The Routledge Companion to Urban Regeneration

Edited by Michael E. Leary and John McCarthy
In the past decade, urban regeneration policy makers and practitioners have faced a number of difficult challenges, such as sustainability, budgetary constraints, demands for community involvement and rapid urbanization in the Global South. Urban regeneration remains a high profile and important field of government-led intervention, and policy and practice continue to adapt to the fresh challenges and opportunities of the twenty-first century, as well as confronting long-standing intractable urban problems and dilemmas.

This Companion provides cutting-edge critical review and synthesis of recent conceptual, policy and practical developments. With contributions from 73 international experts within the field, it explores the meaning of ‘urban regeneration’ in differing national contexts, asking questions and providing informed discussion and analyses to illuminate how an apparently disparate field of research, policy and practice can be rendered coherent, drawing out common themes and significant differences. The Companion is divided into six parts, exploring: globalization and neo-liberal perspectives on urban regeneration; emerging reconceptualizations of regeneration; public infrastructure and public space; housing and cosmopolitan communities; community centred regeneration; and culture-led regeneration. The concluding chapter considers the future of urban regeneration and proposes a nine-point research agenda.

This Companion assembles a diversity of approaches and insights in one comprehensive volume to provide a state-of-the-art review of the field. It is a valuable resource for both advanced undergraduate and postgraduate students in Urban Planning, Built Environment, Urban Studies and Urban Regeneration, as well as academics, practitioners and politicians.

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'With international scholarship and case studies from every continent, this Companion is destined to be an essential reference for anyone interested in urban regeneration. Accessible essays cover every aspect of the problems cities face worldwide and report on the solutions that have been tried using the latest research.'

Yvonne Rydin, Professor of Planning, Environment and Public Policy, Director of UCL Environment Institute, UCL, UK

‘The Companion is extraordinary in the scope of the cases covered. Focusing on Europe and Asia, it points to the similarities and differences among a vast number of projects in developing and developed countries. It shows the effects of neoliberalism on regeneration programs but also the ways in which resistance to megaprojects has been effective.’

Susan S. Fainstein, Visiting Professor, LKY School, National University of Singapore and Senior Research Fellow, Harvard University Graduate School of Design, USA

‘Leary and McCarthy’s impressive collection of papers is a timely reminder that urban regeneration is not confined to the glamour cities of North America or the command and control centers of the EU. Urban regeneration is global, complex, multi-faceted and not always right.’

Professor Robin Boyle, Department of Urban Studies and Planning, Wayne State University, USA
THE ROUTLEDGE COMPANION TO URBAN REGENERATION

Edited by
Michael E. Leary and John McCarthy
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Michael E. Leary  John McCarthy
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FOREWORD

The Rt Hon The Lord Heseltine CH

Across the globe in large cities, towns and informal townships the constellation of urban problems facing millions of ordinary people remains a major political challenge. The need for intervention through effective urban regeneration programmes is widely recognised. I was therefore pleased to be asked to write this Foreword. I have been involved in urban regeneration for over 30 years, as a Minister of the Crown or adviser to governments. I have seen evidence of approaches that worked well, as well as those that did not. In my capacity as Secretary of State for the Department of the Environment of the UK Government, I introduced policy innovations such as Urban Development Corporations and City Challenge, and the positive ethos of these initiatives, as this book shows, retain their currency and applicability to this day. While these initiatives were of course not without their critics, like the critiques in this book they should be welcomed as part of healthy democratic debate and policy development. Indeed my recent (2012) report No Stone Unturned in Pursuit of Growth, commissioned by the British Prime Minister David Cameron, Chancellor George Osborne and Secretary of State Vince Cable, is helping to influence the agenda for Government policy that will impact on urban regeneration going forward, in a time of challenge and change. One recurrent theme in many chapters in this book is the conclusion that central governments need to allow localities to generate appropriate solutions to urban problems, using the energy and entrepreneurial talents of local people. I make this point clearly in No Stone Unturned.

The editors are experts in this field and have commissioned a range of knowledgeable and motivated authors in various areas of regeneration to deliver the component chapters of this book. Providing a meaningful structure for nearly 50 chapters was an unenviable task. With its first two parts providing insight into the grand global frameworks, the stage is set for the substantive parts which follow. These four parts cover contemporary issues such as public infrastructure and public space, housing, community participation and culture-led regeneration. Together with the editors’ insightful introductions and conclusions, this substantial book presents the material in comprehensible and accessible fashion. In particular, the editors have ensured that this book has clear lessons for policy and practice, based on research drawn from experience on the ground with real strategies and projects. Government in my view is about making things happen – including urban regeneration as well as more general economic growth. To do this we need to take on board best practice from wherever it comes. This book enlarges the constituency of experience and helps to draw it together.

If urban regeneration initiatives are to work, they should be based on evidence. They need to be thought through and be informed by research and experience. It helps to know what other countries
Foreword

are doing. This book helps to make this happen. It has been designed to have a global reach – so that lessons can be exchanged between many different areas of the Global North and Global South. Specifically – this means harnessing the entrepreneurial ethos of the private sector but also unleashing the enterprise of the public sector, involving local citizens and ensuring best practice, for instance in the modern variants of Urban Development Corporations being applied not just (once again) in the UK but also in other contexts, as this book demonstrates.

I commend this book to you, whether you are a student, politician, professional, academic or an interested citizen concerned about urban problems in our increasingly-globalised world. Our cities need best practice in urban regeneration. They need informed practice. They need evidence-based practice. Michael Leary and John McCarthy have succeeded in delivering on the ambitious aims they set out for this weighty volume, which makes a timely and significant contribution to the on-going world-wide debate.

Michael Heseltine
Hammersmith, London
March 2013
INTRODUCTION

Urban regeneration, a global phenomenon

Michael E. Leary and John McCarthy

Nevertheless here are social problems before us demanding careful study, questions awaiting answers. We must study, we must investigate, we must attempt to solve; and the utmost the world can demand is, not lack of human interest and moral conviction but the heart-quality of fairness, and an earnest desire for truth despite its possible unpleasantness.

(DuBois 1899: 3)

Section 1

Rationale and aims

Few would dispute that the modern city that first emerged in Europe in the eighteenth century and proliferated around the globe, is still characterized in part by the often shocking juxtaposition of areas of affluence and beauty, poverty and dilapidation. Frederich Engels and Karl Marx noted with some relish in the nineteenth century, the stubborn persistence of what we still recognize today as urban problems. Although it may be called different things in different countries: revitalization, renewal or renaissance – revitalizacja, regeneración urbana, урбанская регенерация, शहरी उत्थान and 城市再生 – urban regeneration remains a high profile and important field of government intervention in a host of countries around the globe. This is despite the series of recurring economic crashes that hit many countries, particularly in the Global North, in 2006/7/8. Some opinions heralded the swingeing public spending cuts that followed the credit crunch in many of these countries as a regeneration death knell. In fact, economic hardship and business uncertainty necessitate continued government intervention to fund regeneration initiatives and boost confidence (Parkinson et al. 2009). Serious summer riots in several cities in France in 2010 and in the UK in 2011 added piquancy to the perceived political importance of regeneration. Policy and practice continue to adapt to the fresh challenges of the twenty-first century as well as to confront long-standing protracted and intractable urban problems and dilemmas. Academics, researchers and practitioners continue to provide critical insights into a multiplicity of urban regeneration issues principally at the level of individual projects and initiatives in particular cities. Recent years have seen some damning critiques of long-term urban regeneration interventions, especially in the UK (see, for instance, Leunig et al. 2008), which have compounded the complexities and created some confusion in what can sometimes appear to be a disparate field. Leunig et al., were condemned across the political spectrum in the UK, not least by the British Prime Minister-in-waiting, David Cameron, who said of Leunig, ‘I gather he’s off to Australia. The sooner he gets on the ship the better’ (quoted in Brown 2012; see also Wainwright 2008).

Despite robust criticism, many governments around the world remain willing to invest public resources in multitudinous policies and projects to combat the pernicious impacts of serious urban problems across their physical, economic, social and environmental manifestations. Urban regeneration policy makers and
practitioners have in the last decade been confronted increasingly by issues of: sustainability, public sector budgetary constraints, demands for community involvement and rapid urbanization in the Global South coupled with the explosive growth of informal residential areas. Many projects and programmes have been put on hold or simply axed and some governments take a more laissez-faire approach. However, it is clear that most governments understand the need to provide a strategic regeneration lead and to continue to fund regeneration schemes. It is apparent though that high-quality regeneration work continues through difficult times and there are signs that out of the fiscal crisis imaginative responses and new regeneration ideas are being forged in England (Carpenter 2011) and in Europe (Bailey and Chapain 2011). The post-2008 credit crunch throws even more weight on the negotiation of regeneration benefits that are needed in the context of what we call ‘globalized neo-liberalism’. Whether urban regenerators have the requisite skills and confidence to negotiate genuine community benefits provided by the private and public sectors is a moot point. There is no doubt, however, that this is a crucial point in the regeneration process and rather than being an innate gift, negotiation is a skill that can be learned as Fisher and Ury (2012) explain through their idea of ‘principled negotiation’.

This Introduction is structured as follows. First we provide the rationale for the book, which includes critical consideration of two key cross-cutting themes: globalization and neo-liberalism. We then place the book in the context of a range of relevant academic and ‘grey’ literatures, while explaining what the book is not and what it does not seek to do. Urban regeneration does not present a body of clearly delineated literature, partly because of its multi-disciplinary nature, a discussion of which follows. In Section 2 we present a series of conceptual challenges and discuss definitional issues in the context of a brief overview of regeneration histories. We argue that definitional complications are compounded where they tend to move rather too close to particular contexts, strategies and projects. What is needed is a definitional rethinking of urban regeneration, which is provided below.

Even with only a passing familiarity with the field it becomes apparent quickly that the terms regeneration and renewal tend to dominate the debate around the world. In general renewal tends to mean physical approaches and regeneration more holistic responses. Unfortunately, the discourse is complicated, since renewal in North America and elsewhere in the Global North and South often means holistic approaches and in the 1980s in Britain regeneration meant physical interventions; the two terms are also sometimes used interchangeably. We hope that in the chapters that follow the meanings are clear from the context. In the Introduction to Part 2 we explore the idea of a reconceptualization from renewal to regeneration. Surprisingly for such a globally ubiquitous and fast-evolving arena of government and professional activity, books in the field have not attempted to construct a comprehensive global overview of recent experience in an era of globalized neo-liberalism. This provides an opportunity for a book that can serve as a state-of-the-art rallying point for the diversity of regeneration issues and approaches in different national and supra-national contexts.

