Oxford degree in Jurisprudence and a twenty-five year career in planning law that included regular appearances in the High Court, the House of Lords and the European Court of Human Rights. Moreover, they were expected to develop a coherent case against *New Heartlands* by acquainting themselves with all the numerous documents and frequently complex arguments put forward by the proponents[32]. The objectors also had work, family and care commitments and, unlike their opponents, they were not being paid to attend. Stephen Ord, one of the principal objectors at the Liverpool *New Heartlands* inquiry in 2006 described his experience as follows:

> How would a normal person resolve this? How would someone without the internet and computer skills that enable people to network and find information do this? How do normal working people even get the time off to attend this Inquiry? In reality it would use nearly a year's statutory leave allowance... How are people expected to carry on working, look after their family, have a social life and object to this? (Ord, 2006: 4).

Elizabeth Pascoe also draws attention to this in her written submission to the same *New Heartlands* inquiry:

> I know how hard it is when you haven't a clue... Unlike Mr Ord I was able to put all else to one side, and work on it for 16 to, by the end, 22 hrs a day, 7 days a week for months...I am sure that the Inspector realises what a

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[32] Note that there were over *one hundred* lengthy core documents plus a further two hundred supplementary reports and papers; in addition, many of these reports were written in 'legalese' or the dense, technical language of planners, urban designers and surveyors and frequently lapsed into impenetrable, esoteric jargon.

tremendous strain it is for ordinary people to do this, he may be aware at Bury in May, the man leading the objectors suddenly died on the first day of the inquiry (Pascoe, 2006: 1)

Steve Brooks, leading a group of Bootle residents, reports how he faced a similar uphill contest against *New Heartlands* and LCC:

> "Everything was difficult," says Brooks. "Council documents were put online, rather than in the library, but we aren't all computer literate and lack the resources...The volume of paperwork was overwhelming...How can you fight the system when it's conspiring against you? Everything was stacked against us, and still is. The whole thing was a foregone conclusion. Compared to them, we're in a weak position – under-funded and uneducated (Brooks, 2007).

Given that so much was at stake in the Merseyside CPO inquiries, it perhaps comes as no surprise that there were allegations of bullying and intimidation on the part of the proponents. At a general level, Pascoe (2006) notes that many residents were afraid of speaking out against the proposals for fear of not getting re-housed. More specifically, Mike Lane, a prominent Liverpool community activist and outspoken critic of the city council, highlights how Pascoe had been the victim of several criminal acts since becoming a high-profile opponent of the various CPO schemes (see Lane, 2005). For his own part, Lane has been the victim of several muggings and an attempted kidnapping; his car has also been petrol-bombed outside his council flat (Lane, 2005). Whilst not subject to direct physical intimidation, Allen (2008c) recounts how the publisher for his critical, book-length account of HMR in Kensington (Allen, 2008a), received three letters from Brendan Nevin and Liverpool City Council's solicitor. Accusing Allen of making libellous assertions and threatening him with legal action, Allen (personal communication) contends that these letters were basically aimed at halting the book's publication. In the event, the publisher found no substance in the claims being made by Nevin and LCC and supported Allen's academic freedom and his right to publish critical work on HMR in Liverpool.

The immense difficulties faced by the objectors were immediately apparent to any onlooker. There were, for example, several practical matters:

> ...on a daily basis, I observed ordinary people, inexperienced and unschooled in the arts and skills demanded by an adversarial, quasi-legal, highly technical hearing, trying to negotiate the arcane processes of evidence, cross-examination and rebuttal. Across the room, the objectors confronted a pre-eminent, highly experienced QC and his assistant backed by a legal and clerical support team and a formidable array of well-briefed, specialist witnesses (Crookes, 2007: 9)

Unlike the officers present, residents, of course, were not being paid to attend. The inquiry proper took place intermittently over the space of four weeks, and the objectors struggled to balance their domestic and work commitments with the demands of attending the inquiry. As the inquiry progressed, however, what I found

particularly repugnant was the manner in which the testimonies of the objectors became a source of entertainment – amusement even - for some of the officers attending:

> For the officers present – on some days there were around 15 to 20 of them in attendance - it might have provided a nice change from the daily routine, with time out of the office...and the bonus spectacle of seeing the 'little people' fighting for their lives, all whilst being paid to watch. The objectors, in contrast, were unpaid, inexperienced and overwhelmed, but nonetheless 'doughty fighters'. With so much at stake, some of them were understandably nervous and afraid, intimidated by the formality of the proceedings. From where I was sitting, I was shocked to glance across the room and see officers and developers smirking as local residents struggled to deliver heartfelt and emotional testimony in a vain effort to save their homes - worried people who had had to take time off from caring for family members or use up leave entitlements to get time off from work (Crookes, 2007: 10).

Reading about displacement is jolting enough but seeing it unfold before your eyes is truly heart-rending. In a different context, Widdowfield has described the emotions that she experienced in her research with residents living in a deprived area of Newcastle: "While I would not wish to deny that numbers have the capacity to be emotionally affecting and can cause distress - for example, knowing the number of people living in poverty or with cancer - how much more intense those feelings and that distress when those numbers become names and those names 'real' people with whom the researcher has face-to-face contact" (2000: 201). Observing the asymmetrical proceedings with a mixture of sadness, dismay and anger, it was at this point that I was moved to make a written submission to the inquiry as a non-statutory objector. For my efforts, I was publicly denounced by the QC who described me contemptuously as an 'interfering busybody'.

In accordance with paragraph 17 of Circular 06/04, the proponents of a Compulsory Purchase Order must demonstrate that there is a compelling case in the public interest which justifies the interference with the human rights of those affected by the compulsory acquisitions. Liverpool City Council's 'statement of case', which set out the rationale for the acquisitions, argued that:

> ... demolition will enable the removal of housing that is: worn out; beyond economic repair; life expired or unsuitable for modern living; or in low demand and its replacement with modern housing better suited to current housing needs. This will contribute to the achievement of the promotion and improvement of the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the Inner Core of Liverpool and its residents and will address the current issues of population decline. (Liverpool City Council, 2006)

We see here the invocation of the tropes introduced in Chapter 8. The housing being targeted is said to be: 'worn out; beyond economic repair; life expired or unsuitable for modern living'. Such is the dominance of this storyline, one finds the same themes repeated again by the nominally independent Inspector, whose report states that the purpose of the CPOs was "to reduce the oversupply of small Victorian houses that do not meet modern expectations and attract private investment into the

area so as to facilitate development, redevelopment and improvement that creates sustainable neighbourhoods with modern family homes in Council Tax bands C and above...thus offering greater diversity and choice of housing for existing residents and attracting new ones" (Grainger, 2006: 6). In this way, the planning inspector is aligned with the politicians and academics that regard an expansion in the number of homes in higher Council Tax bands and wider 'transformational improvement' – what we would conventionally term as gentrification - as the only way forward:

> ...clearing...and redeveloping the site would increase the variety of housing and add to the 'offer' of the area in a way that I consider...refurbishment...would not. It also seems likely to be significantly cheaper. It would therefore be a more effective way of initiating the regeneration of the area, something that I consider very desirable, and would, in my view, fully accord with local and national aims for truly transformational improvement. In any event, no scheme for the comprehensive and transformational refurbishment of these streets exists and there is no evidence that private investment on the necessary scale would be forthcoming or that it would attract government subsidy...I conclude that in order to ensure that intervention in this area has the best chance of securing rapid and lasting improvements to the housing market and residential environment, there is therefore a strong case for clearing and redeveloping these streets. (Grainger, 2006: 102-103)

Following Allen (2008a), what all this points to is just how successful the advocates of HMR (and the dominant voices within society) have been with regard to elevating and embedding a perspective that foregrounds housing as an investment vehicle rather than a place to live. Such a perspective has become so firmly entrenched that even planning inspectors now see demolition, new-build gentrification and, most remarkably, higher house prices, as being in the public interest. It is this context that prompts the Inspector from the *New Heartlands* inquiry to make comments such as this: "the houses on these streets are unexceptional" (Grainger, 2006: 93). We also see here the insider/outsider dichotomy at work. Such houses may be 'unexceptional' to the casual gaze of a Planning Inspector but they nevertheless provide many people with affordable, cherished homes that harbour a lifetime of memory in communities that offer a close and supportive network of family and friends. This 'insider' perspective is exemplified by the two extracts from the objections made by Robert Jacks and Gary Toohey at the 2006 *New Heartlands* CPO[33]

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[33] NB All these objections are in the public domain.

I Robert Jacks, of 38 Garrick Street Liverpool, 7 would like to submit the following statement setting out my reasons for objecting to the proposal that my property, and other properties in the area defined in your proposal be demolished.

Firstly this is my home which I have lived in for 46 years. I have brought up my family here and latterly shared the property with my wife. This is our marital home and my wife and I have lived here together happily until she passed away in March of 2004.

I have maintained the property in good order. carrying out regular maintenance, painting and decorating as required. The structure of the property is, to the best of my knowledge sound, the walls and roof are water and weather proof. I have spent money on improvements making use of Housing Improvement Grants that were available. All of the piping was replaced with copper piping, the loft insulated and proper damp proof course fitted. I further had the drainage system renewed.

I consider the property to be sound and it has not cause me any major problems with repair as I understand the properties were built very solidly and had a much longer life than anticipated as a consequence of being properly maintained and improved.

In 2004 I carried out a further major improvement and had all of my windows replaced with double glazed, low maintenance windows. This has improved the insulation and reduced heat loss. This included new front and rear doors to help with added security.

My wife died of cancer in March of 2004, this was something that she lived with, and I nursed her for six years, at home, whilst she underwent much uncomfortable and invasive treatment to try to arrest its progress. The treatment was sadly unsuccessful. This has caused me tremendous distress as we were very close, and whilst I miss her terribly, our home provides a strong link with the past, and holds all of the happy memories she and I had

of our family together. I do not wish to lose this reminder of our life together.

Matters have deteriorated this year as I now have the added stress of my daughter having been diagnosed with breast cancer, and the feeling of stress that I have has been added to.

I am 77 years of age and do not want to have to look forward to leaving my home and going through the upheaval of moving house and staring up afresh setting up a new home.

Surely with the skills and materials now available the houses in this proposal could be rehabilitated and improved, where required, at a much less cost than completely demolishing them and rebuilding new properties.

I would also ask you to consider the human cost and disruption to people like myself if the proposal were to be allowed.

Signed...
Robert Jacks

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I am a Statutory objector and I would like to begin by stating that I am not opposed to regeneration in our area but I do, categorically object to this Compulsory Purchase Order.

I am 46 years old and have been born and bred in this community, I have been a resident in the Phase 1 area of Smithdown Road for the past 24 years and by this time next year; I will have then achieved my ambition of finally owning my house. I have often worked hard over the years and held down 2 jobs in order to accomplish becoming mortgage free and proudly owning my own family property.

I currently work for Liverpool Community College, employed as a City and Guilds Tutor and Assessor in Leisure and Recreation, where for the past 28 years I have worked with challenging and disadvantaged young people in the Toxteth, Edge Hill and Wavertree community, helping our learners to gain skills, work experience, qualifications and to gain entry to employment. I regularly liase with local Connexions Personal Advisors, Local Youth Offending Teams, local Police Forces, the Probation Service, local Youth and Community Centres and parents withn the neighbourhood. I consider myself to be part of this community and this community is part of me.

My 3 children have all successfully been raised in this district and were educated in one of the superb local schools, we have all been happy growing up in this area where all our friends and family are still situated.

I originally decided to live in this street because the houses are solidly built, they have stood the test of time and it is situated in a prime location, close to all amenities e.g. Schools, Churches, Shops, Pubs, Cemeteries etc. but mainly because it is a main gateway into the City Centre.

We have always valued this location, unlike others who have only just recently come to realise the true potential and advantages of living in our streets off Smithdown Road. Our streets, houses and shops have now become much sought after properties, mainly because many more affluent

people are now pouring into Liverpool and wish to reside in the City Centre or as close by as possible.

I now feel that this is the perfect opportunity to rebuild and improve our neighbourhood, but not at our demise, because we now strongly deserve better. It is soul destroying to think that after all the years of torment, misery and "low-life" that we have had to tolerate, that at the very point of feeling safe in our homes again, we will now be forced out of our properties. I am now happy in my home, my house is the ideal size, structurally sound, is not in need of any major repair and I now have my own plans to improve my property and life style, therefore, why? Just at the very point of becoming mortgage free, should I wish to relinquish my home and become lumbered with another millstone placed around my neck for a further 20 years or more? I don't think anybody would, if they were placed in my position.

The Liverpool City Council want our properties and land for the regeneration plans, but they appear to be bullying us out because we now emerge as an easy target. I have often been left feeling highly insulted by their matter of fact attitude and pathetic attempts to persuade me to

give up my home. I wish to make it clear that I can not consider their empty gestures, as the proposals and loan schemes that they are imposing upon us are not beneficial or acceptable because they would certainly place me and my family at a great disadvantage and financial loss.

My encounters with the Liverpool City Council staff have not been very productive, they have not been helpful or supportive in any way, but have often treated me with contempt and ignorance. I was recently accused of being Unco-operative because I could not meet an early appointment, I was then arrogantly informed in a cold and blasé fashion, that I was "worrying unnecessarily, as this entire regeneration project was in no way, an inconvenience for me" followed by the telephone abruptly being slammed down on me during mid sentence. This is an example of how the City Council feels little or no empathy for our dilemma and is oblivious to the effects that these plans are having on our lives, families and futures.

This type of disrespectful manner only succeeded in compelling me to stand my ground ant to become more determined to keep my home in this area. If we were to be treated justly and given more respect regarding our situation, I feel that common sense and fairness would have prevailed, and then there would have been no reasons for us to be sitting at this Tribunal opposing a CPO.

To conclude, I, as a homeowner, wish to remain in this exact situation as a proud occupant in my own house, free from mortgage, in the area that we have been raised and in the neighbourhood that we have become accustomed to.

Gary Toohey. 56, Underlet Street, Liverpool, L7 4JX

However compelling – and moving – residents' arguments might be, one of the main implications arising from Allen's (2008) work is that residents are unable to

challenge the CPOs on their own terms, that is, the articulation of arguments about the destruction of home and community actually carry little evidential weight. With housing conceptualised principally in terms of a competitive space of positions, objectors must, if they are to stand any chance of being listened to, construct counter-arguments that address the points made by the proponents.

The proponents' ability to establish the parameters of the argument puts residents at an immediate disadvantage. Rather than fighting from 'home' ground, so to speak, they are forced to confront their opponents on uncertain terrain marked by unfamiliar language, abstract arguments and, often, impenetrable statistical data. Where the proponents' evidence bears the nominally superior credentials of academics and outside experts, the objections of local residents, lacking the veneer of academic credibility, are not afforded the same level of epistemic respect as knowledge produced through formal academic methods. Objections from local people, grounded in the local knowledge acquired through lengthy residence and everyday experience, precisely the sort of knowledge produced by ethnographic methods, are usually deemed as being of a more personal nature ('this is my home') and carry little weight with Planning Inspectors. Whilst the 'expert' knowledge that bears the 'badge' of the academy can be bought and used to dispossess people of their homes, the experiential knowledge of local people is dismissed as irrelevant, subjective and not at all 'material' to the decision-making process (see Crookes, 2006; Allen, 2009; Allen and Marne, 2010).

The disqualification of other forms of knowing from planning decision-making runs counter to Sandercock's (1998) call for an 'epistemology of multiplicity' in planning practice. This democratised epistemological approach acknowledges the many other ways of knowing that exist alongside the reductionist technical and scientific ways of knowing that are taught in planning schools and privileged in planning inquiries. Under HMR, however, the social construction of areas of 'monolithic' housing provision was informed by an equally monolithic approach to knowledge production: the enthusiasm for mixed communities has not been matched by a corresponding desire for a mixed epistemic community. Quite aside from arguments about the 'inequality of arms' in the respective legal resources that can be mustered by proponents and objectors, there is a much deeper argument about the differential treatment of the contrasting epistemic universes that are brought into a public inquiry. Indeed, we might additionally speak of an 'inequality of epistemics' that further disadvantages local residents. McConkey, developing Fricker's work (1999), contends that "Epistemic injustice occurs when the credibility that a person deserves to have does not correspond to the credibility they are actually afforded" (2004: 199). The question that follows on from this is how can public inquiries be procedurally fair if they systematically deny the validity of the knowledge claims made by local residents? As Santos (2005) argues, an absence of epistemic or cognitive justice seriously undermines the possibilities for achieving social justice.

Unfortunately, however, there was no epistemic justice for Mr Jacks, Mr Toohey and their fellow residents. The Inspector found the proponents' arguments to be more convincing and recommended that the clearance go ahead largely as planned. His recommendations were formally approved by the Secretary of State and the CPOs were therefore confirmed.

10.4 "It's not about houses, it's about homes and people and feelings"[34]: fighting to stay put in Oldham

The arguments in the Oldham public inquiry centred on themes very similar to those that were disputed in Liverpool. The main difference was that the Oldham objectors' application for Legal Aid was successful and they benefitted from the services of Robert McCracken, a London-based barrister who had spent his formative years in Oldham. Whilst his presence and local knowledge made for a more critical questioning of the written evidence and a more robust cross-examination of the Council's witnesses, the CPOs were still nevertheless confirmed.

Looking at the motivations for HMR in Oldham, some of these were contained in *Oldham Beyond* (URBED *et al*, 2004), a document that set out an ambitious vision for the Borough's physical regeneration up to 2020 and beyond. It also provides a further example of the normalisation of gentrification in British urban policy. In a copycat 'cut and paste' replication of the vision for Northerly, the reader is informed that Oldham will be:

> A confident place, at ease with itself and celebrating in its diverse communities and landscapes – from the tight-knit terraced communities to the wild moors and valley villages to the east. A borough that is proud of its industrial past but which has reinvented its economy by making the most of the creativity and drive of its young people. The world will see the borough as a place transformed and people will be attracted to live and work in the borough by the quality of life that it offers and by its reputation for tolerance and diversity (URBED *et al*, 2004: 4)

In particular, we are told that "the new confidence in the borough... will transform the low wage/low skilled culture of Oldham" by attracting new people and encouraging local people to stay. *Oldham Beyond* predicts that the borough's renaissance will initiate a virtuous circle of investment and growth that includes "a more skilled population with better jobs – increased spending power – a resurgence of the town centre and more money in the local economy – more jobs because the borough is more attractive to entrepreneurs and inward investors – an improved image attracting even more talented people etc..." (2004: 4).

