



## 11 October 2006 Manchester Seminar: Reflections on Managing Decline

Hosted by the Centre for Urban Policy Studies, University of Manchester  
Sponsored by the Regional Studies Association

Venue to be confirmed  
Lunch and Refreshments will be provided

Places are free but limited to 35

To book your place, contact Kellie Gallagher ([kellie.gallagher@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:kellie.gallagher@manchester.ac.uk)).  
For further details of this event, contact Cecilia Wong ([cecilia.wong@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:cecilia.wong@manchester.ac.uk)).

TIME	SPEAKER	TITLE
9:45	Cecilia Wong	<b>Introduction to the Event</b>
10:00	Peter Roberts	Sustainable Communities: The Housing Dimension
10:30	Alan Murie	Changing Politics and Policies for Mass Housing
11:00	Coffee / Tea	
11:15	Thilo Lang	Urban Decline and Urban Regeneration
11:45	Brian Robson	Housing and the Neighbourhood Agenda
12:15	Gwyn Williams (Chair)	<b>Discussion Session</b>
13:00	Lunch	
13:45	Sebatian Mueller	International Finance Industry for Rationalising Regional Housing Supply
14:15	Stephen Hincks & Cecilia Wong	The Interaction of Housing and Labour Markets in North West England
14:45	Coffee / Tea	
15:00	Stuart Cameron	How Revanchist is Housing Market Renewal?
15:30	Chris Allen	The Breaking of the English Working Class - Housing Market Renewal and the Class Remake of the City of Culture
16:00	Gwyn Williams (Chair)	<b>Discussion Session and Close</b>
16:45	End of Seminar	

## **Sustainable Communities: The Housing Dimension**

Peter Roberts

Academy for Sustainable Communities and University of Leeds

The Sustainable Communities Plan places considerable emphasis on the provision of housing. Particular emphasis is put on the role of housing in the creation or regeneration of broad communities and on the need for housing to be both affordable and provided in appropriate quantities. An additional consideration is ensuring the correct location of housing and making it accessible to employment, leisure and other facilities. Within this context, the management of housing stock has increasingly been influenced by the requirements of sustainable communities and regeneration policies. This paper will explore and evaluate some of the most important dimensions of these debates.

## **Changing Politics and Policies for Mass Housing**

Alan Murie

Centre for Urban and Regional Studies, University of Birmingham

Over the last 25 years the policy agendas pursued in relation to public sector housing and the wider housing market have undergone major changes. While there have been important differences at a national level in starting points, the factors determining change and in outcomes there are some strong emerging similar concerns. This paper draws on material from Europe and the USA to provide an overview of changes affecting public sector housing and discusses the different capacities and responses to emerging problems. It suggests that there are distinctive approaches emerging and reflects on the relevance of these for the UK.

## **Urban Decline and Urban Regeneration**

Thilo Lang

Centre for the Study of Cities and Regions, Durham University and Potsdam University

While the English political agenda is shifting towards a better distribution of growth, the management of decline has been a long term issue in East Germany. One million empty flats in East Germany is just the symptom of wider processes linked to urban transformation and the long term impacts of the transition of the GDR planned economy to the West German model of the market economy. Nevertheless, the situation of single shrinking towns and cities is not unique. Urban areas struggling with the loss of jobs and population can be found in many regions all over Europe – but often in a smaller scale. The paper highlights some aspects of the problems, especially the difficulties in linking demographic decline, jobless growth and housing market failure. The starting point of the discussion is set in East Germany, but the paper will link to other examples in Northern Europe and England.

## **Housing and the Neighbourhood Agenda**

Brian Robson

Centre for Urban Policy Studies, University of Manchester

Housing markets generally operate at a spatial scale far greater than that of administrative areas. The churn of overall residential mobility within and between districts can tell us much about the patterns of household moves related to life-cycle stages and to career progression. However, at the micro scale of the neighbourhood, the normal patterns of residential movement may apply less readily to deprived neighbourhoods. In such areas many households may effectively be trapped by static or falling house values or by constraints linked to rental tenures. Conversely, some neighbourhoods may be characterised by abnormally high levels of mobility associated with their role as short-term transit areas, for example, for students or for first-generation migrant households. In understanding the challenges of regenerating such neighbourhoods there may be merit in developing typologies based on the socio-economic characteristics of their residents and the scale of residential churn of their households.