With this rationale in mind our ambitious aims for the book are as follows:

1. To provide a succinct definition of regeneration and explore through the contributions of the authors the various meanings of ‘urban regeneration’ in differing national contexts, asking questions and providing informed discussion and analyses to illuminate how an apparently disparate field of research, policy and practice can be rendered more coherent, by drawing out common themes and significant differences.

2. To provide an internationally orientated, cutting-edge critical review and synthesis of recent conceptual, policy and practical developments in the field by drawing together in one volume a diversity of approaches and insights.

3. To facilitate international dialogue and provide an international forum for the exchange of regeneration strategies, policies and practices in different national and continental contexts with a view to highlighting future prospects, directions, challenges and possibilities.
Introduction

While the imperative to be up to date is strong, we would be remiss if we (and the chapter authors) ignored the historical dimensions of regeneration, especially some of the pivotal moments. At this stage it is important to note that we do not intend the book to be a ‘how to’ toolkit encompassing ready-made regeneration solutions for all urban deprivation ills, neither is it meant to offer a globally relevant panacea. Berens (2010) does provide a good guide to physical regeneration for practitioners, especially those based in North America and examples of good practice are highlighted in the variety of evaluation reports, albeit that many of these are not particularly accessible. Nonetheless, through its critical insights into a divergent range of strategies, policies and projects, the book will prove valuable, at least in part, for politicians and professionals. That said, we accept the dominant proportion of the readership may well be students as well as: academics, scholars and researchers, many of whom it should be acknowledged, as the contributors to the book attest, are also active in regeneration practice.

The literature landscape

We have not attempted to replicate the existing introductory literature so this book is not an introduction to urban regeneration; we assume the readership has a decent grounding in the basics of the field. Useful general introductions have emerged in recent years (McCarthy 2007; Jones and Evans 2008; 2013; Tallon 2010; 2013). In the last 20 years the urban regeneration/renewal literature has grown enormously and we can only offer key pointers here. A common approach is to provide a national overview as do the three texts mentioned above; in the Global South, Sivaramakrishnan (2011) does this for India. Some authors focus their efforts geographically with analyses of: the US (Jonas and McCarthy 2009) China (Ye 2011), Lima (Gandolfo 2009), London (Imrie et al. 2008), Manchester (Williams 2003), Barcelona (Marshall 2004), New York (Zukin 2009), Washington DC (Stevens 2012). Others provide international comparisons such as between Chicago and Dublin (McGreal et al. 2002) and what Power et al. (2010) call the rust-belt cities of the US and other weak market cities in Europe. Potts (2007) asks what regeneration lessons can be learned from France. Other authors take a geographically orientated intra-city approach, for instance focusing on waterfronts (Smith and Garcia Ferrari 2012) or urban quarters (Bell and Jayne 2004). Events-based regeneration is examined by Smith (2012) and by Gold and Gold (2010) who concentrate on Olympic Games’ legacies. A thematic approach is taken by Atkinson and Helms (2007) who focus on crime and community facets of the Richard Rogers-informed Blairite project of ‘urban renaissance’. Punter (2009) brings together a collection of authors to examine the contribution of urban design to what he calls urban renaissance. Perera and Tang (2013) explore the implications for regeneration of the production of space in Asian cities. Interconnections and tensions between religion and urban regeneration are examined by Farnell et al. (2003). And despite or because of the controversy and criticisms, in particular Peck (2005), Florida (2012) revisits the contested idea of the creative class as a policy vehicle for city regeneration.

Tallon’s magisterial (2010) four volume collection with the significant title, Urban Regeneration and Renewal, is an academic reference resource that assembles for critical evaluation and discussion previously published work, elements of which undoubtedly constitute some of the seminal contributions in the field. The book that comes closest to this volume is Diamond et al. (2010, reprinted in paperback in 2011), a worthwhile and insightful contribution to international dialogue, which is laudable in its inclusion of voices from the Global South. It is however, distinctive from this book in several ways; since it approaches the subject from a management perspective and is rather more limited in its international coverage than this volume. Diamond et al.’s central argument is based on a critique of what they call the US model of urban renewal, and despite the title the book is not limited to urban regeneration. Over the past decade a burgeoning amount of literature is evident not just in the form of book-length contributions but also in a profusion of high-quality articles in prestigious peer reviewed academic journals.
Despite this myriad of sources and although many writers touch on the subject, there is a noticeable weakness in the literature regarding explicit theoretical underpinnings for urban regeneration, a subject to which we return below.

Alongside the corpus of academic contributions, there is a substantial body of ‘grey literature’ that often provides evaluation studies and champions regeneration that is regarded as successful. One manifestation of this support for success in the UK and elsewhere is the tradition of organizing competitions for regeneration awards. For two decades from 1991 to 2010 the (not for profit) British Urban Regeneration Association (BURA) presided over a ‘best practice’ annual awards scheme. Interestingly, one of the judging criteria resonates with genuine regeneration (discussed below); entries in the competition had to:

... contribute to community spirit and cohesion by raising levels of confidence in the long-term living and working environment of the local area and contribute to building the capacity of local people.

(Jones and Gripaios 2000: 219)

BURA was a casualty of the post-2008 economic crisis but has since been replaced by the lobby group UK Regeneration. Currently, the British professional magazine Regeneration and Renewal in conjunction with the Royal Town Planning Institute carries out an annual survey to find the ‘Top 100’ regeneration initiatives (that is the largest) in Britain (Branson 2012). One of the criteria for inclusion in the Top 100 in order to separate genuine regeneration projects from straightforward market-driven property development is that projects have to be based on some form of public investment or subsidy: a key element of regeneration that is picked up in the discussion below. Surveys such as these provide a wealth of insights into myriad aspects of regeneration.

Returning to the grey literature, it takes the form of largely independent evaluations of regeneration policies, programmes and individual projects. These publications are usually funded from regeneration budgets but are based on research carried out by private sector consultancies, university research teams and voluntary organizations (for example, in the UK, Robson et al. 1994; in Canada, R.A. Malatest & Associates 2008). At times too such studies emanate from within government departments or quangos. Perhaps one of the most famous of these is the UK Government’s Audit Commission report on urban regeneration, which declared in rather elegant poetic language that:

... government support programmes are seen as a patchwork quilt of complexity and idiosyncrasy. They baffle local authorities and business alike. The rules of the game seem over-complex and sometimes capricious. They encourage compartmentalised policy approaches rather than a coherent strategy.

(Audit Commission 1989: 1)

Interestingly, the Audit Commission was the brainchild of Margaret Thatcher and this report was an attempt to evaluate urban regeneration at the national scale. We argue that an ‘evaluation tradition’ is a key component of the neo-liberal approach that emerged in the 1980s, in which governments are keen to seek reassurance that public subsidy achieves value for money and where appropriate, improves social welfare and provides adequate leverage of private sector investment. In Britain the evaluation imperative was first signalled by the neo-liberal Government of Margaret Thatcher through Michael Heseltine’s programme of evaluation of that emblematic incarnation of urban regeneration, the Urban Development Corporations (UDCs) in London Docklands and Liverpool Docks. Politicians, of course, are perennially under pressure to demonstrate the immediate success of their initiatives so the timing of evaluation is
crucial; from the political perspective, the sooner the better. So in the same year that several UDCs were wound-up, an evaluation study was published that proclaimed them to be largely successful (Roger Tym & Partners 1998). Similarly, an evaluation of the Manchester UDC (Deas et al. 1999); wound-up in 1996 was based on a Government commissioned evaluation completed in 1997.

It may now seem strange to realize that from the 1960s to the early 1980s regeneration strategies as opposed to projects were uncommon. In the last decade in many countries an abundance of national, regional and city-wide regeneration strategies have been put into place, for example in Hong Kong (Secretary for Development 2011) and Northern Ireland (Neighbourhood Renewal Unit 2011). Although the criticisms in the 1980s regarding the lack of strategy were valid at the time, we argue that one of the little noticed impacts of the UDC regime introduced by Michael Heseltine in 1981 was the marked trend towards the recognition of the importance of strategic overview and direction. All UDCs devoted significant resources to the production of a regeneration strategy in their early years. The importance of providing a strategic framework within which to locate individual projects was emphasized further in the 1990s through the nationally orchestrated City Challenge (and Single Regeneration Budget (SRB)) programmes also introduced by Heseltine. In the final SRB evaluation report the crucial significance of regeneration strategies was stressed:

It is essential that regeneration initiatives think through how physical, social and economic initiatives can come together to deliver the best outcomes and this can only be achieved through a well articulated strategy from the outset.

(Rhodes et al. c2007: xv)

In recent times Tony Blair’s New Labour governments were equally emphatic about the need for regeneration strategy and evaluation. A high-profile example of this is the comprehensive evaluation of the large scale New Deal for Communities (NDC) programme. A number of independent research teams found the schemes were largely achieving their objectives and there is no doubt that a great deal of genuine community benefits and economic stimulation were delivered through these interventions (for example see Batty et al. 2010). This report was the last in a series of evaluation efforts over a ten-year period. It is therefore rather disappointing to find the British Government being criticized recently by an all-party House of Commons Committee for showing little understanding of urban problems. The Committee found the Government’s approach articulated in Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) (2010) lacked a coherent regeneration strategy for England that draws on past good practice established over the previous decade, in particular the approach to regeneration:

... lacks strategic coherence and does not seek to define what is meant by the term ‘regeneration’. It is unclear about the nature of the problem it is trying to solve and to what overall outcome the measures set out will contribute... We recommend that the Government identify a set of clear objectives to enable the success of its approach to be assessed at both local and national level.