Research by the consultants who developed the vision identified middle-class flight ('the lost middle class') as one of the key drivers necessitating change:

> Oldham is a working class town and the western part of the borough lacks the areas of middle-class housing found around similar towns.... The lack of aspirational housing in the west of the borough adds to the pressure on people who do well to leave. It also means that companies looking to relocate can see nowhere in the centre of the borough for their managers to live. This relates in part to middle-class suburbs, however today it might equally relate to 'loft apartments' and urban housing. This is the type of housing likely to appeal to the young and talented as much as the three bedroom semi (URBED *et al*, 2004: 10)

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[34] Mrs Thomas, oral evidence to the Oldham CPO inquiry, 7 February 2007.

Whilst striving for self-reliance and independence, however, a key part of the borough's strategy appears to rest upon improving transport links with Manchester, such that it becomes, in effect, a sort of satellite dormitory town for people who work there:

> Just as Oldham grew up, in part, as a satellite of Manchester, it must base its recovery, in part at least, on Manchester's revival. This could take a number of forms including an increase in commuting into Manchester from Oldham...This will be greatly assisted by the expansion of the Metrolink network which is due to more than double over the next decade.

Attracting these Manchester-bound commuters through an improved housing 'offer' then becomes a key aspect of Oldham's attempts to compete with the other seven Greater Manchester towns:

> A central part of the vision is to broaden the range of housing available in Oldham so that people wishing to live in the borough have a wider choice of housing than just terraces. This will encourage a broader range of people to choose to live in Oldham and can be achieved through Housing Market Renewal. This involves two components. The first is aspirational urban housing and apartments around the Metrolink stations, Oldham Town Centre and smaller centres. This will cater for the changing demographics of the housing market and the growth in demand from childless households. However, allied to this should be the development of other HMR areas at lower densities with a greater number of family homes with gardens.

The vision document also accepts that whilst Oldham has a 'weak' housing market, "it has not experienced the collapse that has taken place elsewhere. The private sector vacancy rate is 3.7%, lower than the regional average of 4.8% and in much of the Borough house prices are only marginally lower than the regional average". As in Hilltop, HMR in Oldham was therefore principally concerned with assembling brownfield sites that had good transport links and were of sufficient size to interest developers. As the Assistant Director of Regeneration commented in his oral evidence to the inquiry:

> Our strategy is all about making Oldham a more attractive place in every sense of the word. We want to improve the environment and housing offer, attract more people, wealth and prosperity. The legacy of terraced housing will not be sustainable in the long-term. The Masterplan balances respect for heritage and development of a site of substantial size that will create transformation (field notes, 7 February 2007).

The two main HMR areas in Oldham – Derker and Werneth – were both located close to the centre of Oldham and, more importantly, both were served by railway stations that were on the main route to Manchester. As part of the planned extension of the GM Metrolink tram network, both stations would be replaced by new Metro stops. As McCracken argued: "You want upwardly mobile people to come in, that's at the heart of your case. In terms of making it attractive, it's going to be 20

minutes by tram to Manchester; there's going to be a new Tesco and people can enjoy walking in the Beal Valley" (field notes, 7 February 2007). One of Oldham's key witnesses, a development surveyor with GVA Grimley confirmed that:

> The new homes will attract new people with a mix of skills, income and qualifications. This is about sustainability: higher incomes will mean greater demand for commercial activity and public services. We're looking for a more sustainable profile than is currently the case. We need to diversify the population base to increase the number of economically active people. Housing renewal complements the economic regeneration of Oldham (field notes, 7 February 2007).

Under cross-examination, Chris Snow, a Senior Business Development Manager with Gleeson PLC suggested that HMR was all about changing perceptions of the area. He drew attention to Derker's "strong geographical location" in terms of easy access to major motorways, its proximity to Manchester and the improved accessibility that would result from the Metrolink extension. At present, however, it was his view that the "area has no distinct character and [there is] no distinct sense of arriving in Derker". In particular, he felt that there was a "need to improve the environment of Derker Station as a first impression". Mr Snow further informed the inquiry that he had experience of "similar dysfunctional areas" and he noted that his company "Could/would not have invested without the CPO. Without it we couldn't assemble a sufficiently large land package to develop". The ensuing exchange between Mr Snow and Mr McCracken (RMc) is worth quoting at length:

Chris Snow (CS): My proof sets out why the demolition of predominantly abandoned and obsolete, poor housing stock is necessary.

RMc: I don't accept that there was widespread abandonment.

CS the very first time I went to look at the project was 2004. I walked up from Derker Street and turned right. Lots of properties appeared to be abandoned, windows were smashed and there were several undeveloped plots of land.

RMc: Can you identify a single property in this CPO?
CS: HMR is about the perception of these areas. The area looked like an area of abandonment...I can't tell you of any specific properties...At the moment, there would be no reason to get off the train at Derker.

RMc: Perhaps if people wanted low cost, quality housing?...Elsewhere you assert that Derker has poor and under-resourced schools. On what basis did you get this information...are you just slandering Derker without reason?

CS: I refer you again to when I walked around in 2004, when I saw broken windows. It's my perception.

RMc: My clients are having their houses demolished so your company can make money.

CS The CPO is necessary to acquire land at a sufficient scale. It's in my proof.

RMc: What is the minimum size for development?

CS: For bespoke, high-value properties…the smallest site is now 50 homes

RMc: The homes on Acre Lane have a marvellous view across the valley. People would pay a lot for such views, don't you think?

CS: I had a look at that before. Bellway and us looked at who might do what. We want to support a step-change in aspirations in Derker.

RMc: More like a step-change in income levels needed to live in Derker!

CS: Yes, this is one of the objectives of HMR.

While the long-standing residents of Derker were fighting to stay in their homes, it appears that Mr Snow and his counterparts from another house-building company were busy carving up the potential sites that would become available through demolition: "Bellway and us looked at who might do what". Moreover, as an outsider with purely commercial interests, Mr Snow saw no value in Derker in its present form and demonstrated a breath-taking lack of respect for the place and its residents: "At the moment, there would be reason to get off the train in Derker". This particular comment provoked a visible reaction from residents, one of whom came back with the retort, "Getting off the train at Derker is what we like, because we live there. Derker is a maligned and marginalised community. We don't aspire to apartments. We have our own houses that we like. We're not stupid and workshy as you seem to think. In our lost world, you have to give respect to get respect" (field notes, 7 February 2007). Mrs Walsh, the Chair of the Derker Action Group, continued angrily:

It's not just about the facts and figures. There are people on crutches here. It's not just about the money. You could give me a million pounds and I wouldn't take it. All these facts and figures…I live near my family, we look after the grandchildren. Will we have to go to a one-bed place? Two people I know have had shingles. They are keeping back-to-back mill-workers' cottages and knocking down 3- 4 bed terraces with gardens! Mr McCracken has seen my house – he was appalled at what they were proposing…We're a three-generation family. My daughter lives two streets away – she and her partner both work and they can't afford one of the new homes that you keep mentioning... The aspirations you allude to are yours not ours.

10. 5 "To them it's nothing, but to me my house is everything... I'm fighting for my life here."[35]
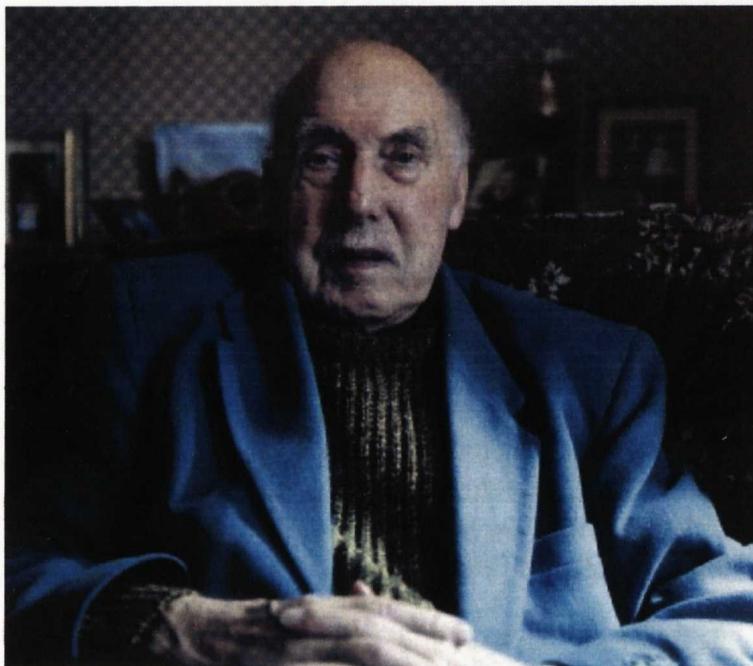
Plate 9: Elijah Debnam

(Source: Big Issue in the North, 21st June, 2010)

Having listened to Elijah's simple, plain-spoken, yet immensely powerful, testimony at the Oldham Derker public inquiry in 2007 and having subsequently followed his continuing determination to stay put and remain in his home, I felt it was essential in this chapter to present his views in order to give them the recognition and respect they rightfully deserve. Such voices are rarely heard in gentrification research. Not only do his remarks reveal the depth of the feelings and grievances shared by the many people who are threatened with losing their homes as a result of planning and regeneration schemes, his words also reiterate many of the themes addressed by this research. His love of home, his refusal to be pushed around and his strong sense of injustice are matters that frame the entire thesis. For me, Elijah's situation provided a useful moral reference point for navigating through my research, that is, it provided me with a constant reminder of who and what social science research should be for. In the field of human geography, the notion of 'relevance' has been the subject of considerable – sometimes heated – debate. Being relevant, however, surely does not just mean being relevant to policy and the needs of policy-makers. In the context of gentrification research, one can choose, as far as funding and research structures allow, to do critical research that strives to serve the needs of ordinary people and challenge the celebratory, self-congratulatory claims and assertions of policy-makers, developers and academics by confronting them with evidence of the injustice and harm wrought by their actions, neglect and/or inaction. Quite simply,

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[35] Debnam, personal communication, 14 February, 2007

as Bill Bunge once put it, the choice is between a docile but highly-paid 'smug campus career' and a community/people perspective.

Below, I present extracts from the talk that Elijah gave as part of a joint paper presented to the 2008 Annual Conference of the Royal Geographical Society (Allen *et al*, 2008). The conference theme was 'geography matters' and Elijah agreed to contribute to our paper, making the long return journey from Oldham to London in an attempt to make visible the working class people and neighbourhoods that are increasingly overlooked or denigrated by urban elites and to raise the profile of the everyday, grass-roots geographies – the homes and places - that matter to ordinary people in the north of England. Public inquiries and academics often dismiss the situated knowledge of local people as inferior to knowledge that has been produced through formal research methods (see Allen, 2009 for a critical perspective on this). In my view, however, Elijah's comments offer a lay understanding of gentrification and the effects of displacement that are on a par with any academic account. In particular, given Derker's strategic location on the planned Manchester to Oldham *Metrolink* tramway extension, with a journey time to Manchester Victoria station of less than 20 minutes, Elijah was not too wide of the mark when he described the Derker HMR scheme as something that is being done 'for the yuppies of Manchester'. Below, I present an edited version of Elijah's talk:[36]

> I'll start from the beginning. I was born in Greenacres, Oldham in 1920. I was called up when I was 20 and served in Gibraltar, Normandy and Germany. I came back from the war in 1946 and worked on the railways. I met Alice and we got married and lived in a rented house for some time. We moved into this house in 1954. It was like a new dream come true. I've lived here ever since and I paid the last mortgage instalment in 1963.
>
> I've never ever regretted moving to this house of mine and I've got plenty of happy memories of it with the wife and my son and, aye, when you talk about fifty years it's a lifetime, what can I say? But they were all happy memories that I have of it and I always thought as I've said to other people, I thought coming to the end of my tether now, being 88, that I would die here, you know, and I said that to my son, who unfortunately has now left me as well. My wife died in 1999. So I'm now on my own here, all my grandchildren live down in the south of England...so, I'm literally on my own. But I like it here. My neighbours and friends are good and kind. It's convenient for shopping and I can get around easily. Most of all I love my home. It's made of Accrington brick, the same as the mills. One of my neighbours, a brickie, said our houses were built to last. Believe me, I know. In the 54 years I've lived here I've only had to replace one roof tile. I've also got central heating and a good-sized garden where I can sit out and get the sun all day long.
>
> Now this has come along, this CPO, it has really upset me...But this CPO has also made me realise what I've got and what I'm going to lose if I lose my home. So I will fight with every means I've got to try and keep it. I think if people would only waken up and look at what the local councils are doing to

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[36] The full transcript of Elijah's talk is included at Appendix 3

them with these sorts of schemes, and if they banded together - fought when it's necessary - things might change a bit for the better of the people.

Last year, to try and save my home I spoke at the public inquiry. I found it very emotional...as I thought I was going to lose my home and, you know, I think, when it happens to anybody, if you're fighting, you're being literally thrown out of your home. Not because it's a slum, but because it's the wish of somebody somewhere that they want to do a development, for property speculators, and they pick on an area of the town and they say, that is the plot we'll do, and then the people in that area have to be moved out to let the plan continue. So what you're doing there is, you're removing the population of that area from there and they spread them all round the town. Consequently, they're buying property, renting or whatever and taking out new mortgages – they never come back. So, when the new project is done or the new houses built, the people that come and buy those properties are not the people that lived there originally, so it's a new population that moves into the area. And some people are saying, because of the prices, the people that left here couldn't afford to move back anyway, they couldn't afford to buy the properties. So, really, what they're doing, they're building this for the yuppies of Manchester. HMR is not interested in improving my life or the lives of my fellow Derker residents.

God help me I don't intend to leave my house. It's going to take something to move me out of here ...You know, there's an old saying, that an Englishman's home is his castle and I still stand by that and I hope the rest of the population are the same because once you lose that, you've nothing, you've no roots. If I leave here now, what roots will I ever have, at my age? Nobody's going to bother about me, they won't want to know me. All they'll say is, 'did you see that old man going down there? He lives on his own at so-and-so street', and that's how it'll be for the rest of my life. Where living here, I can walk out and I can pass the time of day, and I can go shopping, meet people. People know who I am, they know my name, they look out for me. You're known locally and that's what it's all about, being known locally. If I move out of here to another area of Oldham, I'll be a stranger in my own town.

Mid-way through delivering his heartfelt objection to the CPO, as he spoke of his wife and son, Elijah was suddenly overcome by emotion and he had to pause and spend a little time to gather himself. Coming from a tough old soldier, this moment, where his eyes became tearful and his voice trembled with emotion, showed just how much his home meant to him. Elijah's powerful testimony was made all the more poignant by the fact that his son, Keith, had recently died of a heart attack.

After observing two weeks of ritualised argumentation on principally technical matters, it was my impression that Elijah's intervention changed the mood of the inquiry. As I entered in my notebook:

Up to now, the inquiry proceedings have all been centred on technical arguments. There's hardly been anything about people and what it means for them. Elijah's comments remind us what it's all about and it has a big effect on everyone present. It brings it down to the human scale...There is a hushed,

respectful atmosphere as if something very profound has just been said. (field notes, 14 February, 2007).

However momentary, Elijah's comments brought *people* back into the picture and it was not surprising that he received heartfelt applause from the other objectors, many of whom had been moved to tears. His plight was their plight too and he brought to light the fears and suffering of those who had most to lose from the confirmation of the CPOs. As one of the objectors commented, "After what's been heard at this inquiry, they've got hearts of stone if they let this go through". The inquiry proceedings also had considerable emotional impact on me too, serving to re-affirm my antipathy towards HMR and gentrification and displacement more generally. The only other occasion that provoked a similar emotional reaction from those present (including myself) was when one of the objectors, unable to continue the childcare arrangements that had allowed him to attend the inquiry proceedings, was forced to bring his three children into the inquiry room. This moment really seemed to convey the potential human impact of home loss that was so often masked by the dry, quasi-judicial proceedings of the inquiry. But such occurrences and sentiments made little impression upon the Planning Inspector, the upholder of a coolly rational and ostensibly objective regime of planning decision-making. Unmoved by residents' accounts of the personal distress wrought by the CPOs and the threat of losing their homes, the Inspector evidently found the experts' stories of housing market 'disaster' and developer-led renaissance as presenting a more compelling account of local development needs (Cookson, 2008). His view was that the acquisition and demolition of the houses listed in the Orders, succeeded by new-build residential development, would better contribute to the area's economic, social and environmental well-being, that is to say, the Inspector's interpretation of the evidence presented to the Inquiry was that the confirmation of the CPOs would be in the public interest.

As in Liverpool, the Inspector duly submitted his report and recommendations to the Secretary of State and, in October 2007, Derker residents eventually received word that the SoS had agreed with the Inspector's conclusions to confirm the CPOs[37]. The demolition of the remaining houses would therefore proceed as planned. Unhappy with this decision the objectors made appeal to the High Court for a judicial review, alleging that the Inspector had shown bias towards the proponents, both in his day-to-day running and management of the inquiry and in his subsequent decision-making. As a notionally independent observer of the proceedings, I was called upon by the residents' legal team to provide written evidence to the review in support of their contention. Unfortunately, the High Court hearing later upheld the Inspector and SoS's decision. Unexpectedly, however, residents were granted a further right to appeal in 2009. This again was unsuccessful. With the future of their homes dependent on the public inquiry and subsequent legal challenges, the lives of many residents were effectively placed on hold for a period of about four years.

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[37] A recent review of CPO decisions suggests that, nationally, 95% of the housing CPOs made between 2003 and 2009 were confirmed and approved by the Secretary of State (Dickinson Dees, 2010). In short, objectors have only a 1 in 20 chance of overturning a CPO.

10.6 Conclusion

Revisiting Elijah in May 2010, I encountered a changed man. Facing an uncertain future and enduring a stressful present, Elijah, who reached his ninetieth birthday in June 2010, was no longer the feisty, spirited 'doughty fighter' that I first met in 2007. Despite his continued determination to remain in his home, I observed a marked deterioration in his health. Making regular visits to his doctor and the local hospital for cancer-related tests, Elijah attributed his worsening health to the stress and worry of the last few years. His story recently caught the attention of a freelance journalist and she too has observed the painful episodes he now endures:

> Last time I saw him he suffered three of what I can only assume were panic attacks in an hour. His face kind of crumples up into a heart-breaking mask of pain while they're happening. They are terrifying to watch, so I can't imagine how they must feel for him. It's the stress that brings them on, he says (Leeming, 2010).