## **International Finance Industry for Rationalising Regional Housing Supply**

Sebastian Mueller

Department of Spatial Planning, University of Dortmund

Things in the German housing market seem to work differently to the European and British one. With nearly 39 million homes it may be Europe's biggest property market, but it has also been one of the less exiting ones – from the viewpoint of real estate investors since 1995. Germany still carries on to be a nation of tenants. A 43% owner occupancy has grown in the recent decade, but at a far slower rate than for its neighbours. Rents levels

have managed to drift down over the last 10 years, with the exception of some growth poles like Munich, Cologne or Hamburg. In the Ruhr Area or the Eastern provinces you may find empty apartments in every street, empty sometimes for years, and there is offer of apartments nearly in every sector of the housing market. Nevertheless since five years the international finance industry bought some 800 000 units from public housing or semi-public housing companies at Berlin, Frankfurt and in the Ruhr Area. Main types: Pre-war “workers’ housing estates and settlements”, considered “poor” and “with special needs for renewal”, vacancy; “Workers housing estates from the 1950”, inhabited by a high percentage of migrants, welfare recipients and elderly unemployed, strong vacancy; “Modern Housing schemes from the 1960s and 70s”, good maintenance, younger population but not without social problems, less vacancy. After first German experience, the international finance industry “rationalises” its housing estates through legal eviction of affected tenants by new owner-occupants, mobbing against tenants with legal housing rights and fear of eviction, presentation of ambitious renewal schemes or no investments strategy, destruction of existing social structure, ethnic conflicts etc. The aim is to fragment the former public housing markets and to create several profitable less profitable and non profitable ones, speculating for state subventions for social welfare and housing demolition programmes.

### **The Interaction of Housing and Labour Markets in North West England**

Stephen Hincks\* and Cecilia Wong~

\* Department of Civic Design, University of Liverpool

~ Centre for Urban Policy Studies, University of Manchester

The consideration of housing and labour market interaction is a relatively recent development in a continuing academic and policy debate, which has traditionally considered home and work in isolation from one another. However, recent policy agendas, most notably the urban renaissance agenda and the Sustainable Communities Plan have emphasised the inherent linkages that exist between housing consumption and location, employment production and job location and the need to travel. This focus has resulted due to the spatial disintegration of housing and jobs as a result of employment and residential decentralisation from urban to non-urban locations. As a consequence of the spatial disintegration of residential and employment locations, commuting patterns have become increasingly complex, including the traditional patterns of travelling from suburban residential locations to urban centres, but also a highly complex web of commuting between suburbs as well as commuting from urban residential locations to non-urban workplaces. This paper aims to examine empirically the process of housing and labour market interaction in the form of commuting at the sub-regional level in the North West of England. The paper begins by identifying the sub-regional housing and labour markets in the North West, between which the interaction is explored. Some policy implications to housing market restructuring will be drawn out from the analysis.

### **How Revanchist is Housing Market Renewal?**

Stuart Cameron

School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape, University of Newcastle upon Tyne

The label ‘revanchism’ has increasingly been used in critical assessments worldwide of housing and renewal policies which involve the appropriation of urban space for the advantaged combined with aggressive and oppressive policies of exclusion and control of low-income and marginalised groups. This presentation will explore the question of the revanchist nature of contemporary market renewal policies in England, within and outside the Pathfinders, by posing three questions:

1. Do the policies involve the capture and transformation of urban space for the middle-class to the detriment of lower-income groups?
2. Is there an element of oppressive and punitive action against lower-income groups?
3. Can the policy be seen as part of a political agenda to undermine past political gains made by lower-income groups?

The paper will, in particular, discuss the possible combination of gentrification and displacement with the use of measures to combat antisocial behaviour now available policy, local authorities and social landlords to ‘civilise’ neighbourhoods. The conclusion suggested is that the initial trajectory of housing market renewal has involved revanchist elements. The implications of the apparent recent policy retreat, especially from large-scale demolition, will be discussed. A number of scenarios will be suggested, including the possibility that as a result HMR will become little different from past area-based regeneration programmes such as City Challenge. The presentation will use example from Newcastle-Gateshead to illustrate issues surrounding national policy and international experience.

## **The Breaking of the English Working Class - Housing Market Renewal and the Class Remake of the City of Culture**

Chris Allen

Department of Sociology, Manchester Metropolitan University

Literatures on housing policy are replete with references to poverty, exclusion and inequality. However, there have only been a few historical attempts to connect housing analysis with sociological debates about class and stratification (for example, Rex and Moore 1967). Recent work connecting these two issues has been undertaken by sociologists and geographers whose main concern is to theorise about residence as a site of middle class formation and fragmentation (Butler 1997; Savage et al 2005). Within such literatures working class households appear as 'victims' of 'displacement' rather than 'actors' in their own right that are engaged in class struggles on the urban landscape. This paper will examine the housing field as a site of strategic and everyday class struggle by drawing on the constructionist phenomenology outlined in previous work by the author. Specifically, the paper examines the construction of the housing field in a housing market renewal area bordering Liverpool city centre. The location of the area has ensured that re-development plans for the area are informed by the 'needs' of the city of culture. For local strategic actors this perforce necessitates 'selling' the city of culture to the middle class. I examine middle class and working class housing strategies within this context to understand how and where both fit in to the new urban landscape in Liverpool. I conclude that housing market renewal in the city of culture is breaking the English working class who are regarded as misfits on this new urban landscape. In terms of the question posed by Stuart Cameron, the city of culture is revanchist and should be exposed as such.