(Communities and Local Government Committee 2011)

It is clear that the global spread of urban regeneration indicates an acceptance by governments of the continuing need to intervene through policies, programmes and projects that confront urban problems. In doing so governments, regeneration professionals and academics are of necessity engaged in working through a set of complex issues in terms of problem identification, policy development, implementation and evaluation. The implications of this conceptually complex ensemble are the subject of Section 2 of this Introduction.
Section 2

**Conceptual challenges for a multi-disciplinary endeavour**

Urban regeneration is a multi-disciplinary field of research, scholarship, public policy and practice, including elements of city planning, housing, transport/infrastructure, political economy, urban design, urban tourism, community development, sustainability and cultural industry studies. Part of the reason for this lies in the nature of the constituent urban problems, which fall within the urban policy remit. Each expert’s list and that of politicians and local communities may well vary. Since the 1970s, a local area index approach to problem identification, which originated in Britain and the US, has been used that measures the extent and intensity of relative deprivation. Recently, this kind of index approach has become commonplace (for instance see Kitchen 2001; Yuan et al. 2011). In England this culminated in the recent 2010 Indices of Deprivation (DCLG 2011), which deploy the following ‘domains’: health deprivation and disability, education, skills and training, barriers to housing and services, crime, living environment. Evaluation of urban regeneration interventions is difficult at best and often fraught. Such evaluation must measure, through quantitative and qualitative techniques, multiple and diverse socio-economic variables in order to pinpoint the problems. Of course, conceptual and practical difficulties surface again when trying to measure regeneration success. Given the mass of statistical data available it is surprising that the use of multiple regression analysis is not particularly prevalent (but see Hincks and Robson 2010), although this powerful statistical technique is used to a much greater extent in other areas of public policy. It is clear that the small area-based index approach is useful but has its weaknesses and Rae (2011) suggests how this approach may be combined with spatial, inferential statistical approaches.

Each of the multiple fields of urban regeneration has its own research and scholarly traditions, fundamental ideas and theoretical approaches. In addition, the resurgence of conceptual interest in the city has brought forth a recent cornucopia of texts, seeking to establish the seminal works in over a century of writing and identify important recent developments, for example LeGates and Stout (2011), Hall et al. (2008) and Bridge and Watson (2010; 2011). At a time when a good deal of what might be called frightening urban literature has pervaded the debate for two decades (Davis 1990; reiterated in 2006; Atkinson 2003) it is worth pointing to an example of more optimistic analyses that see the often neglected emancipatory potential of cities (Lees 2004). These collections, albeit unintentionally, amass important contributions in the various disciplines that may be said to constitute in part an intellectual framework for the field of urban regeneration. It should though, come as no surprise to discover that ‘Most thinking about urban regeneration is undertheorized’ (Lovering 2007: 343). Problems facing the search for regeneration theory are compounded by its politicized nature and the crucial role of governments in shaping urban regeneration (see the eloquent discussion by Cochrane 2007). Ideas which underpin urban regeneration and urban policy more generally tend to originate from academics and politicians themselves and occasionally the two sources are synchronized. A wide range of theoretical perspectives mainly from politics and the social sciences, have been brought to bear on urban problems and policy proposals from the 1960s, including: Oscar Lewis’ ‘the culture of poverty’; (Senator) Daniel Moynihan’s ‘new political class’; Henri Lefebvre’s twin concepts of the ‘production of space’ and the ‘right to the city’; Manual Castells’ ‘collective consumption’; Logan and Molotch’s ‘growth machine’; David Harvey’s ‘entrepreneurial city’; and the concept of ‘social exclusion’ which originated in France (Pierson 2009). Most recently, British ex-Deputy Prime Minister, Michael Heseltine sees urban regeneration as dependent on ‘unlocking the potential for growth’ (Heseltine 2012). To complicate matters further, urban regeneration is related closely to another state activity, urban planning: an endeavour with its own theoretical challenges (Fainstein and Campbell 2011). So while we agree with Cochrane (2007: 13–14), that ‘pinning down’ a satisfactory theoirization of urban policy (regeneration) is a fraught quest, we also agree that in order to construct robust understandings of urban regeneration it is necessary
to explore the manner in which it has been constructed in practice. This book will, we hope, provide a provocation to enabling these understandings to develop further.

New governments often propagate new purposes and priorities for regeneration, on the foundations of political ideologies or political expediency, which require or provoke the propagation of new (or substantially reworked) bodies of knowledge and conceptual understanding or theories. The UK provides a salient example, the thrust of which will be familiar in many national contexts, although the specifics will of course differ. In the UK priorities for urban intervention shifted from: 1960s social needs and the racialized ‘immigrant problem’, to 1970s economic development, 1980s property-led approaches, 1990s competitive funding and holistic strategies, and 2000s social exclusion and a (partial) return to social needs. Since the election of the UK Coalition Government in 2010, the priority has shifted again to the delivery of regeneration partly through the rather nebulous mechanism of the ‘Big Society’ linked to a reconceptualization of regeneration’s fundamental purpose, which is seen as the stimulation of economic growth (DCLG 2012) – a wholly new paradigm.

While we do not attempt to propose a general theory here, what is clear is that much of the theoretical and conceptual underpinning for regeneration comes from two rather different directions. The first is the European Enlightenment tradition of universalism and the idea that all citizens have fundamental rights to: a decent quality of life, universal welfare provision, a concomitant minimum level of necessary resources and a healthy physical environment. The work of the United Nations Development Programme epitomizes this with its Millennium Development Goals programme for inter alia the alleviation of extreme poverty (UNDP 2012). In this sense, urban regeneration is part of the post-Second World War Keynesian consensus in many parts of the world that saw a major role for the state in providing a framework for full employment supplemented by the provision of a basic safety net of welfare services and resources. Elements of this underpinning remain principally in the political philosophies of the social democratic left. Issues of social justice remain strong themes in urban regeneration and reverberate in the writings of Soja (2010), Fainstein (2011) and Harvey (2012).

The second underpinning for urban regeneration is evident in the post-1970s breakdown of consensus, across a range of countries in the Global North, regarding what David Harvey called in 1989 the municipal managerialist approach to urban planning and social welfare provision and its replacement with one based on an increased role for the private sector at the local level. This was to be achieved through the governance mechanism of ‘entrepreneurial’ city management predicated on public-private partnerships derived from a neo-liberalist world view of urban problems and of regeneration solutions in particular (McCarthy 2007). Processes of globalization have seen the neo-liberalist model of regeneration disseminated world-wide (Lovering 2007). Unlike Thomas Kuhn’s paradigm shifts, in each particular context, we argue that the second conceptual underpinning has not completely replaced the first (Raco 2005; Leary 2008). More recent debates have seen regeneration linked with pressing issues of sustainability and sustainable development, promulgating the concept of sustainable regeneration (Gospodini et al. 2010; Tamminga 2013), related to notions of the ‘compact city’ in Europe and ‘new urbanism’ in North America.

What this does is to place urban regeneration practitioners, politicians and researchers in a terrain where there are multiple theoretical perspectives to draw on derived from the substantive field of interest, coupled with two grand overarching conceptual narratives: globalization and neo-liberalism and associated discourses that underpin the general activity of urban regeneration, but for quite different reasons. Given this fundamental theoretical instability, it is rare to find regeneration initiatives that survive changes of government where a new political party takes over. However, where stability takes hold great things can be achieved; this was the case in Baltimore and the Baltimore model of business-led regeneration has had a high profile in the academic literature for 30 years. Less well known in academia but important in the world of policy and practice is the Lowell model that dates from the 1970s. In the US, in the city that some said in the 1970s should be given up for dead, Lowell, Massachusetts, a Federal institution
was created, the Lowell National Historical Park, set up by an Act of Congress in 1978. The ‘Park’ is unique in that it covers the entire downtown area and its remit was and is partly to oversee the regeneration of the area through the provision of grants and tax credits and through partnership and the cajoling of the public, private and non-profit sectors within the Park and the wider city area. Over the decades the transformation of this former textile city teetering on the edge of ruin has been remarkable and the Park is recognized as a model of how to achieve regeneration success (Frenchman and Lane 2008; Berens 2010). Being a Federal institution the Park is, of course, infused with a public sector civic ethos of working in the public interest at the local level and enjoys guaranteed funding. In significant ways therefore, it provides another kind of long-term regeneration model where a Federal government agency provides a sustained vision, leadership and resources but also a willingness to work in partnership.

A definitional conundrum

We argue therefore, that what holds this seemingly disparate field of research, policy and practice together is a strong political motivation for the state to intervene at the local level through area-based initiatives: we call this motivation ‘aspirational regeneration’. These kinds of interventions are not new and have probably existed as long as cities themselves. Limiting consideration to the modern city and the modern state which emerged in Europe from about the eighteenth century; it becomes obvious that urban policy until the second half of the twentieth century tended to intervene through physical measures of demolition, redevelopment and regulation. This is not to ignore the plethora of social welfare provision for the working class by philanthropists and charitable organizations from the early nineteenth century. Hence before the advent of recent urban regeneration, with its specific characteristics outlined below, a range of state-led urban interventions in a variety of national jurisdictions went under the banner of: urban renewal, slum clearance, comprehensive redevelopment, model cities, beautification, inner city renewal and the urban programme. Since ‘urban regeneration’ came into popular parlance, others have preferred such terms as ‘revitalization’ and ‘renaissance’ essentially to describe the same thing, albeit with slightly different emphases.

It is perpetually tempting, though dangerous to try and plot the precise temporal origin of politico/social phenomena. Somebody will almost invariably unearth new evidence to contradict claims for a particular historical point. What is clear is that urban policy pre-dates what we now call urban regeneration and has its origins in a series of perceived urban crises in the US in the early 1960s and in the UK in the late 1960s. In response President Lyndon Baines Johnson and Prime Minister Harold Wilson respectively, initiated various urban interventions, the descendants of which provide some of the substance for this book. That said, it is claimed that state-led ‘urban renewal’ goes back to the 1930s in the UK and US (Carmon 1999). With this urban policy background in mind it is by no means certain when the term urban regeneration came into vogue, though the related term ‘regeneration of the inner areas’ does appear in the British 1977 White Paper Policy for the Inner Cities. Once it did become established, during the early 1980s (Imrie and Thomas 1999: 6) the initial idea, rooted firmly in economic and physical state-led interventions, eventually achieved global credibility. Consequently, Imrie and Thomas (ibid.) stress the physical dimension and property-led nature of regeneration, with accompanying marketed strategies to lever in private investment and a neo-liberal inspired sharing of policy-making between the public and private sectors. In contrast and perhaps at the other end of the definitional spectrum, Blackman (1995: 5) is adamant that regeneration is primarily about the welfare of local residents and supporting the development of the local economy. A comprehensive and fascinating, if rather quirky examination of the meaning of regeneration was carried out by Furbey (1999) who points to its religious connotations of resurrection. However, a definition that signalled recognition of the policy shift to holism is that of Roberts (2000: 17), which encapsulates a significant reconceptualization of regeneration and is one that stresses the integrated nature of intervention across the physical, social, economic and
environmental aspects. Like all definitions of complex multi-faceted socio-economic phenomena, Roberts’ has been subject to a variety of criticisms, most notably from Turok (in Tallon 2010: 5), who takes issue with Roberts’ claims regarding urban problem resolution and the solution timescales. This tends to create the predicament where urban regeneration becomes a ‘floating signifier’ (Lovering 2007: 344). We argue that definitional problems arise partly because the extent to which the conceptualization of regeneration rests on a normative or a positive position is left vague. For example, the normative characteristics of Roberts’ well-known definition appear to be taken as positive statements by Turok.