How can this be justified as being in the public interest? The barrister representing the Derker objectors summed this up in his closing statement to the inquiry: "I pose finally this question. Elijah Debnam fought from Normandy to Germany to protect our homes: are we, whose homes are not under threat from CPO, to take away his home?" (McCracken, 2007).

Since Marx and Engels, we have long known that capitalism is exploitative and does damage to people and places. Through varied forms of violent expropriation, capitalism was born, "dripping from head to foot, from every pore, with blood and dirt" (Marx, 1967: 760 cited in Glassman, 2006). In 'oiling the wheels' of land assembly, CPOs help to contribute to this wealth and constitute an essential element of accumulation by dispossession. The objective of site assembly has frequently involved the threatened use or actual use of CPOs on a scale not seen since the early 1970s. This change in the manner in which CPOs are deployed underlines the changed nature of the state's involvement in gentrification. Where compulsory purchase and eminent domain had once helped to produce, following Hackworth (2007), the 'Keynesian managerialist city', they have now been yoked to the task of creating the 'neoliberal city', to clear or 'recycle' residential areas for capital accumulation and new-build gentrification. As Blomley (2007: 201) notes, in relation to *Kelo*:

> The heavy hand of the state, much maligned by neoliberals, appears here as an essential tool for the entrepreneurial city. The *Wall Street Journal* noted that local and state governments have increasingly embraced eminent domain as an essential marketing tool to lure footloose capital.

How long must we go on accepting the charade that death, destruction and devastation to people's lives are somehow in the public interest? As one of the Oldham objectors described it in her oral evidence to the public inquiry, what was

happening to her and her neighbours could not have been clearer. Quite simply, as she put it, "It's theft of property" (field notes, February, 2007). As *Private Eye* summarised it: "Pathfinder is essentially thuggery and theft as well as an architectural and environmental crime" (*Private Eye*, 2006). However, as Box (1983: 15) has argued:

> For too long too many people have been socialized to see crime and criminals through the eyes of the state. There is nothing left, as Matza points out, but mystification. This is clearly revealed in the brick wall of indignation which flattens any suggestion that the crime problem defined by the state is not the only crime problem, or that criminals are not only those processed by the state. There is more to crime and criminals than the state reveals. But most people cannot see it.

Unsurprisingly, there has long been a general reluctance to examine and investigate the crimes of the powerful. In contrast, those who sought to oppose HMR were constructed as standing in the way of progress, of thwarting urban regeneration and obstructing the public interest. At worst, they were criminalised (see for example Allen, 2008c), thereby maintaining attention on the narrower 'crime' of resistance whilst deflecting attention from the much bigger property crimes or 'land grabs' that were under way. Arguably, the HMR public inquiries I observed were little more than expensive decoys to cover-up the theft of people's homes.

The occasional grass-roots victory does the important work of convincing everyone that all is not rotten within the planning system. Then it's back to 'business as usual'. However, whilst taking people's homes is good business for some, for those who are being dispossessed and displaced, urban regeneration is an altogether different, unhappy, experience as the next chapter confirms. The words of Hartman *et al* continue to be relevant today:

> Regardless of whether it results from government or private market action, forced displacement is characteristically a case of people without the economic and political power to resist being pushed out by people with greater resources and power, people who think they have a better use for a certain building, piece of land, or neighbourhood. The pushers benefit. The pushees do not (1982: 4).

Chapter 11

Losing Home: Stories of the dispossessed

A house is first and foremost a home and it is this that is so often overlooked in any rehousing programme. Over the course of years there is a process of evolution in which the intense familiarity of every nook and cranny of one's home and a network of relationships and informal support develop which allow even the very frail elderly person to cope with everyday living (Pathy, 2000, cited in Dumbleton, 2006: 39)

You can't make an omelette without cracking a few eggs! HMR Manager, Northerly MBC

11.1 Introduction

The previous chapters demonstrated how the state attempts to wrest homes from ordinary people and "produce urban space for progressively more affluent users" (Hackworth, 2002: 815) by invoking a three-pronged approach, including territorial stigmatisation, attrition or 'winkling' and, *in extremis*, compulsory acquisition. Some people may, of course, decide to leave a demolition plan area 'voluntarily' but, as we have seen, this can often occur as a consequence of the prolonged and sustained pressure that is generated by such a scheme. This notion of 'displacement pressure' (Marcuse, 1986) was introduced in Chapter 2 and highlighted in the preceding empirical chapters. Regardless of the manner in which residents leave their doomed homes, regardless of whether they leave early in the process or remain to fight it out to the end, they are really left with little choice in the matter: they are to all intents and purposes forced to leave their homes prematurely, at a time that is not of their choosing.

The purpose of this chapter is to understand what happens next, that is, to examine the experiences of people who were all, to a greater or lesser extent, forcibly removed from settled homes.   Where housing authorities will be quick to point to the experiences of those who thrive and do well from moving, they tend to overlook or downplay the more negative – sometimes fatal – effects upon others.

The challenge for critical scholars is to ensure that the voices of those who suffer are not drowned out or silenced by public authorities' careful media management and amplification of the more positive accounts of those who were better resourced and better able to cope with a move. Privileging the voices of the 'losers' of urban regeneration, Porter (2009b: 397), for example, provides an important counter-point to "The voices of those who stand to gain, and who do gain, from...urban development...". These 'winners' voices, she adds, "are more easily heard and significantly more widely reported". Evidence suggests that nearly 70% of the

housing demolished under HMR was social rented (see Ferrari and Lee, 2010). Given that the Chartered Institute of Housing estimates that, nationally, "Approximately one third of all social housing tenants are over sixty years of age and many people living in social housing have a long-term illness or a disability" (CIH, 2010: 11), the high rates of social housing demolition suggest that HMR disproportionately impacted the most vulnerable households.

The evaluation of urban regeneration projects, far from being an objective, technical exercise, is rather an inherently political matter, that is "inextricably linked to whose interests are served by the evaluation, which is in turn directly linked to the criteria selected to gauge their 'success' or 'failure' " (Loftman and Nevin, 1998: 17; see also Beaumont *et al*, 2005). This 'politics of evaluation' is very evident in the two major CLG-funded national evaluations of HMR (Leather *et al*, 2007; Leather *et al*, 2009) both in terms of *who* wrote them and *what* they deem to be worthy of assessment. Firstly, with regard to the former point it should be noted that the leading author, Philip Leather, is a business partner of Brendan Nevin who, along with Ian Cole (who also happens to be one of the contributing authors to both National Evaluations) is widely regarded as one of the founding 'architects' of HMR (see Cole and Nevin, 2004). We therefore immediately have a situation where those who played a key role in the formulation of HMR are also linked to, or directly involved in, its evaluation. Secondly, nowhere does either of the evaluations attempt to track the fortunes of those displaced: unlike HOPE VI, there have been no longitudinal HMR panel studies to determine, for example, whether displacees have moved to better housing conditions and/or secured improvements in different aspects of their lives. This stark omission, I would contend, is hugely telling. It indicates that HMR actually had very little interest or concern in what happened to those displaced by demolition. This suggests, in short, that from the outset, HMR was never interested in improving the housing conditions and life-chances of those residents who it placed in the path of the bulldozers. The words of Elijah Debnam are entirely apposite here: "So, really, what they're doing, they're building this for the yuppies of Manchester. HMR is not interested in improving my life or the lives of my fellow Derker residents." (interview, 2007).

Against this background, the present chapter focuses attention on the experiences of the former residents of Parkside who were forced to leave their homes because of the impending demolition and redevelopment. Where relevant, I also draw on primary and secondary data from the other case study sites. Using data from Parkside, I begin by first analysing *where* people moved in terms of distance, level of areal deprivation (as measured by the CLG's Index of Multiple Deprivation) and tenure. I then proceed to analyse the questionnaire data which suggests something of a mixed picture on the impact of leaving Parkside. Resisting pressure to present 'good news' stories (field notes: January, October 2007), however, the next part of the chapter draws upon interviews with former Parkside residents who were experiencing difficulties as a result of their relocation and focuses particularly on the individual, social and financial impacts of moving. Without this sort of qualitative data, without the insights and experiences of those who are most adversely affected by demolition, any evaluation of HMR is incomplete. Unfortunately, the emotional impacts and costs of policy decisions rarely figure in official decision-making (Anderson and Smith, 2001). At the public inquiries I attended, the emotions of the objectors were palpable and I saw both men – tough, hard-edged, working-class men

- and women breaking down, their voices choked and tears streaming down their faces (Crookes, 2007). But such displays of emotion seem to have little sway with hard-nosed Planning Inspectors. For example, the Inspector who presided over the Derker inquiry, uses the stock phrase, "the evidence given by these objectors is of an overriding personal nature" throughout his report (Cookson, 2007), thereby alluding to the subjectivity of their objections in a manner that seeks to undermine their validity as formal 'evidence'. At best, he notes that "The views of these objectors are strongly held and genuinely and emotively expressed" (Cookson, 2007: 32).

Thus, like Porter (2009b) I make no apologies for presenting what might be seen as an 'unbalanced' selection of viewpoints. Following Porter, the experiences presented here "tell us about what the daily grind of being displaced actually looks and feels like" (2009b: 397). They also offer an alternative perspective to the 'official' narrative reported in the two formal evaluations. More than that, however, they also make us think about the manner in which relatively powerless, frequently vulnerable, people are forced to *make way* for urban change while powerful others *make money* from such changes (Porter, 2009b; see also Allen, 2008a; Jenkins, 2007; Wilkinson, 2006). Reflecting on the negative effects of displacement, the chapter concludes that HMR and other examples of gentrification-by-bulldozer, if not gentrification generally, should, far from being celebrated, be reconceptualised as forms of 'social harm' (Hillyard *et al*, 2004). Paradoxically, the only way we might impede displacement is by putting a financial value on it so that it becomes fully and properly costed in redevelopment: but should we, can we, put a price on displacement?

11.2 Where did displaced households go?

Given the dearth of data on displacees, this section presents a brief analysis of the first destination of households that left Parkside in terms of the distance they moved, the IMD rating of their new neighbourhood and tenure status.

Distance moved

Using the Arcview GIS software, the author, in collaboration with NMBC officers, was able to produce a basic analysis of the distance residents moved to their first address on leaving Parkside. Several US studies have shown that residents displaced from public housing typically move only short distances in order to remain in, or close to, communities with which they are familiar and remain close to family, supportive social networks, employment and schools (see for example Clampet-Lundquist 2004; Comey 2007; Gibson 2007; Goetz 2003, 2010; Varady & Walker 2003). Goetz (2003) reports that half of the families displaced by a HOPE VI-like demolition scheme in Minneapolis moved within a three-mile radius of their former homes. Similarly, Kleit *et al* (2010) found that 37% of households displaced from a housing project in Bremerton, Seattle, moved between one to three miles with 90% finding new accommodation within five miles. Nationally, the median distance moved by HOPE VI displacees was 2.9 miles (Kingsley *et al*, 2003).

The findings for Parkside are similar to the US studies noted above, demonstrating even greater spatial proximity to the original neighbourhood. Excluding the small number of people who moved outside Northerly, former Parkside residents moved an average distance of only 1.75 miles; the median distance was even less, at 1.5 miles As Figure 8 illustrates, 20% of residents displaced from Parkside moved within half a mile of their former home, with many moving to addresses in the three remaining streets of Parkside or to the adjacent council estate. Forty-five per cent of displacees moved less than 1.5 miles; almost 90% moved to an address within 3.5 miles.

Figure 8: Cumulative frequency (%) of distance moved by former Parkside residents (n = 149)
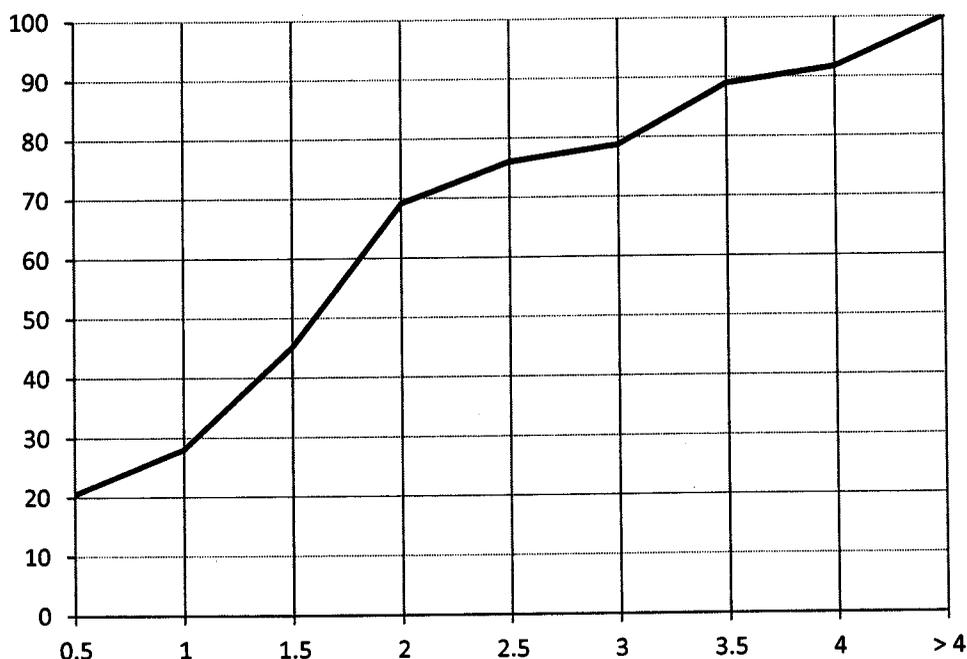
Neighbourhood deprivation

Where one of the goals of HOPE VI was to move public housing tenants to 'better' neighbourhoods with lower rates of poverty, there is no published data on whether HMR displacees moved to areas that were more or less deprived than where they lived previously. Using the composite Overall Index of Multiple Deprivation 'scores' for NMBC (DCLG, 2004) at Super Output Area (SOA)[38] level, the present study sought to determine whether Parkside residents moved to SOAs in Northerly that were more or less deprived. Northerly comprises 193 SOAs and, as part of the published 2004 IMD, each SOA is given an overall deprivation score and rank. Extrapolating from the national data, the Northerly SOAs were ranked from 1 (most deprived) to 193 (least deprived) and, having first coded each mover's postcode to the relevant SOA, the results were presented as follows:

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[38] SOAs are geographical areas designed for the collection of small area statistics. They were developed after the 2001 Census and typically group together a small number of lower-level Output Areas. On average, each SOA contains around 1500 people.

Figure 9: Histogram showing destinations of Parkside movers by IMD ranking
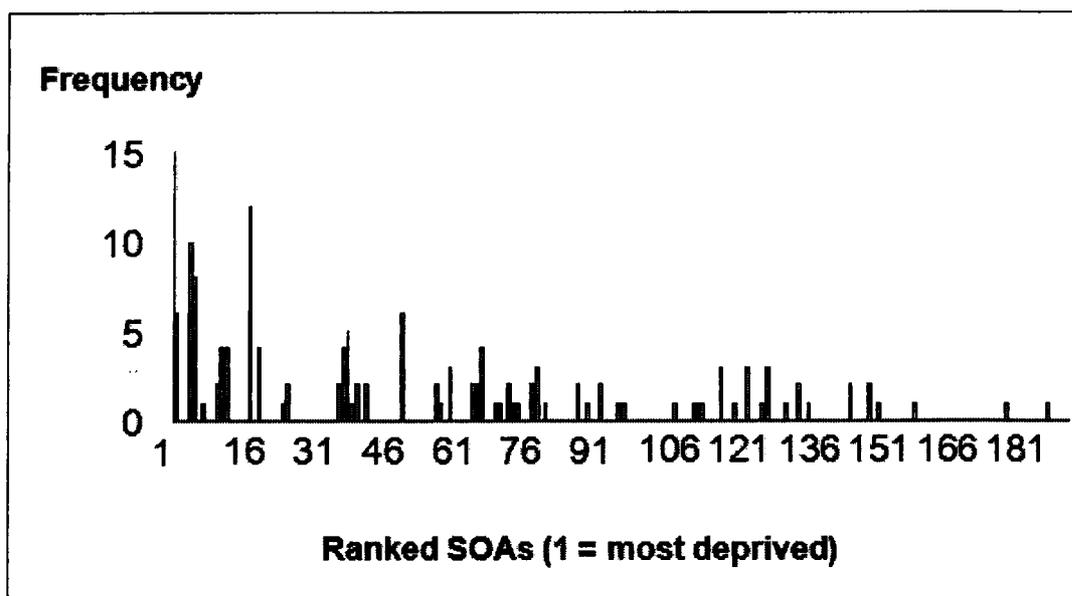
Of Northerly's 193 SOAs, Parkside was the sixth most deprived according to the IMD 2004 scores. The histogram highlights the following:

- six households moved from Parkside to the most deprived SOA in Northerly;

- ten households moved within the Parkside SOA; and

- twelve households moved to an adjacent SOA, a council estate that ranks as the 16th most deprived SOA in the Borough.

Graphing this data cumulatively we see that:

- 25% of Parkside residents moved to the twelve most deprived SOAs

- 50% moved to the 41 most deprived SOAs

- 77% went to SOAs with levels of deprivation above the Borough average (represented by the vertical dotted line at 90)

Figure 10: Cumulative frequency distribution of movers by IMD ranking
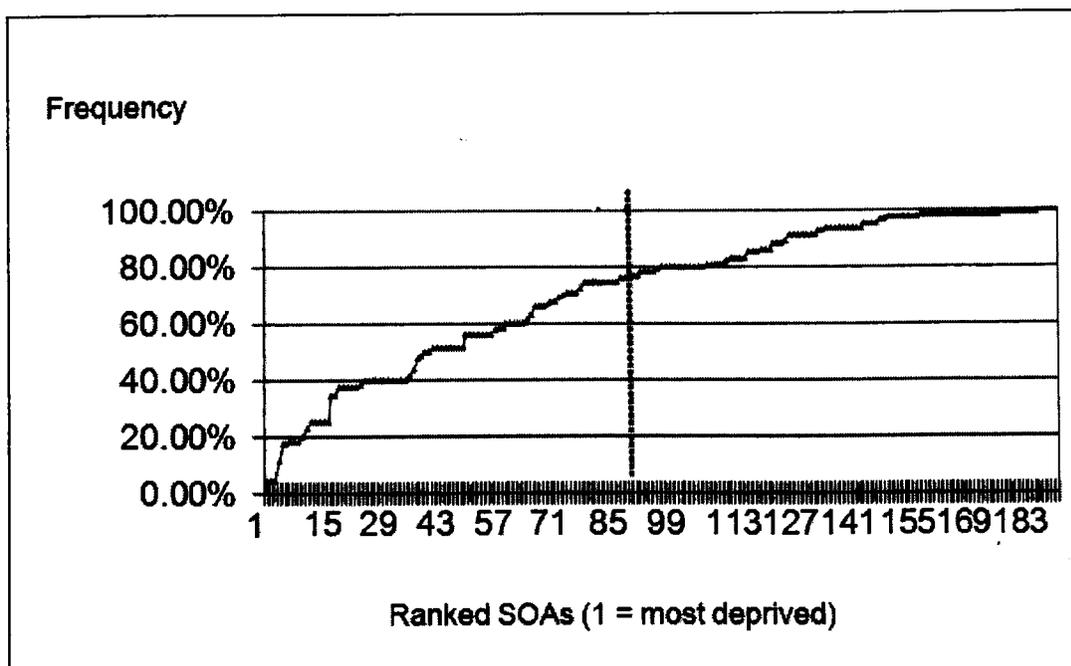
Echoing Goetz's (2010) findings in relation to HOPE VI, most of the residents who were displaced from Parkside moved to neighbourhoods with lower poverty rates. Nevertheless, 77% of those who left Parkside still moved to neighbourhoods with poverty rates higher than the Borough average. The point made by Goetz is an important one: "Moving from a concentrated poverty neighborhood to a high poverty neighborhood does not significantly alter the micro-level processes shaping poverty, either exogenous to the neighborhood (such as the quality of public services) or endogenous (such as social support and stigmatization)" (2010: 28). The structural inequalities of capitalism do not simply go away. Moving to a slightly lower poverty neighbourhood means that such inequalities and their effects are still very much at work in =people's lives and the anticipated improvements in households' social capital are not always realised. Clampet-Lundquist (2004) found that many residents felt more socially isolated after they had moved. Her subsequent study, which focused specifically on the social impact upon adolescent movers found that they also experienced difficulties establishing social ties in their new neighbourhoods whilst also losing the stabilising influences of former neighbours and institutions (Clampet-Lundquist, 2007). With regard to Parkside, around half of the questionnaire respondents (n=34) indicated that that their contact with neighbours had improved as a result of the move, whilst the remaining half indicated contact had either stayed the same or worsened.

Tenure

Prior to demolition, around 70% of the properties in Parkside were owner-occupied with the vast majority of the remainder privately-rented. In the area that was being demolished, however, the relative proportions were more balanced. Of the 149 households that sought assistance from the Council, 66 (46%) were owner-occupiers, 75 (52%) were private tenants and 3 lived in RSL-owned properties. The previous and current tenures of displacees are detailed below in Table 13. After moving:

- 49 of the original 66 owner-occupiers remained owner-occupiers

- 17 former owner-occupiers were in social housing

- 52 of the 75 private-rented households were also re-housed into social housing

- One former RSL tenant moved into the private-rented sector

Overall, of the 149 displaced households for which the Council held records, 46% went into social housing as a result of the demolition scheme, creating additional pressures in a town where over 12,000 households are already on the waiting list for social housing (CLG, 2009). Elsewhere in Northerly, a senior officer reported that 75% of displaced households from one of the Borough's HMR schemes were going into the social housing sector (field notes, 30 January, 2007). The point here is that large-scale clearance schemes only add to the existing pressures on an overstretched social housing sector. This was accepted by the Head of the Pathfinder Team who, in conversation, admitted that the shortage of affordable housing in Northerly was leading to a re-evaluation of the viability of demolition "as it reduces the supply of affordable housing and increases pressure on the social housing sector" (field notes, 15 January, 2007). Moreover, the fact that some former owner-occupiers moved into social housing seems somewhat at odds with the Council's stated desire to improve housing quality and choice and increase levels of owner-occupation where: "encouraging owner-occupation within [Parkside] is central to our approach" (NMBC, 2006: np)

Table 13: Parkside displacees, analysis of change in tenure

Original tenure			New tenure				
	No.	%	Owner-occ	Pr rented	RSL	Council	Other
Owner-occ	66	46	49		3	13	1
Pr rented	75	52	1	26	3	47	
RSL	3	2			1	1	2	
Council	0	0					
	144	100	50	27	4	62	1
		%	35	19	3	43	1

Similar shifts in the tenure of displacees are also evident in the Merseyside Pathfinder. Secondary analysis of the data presented in the Relocation Survey prepared for New Heartlands (Ecotec, 2009) indicates that around 37% of the owner-occupiers who were displaced went into social housing/shared ownership (see Table 14, below). This movement into social housing may, in part, have been a reflection of the cross-HMR 'affordability gap' noted by Cole and Flint (2007), whereby owner-occupiers were faced with an average shortfall of around £35,000 to buy a house similar to the one they were leaving.

Table 14: New Heartlands displacees, analysis of change in tenure

	Original tenure		New tenure			
	No.	%	Owner-occ	Pr rented	RSL	Shared
Owner-occ	116	50	72	0	22	21
Pr rented	36	15	1	6	29	0
RSL	81	35	3	12	65	0
Shared	0	0	0	0	0	0
	233	100	76	18	116	21
			33	8	50	9

Calculations based on secondary data (Ecotec, 2008) suggest that fifty per cent of *all* the households that were displaced in the New Heartlands area went into social housing, a figure comparable to Parkside (see Table 13 above). These figures also indicate that twelve former RSL households were unable to remain in social housing after being displaced and went instead into the private rented sector. Without further information, however, it is difficult to say whether these households may have faced additional barriers in their re-housing as a potential result of complex housing needs related to, for example, mental health issues, disability, drug and alcohol problems and/or offending behaviour. It is precisely these extremely vulnerable, 'hard-to-house' residents that experience the biggest challenges upon being displaced and it is they who need the greatest support before, during and after their upheaval (see for example Popkin *et al,* 2000).

Reduction in affordable housing stock

Using the numerical expression introduced in Chapter 5 and given the information that NMBC subsequently approved the appointment of a developer to build 123 new homes of which 86 would be for sale at full market value along with 15 shared ownership and 22 social rented homes (NMBC, 2010), we can crudely calculate the primary reduction in affordable housing (a proxy for exclusionary displacement) for Parkside as follows:

Recall that $A_2 = [A_1 - (d + r)] + [0.3(n)]$

where A_2 = post-demolition pool of affordable housing (no. of dwellings)
A_1 = pre-demolition pool of affordable housing
d = number of units demolished
r = number of displaced households re-housed
n = number of new-build units (note that new-build is usually at lower density, ie $n <$ d) 0.3 represents the negotiable 30% affordable housing requirement for new developments

Now $A_2 = [A_1 - (270 + 149)] + [37]$

$$= A_1 - 419 + 37$$

$$= A_1 - 382$$

That is, even when the affordable new-build units are included, the demolition of 270 houses in Parkside produces a net 'loss' of 382 affordable dwellings in the Borough, including dwellings that have been demolished and affordable housing that is no longer 'available' to other low-income households since it is now occupied by Parkside displacees. This is before we even begin to consider the additional exclusionary displacement produced by levels of house price inflation in Pathfinder (and similar) areas that were significantly higher than in other parts of the market (see Ferrari, 2007). Note that Leather *et al* devote an entire Annex of their second National Evaluation of HMR to "the worsening situation in pathfinders with respect to housing affordability", reporting that: "The gap between local incomes and house prices has grown to the extent that even in weak housing markets, some households experience difficulty accessing or sustaining owner-occupation" (2009: 32, 96). Commenting on 2005-07 data, they were particularly concerned that the price-income ratio in three Pathfinder areas was actually higher than that for the relevant city region (see Leather *et al, ibid*: 108). As one Parkside resident put it:

> These are decent houses...these are first-time buying houses. For, like, young people who want to buy a house first time, these are the only kind of house that they can afford but they [the Council] have gone and knocked 'em down so there're gonna be less and less houses for young people to be able to buy and there's gonna be all these expensive houses in their place, you know, you've got to give somebody a chance in life and there's gonna be none left, so everybody's gonna end up renting...and these are gorgeous houses, they're big too...(interview, Chris)

11.3 Analysis of responses to the 'movers questionnaire'

I presented my analyses of movers' destinations and the questionnaire responses to a meeting of the Parkside Task Group in October 2007. Whilst officers showed little interest in where people had moved to, they were very interested in how former

residents had responded to the key question of whether their lives had generally improved as a result of the move. Of the 34 responses:

- 20 indicated that their lives *had* improved;
- six said there had been no change;
- six indicated that their lives had got worse; and
- two did not answer this particular question.

Quickly calculating the percentage of residents who indicated that their lives had improved (c. 60%), the council officers at the meeting immediately seized upon this as evidence that the project had been successful. Given the relatively small number of responses and noting that nearly half of all the respondents had indicated they were planning to leave Parkside before they became aware of the demolition scheme, I suggested that a more cautious interpretation was needed; I also drew attention to the more negative responses that I had received. The officers present, however, ignored my reservations and proceeded to note down the figure whilst the Head of the Private Sector Housing Team turned to the officer who was taking the notes of the meeting to make sure that this independent, PhD research-validated measure of the scheme's success was duly minuted and put on record (field notes, October 2007).

Continuing to err on the side of caution, the fact that 20 out of 34 respondents indicated that their lives had improved as a result of the move actually tells us little about the overall success of the Parkside scheme. Firstly, we do not know how the 115 displaced households that did not respond to the questionnaire felt about their changed circumstances; nor do we know anything about the unknown number of households who did not seek assistance from the council. As the author of the New Heartlands relocation survey conceded, the sampling frame for their survey was:

> ...limited to those property acquisitions where there is a known forwarding address for the household that has been re-housed. Where properties are acquired from RSLs, the forwarding address is almost always identified... However, where owner occupiers or private tenants are re-housed, the forwarding address is usually only identified where the household has been assisted with their re-housing using one of the Pathfinder services, such as the Homemover's service. In other cases...[the] forwarding address is not known (Ecotec, 2008: 7).

Apart from those who responded, we do not know how many displaced residents were still living at the first destination addresses that the Council had on file. Leaving Parkside may well have initiated a process of serial displacement. One of the interviewees, for example, had moved twice in the year since leaving their original Parkside home. This is not uncommon. Goetz highlights how "the first move may create financial hardships that may result in additional moves, setting off a prolonged period of residential instability" (2010: 10). Marris (1962), describing the effects of slum clearance in Lagos, reports that, within a year, around 20% of relocated households had been evicted from their new housing for failing to pay rent. As previous generations of gentrification scholars have reported, this type of 'serial displacement' compounds the difficult task of tracking down displaced households. Yet it is precisely those vulnerable individuals and families who lack the personal

and financial resources to make a successful move that are most likely to be in this invidious position. Their difficult, challenging experiences remain largely invisible to gentrification scholarship. As Hartman notes:

> Most studies pay little attention to that part of the re-located population that has 'disappeared', and conclusions are made solely on the basis of data on those families for whom information is available. Yet the 'lost ' families are generally the least stable, most transient group in the area, with fewest resources, and probably fare far worse than those families who receive help and whose post-relocation whereabouts are known. Rarely are conclusions qualified or offered as tentative in view of this unknown factor (1964: 282).

The Council's commitment to providing Parkside owner-occupiers with a relatively generous compensation package, at least compared to HMR area residents, may also have inclined some respondents to pen a more favourable assessment of their move; conversely, there may have been some residents who may have been afraid to vent criticism at NMBC for fear of, for example, being asked to make repayments of relocation monies or, even, being evicted from a council-rented property. The other key point to note is that none of the respondents had been forced to leave their former homes as a result of a CPO. Surveying former residents who had been forced out by CPOs – residents who would have had a much more antagonistic relationship with the Council - would arguably have produced a very different set of results. This single, over-arching question of overall improvement/deterioration aside, the results of the questionnaire were otherwise quite variable. This mix of positives and negatives is described below and should be read in light of the caveats I have outlined.

What were your views on the scheme when you first heard about it?

In answer to this question, responses were split between apprehension and enthusiasm. This polarisation of reactions may be a reflection of the different levels of preparedness and adaptability that people bring to such news, with some people better able to respond to change than others. Note, however, that there were no strong associations between people's responses and, for example, their age, former tenure and length of residence. These were some of the responses to this particular question:

About time! - 49 year old, owner-occupier, resident for less than five years

Very interested – 69 year old, owner-occupier, resident for more than 10 years

Excited – 35 year old, private tenant, living with wife and two children, 6 years residence

Glad, it was a horrid place – 42 year old, private tenant, living with partner not to happy to move

In contrast, many other residents were very worried and fearful of what might happen. These respondents expressed the following reactions:

Apprehensive – 51 year old, private tenant, resident over 10 years

A bit scared – 23 year old single mum with three children, private tenant, resident less than a year

Was very shocked and worried – 27 year old owner-occupier

I was upset at the prospect of being forced to move – 26 year old, owner-occupier

Scared of losing house as I'd not been able to get a mortgage for anywhere else – 34 year old, owner-occupier, resident more than 10 years

The comments of one woman – a private tenant - capture the sense of bewilderment, confusion and uncertainty that such news provokes, at least for those who, like many of us, feel deeply threatened by the prospect of upheaval: "I thought where should I go?" One respondent, who I later interviewed, was Albert, an 84 year old man, who had bought his house in Parkside in the 1960s. He simply entered the word, "Devastated" as his reaction. Another respondent refused to believe that the demolition scheme would happen: "I did not think it would go ahead". The contrast in people's responses to this question demonstrates the variability in people's preparedness for change and reaffirms earlier findings that suggest people approach and experience displacement differently, depending upon their resourcefulness, vulnerability and coping skills. Some people, for example, were used to moving around in order to find employment:

LC: "So how did you feel when you found out you'd have to move?"
Bill: "Well it never bothered me cause I'd moved all over the place, you know 'cause I had to, finding different jobs and all"

Other residents were much more emplaced, as the responses to Questions 4 and 5 suggest, below. In response to Question 4, *How hard did you find it to leave your home?* , 16 respondents 'didn't want to leave', three were 'not bothered either way' and 13 'wanted to leave'. The supplementary, open-ended question, *What were your main reasons for either wanting to stay or leave*, produced some interesting comments. People's reasons for wanting to leave could be summarised under the headings 'neighbourhood decline' and, to a lesser extent, 'poor housing'. Whilst housing conditions were frequently mentioned by NMBC officers and consultants as one of the key reasons for the Parkside scheme, just three respondents mentioned housing as their main reason for wanting to leave.

Reasons for wanting to stay in Parkside

Respondents who didn't want to leave Parkside gave several reasons for staying put. Broadly, several respondents expressed what might be described as a 'fear of the unknown', that is, the potential problems of change, upheaval, disruption of long-established daily routines, settling somewhere that was unfamiliar and a general sense of uncertainty. Other reasons for wanting to remain were grouped under the

following headings: financial; social support networks and what might be termed as place and location.

Financial

One respondent stated quite plainly that he could not afford to buy anywhere else in Northerly. Another respondent in his 20s remarked that he owned his house outright, suggesting that he was unwilling to take on new debt. A female pensioner was unhappy that she would have to become a council tenant and pay rent from a limited income after having long owned her own property.

Social support networks

The benefits of such networks, particularly in terms of unpaid care and mutual support, were reported in Chapter 7 and again in Chapter 10. Relevant comments from questionnaire respondents included: "Family close by"; "my stepmum and dad lived there"; and a "network of friends and neighbours". One man in his late 50s, noted how he "did not like losing contact with quite a few friends including immediate neighbours and close access to a local social club". He indicated that his health had got worse as a result of moving, adding that he "Misses the exercise of being able to walk into town".

Place and location

Challenging the dismal, frequently malign, representations peddled by the council and its regeneration partners, several respondents drew attention to their roots and emplacement within the area and the meaning of Parkside as home. Their comments also echoed those of several interviewees who described the advantageous location of Parkside and its convenient proximity to the town centre.

I was born in the area and wanted to stay
We had made it a home
My life was there and my memories
It was my home!
Settled in the area, knew the people and a walk away from town
It was my home and I owned it outright. Also close to town
I was brought up in this area and it was close to all the amenities

How could the council have made your move easier?

The differing fortunes of displacees are again evident in the responses to this question. Most respondents had few complaints apart from the issue of poor

communication and information over the lifetime of the project. Some were unhappy at how long the project had taken:

> " it is unsettling to me that there has been nearly a two-year delay in the demolition of houses, this has lead to an increase in anti-social behaviour in the area i.e. vandalism, squatting, arson etc. Also the delays make me wonder whether the council will actually deliver on their promises, there seems to be an increased doubt in the community as to the management of the scheme and the true extent of the scheme i.e. will all the streets be demolished against residents' wishes?

Another respondent expressed similar concerns about the slow progress of the demolition and its impact on both her and her partner's everyday life:

> We only moved to the bottom of the road, where a few houses are staying. The house is a lot better. However the houses that are to be ripped down have been left so long that every local drug user uses them - homeless drug users moved into them. There are fires on a weekly basis. My partner stays up all night because of people being in and out of the houses. They should have made them secure.

Other respondents who had been forced to move to poorer quality accommodation were most unhappy, suggesting that the council would have done better "by not moving us at all" or, in another case, "by getting us somewhere else to live, we are homeless". I later interviewed this couple (see below). By the time I spoke to them they were living in private-rented accommodation which they were barely able to afford. Prior to that, they had been forced to spend several months living at the home of the woman's ex-husband and their relationship had come under severe strain.

Question 9 asked displacees to indicate whether they (dis)agreed with certain statements about the Council as a result of their recent experience. Twenty-five of the thirty-four respondents agreed that the Council "provided an adequate relocation package", a reflection perhaps of the relative generosity of the compensation received by former Parkside residents. No other question attracted such an emphatic response. In a subsequent question, fourteen respondents indicated that their financial position was unchanged as a result of their move; nine respondents reported that they were worse off, six of whom were continuing owner-occupiers. This is interesting, for it suggests that some owner-occupiers were struggling, even with the compensation of market value plus a 10% Home Loss Payment *and* a £20,000 grant.

Note also that these residents were being forced to move in the period up to Autumn 2007 - at the height of the house price boom. That is, they were forced to buy into the housing market at the worst possible time.

Respondents' answers to Question 10 are presented in Table 15 (below). Recalling the caveats outlined above, the responses provide a broadly favourable, if mixed, account of the impacts of displacement. They suggest, in particular, that displacees:

- benefited from better housing conditions;

- felt safer;
- enjoyed an improved neighbourhood environment; and
- had, overall, seen improvement in their lives as a result of moving.