**An aspirational urban regeneration?**

Regeneration requires a definition that stands outside the day-to-day struggles and contradictions of the politics and practicalities on the ground. It also needs to suggest something to which politicians and practitioners can aspire, while perhaps not always attaining. Regeneration requires a definition that academics, even if not condoning completely, can take seriously. We offer the concept of the *ideal type* — ‘aspirational regeneration’ — to help circumvent the definitional problems of becoming bogged down in attempts to encompass positive details of regeneration strategies, policies and projects at the national level and across the global range. What is necessary is not a tool that politicians and regeneration professionals can apply off the shelf but an ideal type definition that inspires, enthuses and legitimates. With this in mind we propose that:

urban regeneration is area-based intervention which is public sector initiated, funded, supported, or inspired, aimed at producing significant sustainable improvements in the conditions of local people, communities and places suffering from aspects of deprivation, often multiple in nature.

However, we do accept that there may well be a significant role for the private sector, voluntary sector or community enterprise. Nor do we wish to imply that regeneration efforts should focus exclusively on seeking solutions within the troubled areas themselves. It was in the 1970s (Loney 1983) when it was acknowledged that the wider structural constraints created by big institutions in the private and public sectors needed to be factored into urban regeneration at a strategic level. It should also be noted that such area-based interventions occur outside of and additional to mainstream governmental financial budgets and service provision. What this aspirational definition does is put the foci on public sector leadership, locality and outcomes. Partnership is a key feature of regeneration but the precise arrangements need to be organized with care (Ball and Maginn 2005). The notion that within partnerships, private enterprise ethos and skills will diffuse to the public sector was a *sine qua non* for their initial establishment in the early 1980s. However, we feel strongly that public sector leadership is crucial, not just in terms of financial subsidy and where appropriate, the direct provision of regeneration projects but in terms of providing the crucial strategic vision and longevity needed through strategic policy and if necessary, legal frameworks. This vital public sector role in regeneration was acknowledged recently by a former British government minister from the political right – with the approval of the Conservative-led Coalition Government (Heseltine 2012). He rejects the view that enterprise is a quality found only in the private sector. We would go further and argue that if regeneration is to succeed it is vital that private sector partners are inculcated with the public sector ethos of: sensitivity to social needs, civic duty, the public interest and taking the long view. There is empirical evidence that this does happen (Leary 2013). The institution of corporate social responsibility indicates that this kind of ethos is not unfamiliar to the private sector and the idea dates back at least to nineteenth century industrial philanthropy.

In a global world of shifting political philosophies and differing economic and cultural contexts, the aspirational approach leaves deliberately contingent: the nature of the problems and their causes, precise
intervention objectives, governance arrangements, community participation, the role of the private sector, funding mechanisms, outputs and outcomes. In this regard the precise emphasis between the social, economic and environmental aspects of regeneration will vary according to context. We would expect too that the ‘significant improvements’ would be stated explicitly in the aims of regeneration strategies, policies and the projects. Furthermore, we would expect that publicly funded or part-subsidized projects delivered through particular agencies would be evaluated against relevant criteria based on a variant of aspirational regeneration.

**Structure of the book**

All the chapters in the book are new and were commissioned specifically by the editors. All the authors have previous publications: they range from recognized and sometimes eminent experts in their fields, to emerging academics and researchers. And given the book’s global rationale, we endeavoured to include a significant number of authors from the Global South. We did not specify the epistemological or methodological research approach the authors should adopt but readily admit that the result is a book in which most chapters present the findings of case study research based mainly on a qualitative approach. That said, a rich range of research methods are employed including: interviews, surveys, document analysis and archival, ethnographic and observational research. Together with the data, they help provide fascinating and insightful analyses and conclusions. However, we certainly do not decry the necessity and merits of quantitative and mixed methods research evident in both academic works and the plethora of reports in the grey literatures.

There is no obvious way to structure a book of this kind, given its aims, rationale, global reach, size and the multi-disciplinary character of the subject. Efforts to structure the book were complicated further by the emerging globalized nature of the book’s production in its formative stages. It became increasingly clear that a geographical division, for example, into the countries of the Global North and South was hampered by difficulties. First, this was because several key issues and themes spanned this partition but second, so did the nature of the book’s production process. By this we mean that it was often hard to categorize the national or even continental roots of authors and their subjects. Second, some chapters are written by groups of authors from different countries. Third, some authors from one country are researching and writing in or about another. Fourth, there is a good deal of international comparison within chapters. Clearly this provides for a healthy cross-fertilization of ideas, critiques and the specification of good practice. There is another more minor but still important point here, particularly for the student readership. In an international collaboration such as this, with authors drawn from many English-speaking countries and including authors for whom English is their second language, compromises had to be made regarding spelling. This was a particularly vexatious issue in relation to North American and British English. The more the editorial process proceeded, the more differences emerged. In the end we allowed chapter authors to decide between US or British spelling, with the proviso that there is consistency within chapters.

We also found, unsurprisingly, that due to forces of globalization and neo-liberalism, many chapters discuss the diffusion of political philosophies and policy mobility between the Global North and Global South. Similarly, because many authors necessarily range across relevant regeneration histories, a chronological approach was unfeasible too. We also acted on some of the suggestions regarding structure offered generously by the three anonymous referees appointed by Routledge to review the book proposal. Therefore, the structure of the book derives from four main sources: (1) our judgement as to the dominant regeneration spheres across the realms of research, policy and practice; (2) the global character of regeneration across the Global North and South, which is constituted by divergence and convergence; (3) the importance of processes of globalization and neo-liberalism as significant themes in their own
right and as crucial structuring factors that often provide contexts for and drivers of regeneration in the varied political, economic and cultural milieux in which they occur; and (4) our aim of bringing together some of the leading experts in their field so as to provide critically informed analyses of the latest regeneration trends that will inform current and future debates. These four imperatives resulted in the book’s sub-division into six parts, each of which is prefaced with an introduction.

Consequently, Part 1 concerns the influences of globalization and neo-liberal ideas, processes and perspectives, which inform the research approach towards these chapters and provide an explicit context for many of the book’s other chapters. Neo-liberal political and economic agendas are arguably the principal politicized components of globalization, usually advocating the relatively unhindered operation and spread of markets and the international movement of workers and capital investment, each of which carries important but contentious consequences for regeneration. Part 2 has a different format from the other introductions because of the need to elaborate on what is meant by ‘reconceptualization’. It concentrates on emerging reconceptualizations of urban regeneration that result in part from the influence of or resistances to the twin geo-political projects identified in the first Part. Furthermore, this Part asks some fundamental questions about urban regeneration, not least how and in what ways the concept and practice of regeneration tends to undergo transformations through time and may have different connotations in different national and local contexts. In Part 3 and the subsequent three parts, attention turns to four of the major thematic streams of regeneration strategy, policy and projects in a host of countries worldwide. Part 3 brings together a group of chapters focused primarily on the provision or improvement of public infrastructure and/or public space. Housing and cosmopolitan communities are the foci of Part 4, which concentrates on presenting a variety of analyses that highlight the interconnections between physical and socio-economic aspects. A recurring issue since the 1990s is the role and importance of community involvement in regeneration and this provides the analytical starting point for Part 5. Culture’s role as an economic driver rather than simply a beneficiary has been recognized since the 1980s, and remains a critical factor. Consequently, in the last Part the chapters offer research findings regarding culture-led regeneration.

The attention here is on culture as production and consumption, for instance via the cultural industries, heritage, sport and the valorization of ethnic diversity and local cultural distinctiveness. In closing, the editors present their thoughts on the conceptual and substantive work presented in the preceding 48 chapters, drawing out key findings, and providing overall conclusions. This last contribution to the book is divided into two sections, the first of which reflects on the empirical research findings, the second on future aspirations and a proposed research agenda.

Even in a book of this size, it was not possible to include all the potential themes or examples from every country or every type of regeneration strategy and project. Some commentators will no doubt be unable to find this or that country or issue covered to their satisfaction. And, others may wonder at the wisdom of allowing the overlap between parts and the inclusion of more than one example from a particular country. Given the cross-cutting themes and the multi-disciplinary nature of the subject, it is inevitable that issues and arguments will permeate between parts. We contend that to attempt to contain the issues completely within chapters or parts would have been stultifying for authors and open to legitimate criticisms of intellectual and practical myopia and parochialism. Any efforts to try to hermetically compartmentalize the parts would have inevitably foundered on rocks of frustration. Similarly, we considered it inappropriate to constrain overly the number of chapters per country, partly for the globalization reasons discussed above and partly because regeneration clearly raises different issues in the same country, even the same city. Each part has an introductory rationale and we wish to avoid repetition here. Each part also has an internal coherence; this attribute, we suggest, is necessary in a book of this size, which many readers will use by focusing on particular parts or chapters rather than reading cover-to-cover in novel-like fashion. To assist those readers who wish to navigate efficiency without reading the whole book, we provide signposting in part introductions and frequent cross-referencing within chapters.
A Routledge Companion is meant to offer critical friendship, rather than unconditional love. The chapter authors acknowledge significant regeneration achievements where appropriate but they also provide thoughtful evidence-based critiques. In some quarters the critiques may be considered unpalatable, even unpleasant. We feel though that in a post-modern world they provide insightful truths rather than the truth. Hopefully, William E. B. DuBois would have approved of the spirit of fairness which we believe is a hallmark of the book. We hope therefore that this Companion enables readers to be better informed of the conceptual intricacies and practical realities of urban regeneration, and of the possibilities for cross-context learning and policy development. The definitional proposal for ‘aspirational regeneration’, together with the wealth of research presented, we contend can only enhance the regeneration potential in both the Global North and South. During times of economic growth and times of stagnation regeneration needs to remain a vital strategic governmental pursuit. Similarly, open and informed academic debate should remain an important component of the regeneration discourse. Despite appropriate criticism, we expect the book to encourage practitioners, politicians and local communities to address the multiple and inter-connected problems relating to the future urban challenges in their localities. In doing so we are sanguine they will aspire to and hopefully realize strategies and initiatives that provide sustainable improvements.