These outcomes, it should be noted, were fortuitous rather than planned. At the same time, however, it would seem that movers saw little improvement in their health, finances and access to services.

Table 15: 'Parkside questionnaire' - summary of responses to Question 10, n=34

FOR EACH OF THESE STATEMENTS PLEASE TICK THE BOX WHICH SEEMS MOST APPROPRIATE TO YOU	Improved	Stayed the same	Got worse	Don't know/ No response
My general health has….	11	16	6	1
My financial situation has…	9	14	9	1
The general condition of my housing has…	21	6	5	2
My overall level of satisfaction with my housing has	19	8	3	4
My contact with friends and family has…	7	17	9	1
My contact with neighbours has…	15	7	8	4
My feelings of personal safety and security have…	23	4	6	1
The level of crime and anti-social behaviour in my neighbourhood has…	22	3	5	4
My neighbourhood environment has…	23	4	5	2
My access to local services (for example, shops, doctors, schools) has…	13	14	6	1
If you have children, the conditions for raising them have…	4	2	3	25
Overall, as a result of your move, do you feel that your life has…	20	6	6	2

The bare numbers tell us very little about the trade-offs that low income displacees must make. Nor do they tell us much about the everyday experience of displacement and the trials of people struggling to get by (Porter, 2009b). As Slater notes, *"asking people about their experiences of displacement* is just as important as asking how many people have been displaced" (2008: 218, original emphasis). The next

section, then, is concerned with giving voice to those displaced, and draws mainly on the interviews I conducted with former Parkside residents. In presenting their stories I feel the need to step back and let them do most of the talking in an attempt to preserve the truths that they utter, unmediated by academic analysis and conjecture. Displacement in the raw, if you like. If it makes for uncomfortable reading, so be it. Seen up-close, the accounts of displacement they describe are brutal, raw, and heart-rending.

11.4 Displacement: the view from below

Witnessing domicide

I begin this section with a brief account of a summer morning in 2005 when former Parkside resident, Michelle, watched her former home being demolished. Michelle's deep emotional attachment to her old home and Parkside and its people were described in Chapter 7. In order to maintain social ties and retain familiar surroundings, she had moved into a nearby street and she could still see her old house through one of her upstairs windows. On the day of the demolition, she happened to be on the telephone, chatting with Beth, her former next-door neighbour, who, unlike most of the other displacees, had left Northerly and moved to a small town a few miles away. As Michelle notes: "Like me, she [Beth] felt... a strong connection to where she lived and she felt like she'd been ripped [*with emphasis*] away from her home" (interview, 2006). They had been good friends and now kept in touch by telephone. Michelle remembers how she heard loud banging, smashing and splintering noises nearby:

> Now, throughout my life I've lived next to a lot of building sites [*tearful, pauses*] and it sounded just like a building site and I thought well they aren't building anything apart from the stadium at the bottom and they don't work Saturdays so I knew it was some heavy machinery. So I looked out of my side window...you can see from the top of my stairs and there was... a machine ripping my old house down [*incredulous*] and you watch that being ripped down...it's quite traumatic. I knew it was gonna happen sometime, but I'd had no notice. I just spent the rest of the day in tears.

> The day that my house was knocked down it was traumatic, I was in tears, all that day and for several days afterwards, but I've been lucky enough to have that closure. You know it's like being in the war, being a bomb victim, y'know, you are shell-shocked by the whole process, because you have no control over it, none whatsoever and I think, seeing it ripped down, there's no going back, there is no house there to hang on to. There are no walls, there are no rooms, you know, that isn't your back garden anymore, it's somewhere where the bulldozer's churning stuff up...

> And, I know it's a bit of a cliché, but time is a healer, in that, the further away from it I get, the easier it is to deal with it. What I would say, though, it's all very well people trying to cheer you up, saying oh, but you're going to get a better house, you'll have a lovely house, you can do it how you want it, won't

it be better? It's like you can see all these things, you know all these things but it still doesn't take away the pain of leaving. I didn't want to move, I didn't want to leave my house, which was my home, which had seen me through some God awful times. (Michelle, interview, 2006)

It would seem that NMBC's acquisition of Michelle's home and her enforced departure was merely the beginning of a long, unsettling process of adjustment and reorientation. For others, displacement can mean the loss of a sense of purpose and, as discussed in Chapter 3, the discontinuation of spatially determined 'personal projects' that structured both their everyday and longer-term goals (Wallenius, 1999). This interviewee described it in terms of his 'vision':

It's difficult for me to explain what they've taken away...What they've done, they've taken away my vision of how my life would be...the vision has been destroyed and that's upset me tremendously... That was my home down [name of street]. This is just temporary accommodation to me until something clicks in and it hasn't clicked in yet. My wife might be happy here but I'm still unsettled. And that's it, I'm not happy.

Hurting and harming

But not everyone even makes it as far as their new home. For some, the grieving for a lost home first documented by Fried (1963) was also accompanied by real grief for the loss of those for whom either the prospect or actual experience of upheaval and displacement proved too much. Many residents were adamant that the only way that the authorities would get them out of their homes would be if they were carried out "in a box", that is, if they were dead. For too many residents, this, tragically, is what happened. In a meeting I attended, one Hilltop resident, frustrated by officers' technical jargon and "waffle", felt that officers were evading the real issues and displaying insufficient empathy for those who would be affected by the scheme:

It's easy for you to talk about this but it's a very stressful situation for people to be in. My 86 year-old neighbour, for example...We're not just talking about homes here, but people, their attachment to an area. You talk about it being life-changing, but I disagree. This will be a life-*ending* experience for the really elderly. It will. (field notes, 16 January 2007)

Unsurprisingly, this most taboo of subjects does not receive attention in Inspector's reports or official evaluations of HMR and HMR-like schemes yet residents of the three areas where I did fieldwork for this thesis all reported an increasing incidence of death and illness amongst loved ones, friends and neighbours which they attributed entirely to the uncertainty, stress and upheaval generated by HMR (see for example Edge, 2008; Minton, 2009; Pascoe, 2008). Even within the fairly small number of interviews that I conducted in Parkside, one interviewee attributed the death of his wife to the stress of their impending move, whilst another interviewee spoke of an additional death and one interviewee told of the attempted suicide of one of her former neighbours. I present the relevant dialogue from these interviews

below. These extracts show the enormous impact wrought by such schemes on vulnerable people. By way of context, the first extract relates to the attempted suicide of a woman in her 60s who had been living next door to her daughter. Both mother and daughter had been forced to move as a result of the scheme but they had been re-housed in separate areas that were several miles apart:

> ...the sad thing about it is that there was a mum and her three children and next door to that was her mother, the woman's mother and her father. They'd lived next door to each other for ages. She [the daughter] got put in [name of town X] and the mother's ended up in [name of town Y]. They've put them both into council houses, but the mother, because she'd lived next door to her daughter for so long, she couldn't cope, so she tried to kill herself. She's now in hospital. She moved three months ago...[and]... they've basically told her family that she's not ready to come out: she's still awaiting a lot of psychiatric assessment. She's unstable. But that woman has never had any mental health trouble in her life. She's lived there all her life. Sixty years she's been there...(Sarah, interview, 2006).

Another interviewee, one of the residents who had been displaced by the Parkside scheme, noted that he had heard about the death of a resident through former neighbours: "I think a lady up the street...died through the anxiety of moving and all this distress. She passed away. It can take you to the edge." (Michelle, interview, 2007)

I interviewed Mr Williams, who was in his 80s, in his 'new' home, just three streets away from his old home, which had now been demolished. Mr Williams was caring for his wife, who was terminally ill, when they were informed that they would have to move because their house was being demolished. He insisted that the shock of this news accelerated his wife's demise and ultimately contributed to her death, prior to moving:

> LC: Did your wife see this place?

> Mr Williams: No, she never saw this house because she couldn't walk. We had to take her out in the car or the ambulance if we ever went anywhere...

> LC: And you think all the worry of this, it really affected her?

> Mr Williams: Oh it did, aye, it upset her. She didn't want to go. She was so comfortable there with me looking after her that she just gave in...I knew she'd die that night and she did...It was the stress of having to move and start afresh. I've done it all my life so it didn't bother me, but it did bother her. I kept saying, come on, you've no need to cry, I'll look after you, you know I will...She got so upset, I used to talk about different things and try and get her back to normal and then she'd settle down again. But this time I couldn't get her settled and then she started, couldn't get her breath...

Reflecting on all this, Mr Williams longed to be back at his old home: "I'd have been better there looking after my missus because she'd have still been alive, I know she would." Another interviewee similarly attributed the death of a 70 year-old

neighbour to the shock and worry that resulted from the news that her house was going to be demolished:

> ...a lady who'd I'd known for around thirty years, who was a neighbour at the top of the street. When she received the letter saying her house was going to be demolished she just took it very badly indeed, mainly because she was a widow, her daughter lived a good distance away and she made the street her life, you know, sitting on the doorstep, chatting to people. She was totally distraught.

In Liverpool, Liz Pascoe was determined that the Planning Inspector should hear of the human stories, the continuing heartache and, not least, the tragic loss of life that had resulted from the proponents' demolition proposals. To the proponents, the Inquiry was little more than a mechanism for acquiring the remaining houses from the people who stood in the way of the development scheme. Liz Pascoe therefore did her utmost best to challenge this marginalisation of human life from the inquiry proceedings:

> Hundreds of people's lives are affected by this CPO...For us, the cost is enormous. It takes us all to breaking point and has broken this community and our spirits. It has cost many people their lives or made their last years a misery. It's very hard to explain what it feels like to have this done to you...It's like the difference between falling in love and rape. People have died fighting alongside me - the 97 year old lady who died four months after moving. The NDC strategy did talk about reducing the proportion of elderly and low-income people...I just didn't think they would do it like this. I want to tell this Inquiry about who we were. The personal stress, the individual costs and trauma get overlooked. I want to show the cost in human terms... (field notes, 15 January, 2008)

With tears welling in her eyes, Elizabeth continued to describe the impact on the community where she lived with a series of vignettes that were intended "to give an insight into what this is like on the receiving end":

> I'll start with Jean – her husband had fought in the Second World War. Coming back from the war he had said to her, "I can't offer you much but I can provide you with a home". So he bought a little house outright. He died some years ago but she held on to her home as long as she could in memory of him. Her son was furious that she was being asked to move: "If you make my mother move you'll kill her"...and she did die of cancer not long after she moved. Harry gave in before it started; Paul gave in because of his mother's stroke.

> My next door neighbour is afraid of objecting in case she upsets the authorities. Her partner died. They were just about to finish paying their mortgage. She will become a tenant because she won't be able to afford a mortgage and doesn't want to own half a house. Paying her mortgage has been a 25-year struggle and now the best years of her life are down the drain. Libby was told she had 28 days to get out once the Judge ruled on our High Court appeal. This is the most tragic story. Her son paid off the loan on her

house: "I want you to be happy and safe", he said. Because she gave in she thought she had betrayed him. She used to have this great big sideboard with wedding presents on. When I visited her last there were just marks left on it – she's given away her most precious things. She now lives in a flat.

Neelam ran the corner shop. She wouldn't run a shop somewhere else because they wouldn't know her. They'd shout racist abuse – they'd call her a 'Paki'. Her business closed because of the CPO.

John. He always seemed to be such an unemotional person but he cried when he found out I'd won the High Court case. He came up to me and hugged me and cried. He died three days later. He was as good as any of you but you people look at us and underestimate us.

In a series of personal communications to the author, Pascoe further expressed the view that a significant number of people died as a result of the stress and displacement caused by the Edge Lane regeneration scheme. She also describes the tremendous toll that fighting the CPOs and appeals has had on her own health. With just a few weeks left before she was required to vacate her home, Pascoe wrote the following:

I have to get out of my perfectly good house by the end of the month and it is certainly taking its toll. My memory is trashed, I have no energy at all, and my blood pressure has sky-rocketed. So, I can't take part in anything at all as I can't focus on even the simplest thing. I am not as strong as people assume... We have had 41 neighbours die, and if it weren't for the intensive care of my GP I suspect I would have by now joined them.

Some of us fight back. But even if we win in the High Court there is absolutely no remedy in law to prevent the totally unaccountable quangos simply starting again at the beginning with an identical 'scheme' until decent people are ground to dust. Nine funerals in as many weeks was the dawning for me of the real cost to society. So how does it feel? Well you may think you are able to imagine, but I doubt it, unless you have experienced it.

It feels like being told "Your home doesn't matter, you life doesn't matter, nothing about who you are or what you are, or what you are doing matters, including your friends and neighbours who certainly don't matter, so clear out of our way because colleagues of ours want to gamble on the chance of making a profit from the land that is yours, and they are paying us all very handsomely for doing this to you".

In an e-mail sent 27 November 2009, Pascoe writes that:

My home was acquired last Friday...Back on beta-blockers for high blood pressure. Holding on I guess...I will be utterly choked the last time I walk out of here... SO MANY memories. I have certainly really lived here (personal communication, original emphasis).

Elizabeth finally left her home in January 2010. She again reiterated her strong feelings about the impact of the Edge Lane scheme on her friends and neighbours:

I have had 41 neighbours die now, that I know of, largely prematurely and due to this. If this was Zimbabwe then a TV programme would be made about it, and someone would be saying 'this is wrong', loud enough to be 'heard'. My 'new' house is in a conservation area, so may be safe until I die. In fact if such as this occurs again I'll make sure I die first, before watching the slow destruction of lives / buildings / hope. It cost double what I got by the way, for the same functionality, and needs £20K spent on it, and still won't be up to the standard of this house. Mortgage now until I am 102. I had no mortgage here...So, short version, I am cracking up, don't want to know (Liz Pascoe, personal communication, Jan 2010)

Based on the evidence that Elizabeth Pascoe submitted to the second Edge Lane inquiry and using extracts from my 2007 interview with Elijah Debnam[39], Charles Clover, a newspaper columnist and critic of HMR, wrote a brave piece for *The Sunday Times* where he drew attention to the "dozens" of people "who have died during the years of distress and bureaucratic intimidation by threat of compulsory purchase" (Clover, 2010). This drew a quick response from certain individuals who were obviously angry at being portrayed as 'murderers' and argued that Clover had no evidence to support his claims that these deaths might be the (in)direct result of HMR interventions (Clover, personal communication, 18 February 2010). In response to these challenges, however, Pascoe made the important point that even though she had highlighted this figure of 41 deaths in both oral and written evidence to the Inquiry, at no point in the Inquiry was she asked to prove it. Nor did the proponents attempt to refute the figure:

> ...it wasn't substantiated because I WASN'T ASKED TO SUBSTANTIATE IT, BUT neither was I challenged IN THE VERY SLIGHTEST to prove it and most important nor was it denied and I therefore assumed that the number was probably larger / they didn't want to draw attention to the effects of ripping peoples' lives apart. (Pascoe, personal communication, 23 March, 2010, original emphasis)

In addition to these deaths, it was apparent both from my interviews and testimony given at the inquiries that many of the residents were suffering immediate - and sometimes longer-term – deteriorations in their health as a result of losing their homes or being under threat of losing them. The comments below were voiced by objectors at the Oldham inquiry:

> I've had shingles...another neighbour has. One neighbour who was terminally ill said he just wanted to die. He died at Christmas...

> All the worry is causing serious stress. My husband and I argue much more than we used to. I've got high blood pressure and I worry morning and night.

> You have to spend your time throwing up and crying. Fighting it is pointless.

---

[39]NB: with Mr Debnam's permission

In Parkside, many residents had been faced with several years of uncertainty in regard to their future housing prospects. Mary describes the anxiety she felt when she first heard that her house was to be included in the demolition scheme:

> It's an awful feeling. I'd been on holiday and when I came back Martin rang me and asked me if I'd go round and he'd got the map of those that were coming down [*emotional, stops to compose herself*]... and I couldn't believe it, there were no way I were going to move. I was stunned, it took me days, ...it were terrible, terrible, yeah. You...you feel as if part of your life's been taken away from you. Yeah, I got really down, yeah. I didn't want to do anything anymore, I thought, "what's the point?"

With growing numbers of residents complaining of increased stress and worry, the Parkside Focus Group was able to secure a small grant from Northerly NDC to provide distressed residents with the services of a trained counsellor who could help them through the difficult process of leaving their homes. Mary became one of the counsellor's clients. Now in her 60s, Mary had separated from her husband at an early age and been left with three young children to raise alone. Up until the announcement of the Parkside scheme, she had always been a very energetic, independent, determined, strong-minded person. From having a stable, purposeful life supported by her daily routines of shopping, socialising with neighbours and gardening, the demolition plans plunged Mary into uncertainty, fear and depression as her life was taken out of her control. For the first time in her life she sought help through counselling. I interviewed her around six months after she had left her old home. She was still very angry about the effects of the scheme:

> Mary: They [NMBC] are messing about with people's lives, it could kill some people, it could, cause some people to commit suicide, people with bad hearts, it could finish them couldn't it? It could bring on all sorts of things, it could bring on depression for people who've never been depressed. I mean I had a spell with [name of counsellor] because I used to ring Martin [Chair of Parkside Focus Group], I used to wake up in the morning and decide I weren't gonna get up at all: what is there to get up for? I used to go to bed at night and think I hope it rains tomorrow and I won't get up, I won't have to go out and then I'd think to myself that's not me...that's not me. I could have gone really down...and that's just one person (interview, 2006).

In my interviews with council officers, several of them indicated that they could appreciate the enormous personal consequences for people who were losing their homes (see Chapter 7). Mary disagreed:

> I don't think they've got an ounce of feeling amongst them...they say they have but they haven't a clue what it's like, not a clue. They'd have to have it happen to them...and where they live it's not likely to is it? They live in another world...They [NMBC] don't know what's happening, they should go and live with someone... while it's happening and follow it through and see what it's like...to go through the hassle of everything you have to do. They could learn a lot (interview, 2006).

More pointedly, despite claiming to understand and/or appreciate the potential impacts of housing demolition and the severely unsettling effects of displacement, NMBC actually took few steps to involve others such as Social Services and public health workers in the relocation process. The Council's advice surgeries were very much restricted to administrative, re-housing matters; Social Services only got involved in cases where extremely vulnerable residents were experiencing severe difficulties in being re-housed. In short, there was no strategic, co-ordinated plan to mitigate the impacts of displacement. I discussed this issue with Michelle:

> LC: I've been surprised at the lack of support from the Council. Apart from the surgery there seems to have been very little help for people.

> Michelle: Yeah, you're right. You would think that Social Services, I mean the amount of people, I mean considering how distraught I was...and it caused me to have four months off work...all this business. And I'm normally a well-grounded, intelligent, emotionally stable person and it just slayed me, literally. There's been no support, other than through the Parkside Focus group. I was just lucky that when I had my meltdown we'd got a counsellor who could help.

As I noted in Chapter 7, part of the attraction of Parkside was its affordability and location. Several of the women I interviewed had moved to Parkside after separating from partners because it had been one of the few centrally-located areas in Northerly where they could afford to purchase a reasonable home on a single income. Being displaced obviously removed these advantages. Moreover, people were being forced out at the worst possible time, that is, when house prices were approaching their 2007 peak. Fear of the unknown, the uncertainty of not knowing where you might end up, mixed with financial worries and the disruption or loss of taken-for-granted social support networks, produced considerable stress for some people, as Michelle recounts:

> I was under a lot of stress: trying to get a decent price for my house, trying to get a decent price on another house somewhere - if I could find another house somewhere. Having to pay another eleven grand on a mortgage when I'm a single person on a low wage, it ain't easy. Yes, you've got to make some compromises, but eleven grand! I only paid £26,000 for that property down there on a mortgage and to have to pay eleven grand more, it's a hell of a chunk of money, y'know. And all these things caused me to...I ended up bursting into tears at work after phone calls, I even ended up crashing my works van one time when the District Valuer phoned me up. I ended up being off work for four months...because the stress caused me so much tension that I ended up slipping a disc in my back, trapping a nerve in my spine. I ended up in casualty four times on one weekend and I had all the other ensuing emotional problems...But for somebody like me, reasonably intelligent, reasonably together, to get that far, it damn well is that bad. I mean like that gentleman that I was helping pack, he had nobody. He seemed to hide it very well but he's an old man, he had nobody else, he was elderly, he was infirm. Who's to represent him, who's to help him? Why isn't somebody assessing his needs before he has to find somewhere else to live? I mean I've got a mouth on me, I've got a mind on me that I can ask people for information, I can ask people for help. But for somebody like that, who's as scared if not

more scared than I was and I'm bolshie enough to speak out about it, what's he going through, y'know and he's just one person in hundreds (interview, 2006).

Michelle noted that her life was getting back to normal, albeit very slowly. Finding this stability, however, had taken a lot of time and support. Indeed, she had moved only a very short distance in order to retain social ties and a familiar, supportive environment:

> Well I can talk about it now without bursting into tears. If you'd have asked me some of those questions, even a couple of months ago, I wouldn't have been able to speak through half of the answers. I'm lucky that I'm more grounded now, physically and emotionally. I have had support, I have had counselling...(interview, 2006)

Impacts on social relationships

Reinforcing the negative health impacts of displacement, several interviewees bemoaned the loss of significant friendships that had been built up over time:

> LC: Do you still have friends living in Parkside?
>
> Mrs Collins: Yes, a couple - Patrick and Claire - we knew them and we haven't seen them for months. There were a few other people as well, but everybody's just been dis-banded , you know.

But it is not only relationships with friends and neighbours that are affected. Displacement can also present severe challenges to close relationships *within* families:

> LC: Talking to people in the Council, one of the things they said was that no one will be worse off as a result of the scheme. What do you think to that?
> Mrs Collins: Ha!
>
> Mr Collins: I think there's a lot of people who's worse off. I mean, I know at least two people who split up over it, at least two. Sarah's brother, because him and his girlfriend, he wanted to go to [name of suburb] and she wanted to go somewhere else. They couldn't make their mind up on that lot and in the end he did go to [name of suburb] but she didn't. They've split up and they had two little kids.

Having only lived at her new house for six months, Mary had yet to establish the trusting relationships that had supported her through her time in Parkside:

> I had a friend living across the road and I miss just nipping across there, because if I were fed up I'd just go across there...if he went away I'd look after his house and he'd have my key if I went away and that sort of thing. Well I've not got that relationship with anybody at the new house yet.

One of the concerns raised by the more elderly interviewees was the fear of being forced to move into a care home for elderly people or housing that was specially designed for the elderly:

> There were some older ones that were willing to go into bungalows...I'm not ready for that. I've got a friend who lives at [name of suburb] and she's in an old people's bungalow and she said she didn't feel old until she moved in that and now she thinks, "Old people's bungalows, I must be old", and her outlook's changed and she's become old. (Mary, interview, 2006).

Another interviewee argued that the scheme was taking away elderly people's right to live independently. One of the early managers of the scheme expressed the view that this might prove beneficial for the more elderly residents but many of them contested this, arguing that they would prefer to continue living independently:

> He [name of scheme manager] said that a lot of people in Parkside were of the right age for going into 'homes'. Bill argued strongly against this: "People don't want to go into homes. Have you seen those places? I once worked at one [as a tradesman]...there's no way I'm going into one of those"

Several families who sought advice at the twice-weekly housing surgeries expressed their concerns about the potential impact of the move on their children's schooling and social relationships. One interviewee, who was still residing in Parkside, spoke of how her displaced neighbour had been unable to get a place for her young son at the school which served her new neighbourhood. Consequently, she now had to make an eight mile round-trip by public transport to take her son to school:

> ...she had three children but one of them was only young and he's still travelling to Parkside to go to school: she's still making the trip from [name of town] where she wants to send him to school. She has to get two buses from [name of town].

Previously, it had taken the woman less than ten minutes to walk her son to school. Equally, those children who lived in the houses that were being retained were affected by the loss of many of their friends:

> ...there used to be loads of kids - there used to be a lot playing in the street - there were that many kids on this street, your life were a breeze. I swear to God they'd play out from ten in t'morning to six o'clock at night. They'd just play and play but they've all gone now and my son's really upset because he used to be friends with them all and they've all moved away...I mean it's the summer holidays now but he just wants to go back to school all of the time (interview, Sally).

This woman's closest friend had moved to a suburban area with her partner and young child, where they were now renting a house. She talked about the contrast between Parkside and the area where she now lived:

> Yeah, I loved it...You'd be surprised, right, [where I live now] there's all these posh houses with their professional people, they don't seem to want to know...

but when you're close like [Parkside], everybody's like 'morning' you know what I mean? There's more of a community spirit... I'll never forget living in [Parkside]. It were a lovely place to live. It were ideal for everything. But they've just frightened the hell out of everybody and got rid of all the decent people.

Financial impacts

Mr and Mrs Collins contacted me soon, after receiving the questionnaire and were keen to let me know how their financial circumstances had deteriorated as a result of having to leave Parkside. When they bought the house in Parkside, Mr Collins had been earning a good wage as a motorway construction worker, bringing home around £2,000 per month. But such work had become increasingly sporadic and Mr Collins was now working full-time at a local supermarket on minimum wage. They had bought the house a few years before and were paying a mortgage of around £200 per month. When they heard about the demolition they were keen to be re-housed by the Council as the combination of significant house price rises and a reduced income meant that they would no longer be able to get a mortgage for a comparable property: "You go to the building society and say 'I earn twelve grand a year, how do I stand for a mortgage?' They say, 'You don't stand, you crawl, you know, they just don't want to know do they?'" (Mr Collins, interview, 2007). As Mrs Collins added: "We couldn't have afforded to anyway. I wouldn't have took all that debt on. I mean I'm 46, he's 44. There's no way we wanted to get into debt for thousands of pounds" (interview, 2007).

Also, in the private-rented market, average rent levels in Northerly were double what they were currently paying in mortgage repayments. Unfortunately, however, with grown-up children and no special housing needs, they lacked the requisite number of 'points' that were needed to be allocated council accommodation. A temporary return to the home of her violent ex-partner had not gone well. At the time of the interview, the couple had just moved into a private-rented property that was costing them £420 per month:

> Mr Collins: It's crippling us, it really is. I mean, luckily we've no debt; we couldn't afford to have debt you know. When I get paid, we pay everything and there's nothing left. And that is all we get, you know and it's not easy. I don't know how long we'll be able to afford to do this for.

> Mrs Collins: Yeah, it's crippling. I mean there are very few nights out. There's nothing. Luckily we're happy stopping in: we do a lot of crosswords, we watch telly we go for walks and stuff, but there's no luxuries. We don't drink, we can't afford to smoke, you know, there's no life. We've just not got the money to have a life now this has happened.

> LC: Were you a lot better off when you lived down there?

> Mrs Collins: Well yes, because he were paying his mortgage, I mean his mortgage were half of what this rent is, plus the fact he had a better job then. I mean like now he's fetching £750 a month home. I mean when you've paid

rent and council tax and water rates and shopping that's it, it's gone...The rent's crippling us isn't it?

Mr Collins: Yeah. £420. If I had a flat 39 hours and didn't work any Sundays, I'd just pull £700 a month. We pay our bills and that's it, you wait for your next pay cheque before you can do anything and then it goes straight on bills. Mrs Collins: As I say we've nothing left have we at the end of the month? I mean, if anything happened we'd be stuck. It's a good job it's a rented house because if the roof blew off tomorrow...You can't save for anything can you? You can't save for a rainy day because there's nothing to save with, except for a few quid and that's it. Christmas is gonna be a nightmare isn't it?

One of the worst aspects of their situation was the fact that, two years after leaving Parkside, their former house was still standing: "They've only just knocked em down haven't they and it's two years. We could have stopped in that house another two years, you know, and been all right" (Mrs Collins, interview, 2007).

The displaced owner-occupiers that I interviewed had been forced to either use their savings or take out new mortgages in order to buy comparable properties, even after they had received the market value of their homes plus the standard 10% Home Loss compensation and a £20,000 grant. Having paid off the mortgage on her old house many years ago, Mary, in her late 60s, had taken out a mortgage for £30,000. Other residents were equally unhappy about the idea of taking on additional debt:

Chris: I'm very strict on finances and I didn't want to take another mortgage out at my age. So we went for this one because we knew we could budget for it with the little bit of savings that we had but they're nearly exhausted now because we've had to spend quite a bit more getting it to how we want it, up to the standard of our old house.…it's taken us about two and a half years to get on top of things. There's people that's had to get in debt, further debt. I know Michelle had to get into debt for over £40,000 and I know somebody else that had to get in debt for £50,000 to get the house that he wanted. We just managed to scrape through. But if we hadn't had any savings I don't know where we'd be. We wouldn't have been able to buy this property.

Maureen: Altogether we got about £86,000 from the house and the grants and all, and then this house was 110, so we had to put in 24 but they paid for the solicitor's fees and new white goods and stuff. Even so, it's not right. That money was for our retirement. I mean we got that [the Parkside house], we got a mortgage for 15 years and we paid that off didn't we? We'd got no debt and then all of a sudden you find you've got to find another house and possibly get up to your eyes in debt. We didn't want to be to be doing that at our age did we?

Such views were common. Many elderly people in Northerly, Liverpool and Oldham, who had paid off their mortgages years ago and were now living on relatively modest pensions, rightly baulked at the prospect of having to take out new loans or pay rent. As one NMBC officer conceded:

Now you try telling a retired miner at 78 who's got his pit pension and worked hard for it, he's got to pay his pit pension out in rent every week. It doesn't work does it…and I only know through my mum and dad, I know what my dad would say: take me out of here in a box, I'm not moving.

The loss of affordable housing through demolition was deeply felt by younger residents who were unable to buy houses at what was the height of the house price boom in 2007. The following conversation was typical:

Vicky: Two houses at the top of the road went for about £75,000 and then there's a guy two doors up from t'alley, he's just moved because he were fighting with the Council, he were saying they weren't offering him enough and then he took their last offer because he thought that they'd, you know, they'd wack him with a compulsory order, so I think he got £42,000 but what can you buy with that, you know?…In fact, he's gone back to his mum's. You can't get anything can you?

Sally: Even at £42,000, me and [name of woman's partner] would struggle to afford to buy one of them, much as we'd like to. It's dead money renting all the time. Like all them houses that were run down they could have sold for eight grand or thereabouts and let people start afresh, you know, young people, couples that want to buy a house – them houses've gone now. Stupid. And your mum, if they knock hers down, she's lived in that nearly all her life, she'll never be able to have another house of her own. They take it away just like that.

11.5 Conclusion: gentrification, displacement and social harm

This chapter has shown that gentrification-by-bulldozer causes substantial, sometimes fatal, harm. Following Porter and Shaw (2009), this raises a fundamental question: who benefits from urban regeneration? Urban regeneration has certainly benefited Tom Bloxham, for example. Chairman and co-founder of the specialist urban regeneration/gentrification company, Urban Splash, Bloxham has been a key player in HMR-funded projects across the north such as Park Hill, Sheffield and the much hyped Chimney Pot Park development in Salford. Listed in the *Sunday Times Rich List* and owner of a property portfolio worth over £200m, he once remarked that, "It's good business to do regeneration" (Salford Star, 2006).

But it is not just Bloxham who has done well. Several private consulting firms have also squeezed substantial fee income out of HMR. Between 2002 and 2007, the HMR Pathfinder partnerships spent a total of around £42.15m on external consultants (Hansard, 21 May, 2007). One company, Ecotec, of which Brendan Nevin was a former Director, received around £1.93m between 2003 and 2006 (Hansard, 19 December 2006). Nevin himself was recently paid consultancy fees of £182, 000 (or £850 per day) as Acting Director of New Heartlands (Waddington, 2011). In the meantime, displaced owner occupiers were, on average, left with £35k shortfalls (Cole and Flint, 2007) as a result of their untimely and unwanted moves.

Commenting on Slater's (2006) *Eviction* paper, Freeman (2008: 190) contends that "The world does not cleave neatly into greedy capitalists promoting gentrification and community activists resisting it". There is ample evidence which suggests that Freeman is mistaken. Every year, for example, a few weeks before the annual film festival, Cannes plays host to the lesser known but equally glitzy *Marché International des Professionnels d'Immobilier* or MIPIM, "the world's premier real estate event for professionals" (www.mipim.com/en/mipim/). According to the website, "MIPIM brings together the most influential real estate professionals to explore major international property development projects, connect with potential partners, and strike deals over four intensive days." (www.mipim.com/en/mipim/). Every year, at least until the recession started to bite, delegates from Liverpool and Manchester councils would make their way to the Cote d'Azur and separately charter yachts to entertain potential investors and developers. Plate 10 shows the 2007 Liverpool yacht.

Plate 10: The 'Liverpool yacht' at the *Marché International des Professionnels d'Immobilier* (MIPIM).

Thus, whilst frightened elderly and vulnerable people were being torn from their homes and having their lives eviscerated and immiserated to create 'Zones of Opportunity' for volume house-builders, delegates from Liverpool, Manchester and other northern councils were wining and dining potential developers on the sun-drenched Cote d'Azur (see for example *Place North West*, 2 March 2010; *Salford Star*, 20 September, 2010). Comparing the photograph of the 'Liverpool yacht' with the one that opened Chapter 10, or indeed, the picture of Elijah Debnam, you can see that Slater is justified in rebutting Freeman's claim: "for those fighting for their homes...the world *does* cleave neatly into 'greedy capitalists' promoting the process and community activists resisting it" (Slater, 2008: 213, original emphasis). Go along to any public inquiry and you can see it for yourself.

In order to better respond to this injustice, critical scholarship needs to develop new approaches for conceptualising gentrification and displacement: gentrification in neo-liberal times, I would argue, is too vicious to apprehend through conventional conceptual lenses. Smith's (1996) notion of revanchism goes so far; we need to go further. When people are dying, we can no longer afford to prevaricate about whether or not gentrification and, particularly, the loss of home and social networks causes harm. My argument, therefore, is that we need to begin to criminalise gentrification and displacement in much the same way that critical criminologists have begun to reconceptualise and criminalise some of the other ills of capitalism as forms of 'social harm' (see for example Hillyard et al, 2004).

As Dorling (2006) has argued, a 'social harm' approach has the potential to take social research in some very interesting and possibly useful directions. Hillyard et al (2004: 1-2) explain that:

> The principal aim of a social harm approach is to move beyond the narrow confines of criminology with its focus on harms defined by whether or not they constitute a crime, to a focus on all the different types of harms, which people experience from the cradle to the grave. The range and type of harm people experience during their life course are, of course, extremely varied...Some of these events will be captured by the criminal law. Most of the events, however, will not be seen as criminal and categorised in a variety of different ways from 'outcomes of the market economy' to 'accidents' or 'mistakes'... [I]t makes no sense to separate out harms, which can be defined as criminal, from all other types of harm. All forms of harms we argue must be considered and analysed together.

Aligning themselves with criminologists, socio-legal scholars and human rights lawyers, critical gentrification researchers might usefully develop a more robust understanding of the harms of gentrification and displacement that could eventually be considered in planning, policy-making and impact assessments.

Some scholars might baulk at any such calls for the criminalisation of gentrification. Gentrification, they would argue, is surely much more nuanced than that. The social and physical distance of the academy and its denizens permits this more reflective stance. But for those losing their homes, some of whom were 'repeat victims' of urban regeneration, their experiences of the bulldozers and their ensuing displacement and disorientation were anything but nuanced.

Chapter 12

Conclusion

12.1 Introduction

I begin this chapter with the incisive comments of Don Touhig, the former Labour MP for Islwyn. In 2007, the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee turned its attention to the topic of HMR. In contrast to the 2001-2002 Empty Homes Select Committee (HMSO, 2002b), the MPs on the Committee were much more robust in their questioning of the HMR programme's achievements and the responsible officials. In just a few scathing lines, directed at Peter Housden, Permanent Secretary at the Department for Communities and Local Government, Mr Touhig did an impressive job of summarising all that was wrong with HMR:

> Mr. Touhig: Mr. Housden, you have a budget of £2.2 billion. You have demolished 10,000 houses. You have managed in five years to build just 1,000 houses to replace them. You have put at risk some of Britain's housing heritage. You have ignored the views of local people. You have provided a bonanza for property speculators and left the people you are supposed to help unable to buy houses because of rising prices. Did your department deliberately plan a cock-up on this scale or are you just incompetent? (House of Commons, 2008: Question 68)

A conclusion usually marks some sort of ending. HMR has now come to an end and it has been roundly criticised by the National Audit Office, the Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee and individual MPs like Don Touhig. But that should not be the end of the debate. The harms described in the previous chapter cannot simply be passed over and forgotten. This conclusion might therefore be better understood as more of a beginning: there is much important work still to do and this chapter suggests some tentative ways forward.