References


Introduction


PART 1

Globalization and neo-liberal perspectives
INTRODUCTION

John McCarthy

This Part provides an introduction to and critical engagement with the crucial impacts on urban regeneration of the many-faceted aspects of the processes involved in the powerful twin forces of globalization and neo-liberalization. In doing so it does not seek to provide an introduction to these topics, which have themselves generated a prodigious literature; for this, readers are referred to, for instance, Beck (1999), Brenner and Theodore (2002), Held (2004), Hackworth (2006) and Lovering (2007). However, part of the rationale for this Part is that a basic grasp of these ideas and practices is necessary in order to gain a critical appreciation of urban regeneration. A major aim of this Part of the book is to provide empirical substance to inform the globalization debate as far as it pertains to urban regeneration. It is important to note here, however, that the debate is often polarized between the globalization advocates who see advantages in greater globalization (for instance, Friedman 2007) and the sceptics (for instance, Rodrik 2012) who warn of the dangers. Nevertheless, it was David Harvey who back in 1989 drew attention to the potential harm that a globalized neo-liberalism could do to disadvantaged areas (Harvey 1989; see also Raco 2005). Neo-liberal political and economic agendas are arguably the principal components of globalization, usually advocating the unhindered international movement of workers and capital investment, each of which carries important but contentious consequences for urban regeneration (Tallon 2010). Aspects of globalization and neo-liberalism are of course highly controversial and contested, and have been examined by a wide variety of observers. In particular, Harvey (2007, 2012) shows how neo-liberalism – assuming market exchange as an ethic in itself – has become dominant in many fields of political thought, policy and practice. This involves minimization of state intervention, including in relation to social welfare. Like many other observers, however, Harvey highlights the possibilities of more socially just alternatives to neo-liberalism. Clearly, such considerations are central to a rounded evaluation of global interventions to progress urban regeneration aims.

This Part therefore focuses on how nations and cities have sought to adapt to shifting economic and social pressures through changing governance possibilities and structures. Issues of urban policy mobility from the Global North to the South are explored as another major outcome of globalization. The Part begins with a historiography of regeneration, and the changing context for urban regeneration in Europe. It then considers global influences on regeneration in the specific context of waterfront development, including implications for gentrification, and this is followed by examination of the specific mechanisms of Business Improvement Districts and Enterprise Zones. Finally, the Part includes a series of country-specific cases covering Turkey, China, Japan, Poland and South Africa.

This Part begins with Gold’s consideration of urban regeneration in the context of architectural modernism. He argues that many interpretations of ‘urban renewal’ derive essentially from two metanarratives related to architectural modernism – ‘triumphalism’ and ‘reappraisal’. ‘Triumphalism’, Gold suggests, signifies the rise of modernism, while ‘reappraisal’ refers to a reconsideration of modernism’s deficiencies. Gold suggests that critique of urban renewal/regeneration-as-modernism remains important
within contemporary discourse on urban regeneration, and asserts the need to factor in a plurality of histories, thus combining awareness of earlier interpretations while understanding the limitations of Grand Narratives. This issue reflects an early manifestation of globalization in terms of the ‘export’ globally of modernist ideas from Europe and North America.

The chapter by Couch, Sykes and Cocks then turns to the changing context for urban regeneration in North West Europe. They highlight the various phases of urban regeneration since the Second World War and the parallel shifting contextual paradigms, including post-war reconstruction; urban renewal and ‘modernization’; a boom in ‘property-led’ regeneration in the 1980s; the more ‘holistic’ approaches of the 1990s; urban renaissance; and more recent integration of policies for regeneration and environmentally sustainable development. The chapter also discusses the reconceptualization of urban, governance and policy contexts, highlighting the increasing complexity of goals and methods for urban regeneration, with, for instance, a shift from urban reconstruction and slum-clearance to housing refurbishment and area improvement. These shifts may also relate to an increasing globalization of regeneration policy and practice. In addition, federal, central and local governments have become much more aware of issues such as social exclusion, with neighbourhood renewal and increased use of partnership-based mechanisms. But the authors highlight the most important change as the rise of the economic agenda and competition for investment, pushing cities towards neo-liberal economic policies which often neglect distributive issues and socio-environmental costs. Institutions at all levels have therefore sought to develop responses, including via the Leipzig Charter, the Toledo Declaration and other documents. Hence – for cities in the EU at least – there is potentially a set of common frameworks for interpretation and co-ordination of policy.

Turning to the specific issue of waterfront development, Brownill highlights how examples in cities in the Global North – as well as in the fast-developing economies of Latin America, the Gulf States and South East Asia – show that the ubiquity of such approaches often illustrates a formulaic recipe. This reflects the increasingly globalized prerogative of neo-liberal-driven regeneration. Brownill focuses on how the waterfront development phenomenon can be understood, and on the international mobility of regeneration concepts. She outlines the history of waterfront regeneration and shows how it has been addressed in the literature, arguing that an alternative analysis, based on the concept of ‘assemblage’ or the bringing together of different elements, actors and ideas, can assist in this context. This suggests that waterfront regeneration reveals much about how we can analyse and understand the processes of urban change. The chapter concludes, however, that the use of the assemblage notion should be combined with acknowledgement of the importance of power, wider social processes and locality.

Lloyd and Peel then turn to the specific mechanisms of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) and Enterprise Zones (EZs). In setting the context for these approaches, they show how public policy in the UK emerged from a broad social democratic philosophy. However, the turn to a neo-liberal ideology in the mid-1970s, combined with a market critique of earlier policy, prompted a turn to business-led and land and property development-infused models. In addition, they focus here on the importance of policy learning and transfer, an issue which, of course, cuts across all the parts of this book. In particular, they highlight specific features that might hinder or help a policy’s transferability. The chapter then examines how such transfer of business-led, market ideologies – via BIDs and EZs – has influenced practice in the UK, with the business sector arguably becoming the de facto regulator of public service delivery, and how contractualized relations may be used to determine outputs which may conflict with public interests. Specifically, they show how EZs represented an explicit turn to a more neo-liberal market regime inspired by the relatively ‘free-market’ regime in Hong Kong. And in the case of BIDs, transfer of ideas was linked to disaffection for town centre management approaches, particularly in view of the lack of resources. By using these examples the authors show how, in spite of the porous context in which policy transfer and innovation may occur, critical reflection is needed in assessing policy fit, so that local technocratic and democratic aspects can be protected, a point echoed by Rodrik (2012).
In the next chapter, Güzey focuses on regeneration in Turkey in terms of inner-city redevelopment, within a framework of neo-liberal policies aimed at creating high-income/status housing areas. The sites for such areas frequently comprise stigmatized so-called ‘squat housing areas’, with perceived unhealthy living conditions and potential for crime, which legitimate a process of damaging gentrification (similar points are made in the chapters by Rossi and Vanolo in Part 2 and Kang in Part 5). Güzey highlights here the importance of the use of authoritarian state power through legal mechanisms and, in particular, the imposition of one powerful state agency, responsible directly to the Prime Minister. Güzey shows also how the state and local administrations in Turkey play a primary role in the shaping and channelling of housing demand, as part of broader aims for place-marketing, linked to neo-liberalism and attempts to address crime and economic decline. The state also offered support to real-estate developers to promote the inner city. Güzey emphasizes the resulting variety of problems, using examples of regeneration areas in Ankara, and concludes that, in Turkey, urban regeneration projects using land and financial subsidies to revitalize the construction sector via development of squat housing areas are often poorly integrated into the wider city structure. He also shows that such approaches are inherently speculative and lead to displacement and the exacerbation of social polarization. Hence he suggests that displacement in this context represents a means of using the ‘rent gap’ originating from the increasing financial value of land compared to the existing residential value.

Chen then considers large-scale urban development projects (UDPs) as a particular type of neo-liberal intervention strategy in urban regeneration in China. She shows how this neo-liberal strategy is meant to underpin competitive advantage and economic growth. Thus, via the example of the development of the Shanghai Pudong New Area, she shows how neo-liberalism played a significant role in the formulation of urban strategies to attract global finance; facilitate private participation; promote competitiveness; project modern, dynamic city images; and position the city via global actors and city marketing. She also suggests that the developmental state framework (whereby local government can attract foreign investment while central government loses some control over the development process) has enabled particular implementation strategies, with evidence of synergies between central and local government in the facilitation of large-scale urban development projects, and encouragement of participation of a range of private actors albeit with a lack of active participation by local communities. She concludes that UDPs such as the Pudong development have created new urban spaces and promoted competitiveness, and the Pudong development has often been seen in China as a model of implementation for UDPs in Chinese cities, with its cautious coalition building. But she shows that each city strategy needs to be adjusted to fit its particular context.

In the context of Japan, Tsukamoto then considers Japan’s neo-liberalization in relation to the interactions between its ‘developmental state culture’ and the role of its cities. He shows how urban planning has for many years been a central component of Japan’s national development, linked, for instance, to urban growth and industrialization, or balanced urbanization to ensure spatial equality. In view of Japan’s long economic recession since the early 1990s, strategies of ‘concentration and selection’ have emphasized planning effectiveness based on rational decision making, rather than balanced urbanization. The author highlights the combination of Japan’s neo-liberal policy ideas and rational planning, with implications for redevelopment of major urban centres, particularly Tokyo. He shows that this is a means for the state to legitimize rational top-down development policy, so that state planning is strong and cities function as state assets to achieve national goals. But he also shows how the combination of state developmentalism and neo-liberalism is stimulating bottom-up demands among some urban leaders for drastic state devolution. He concludes that Japan’s neo-liberal state reform represents a convenient tool for decision makers to use for strategic purposes, rather than an adoption of neo-liberal capitalism values, since the developmental state continues to be the model for economic development at both national and local levels. He also highlights the consequent possibility of the Japanese developmental
state disintegrating into a collection of city-regional developmental states, since cities could become essentially local spaces of economic agglomeration and business clusters. This could be linked to a tendency that already exists in the cases of Tokyo, Osaka and Nagoya, which are all considering development of international airports and international cargo ship hubs, for example. He therefore suggests that, if many city-regions chase after similar urban visions, while competing with each other for development and regeneration, the national interest could be adversely affected, thereby hinting at the importance of a national strategy for aspirational regeneration.