My experience of trying to resist and challenge gentrification-by-bulldozer at the public inquiries I attended alerted me to the need to approach gentrification from an entirely different perspective, that is, to shift from a somewhat *post-hoc*, too late, displacement perspective to a rooted, emplaced perspective. This demands that gentrification first be reconceptualised as a problem. It requires scholars to humanise gentrification research and to develop an understanding of gentrification and displacement as a form of social harm. Resistance to gentrification must also seek to politicise home and mobilise the dormant, embedded politics of actually-existing 'home-places'against the abstract spaces of planners and developers and the frothy, if devious, language of urban renaissance. This is why I contend that there is still much work to do: to resist demolition and displacement *we have to start to think gentrification differently*.

But beyond this, I suggest there is also a much deeper, more fundamental concern raised by the role of academics in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of the HMR programme. There is not the space here for a full engagement with this issue, suffice to say that HMR raises some serious questions on the contemporary role, purpose and ethics of social science. Allen argues that urban researchers' denial or downplaying of the conflict attending HMR, their neglect of relevant issues of power and class and their embrace of the technocratic discourse of HMR constitutes collectively:

> ...a dereliction of duty for a social scientific profession whose key purpose should be to 'make trouble' for urban elites who would otherwise do as they wanted, unchallenged. It constitutes an unforgiveable failure (the dire consequences of which are becoming apparent as working-class people lose their *homes*) to perform the critical task that social science is there to do (Allen, 2008a: 197, original emphasis).

Supplementing Porter and Shaw's question, 'Whose Urban Renaissance?' we might additionally ask the question, 'social science for whom?'

With this question ever-present, I begin this concluding chapter by revisiting the research aims and questions that were presented in Chapter 6. By way of reminder, the research sought principally to contribute to knowledge about new-build gentrification by developing a critical understanding of HMR and similar schemes involving demolition and the direct displacement of existing residents. Within the context of this overarching aim I formulated a number of research questions that sought to address key lacunae – specifically the lack of attention to working class places and their residents - that emerged in my review of the gentrification literature. I therefore begin this conclusion by first assessing the work presented in the thesis against the three research questions that were set out in Chapter 6. Invoking the notion of a 'resistance paradigm', I then examine the potential for communities and critical scholars to challenge and resist the continuing march of gentrification, outlining some relevant strategies for practical resistance and the development of a more politically-engaged approach to gentrification research.

12.2 Developing the 'view from below'

Coming into this research from the opposite end of the social spectrum to the 'academic nobility', I had major concerns about the manner in which working-class people, homes and places have been consistently excluded from recent scholarship, not just in gentrification but geography more generally. Where working-class places were discussed, I was dismayed to find that they were frequently dismissed as disinvested and/or problematic spaces: for all New Labour's emphasis on social exclusion, contemporary working class places have remained something of a mystery to much urban scholarship. Invoking the insider/outsider dichotomy, Chapter 7 was therefore an attempt to begin to understand one of the places designated for demolition through the eyes and experiences of some of the working-class people who lived there. Utilising an ethnographic approach, it was about trying

to understand Parkside as a place where people lived – as people's home – rather than through the conventional problem epistemology.

Parkside residents mostly rejected unfavourable representations of the area, highlighting instead the many positive features of the neighbourhood such as the affordability of the housing, the area's proximity to the town centre and a continuing sense of community. With respect to place attachment, residents who had lived there longer, as one might expect, tended to be more firmly emplaced than others but most of the people I spoke to expressed a preference for staying put and retaining the comfort of the familiar. There was much fear of the (housing and financial) unknown. Some held ambivalent views about the area but nevertheless adhered to the maxim of 'better the devil you know'. Some long-term residents, who had invested much of their lives in their homes and the wider neighbourhood, could not contemplate living anywhere else. Overall, talking to residents in Parkside and listening to the protestations of objectors in Oldham and Liverpool, I found that many people preferred to remain close to what they know. Re-hashing Berry (1992) once again, home, however humble, might be understood as an island of stability in a sea of uncertainty.

Despite the current theoretical emphases on mobility, communities of interest and the perceived decline of communities based on spatial proximity, my observations confirmed the continuing relevance of place-based communities and the importance of nearby friends, neighbours and family members. Stigmatised by outsiders, residents experienced these communities as meaningful places that provided a setting for the informal exchange of much-needed goods and services and supportive social networks. Collectively, these practical benefits and advantages, coupled with the ongoing but imperceptible accretion of emotional attachments, produced in most respondents a strong commitment to the current home and neighbourhood. Absent this view from below, that is, without this understanding of the socio-spatial embeddedness of working class lives, it is difficult to comprehend the losses arising from displacement and demolition (see Fullilove, 2004).

12.3 Understanding how the state takes home and produces space

Having explored the emplaced-ness of Parkside residents in Chapter 7, the next three chapters provided detailed analyses of the countervailing, dis-placing forces of HMR, examining how the state attempted to dispossess people of their homes through a combination of discourse, attrition and compulsion. Where much of the emerging work on new-build gentrification seems to take the new-build development itself as its analytical starting point, thereby obscuring any previous conflict or land-use struggles that might have occurred, these chapters sought to examine the actors, processes and injustices that were involved in taking people's homes and transforming meaningful places into cleared, development-ready brownfield sites. Chapter 8, *Demolition by discourse*, noted how arguments for the mass clearance of inner-urban housing emerged at approximately the same time as the government was announcing restrictions on greenfield development. Invoking tropes of emptiness

and decay in the context of a spatial storyline that worked to legitimise demolition, this chapter demonstrated how the discourse of 'low demand' constituted the first step in besmirching, marginalising and 'othering' neighbourhoods that exhibited certain characteristics that exceeded the 'normal' range of a standardised risk index devised by a small group of academics (Nevin *et al*, 2001).

The next chapter, *Attrition*, examined the emerging culture of Northerly's HMR team and highlighted the formal and sometimes subtle practices (and omissions) that were being employed in relation to the Hilltop scheme in order to get people to leave their homes 'voluntarily', thereby obviating the need for expensive and, despite the streamlining, still lengthy processes of compulsory purchase. Incorporating inducements and tactics ranging from temporal and spatial phasing, 'traffic-light' systems, compensation payments, questionable public consultation and, sometimes, bullying and threats of CPO, the processes of attrition I documented were very much akin to the 'winkling' techniques adopted by private landlords in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The chapter further noted how the Hilltop estate was emphatically not a low demand area but benefitted from an elevated position that commanded good views and which had caught the attention of developers as a potentially profitable site.

Finally, the last of these three chapters on taking home, *Compulsion*, examined what happened when residents were unwilling to sell their homes 'voluntarily'. The chapter sought to reconceptualise the CPOs as a form of theft and further examined the huge inequalities that mark public inquiry proceedings. The chapter then examined the experience of compulsory purchase through the eyes of Elijah Debnam, an elderly yet feisty and spirited objector who was unwilling to contemplate the possibility of being forced to leave his much-loved Oldham home. Above all, the chapter also drew attention to the fact that gentrification-by-bulldozer was being determinedly resisted by many local residents *contra* recent scholarly accounts that expressed concern over the "palpable decline of community opposition" (Hackworth and Smith, 2001: 475).

12.4 The individual and social impacts of housing demolition

Having examined the statecraft of dispossession, I then turned my attention to the effects of both threatened and actual displacement upon the remaining and former residents of the areas undergoing demolition. Using a range of methods, this analysis focused mostly on Parkside, although I also drew upon material from the Liverpool public inquiries. Given the lack of attention to such matters in the official, national evaluations of HMR, I was keen to 'make the invisible visible' and bring out the various personal, social and financial impacts of losing home and being displaced. Chapters 9, 10 and 11 demonstrated the brutal manner in which HMR bulldozes people out of sight and destroys cherished homes and places, creating both direct and secondary (exclusionary) displacement. In Chapter 11, I presented evidence on a range of impacts including increased housing costs, disruption of social networks and illness. I also noted an attempted suicide and I heard reports of several deaths among elderly people that were attributed to the fear and stress of

upheaval and displacement. The chapter concluded with a critical assessment of the 'winners' and 'losers' of urban regeneration, additionally advancing the idea that, based on the evidence presented in the chapter, gentrification could and should be reconceptualised as a form of social harm.

As I have demonstrated in this thesis, neoliberalism and the trend towards 'accumulation by dispossession' have given gentrification something of a harder, nastier edge. Gentrification is no longer the quaint, marginal oddity it once was (Smith, 2002). Rather, involving individual acts of 'domicide' (Porteous and Smith, 2001) that cumulatively amount to larger-scale, revanchist processes of 'place annihilation' (Hewitt, 1983) or 'urbicide' (Berman, 1996), HMR actually represents an exemplar model of what Lees *et al* (2008) describe tentatively as 'fourth-wave' gentrification. With respect to HMR, specific features of this 'fourth wave' would necessarily include the following:

- scaling-up of gentrification from the neighbourhood to the sub-regional level;
- increased use of compulsory purchase and eminent domain;
- the intensified "mobilization of urban real-estate markets as vehicles of capital accumulation" (Smith, 2002: 437, 446);
- local authority housing strategies that are now primarily concerned with meeting the housing needs of creative/knowledge economy workers through a distinct 'housing offer, rather than being focused on the housing needs of the poor;
- the emergence of preferred 'developer panels' and a developer-friendly culture in local government ;
- academics advocating gentrification rather than challenging it;
- the resurgence of community-led resistance to gentrification.

Just as gentrification has become more aggressive, so too must critical gentrification research respond in equal measure. Critical gentrification research can no longer afford to stand by as lives and communities are uprooted and discarded.

12.5 Resisting gentrification by bulldozer

After Kuhn (1962), we might observe that gentrification scholarship has, over the years, gone through a number of competing paradigms that have (loosely) structured the nature and direction of scholarly investigations and the kinds of questions being asked. I am thinking here, of course of the production and consumption-oriented explanations of gentrification, along with more recent endeavours, initiated by van Weesep's (1994) call, to put things into a policy perspective. In response to the ravages of 'fourth-wave' gentrification evident in HMR and HOPE VI, perhaps it is now time to adopt a fourth paradigm that is based around resistance and Hartman's 'right to stay put'.

This section is split into two parts. I begin by first examining the potential for working-class people to resist gentrification. The second part considers some

possible strategies for thinking gentrification differently and developing a more politically engaged mode of scholarship.

Some elements of the development of a nascent 'resistance paradigm' can already be seen in the tactics that various residents groups have invoked in their efforts to challenge HMR. Generally, opposition to demolition had much in common with earlier resistance to gentrification, with residents essentially resisting displacement and fighting for their 'right to stay put' (Hartman, 1984). There are, however, four important differences that have changed the nature of this resistance.

Firstly, gentrification is now firmly embedded in public policy. This has had several consequences. Protestors – from all tenures - now find themselves squaring up to a powerful combination of real estate capital *and* government, in a context where gentrification is now widely regarded as something that is in the public interest and where the cries that 'there is no alternative' (Harvey, 2000: 155 cited in Lees *et al*, xvii) ring louder than ever. One positive outcome of this shift, at least in the context of HMR and other forms of state-led gentrification is that protestors have been able to focus their opposition on a specific public body which is, invariably, their own local authority. Rather than demonstrating against amorphous 'property capital' or a distant developer, opponents have been able to engage with specific officers and councillors and attend committees and consultation meetings. Some groups have also been able to secure the support of opposition councillors.

Secondly, in exercising its new role in promoting gentrification, it seems that government has become increasingly willing to use its compulsory purchase powers in support of land assembly. Whilst residents who object to a CPO still have the right to a public inquiry, this effectively pushes opposition deeper into the realms of legal argumentation where objectors are placed at a disadvantage relative to their more experienced, well-resourced and professionally advised opponents.[40] In some situations, however, objectors have been able to secure legal aid to cover the cost of professional legal representation. Most public inquiries have seen the CPOs confirmed, although there have been a few notable exceptions where the residents have been successful in overturning the orders (e.g. Nelson, Lancashire). CPOs and public inquiries also tend to attract media attention which can significantly raise the profile of anti-demolition campaigns.

Thirdly, the advent of electronic forms of communication and the proliferation of news media have re-shaped the landscape of networking, advertising and campaigning[41]. In the face of public relations campaigns in support of HMR (see, for example, The Guardian, 14 March 2007), resistance has generally had to get smarter, more sophisticated and increasingly 'media-aware'. Thus, we are seeing the emergence of more 'tech-savvy' forms of resistance that make extensive use of new electronic media for circulating information and campaigning, for example, through listservs, blogs and digital video. In the case of HUT, an electronic mailing list has

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[40] Interestingly, HMR was generally deemed too 'political' for Planning Aid to get involved in supporting residents to challenge CPOs
[41] Ciara Leeming's online *Streetfighters* project (Leeming, 2010), combining photography and audio recordings of people in HMR areas who are living under threat of demolition provides an insightful and powerful use of visual storytelling and was recently nominated for Amnesty International's Digital Media awards.

enabled protestors to communicate quickly and efficiently, share news, swap tactics and provide contacts and support to distant others engaged in similar struggles, creating, in effect, a virtual anti-demolition community. Increasingly, local housing activists have been making contact not only with other activists at the regional and national level (via HUT, Defend Council Housing and GamesMonitor) but also *internationally*. In recent years, for example, we have seen the emergence of Reclaiming Spaces (http://www.reclaiming-spaces.org/), the International Alliance of Inhabitants (http://www.habitants.org/) and Abahlali baseMjondolo (www.abahlali.org). In addition, activists, academics and practitioners have also been able to communicate and share knowledge via networks such as INURA, Planners' Network and Planners' Network UK (PNUK). Concurrently, through these networks, opponents' enthusiasm for utilising new technology has also been combined with a deeper appreciation of, for example, European policy, human rights entitlements and legal test cases, as well as increased knowledge of planning systems, effective campaigning techniques and greater awareness of the oppositional potential of relevant heritage and green agendas.

The development of these networks can be conceptualised as the emergence of a form of 'militant particularism' around housing (Williams, 1989; Harvey, 1995). Williams describes this concept in the following terms:

> The unique and extraordinary character of working-class self-organization has been that it has tried to connect particular struggles to a general struggle in one quite special way. It has set out, as a movement, to make real what is at first sight the extraordinary claim that the defence and advancement of certain particular interests, properly brought together, are in fact the general interest (Williams, 1989: 249, 115 cited in Harvey, 1995)

Fourthly and rather depressingly, those resisting gentrification and demolition can no longer take it for granted that academic researchers will support them in their struggles. Indeed, with some notable exceptions (Allen, 2008a; Cameron, 2006), HMR shows that the opposite is more likely to be true. Where one might have once found academics standing shoulder-to-shoulder with local residents to resist displacement, one is now just as likely to find them working enthusiastically alongside policy-makers and developers. Youthful radicalism has given way to middle-aged conservatism, careerism and apologism (Cole, 2008). Slater's intervention (2006) is therefore timely and much-needed. The outrage and fighting spirit that characterised much early gentrification research (see, for example Hartman *et al*, 1982) has subsequently softened and been replaced by accommodation and acceptance: the talk is no longer of fighting gentrification but of finding ways to manage it (Lees *et al*, 2008).

More generally, one recent change that might work in residents' favour is the Coalition's government enthusiasm for localism and neighbourhood planning which could potentially give local residents greater influence over local-level development. The shift to neighbourhood planning would also complement the growth of community land trusts that are increasingly regarded as an effective, grass-roots model for keeping local housing affordable (see, for example DeFilippis, 2004; 2007; Bailey, 2010). Residents in the former HMR areas have also welcomed the Coalition's commitment to bringing empty homes back into use.

Separately, a recent Court of Appeal case [*R (SAVE Britain's Heritage) v. SSCLG* [2011] EWCA Civ 334] has led to a change in the law meaning that the demolition of buildings and houses will now need approval through the planning system. This was previously only required for houses and structures that were situated within conservation areas and the additional burden of seeking and gaining approval could see a reduction in schemes that involve demolition.

Resisting gentrification through critical scholarship

As I outlined in Chapter 8, the language we use and, following Hajer (2003), the manner in which we construct a problem, can sometimes make all the difference. Slater *et al* ask "...how can we think of gentrification as anything else but the production of space for – and consumption by – a more affluent and very different incoming population?" (2004: 1145). Based on my experiences in the field, I would argue that we need to (re)think how we approach gentrification as a matter of some urgency. HMR has introduced the cities and towns of northern England to aggressive, gentrification-by-bulldozer on a sub-regional scale. Unfortunately, for various reasons, recent research has tended to overlook the experiences of the people who are most adversely affected by this latest mutation of state-led, new-build gentrification. Evicted from their homes, such people have also been effaced from the pages of gentrification research (Slater, 2006; Wacquant, 2008, Watt, 2008a). This unforgiveable evisceration of critical gentrification research, combined with the growth of servile policy-relevant research and a chilling lack of ethical reflection produced the emotive scenes and immiseration that I witnessed in my fieldwork.

For the dominant interests in society, however, and, for that matter, the academy, the influx of wealthier incomers is not so much a problem as something to be celebrated. Remarkably, in many quarters, gentrification is now viewed in positive terms. Unless we start to change our approach to the study of gentrification, we risk being caught and constrained by an epistemological and theoretical framework that perpetuates the status quo by seeing gentrification as something that is natural and inevitable. Citing Wacquant (2004: 101), Slater (2006) urges prospective critical scholars "to perpetually question the obviousness and the very frames of civic debate so as to give ourselves a chance to think the world, rather than being thought by it, to take apart and understand its mechanisms, and thus to reappropriate it intellectually and materially". In order '*to think the world, rather than being thought by it*', we need to think gentrification differently.

Below, I argue that we must think or construct gentrification differently if scholarship is to be more effective in challenging gentrification. This requires changes in four areas. Firstly, gentrification must be recognised as a problem. Second, critical gentrification research needs to plant its feet firmly on the ground, so to speak: gentrification research needs to be emplaced if it is to support working-class people *in situ*. Thirdly and fourthly, if displacement is unavoidable then researchers must seek both to humanise their research and re-conceptualise gentrification as a form of social harm.

On the first point, we need to stop equivocating about whether gentrification harms or helps (see for example Atkinson, 2002, 2003; Vigdor, 2002). From the contemplative comfort of their university offices, gentrification scholars can call for more nuanced analyses (Freeman, 2005) or worry about gentrification being 'misunderstood as a vengeful wrecker' (Atkinson, 2003). As the conclusion to Slater's *Eviction* paper notes, "progress begins when gentrification is accepted as a problem..." (2006: 217). Quite simply, "Moving people involuntarily from their homes or neighbourhoods is wrong" (Hartman *et al*, 1982: 4).