It is significant in this context that the effects of globalization and neo-liberal approaches to regeneration have applied globally, including in former communist contexts. For instance, in the next chapter, considering the case of Poland, Kaczmarek and Marcinczak show how urban regeneration is linked to the evolution of spatial planning and territorial governance, with a 50-year period of socialist central planning isolating Central Eastern Europe (CEE) countries from the global/continental economy and planning practice. However, they show that the demise of socialism and the growing exposure to globalization and neo-liberal ideas has had significant effects, including project-led and community-led urban regeneration, with examples in Krakow, Warsaw, Poznan and Lodz. The authors conclude that the systemic transformation of Polish society and economy, starting in 1989, led to a new regulatory framework heavily influenced by a neo-liberal approach and an almost unconstrained burgeoning of private property rights. Urban planning led by public bodies and local authorities has become perceived here as a brake on private property rights. The authors show, however, that post-socialist urban renewal has brought positive outcomes, successfully transforming inner cities through new uses. Local authorities have also become actively involved in urban (re)development and local economic growth, freed from the constraints of central government and aided by funding from the EU’s structural funds, with projects focusing on historic cores and city centres. However, these projects have largely been developed in a piecemeal fashion, leading to increased fragmentation of urban space as well as gentrification. In overall terms, therefore, they suggest that urban regeneration has transformed the neglected and decayed Polish inner cities more successfully than the 50-year period of central planning economy, but they question the approach of the entrepreneurial city, suggesting that emphasis on liberal market forces and private property rights acts as a constraint on regeneration success.

The final chapter in this Part, by Houghton, illustrates the application of globalized neo-liberalism by countries in the Global South (also considered elsewhere in this book, for instance by Ibem [Part 4], Fahmi [Part 4] and Kamath [Part 3]). Here, Houghton considers urban regeneration in the context of the post-apartheid transition and transformation in South Africa. This, she suggests, has involved a process in which imperatives for socio-economic transformation, improved economic growth, and increasing global competitiveness are seen by the government as central. For example, an array of urban regeneration projects in Durban has sought to facilitate economic growth and improved quality of life, using public-private partnerships, linked to boosterist neo-liberal agendas. It is interesting to note this finding in the context of Harvey’s original 1989 critique of neo-liberalism and subsequent critiques. Houghton concludes that the prioritization of economic growth and improvement of quality of life in such cities is linked to wider aims for the reintegration of South Africa into the global economy. However, she suggests that the resultant public-private partnership projects are possibly unable to either provide direct advantages to the largely poor majority or to sufficiently boost the urban economy so as to indirectly achieve greater urban equality. This clearly calls into question the overall predominance of neo-liberal economic growth agendas within the partnerships. In drawing attention to this issue, Houghton provides empirical substance for the major critiques of neo-liberalism. She therefore calls for consideration of the possibilities of locally-produced forms of urban neo-liberalization in which the specificities of locality shape the nature of urban regeneration.
Part 1: introduction

References

1
MODERNISM, NARRATIVES OF RENEWAL AND THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF URBAN REGENERATION

John R. Gold

Summary
The comparatively brief period when clearance-based urban renewal was in full spate left both an enormous impact on the contemporary city on both sides of the Atlantic and an important legacy, both positive and negative, for thinking about urban regeneration. Adopting a historiographic perspective, this chapter argues that conventional interpretations of the progress and reappraisal of ‘urban renewal’ essentially derive from the two metanarratives that have guided historians’ accounts of the rise and fall of architectural modernism. In considering that contention, this chapter’s four main sections supply, in turn, contextual introduction, discussion of the metanarratives in question, and consideration of the experiences of urban renewal in the USA and Great Britain between around 1955–75 in the light of the wider historiography. The conclusion reflects further on the continuing significance of narrative in understanding the histories and challenges of urban regeneration.

Introduction
Three inconspicuous information boards stand at the busy junction of Spadina Avenue and Bloor Street in Toronto (see Figure 1.1), but, perhaps unusually, they invite bystanders to appreciate what is not there rather than what can be seen. To explain, they are positioned at a spot that would have changed out of all recognition if a major road known as the Spadina Expressway had been completed in the 1970s. The first board explains how the city’s 1943 master plan had proposed new multi-lane ‘superhighways’ in response to dramatic projections of suburban growth and associated increases in car commuting to the central area. Constructing such a highway would have seen this part of Spadina Avenue ‘transformed into the southern end of a sunken, four- to six-lane expressway and a subway line’, changes that would have meant extensive demolition of residential and commercial properties. The second board notes that while many felt that the Expressway was necessary for Toronto ‘to adapt to modern needs’, others believed that ‘it promised only the destruction of homes and parks, more traffic congestion, and pollutants from automobile exhaust.’ In 1969, activists formed the Stop Spadina Save Our City Coordinating Committee (SSSOCCC) to oppose ‘the negative impact of the expressway and its soaring costs’, which they argued could not be justified by ‘a faster drive to and from downtown Toronto – itself a short-term gain because
increasing traffic from suburban and urban growth would soon overwhelm and clog the expressway’. SSSOCCC failed to convince City Hall about the project’s shortcomings or about the alternative attractions of improving public transport, but an unexpectedly successful appeal to the Province of Ontario saw work on the southern portion cease in June 1971. The third board heralds that decision as:

a landmark in the development of the City of Toronto. It signalled the end to plans for the other expressways which were to be cut through existing neighbourhoods. The Stop Spadina movement also helped give a voice to citizens in the planning of their neighbourhoods, and encouraged greater respect for the historic urban fabric during a period of intense redevelopment. Newly elected municipal politicians influenced by the Spadina Expressway fight and other movements of civic activism would shape the City of Toronto in the 1970s.

This is an argument that must be treated carefully. First, protest against Spadina was a special case, in which a well-connected committee could mobilise supporters as eminent as the University of Toronto’s formidable President Claude Bissell, the urbanist Jane Jacobs (who had just moved to the area), and the media theorist Marshall McLuhan, who memorably opined that: ‘Toronto will commit suicide if it plunges the Spadina Expressway into its heart’ (Plummer 2011: np). Few other pressure groups or issues would have attracted such a cast-list. Second, its success was only partial. While the ‘determined opposition’ to Spadina called into question the thinking behind the city’s transportation plans (Rose 1972: 137), high-capacity roadways continued to be built in Greater Toronto throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Only the

Figure 1.1 Heritage information boards at the intersection of Spadina Avenue and Bloor Street, Toronto (May 2012).
Source: Author’s photograph.
Spadina, Crosstown and Scarborough Expressways were not constructed (Sewell 2009: 40) and, indeed, Spadina’s northern portion (the William R. Allen Road), was completed to plan in 1976.

Nevertheless, the abandonment of the southern section merited being called a ‘landmark’. Taken as a whole, what was at issue here was a representative episode in the history of ‘urban renewal’ – the clearance-based approach to urban regeneration that flourished on both sides of the Atlantic during the 1960s but which would later come under increasingly critical scrutiny. Certainly, the story of the road’s eventual abandonment attracted interest outside Toronto because it meshed effortlessly with wider ‘narratives’ about the subject. Narratives, defined as structured accounts of actions and events, are essential parts of the crafting of histories, helping to clothe the world of the past with meaning, make sense of sequences of events, resolve ambiguity and, not infrequently, identify heroes and villains. Viewed in this way, Heritage Toronto, the body that commissioned these information boards, was not drawing the attention of passers-by to the customary content of heritage markers, such as artefacts of key significance or the homes of important individuals. Rather, it was recounting how local ‘citizens’ had struggled doggedly to rescue a valued environment from the bulldozer. As such, the expressway saga paralleled other stories told about resistance to the city’s planning policies, particularly with regard to high-rise social housing (Lemon 1976: 22). More crucially perhaps, the Spadina controversy occurred at a time when modernism – the broad movement that fuelled urban renewal – stood ‘at a crossroad’ (Robinson 2011: 295). Substantially, therefore, its story can also be situated within the ‘metanarratives’, or overarching stories, that relate the histories of urban renewal to the rise and fall of architectural modernism.

This chapter proceeds against this background, charting the narratives associated with the years (around 1955–75) in which urban regeneration practice was dominated by the characteristic approaches associated with ‘urban renewal’. In doing so, it charts the chequered path of urban redevelopment in the USA and Great Britain, arguing that the metanarratives that have shaped our understanding of the international experience of ‘urban renewal’ can essentially be situated within the historiography of modernism. The concluding section contends that the lessons of this analysis are not confined to an understanding of the past. Before doing so, however, it is important to begin by considering the origins, anatomy and lasting significance of the two metanarratives that have shaped historical understanding of twentieth-century modernism, namely ‘triumphalism’ and ‘reappraisal’.

**Triumphalism and reappraisal**

Any analysis of the histories of modernism, and especially its relationship to the city, perforce confronts an important contradiction. On the one hand, it is possible to generalise about modernism’s characteristic expressions as celebrating upheaval and dislocation, whether conveyed by atonal music, abstract art or the ‘expressive language of simple, floating volumes and clear-cut geometries’ of early architectural modernism (Curtis 1987: 8). These forms of representation, in turn, were underpinned by radical sets of personal attitudes: attitudes towards the past, society, the arts and industry, and the conduct of everyday life. Modernism, then, was not just a matter of learning to paint, sculpt or design buildings in new ways; it also signified that the individual had adopted new moral positions guided by the ‘right spirit’ (Gold 1997: 14). Yet, on the other hand, modernism also fiercely resists generalisation. It was never a single and unified philosophy but rather a diverse collection set of philosophies, ideologies, visual imageries and practices that become ever-more disparate with closer scrutiny. Attempts by historians to purge plurality in the interests of conceptual tidiness are usually shaped by ideologies that subordinate the task of making sense of experience, past and present, to the business of justifying particular interests.

Applying these perspectives to the historiography of modernism and the contemporary city, one can identify two dominant metanarratives or ‘Grand Narratives’ (Lyotard 1994). The first originated in the 1920s and held sway for more than four decades. Created by historians who actively promoted the movement that they studied, it hailed the rise of modernism as producing the only authentic architecture
of its time and celebrated the imminent fulfilment of its historic mission. Its brand of urban vision, linked particularly to precursors found in the works of Le Corbusier, Russian linear city theorists and the thinking of the Congrès Internationaux d’Architecture Moderne on the ‘functional city’, envisaged the future city as being reconfigured by embracing modern constructional materials, single land-use zoning, the abolition of the corridor street, and the alluring but hazily justified combination of tall buildings and urban motorways (Cohen 1995; Mumford 2000; Domhardt 2012). However, it must be emphasised that this was no design-only vision. As discussed elsewhere (Gold 1997: 231–33), ideas about the physical transformation of the built environment were underpinned by notions of transformation of society, with future citizens portrayed as contentedly living the Good Life in a city designed to meet the demands of the late 20th century. These utopian images of future society were important because they helped to insulate the entire exercise from criticism. In outline, built forms were held to be derived from the application of rational and moral principles to the needs of society. Criticisms about the design of the future city could always be answered by reference to the needs of the future urban society, needs that members of the Modern Movement themselves were specifying. Seen in this way, ideas about society can be regarded as sociological justifications used to legitimise cherished ideas about design.

Such ideas were of more than just academic importance. Modernism’s dominance in schools of planning and architecture in the early post-war era (Crinson and Lubbock 1994) saw a generation entering practice that were, first, convinced that the time had arrived for bold and decisive change and, second, confident in the belief that they were part of a movement that had the understandings and techniques necessary to tackle the city’s pervasive problems. Only the lessons of experience would eventually undermine these initial premises.

The second metanarrative, ‘reappraisal’, which purported to make sense of the lessons of that experience, had superseded the first by the mid-1970s. Primarily the work of social and cultural historians supported by some architectural critics, this metanarrative contained none of the triumphalist, technocratic and utopian underpinnings of the earlier metanarrative. Instead, it inverted the previous version’s underlying values, with chains of causation that linked the deficiencies of recently designed urban environments back to the flawed visions of the pioneers of modernism. The previous emphasis on clearance in order to free the ground for comprehensive redevelopment was castigated as dysfunctional and as inflicting heavy social costs. New buildings and environments only recently greeted as symbols of social progress were rejected as hugely expensive follies. The much-vaunted economic advantages of prefabrication and mass production of built forms were denigrated as illusory. Modernism itself became coupled with a style of urban regeneration that promoted monotony and alienation, more likely to exacerbate urban problems than tackle them. Such arguments again had ideological undertones. A metanarrative that supplied a conveniently adverse picture of urban-scale modernism as a historic dead-end undoubtedly had its uses. At the very least, it supplied a suitable foundation of what should be avoided against which favoured alternatives could be juxtaposed.

US experience

Although arguably the term ‘urban renewal’ was coined by Lewis Mumford (for instance, 1938: 305), its translation into practice owed more to US federal housing policy and the work of the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), a body established as part of New Deal politics in 1934. Created to help revive production and employment in the depressed house-building sector and to improve the amount and standard of housing available to working families, the FHA was intended to boost the supply of low-interest and long-term mortgage loans after the problems experienced in the Great Depression. The FHA’s desire to balance its books, however, predisposed it to avoid loans on properties in riskier inner-city neighbourhoods rather than safer suburban locations, a tendency that led Business Week in 1940 to remark that federal agencies ‘seemed resigned to the internal decay of the city’ (Teaford 1990: 17–18).
Nevertheless, attention steadily switched towards more active approaches to urban regeneration, especially as concern grew for remaking the industrial cities of the North and Midwest (Zipp 2010: 4–5). The FHA’s 1941 handbook on urban redevelopment addressed the problems of blighted urban areas and the need for municipal rehabilitation and redevelopment, making the case for an integrated long-term programme (FHA 1941; Foard and Fefferman 1966: 73). Above all, it emphasised the necessity of planning that embraced the city, its component elements and its surrounding communities, within holistic master plans (Bauman and Muller 2002: 145). The 1949 Housing Act reinforced the handbook’s provisions with a section headed ‘Title 1: Slum Clearance and Community Development and Redevelopment’. ‘Title 1’, as it became known, was a programme designed and administered by the Federal Government that aimed to help cities clear derelict land and offer it to developers at artificially low prices that were comparable to the costs of greenfield suburban sites (Bartlett and Quine 1987: 4). Private developers, however, were not interested in low-income housing (whether subsidised or not), but in developing downtown shopping and commercial centres (Cullingworth and Caves 2003: 217).

With relatively few cities participating, the programme was revised with the passage of the 1954 Housing Act. Title 1 was renamed ‘Slum Clearance and Urban Renewal’ – a change that was not merely semantic. Urban renewal, introduced for the first time here, was ‘then a term without common usage’ (Foard and Fefferman 1966: 96). As initially conceived, it involved a spectrum of approaches that included the less expensive options of conservation and rehabilitation of the urban fabric by the private sector without the need for federal funding of land acquisition and clearance (Foard and Fefferman 1966). In principle, too, it was imbued with an ethical sense of the renewal ‘of both people and structures’ (Gillette 2010: 100). Practice, however, belied intent. While retaining the rhetoric of addressing the common good, the 1954 Housing Act initiated a process of dilution in the targeting of project grants. Now, 10 per cent could be used for non-residential purposes, with the focus shifting from a federally directed housing programme to a locally directed programme that also encompassed businesses and commercial interests. Over time, the percentage of project grants available for non-residential purposes as part of urban renewal steadily increased to 20 per cent under the 1959 Housing Act, then to 35 per cent in 1961 and finally, with administrative connivance and suitable manipulation of definitions and procedures, to more than 50 per cent (Cullingworth 1993: 159).

With this latitude, city managers and other local leaders turned away from affordable housing – an essential ingredient in the original conception – in favour of boosting sagging property values and increases to tax returns through investment in schemes that might generate urban renaissance. The pace of change was considerable. Lower income groups were displaced through exercise of eminent domain (compulsory purchase) and often rehoused in social housing estates on land of lower intrinsic value. Transport infrastructure, civic centres, shopping malls, luxury apartment buildings, private hospitals and university campuses took their place (Teaford 2000: 444–46). Overall, city design was strongly influenced by a simplistic version of functional city design that diffused widely in the USA in the 1950s, with the adoption of capacious motorways that either cut through or encircled the downtown and revisions of zoning regulations that based building design on a relationship to open space rather than streets. The latter often led to ‘an incremental version of the tower-in-park city’, albeit one that featured ‘buildings that were not related to one another, amid discontinuous pockets of open space’ (Barnett 1986: 131).

New towns for old

The US model had its attractions. It seemingly offered a physical solution for urban decline by simultaneously tackling city centre redevelopment, road improvement and problems of slum housing. Arguably too, it held out prospects of stemming middle-class flight to the suburbs (Hoffman 2003: 9). Such policies soon encountered fierce criticism (see ensuing section), but their shortcomings were not readily apparent to observers from other countries who looked to US renewal policies as inspiration for
urban regeneration. In 1950s Britain, for example, interest in urban renewal grew out of the long-anticipated but interminably-delayed reconstruction project – the process of remaking cities that had been defined as long ago as 1917 as ‘not so much a question of rebuilding society as it was before the war, but of moulding a better world’ (quoted in Gold 2012: 201). In May 1959, Henry Brooke, the Minister of Housing and Local Government, committed the Government to ‘gradual urban renewal’ rather than ‘piecemeal town planning’ (Anon. 1959). This presaged a programme of work and consultations by his Department, commencing in September 1959, that sought to balance reconstruction, rehabilitation and conservation under the umbrella heading of ‘urban renewal’ (Gold 2010).

When launched as a policy initiative in 1962, ‘urban renewal’ was described as ‘a new phrase for an age old process – the redevelopment and improvement of buildings and even whole areas as they become outworn, outgrown or outdated’. Yet whereas in the past it was ‘a slow but continuous process’, it was now argued that ‘under the impact of rapid social and technological changes more conscious action is needed to guide renewal processes’ (MHLG/MoT 1962: 2). Rehabilitation and conservation remained part of the equation, but their presence was downplayed by a prevailing mind-set that saw the existing urban environment as an obstacle that inhibited progress. Instead, the emerging policy was rooted in new attitudes towards technology and change, broadly endorsing the ideological claims of planners and architects to be practitioners of the scientific dispassionate and ‘objective appraisal’ (MHLG/MoT 1962: 3) that urban renewal required. Indeed, when seeking to lionise their task, planners and other professionals involved in urban renewal were exhorted to think of their task not just as ‘a difficult technical job’, but also more cerebrally ‘as a way of thinking’ that required the trained expert to master (Burns 1963: xi).

What happened as the renewal machine was unleashed varied from city to city because, as in the USA, much depended on the policies and outlooks of individual city authorities, how eagerly they engaged in the process to clear the ground, and how willingly they entered into partnerships with the private sector in order to generate important new sources of funding. Certainly, some towns activated long-standing plans for central area redevelopment or civic improvement and made an early start in pushing modernisation forward when resources became available. Other councils responded enthusiastically to the prospect of a new start with uncompromising and large-scale modernising projects that posited an abrupt break with the past, although these had seldom reached completion before the mood of the times irrevocably changed. Other municipalities acted more circumspectly, doing little more than exercising development control over schemes for commercial offices and retailing.

Nevertheless, the pace of change was impressive, with the urban fabric changing more dramatically than almost any comparable period in British history (Gold 2007). Using powers available under the 1947 Act to declare Comprehensive Development Areas, local authorities applied for compulsory purchase to achieve slum clearance targets, renew town centres and remodel road systems in the interests of the town as a whole (Miller 2003:198). According to one estimate (Anon. 1965: 67), more than 400 central area renewal schemes were in preparation by early 1965. The typical plans reproduced a visually limited repertoire of new environments based on single land-use zoning, direct access to the centre by high-density thoroughfares, multi-storey car parks, pedestrianised precincts, gestures towards multi-level circulation, and construction of new civic buildings and cultural infrastructure to act as foci for civic identity. Relatively few, however, would reach completion and a considerable number were never started – a symptom of the nature and pace of the reappraisal that then occurred.

Second thoughts

Even in the USA where criticism came earliest, urban renewal programmes were not without their successes (Bloom 2008) but they quickly exhibited many problems. The ambiguous and ill-defined goals of the programme allowed divergent interpretations of its aims and intent (Teaford 2000: 445). The
poorly managed housing projects that replaced the ghettos became regarded as effectively second ghettos in cities such as Chicago, St Louis and Newark (Hirsch 1983). Well before urban renewal was merged with other programmes in 1974, its approach was heavily censured not only by those displaced but also by observers concerned about the social consequences of redevelopment policies based principally on the bulldozer (Anderson 1966; Saunders and Shackelford 1998).