In developing a more grounded, emplaced approach to gentrification research, there is clearly a need for more work that engages with residents' sense of place and their attachment to place. If critical gentrification research is to better support people in their struggles to defend home and place, then it needs to have a much better understanding of what people are fighting to protect. In portraying displacement negatively we imply that people have strong and enriching place attachments but we offer little empirical support for this assertion. Being so vehemently opposed to *dis*-placement we need to do more to foreground and privilege emplacement. This has several potential dimensions. It might, for example, require researchers to supplement their existing knowledge of rent gaps with a greater knowledge of the home-dweller's 'subjective premium', that is, the gap between the subjective 'value' that an individual places on their home and the market value of their home or, for tenants, the amount of compensation they receive should they be displaced (see, for example, Byrne, 2005; Fennell, 2005; Merrill, 1986). This might, in turn, require researchers to revisit some of the concerns of humanistic geography that I discussed in Chapter 3. How can we support people in their struggles for place if we don't even attempt to see places how they see them? Without being fore-armed with this knowledge how can researchers begin to challenge a system that "knows the price of everything but the value of nothing" as 90 year-old Oldham resident, Elijah Debnam, puts it?

Emplacing critical gentrification research may give us a firmer basis from which to challenge the unsettling, damaging, sometimes fatal, effects of displacement. Beginning at 'home' also helps us to think gentrification differently by shifting the focus of our attention from displacement to what is already there and what could be lost. It is about focusing on the taking of place rather than its subsequent re-making by the middle-classes. From this perspective gentrification is no longer about the production of space for more affluent users but the violent dispossession of home from people who, for various reasons, may have a much stronger connection to home and place than those that do the taking. Critical gentrification research then becomes more about examining the various practices by which the state and its allies take home; it becomes a matter of looking for flaws, loopholes and weaknesses where we can begin to mount a challenge to those processes

In the preface to this thesis I pointedly opened with a quote that drew attention to the argument that effecting social and political change demanded a combination of reason *and* emotion. For such an emotional topic, gentrification has perhaps focused too much on the former to the detriment of the latter. As a *human* geographer, I despair at the 'the ethnographic void' (Lees, 2003d; Jackson, 1999) in much contemporary geography, the absence of 'human interest' and the constant privileging of theoretical abstraction over lived experience. Such "conceptual

elaborations", Merrifield contends, "...don't speak to us, nor move us, nor stir us. And where there is no humanity and emotion, there is little or no motivation to take action" (Merrifield, 1997: 420). Whilst acknowledging the brilliance of Marx's analytical insights and processual thinking, Merrifield (1997: 433) observes that the first nine chapters of *Capital* are "bereft of people and real suffering": "capitalism's gory horror isn't really revealed until Chapter 10". Merrifield (*op cit.*) adds that "*Capital's* political clout would have been seriously undermined without Marx's vivid narrative on actual sufferings and incidents which he re-described and redefined from "official" inspector's reports and newspaper stories".

If we are to mount more effective challenges to gentrification then it is vital for research and activism to also begin to foreground the emotional impact of gentrification upon working class lives and, where necessary, expose its gory horror. There is, in short, a need to humanise gentrification research, to re-populate the pages of critical gentrification texts with real flesh and blood people, real lives and real places so that we might juxtapose the harm of gentrification alongside the celebratory exhortations of its apologists. Otherwise, our work runs the risk of being as devoid of people as the empty geographies imagined by the promoters of the CPOs. "Treating the working class as phantoms", Slater (2008: 217) argues, "leaves a gaping theoretical and epistemological vacuum" that others will eagerly rush to fill with "demonic behavioural caricatures such as 'underclass' and...the 'chav'". Nor is this 'vacuum' merely theoretical and epistemological. By failing to present real people in real places and leaving only a *terra incognita*, we potentially expose working-class people and places to the worst *terra nullius* fantasies of policy-makers and capital – the so-called 'Zones of Opportunity' that we see in Liverpool, for example.

There has already been some recognition of the need for such work (see for example Lees *et al*, 2008; Slater, 2006; Slater, 2008; Slater, 2010; Slater *et al*, 2004; Wacquant, 2008; Watt, 2008a) and community-based organisations have also recognised the value of 'human interest stories' in fighting gentrification. In issuing guidance on resisting gentrification, for example, New York's Fifth Avenue Committee, a non-profit housing organisation based in South Brooklyn, recommends that, among other things, residents should tell stories and: "Build a campaign around the individual cases of tenants whose stories personify the injustice of gentrification. This humanises the problem more than any real estate data ever could" (Fifth Avenue Committee, *undated*, cited in Lees *et al*, 2008). Blomley (2004: 52) also recounts how the eviction and subsequent death of a long-time resident of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside "entered the collective history of the community" and solidified its resistance to gentrification.

Finally, if we are serious about challenging gentrification and ensuring that people are properly compensated for the disruption and damage to their lives , we should do a much better job of documenting the various 'harms' that result from gentrification and displacement. In particular, we should endeavour to reconceptualise – if not criminalise - gentrification and displacement as a form of 'social harm'. Criminal law categories, Box (1983: 7) reminds us, are nothing but ideological constructs and displacement is a form of suffering that could be avoided:

Rather than being a fair reflection of those behaviours objectively causing us collectively the most avoidable suffering, criminal law categories are artful, creative constructs designed to criminalise only some victimising behaviours, usually those more frequently committed by the relatively powerless, and to exclude others, usually those frequently committed by the powerful against subordinates.

But academics continue to mystify this 'daylight robbery', as many objectors called it, by giving it academic respectability, by intellectualising it and euphemising it as the phenomenon known as gentrification. Yet, as Fullilove notes, "For the people whose homes and districts were bulldozed...[urban renewal] *was nothing short of assault*" (Fullilove, 2004: 7, cited in Johnson, 2011). If Ruth Glass had been a criminologist rather than a sociologist, the past forty years of 'gentrification' scholarship might have been very different. As Box continues, "the criminal law sees only some types of property deprivation as robbery or theft... [and] the criminal law defines only some types of violence as criminal assault" (1983: 10-11).

In the long term, in the context of a severe and continuing shortage of affordable housing, there is a desperate need to change cultural attitudes towards the forcible acquisition of people's homes. The people enduring gentrification and displacement know this already. Academics and policy-makers need to be re-educated to see it as a form of theft. This sounds remote, but we might ask how other social movements such as the civil rights and environmental justice movements have achieved their aims. As already noted, on-line social networks could play a role in moving this agenda forward and demonstrating solidarity. All that is needed, as the history of HMR has shown, is a compelling, believable, emotive, if exaggerated, storyline. Constructing the problem of gentrification differently potentially opens up all sorts possibilities for resistance.

If we assume that the forces of gentrification are halted only by legal sanction and/or financial penalties then it is our responsibility to form allegiances with sympathetic legal scholars and practitioners and, where relevant, maybe, to seek to better measure the individual and social costs of displacement in the same way that the courts award damages for physical injury, mental trauma or loss of employment.

Joining with critical allies in socio-legal studies (see for example Fox, 2006; Fox O'Mahony and Sweeney, 2010; Kenna, 2008), and foregrounding the notion of displacement as social harm, could we not, for example, develop a compensatory framework that better reflects the loss of home and damages to physical and mental health and well-being arising from displacement? The current Home Loss Payment is the nearest we get to a statutory recognition of the negative, non-financial impacts that are generated by displacement. This statutory recognition of intangible losses or 'harm' could potentially provide the basis for the development of more detailed, critical work in relation to the various personal, social and financial impacts of home loss and displacement. At the most basic level, one might argue that, regardless of tenure, different levels of payment should be made in relation to, for example, the occupier's length of residence and the number of people living at the household. Beyond that, one could begin to make a more formalised assessment of the range and severity of the different impacts that might arise.

Failing to incorporate such costs into the decision-making process means that low-income households are forever subsidising the costs of redevelopment by not being properly compensated. As Gans argued in the early 1970s:

> ...the funds allocated to relocation are less than 5% of the total cost of clearing and taking the land...The real cost of relocation is very much higher, but is paid in various ways by the people being moved out. Under present conditions, the redevelopment of American cities is economically possible only because of the hidden subsidies provided by the residents for the areas to be cleared (Gans, 1972: 202)

What this means is that compulsory purchase and eminent domain may be more widespread than they would otherwise be because the 'real' costs of the taking of home and the ensuing losses are not accounted for.

The fact that these intangible effects are recognised by statute in the guise of the HLP, in my view, offers some possibilities for developing work around the various harmful effects of displacement. Such work could provide a more informed basis for decision-making on schemes involving residential displacement. In San Francisco, for example, the City's Department of Public Health has worked with community groups to establish a Healthy Development Measurement Tool, a form of health impact assessment, to apply to new developments. Significantly, as part of the assessment of 'healthy' development, Objective HH2 is designed to "protect residents from involuntary displacement."[42] In the UK, various forms of social and health impact assessment are informing decision-making in planning and, notwithstanding the introduction of the new National Planning Policy Framework, could critical gentrification researchers be involved in creating gentrification impact assessment tools? Such initiatives highlight the possibilities that might be opened up by thinking gentrification differently.

Otherwise, as Allen (2008a) reminds us, if we, as social scientists don't 'make trouble' for urban elites they will do as they please and, most likely, get away with it.

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[42] See http://www.thehdmt.org/objectives/view/63

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NB: In the main body of the thesis I have cited several documents published by the local authority ('Northerly') and the relevant sub-regional HMR partnership ('Metro'). However, in the interests of preserving the anonymity of Northerly and its officers, I have omitted these works from this bibliography.

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Appendices

Pathfinder demolition statistics,
2003-2008

	BNG	%	EEL	Gateway	%	MSP	NH	%	PiA	%	TSY	%	Renew	UL	%	Total, where tenure known	%	All demolitions
Private	833	45		152	46		592	65	119	24	139	8		103	16	1937	32	
Social	1018	55		179	54		319	35	375	76	1593	92		541	84	4025	68	
	1850		1296	331		2837	911		494		1732		793	644		5962		10,888

Source: Adapted from Ferrari and Lee, 2010

APPENDIX 2:   Parkside Regeneration Questionnaire

This questionnaire has been sent to everyone who has moved because of the [Parkside] Regeneration Scheme. If you need further information or need help to complete the form please call Lee Crookes on 07981 xxxxxx.

To better understand the impact the move has had on you and your family would you please answer all of the following questions by circling the answer that best applies to you, ticking the relevant box or entering the required information:

Were you planning to leave Parkside before you heard about the regeneration scheme?
Yes   No   Don't Know

What were your views on the scheme when you first heard about it?

_____

Have your views changed now that you have moved?   Yes   No   Don't Know

If yes, please tell us why _____

_____

People often develop an attachment to their home and the area where they live that can make it difficult to leave. How hard did you find it to leave your home?

I didn't want to leave   Not bothered either way   I wanted to leave   Don't know

What were your main reasons for either wanting to stay or leave? _____

_____

Age can have an impact on people's experience of moving. Including yourself, what were the ages of the family members that had to move?
Adults/____yrs/____yrs/____yrs   Children/____yrs/____yrs/____yrs/____yrs

How long did you live at your previous address in Parkside?
Less than 1 year   1 to 5 years   6 to 10 years   More than 10 years

How could the Council have made your move easier? _____

_____

Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. As a result of your experience, would you say the Council:

	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
…consults local people before taking decisions			
…kept people well informed about the regeneration scheme's progress			
…is remote and impersonal			
…treats all people fairly			
…is trustworthy			
…provided an adequate relocation package			
…did its best to meet your housing needs			

We would now like you to consider how your life has changed as a result of moving. Now that you are living in your new home, would you say that:

FOR EACH OF THESE STATEMENTS PLEASE TICK THE BOX WHICH SEEMS MOST APPROPRIATE TO YOU	Improved	Stayed the same	Got worse	Don't know
My general health has….				
My financial situation has…				
The general condition of my housing has…				
My overall level of satisfaction with my housing has				
My contact with friends and family has…				
My contact with neighbours has…				
My feelings of personal safety and security have …				
The level of crime and anti-social behaviour in my neighbourhood has…				
My neighbourhood environment has…				
My access to local services (for example, shops, doctors, schools) has…				
If you have children, the conditions for raising them have…				
Overall, as a result of your move, do you feel that your life has…				
As a result of your experience, has your attitude towards the Council…				

We would welcome any other comments you would like to make about the Scheme:

If you feel you have more to say about your experience, Lee Crookes, an independent researcher at the University of Sheffield, is currently talking to present and former residents of Parkside to get a more detailed understanding of the area before regeneration and how the regeneration has affected their lives. If you would be willing to talk to him, telephone Lee on 07981 xxxxxx or provide your contact details below:

Anyone who completes one of these interviews will receive a £15 Sainsbury's voucher. The interviews usually last about one hour.

THANK YOU MOST SINCERELY FOR COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE

Please return this form in the reply paid envelope.

Appendix 3: Transcript of Elijah Debnam's presentation at the Annual Conference of the Royal Geographical Society, London, August 2008

Thank you for inviting me here today. In the short time I've got I want to tell you a little bit about me, what my home means to me and this modern-day Rachmanism called HMR. I warn you that I might get a bit emotional but I'd rather talk about it and maybe get a little upset than not speak out at all. I want to talk about my home, the little bit of geography that matters to me.

I'll start from the beginning. I was born in Greenacres, Oldham in 1920. I was called up when I was 20 and served in Gibraltar, Normandy and Germany. I came back from the war in 1946 and worked on the railways. I met Alice and we got married and lived in a rented house for some time. We moved into this house in 1954. It was like a new dream come true. I've lived here ever since and I paid the last mortgage instalment in 1963.

I've never ever regretted moving to this house of mine and I've got plenty of happy memories of it with the wife and my son and, aye, when you talk about fifty years it's a lifetime, what can I say? But they were all happy memories that I have of it and I always thought as I've said to other people, I thought coming to the end of my tether now, being 88, that I would die here, you know, and I said that to my son, who unfortunately has now left me as well. My wife died in 1999. So I'm now on my own here, all my grandchildren live down in the south of England…so, I'm literally on my own. But I like it here. My neighbours and friends are good and kind. It's convenient for shopping and I can get around easily. Most of all I love my home. It's made of Accrington brick, the same as the mills. One of my neighbours, a brickie, said our houses were built to last. Believe me, I know. In the 54 years I've lived here I've only had to replace one roof tile. I've also got central heating and a good-sized garden where I can sit out and get the sun all day long.

Now this has come along, this CPO, it has really upset me. The first I heard about it was when I got a letter. My son wrote back on my behalf. He was less than happy with the Council's response. Each option would leave me substantially worse off. I would lose the only asset I have to pass on to my grandchildren. It would mean I'd have to move away from neighbours who support me and look after me. It is more than likely that I would never have the funds to move back. No building society will give me a mortgage at my age and there are other people beside me in Derker, the older population, it's a non-starter for them - getting a mortgage. Now, as regards this loan scheme they have, I don't know a lot about it. But I think there's more benefit for them than there is for us – they get a share of the house that you buy. And you should see the houses they've offered me. Well one was 50 years older than mine and £20,000 more and as for these new private flats that have been built round the corner – it would be like living in a prison, they're tiny and there's no greenery - they've got no gardens. Each of the options would leave me indebted to the council. HMR's promise that nobody will be worse off is a hollow one.

HMR, developers and the council – they'll get all the benefits from this. They pick on these areas and then say right we'll have that and suddenly it's for demolition. So then they get the council to take this up with them and commit it to a CPO and they get the big building companies to submit plans for the buildings or properties to be developed

on these sites. Now, they want big areas of land to build on. They don't want to build say six, eight, ten, twelve, they want to build hundreds, that's what they are in the business of. Big business wants to build a lot and that to me smells...well, how can I say? Not good, it's not good. And the Council, they get a new set of houses that generate more rates for the town.

But this CPO has also made me realise what I've got and what I'm going to lose if I lose my home. So I will fight with every means I've got to try and keep it. I think if people would only waken up and look at what the local councils are doing to them with these sorts of schemes, and if they banded together - fought when it's necessary - things might change a bit for the better of the people.

Last year, to try and save my home I spoke at the public inquiry. I found it very emotional and as anyone knows that was there, halfway through, I did break down. Some of it was because I'd previously lost my son, who was, you know, he was absolutely brilliant to me and looked after me and all that but I did break down as regards as I thought I was going to lose my home and, you know, I think, when it happens to anybody, if you're fighting, you're being literally thrown out of your home. Not because it's a slum, but because it's the wish of somebody somewhere that they want to do a development, for property speculators, and they pick on an area of the town and they say, that is the plot we'll do, and then the people in that area have to be moved out to let the plan continue. So what you're doing there is, you're removing the population of that area from there and they spread them all round the town. Consequently, they're buying property, renting or whatever and taking out new mortgages – they never come back. So, when the new project is done or the new houses built, the people that come and buy those properties are not the people that lived there originally, so it's a new population that moves into the area. And some people are saying, because of the prices, the people that left here couldn't afford to move back anyway, they couldn't afford to buy the properties. So, really, what they're doing, they're building this for the yuppies of Manchester. HMR is not interested in improving my life or the lives of my fellow Derker residents.

Having read the report of the public inquiry, the verdict and all that, there is very little mention of what people spoke about at the inquiry and their feelings – what was happening to them – and I don't think the Inspector, it looks like that to me, what we said was of no use to him. He didn't want to know because he's made very little reference to it in the report of the public inquiry.

God help me I don't intend to leave my house. It's going to take something to move me out of here ...You know, there's an old saying, that an Englishman's home is his castle and I still stand by that and I hope the rest of the population are the same because once you lose that, you've nothing, you've no roots. If I leave here now, what roots will I ever have, at my age? Nobody's going to bother about me, they won't want to know me. All they'll say is, 'did you see that old man going down there? He lives on his own at so-and-so street', and that's how it'll be for the rest of my life. Where living here, I can walk out and I can pass the time of day, and I can go shopping, meet people. People know who I am, they know my name, they look out for me. You're known locally and that's what it's all about, being known locally. If I move out of here to another area of Oldham, I'll be a stranger in my own town.

I'd like to finish by saying one last thing.   I'm hoping that when we do go to the High Court in October [2008] that the judge, whoever he may be, will listen to what is said by our QC.   And I would love to get in that chair as a witness and put my hand on the Bible and say what I think under oath to the judge or whoever may be at that hearing. This is what's wanted, for the people to be heard