The watersheds in the seismic shift in thinking about urban renewal are difficult to pinpoint with any accuracy, but perhaps the earliest coherent stirrings can be found in the work of Jane Jacobs. Already a critic of the sterility that she associated with the regenerated urban environments on offer from the major architectural and planning movements, Jacobs (1961) argued the case for the unsung attractions of the existing neighbourhoods, extolling the animated nature of the streets, the civility that people showed and the idea that they looked out for one another. Jacobs’ advocacy of apparent disorder complemented other studies that underlined the importance of existing neighbourhoods in the lives of those displaced by renewal (for instance, Young and Willmott 1957; Fried and Gleicher 1961; Fried 1963). Observers of renewal showed that ill-conceived and poorly coordinated clearance policies in many cities had enduringly blighted the lives of many inner-city residents caught up in the renewal process (for instance, Power 1965). Sharp criticism also came from within the ranks of the built environment professions, particularly over housing policy. In Great Britain, a special issue of the pro-modernist professional journal *Architectural Review*, guest edited by Nicholas Taylor (1967), provided trenchant criticisms about the bleak conditions of public housing estates. In May 1968, the Ronan Point disaster, where a simple kitchen accident led to the progressive collapse of one corner of a 23-storey point block of flats in Canning Town (London), saw initial public and professional concern turn to outrage when Official Inquiries pointed to the extent of complacency and malpractice.

With such evidence, even professional assurance about the historically validated renewal strategies being followed had evaporated, but matters were not helped by a constant diet of new problems. The Canadian architect Oscar Newman’s research on ‘defensible space’, a spatial concept spun off from the 1960s fascination with territoriality and other atavistic concepts, sensationalised the idea that the layout of flatted estates contributed to crime and deviance by denying people the possibility of establishing claims over the space around their dwellings – a characteristic held to be a traditional feature of housing design (Newman 1972). An officially sponsored digest of available research findings concluded with a negative overall appraisal of the benefits and drawbacks associated with using high-rise flats for social housing and the winding comment: ‘What is needed for the future is to sensitize those who provide and manage the residential environment to the preferences and needs of those who will live there’ (Adams and Conway 1975: 9). Other urban motorways besides Spadina were drawing opposition as, for example, with the protests in July–August 1970 against Westway, the 2.5-mile (4.1 kilometres) elevated roadway that carried the extension of Western Avenue through West London (Robertson 2007). Clear cases of systematic corruption were unveiled, with revelations of enormous amounts of public funds being siphoned off into private pockets (for instance, see Gillard 1980). Taking stock of the situation, the British newspaper *The Times* ran a full-page feature article in April 1971 on ‘The revolt in the cities’, linking together road, housing and conservationist protests as part of a general movement against a pipeline ‘full of megalomaniac projects on an unexampled scale, which may yet savage everything that remains of the scarred countenance of our cities’ (Wiggins 1971: 19).

Aghast at this turn of affairs, local politicians and built environment professionals fulminated at what one termed the ‘daily drip of criticism, kept going by the mass media’ (Casson 1973: 5). However, there was no prospect that it was a passing media fad or that the naïve trust that practitioners had enjoyed would imminently return. Rather, the episode of ‘urban renewal’ was to pass into the domain of the historians (Bloom 2008: 2), who quickly assimilated it into the metanarrative of the denouement of international modernism. By doing so, it was possible to relate the story of urban renewal to an
overarching narrative that seamlessly made sense of the disparate fragments and provided moral force to any lessons drawn. Christopher Booker (1980), Robert Hughes (1980) and Tom Wolfe (1982) were among many critics who drew the saga of urban renewal into scathing polemics about utopianism and the perceived arrogance of modern architects and planners in the post-war period. Social historians of the 1960s and 1970s essentially periodised the attitudes and mentalities that lay behind planning ‘predicated upon the primary necessity of free movement for the motor car’ (Marwick 1998: 442; see also Sandbrook 2006: 611–40). Understandably, too, proponents of subsequent movements that proffered alternative approaches to urban regeneration looked back to the era of ‘urban renewal’ to find a reliable adversary. The redesign of the city was seen as ‘a blueprint for placelessness, of anonymous impersonal spaces, massive structures and automobile throughways . . . and the loss of human scale in mass society’ (Ley 1987: 43; quoted in Ellin 1996: 4). It was therefore the perfect backdrop against which to contrast the ‘human-scale’ quality of their own ideals and coin new narratives that favoured the triumph of greater visual and textural diversity.

Conclusions

The full scope of the narratives that have taken shape as a result lies beyond the scope of this chapter (see Knox 2010), but the withering critique of urban renewal-as-modernism remains a factor in both the writing of histories about urban regeneration and in the questions asked about urban regeneration’s continuing purpose.

Taking these points separately, with regard to the former it may be argued that historians of the built environment remain wedded to a consensual historical view of urban renewal impregnated with the hostility and noir imageries (Sandercock 1998: 7–13) that are associated with the now-prevalent metanarrative of the fall of modernism. Yet, however much such interpretations appeal to commonsense as being ‘objective’ and ‘value-free’ accounts, they run the risk of reducing the history of urban renewal to a simplistic comic-book sequence of chronological frames. Just as the experience of urban renewal embraces an undoubted plurality that, inter alia, resulted from varying national traditions, differing allocations of responsibility between the different built environment professions, and administrative systems that delegated responsibility for renewing cities from the centre to municipalities and local agencies, so too can its histories be written in many different ways. Certainly, it is only by identifying what Burrow (2009: xvi) termed ‘the plurality of “histories” and the interests embodied in them’ that will it be possible to overcome the universalising tendencies conveyed by writings suffused with the Grand Narratives.

With regard to the latter point about the legacy of historical writings, it is important to recognise that prevailing understandings of the period of urban renewal not only affect knowledge of the past, they also help to shape the questions asked about urban regeneration in the present. It may be argued, for instance, that certain ideas that had always been part of the progressive purpose of planning became casualties of the prevailing critique. These have included: the prospect of reviving use of large-scale planned interventions in the urban environment in order to shape civitas – the community of citizens – through design (Gillette 2010: 1); the creation and implementation of master plans; and the principle of undertaking projects that address the ‘common good’ whereby benefits to residents and businesses in the city as a whole are balanced against the costs demanded from the few. In each case, objections may legitimately be made about the efficacy of the strategies and about the moral right of those responsible for city planning and design to address social objectives. Yet if urban regeneration is to be more than an exercise in physical improvement, underlying questions about the socially transformative potential of large-scale interventions, which were only recently an essential part of the exercise, remain part of an agenda that still needs to be addressed.
References


2

THE CHANGING CONTEXT OF URBAN REGENERATION IN NORTH WEST EUROPE

Chris Couch, Olivier Sykes and Matthew Cocks

Summary

This chapter outlines the changing contexts for urban regeneration since the end of the Second World War, with a particular focus on North West Europe. It highlights the different phases of urban regeneration since 1945 and the shifting contextual paradigms – both nationally and internationally. These include post-war reconstruction; urban renewal and ‘modernisation’ in the 1950s and 1960s; the boom in ‘property-led’ regeneration that followed the economic crises of the 1970s and 1980s; more ‘holistic’ approaches of the 1990s; urban renaissance; and the increasing integration of policies for urban regeneration and environmentally sustainable development in recent years. The chapter then discusses the shifting urban, governance and policy contexts, before concluding with some current issues.

Introduction

In addition to these trends, there has been an international convergence in approaches to regeneration over recent decades. While in each country the individual experience of urban regeneration has been different, partly because of local differences in the historical, social, economic and physical context and partly because of the path-dependent nature of urban policy in many countries, there are also many similarities in both the problems faced by cities and in chosen solutions. There are many common threads and an increasing convergence in the approach to urban problems as each country learns from the experiences of others and responds to developments in European Union policy and funding arrangements. These trends are discussed before some final conclusions and considerations of the future direction of urban regeneration in North West Europe.

Two broad themes can be identified within urban regeneration activity: the first can be characterised as urban renaissance and improving urban competitiveness. This first theme is concerned with responding to two separate but overlapping agendas: maintaining a city’s competitiveness in an increasingly globalised post-industrial economy, while simultaneously trying to achieve more compact and sustainable urban forms. The second theme is ‘neighbourhood renewal’, which is concerned with improving the physical, environmental, social and economic conditions of residential neighbourhoods, especially in inner urban areas and peripheral social housing estates. However, it should not be considered that these two types of urban regeneration activity are completely separate ideas divorced from each other. Rather, each can overlap with the other and there can be tension between these different concerns, particularly resulting from ideas of the competitive city under the neo-liberal agenda discussed below. There are thus important
discussions to be had about the purposes of urban regeneration and key questions about who pays for and who benefits from such intervention.

The historical context

After 1945, in the immediate post-war period, many cities in North West Europe faced the daunting task of reconstruction. This applied particularly to central areas but also to housing and industrial zones. In addition the lack of construction activity over the previous six years and the pressures for housing from bourgeoning populations, only served to emphasise the need for action. Perhaps the most extreme case was Germany where, according to Anne Power, ‘by 1945 there were six people per dwelling compared with 3.6 in 1936. This represented a loss of maybe 5.5 million dwellings’ (Power 1993: 108). Even in Britain some three-quarters of a million dwellings were lost or badly damaged (ibid.: 186). The requirement was often for speed at a time of austerity. The solution adopted in many cases was either direct public sector action or heavy public subsidy of private sector activity.

Although many plans for town centre reconstruction had been produced during the war it was some years before cities such as Plymouth, Rotterdam, Coventry and others had the resources to start rebuilding. This process often included many innovations in urban planning. Plymouth city centre was redesigned as an efficient modernist machine, with great attention to townscape and urban design. According to English Heritage:

Post-war reconstruction offered unparalleled opportunities to the developing profession of urban planners to cast off the constraints imposed by historic infrastructure and produce a new vision of urban living, expressed in rationally designed city centres linked to suburban precincts and with modern integrated transport systems.

(Gould 2012)

Both Rotterdam and Coventry tackled the growing problem of traffic by incorporating pedestrianised shopping streets into their design.

Moving into the 1950s, many cities finally had a chance to turn their attention to neighbourhood renewal, with a particular focus on improving housing conditions. Often, little had been done since 1939, and conditions in many areas had deteriorated badly. In most countries the preferred approach was to clear (usually private) slum housing and replace it with new social housing, frequently at lower densities. This in turn led to the need for overspill estates to be built on the periphery of cities. Much of the replacement high-rise and high density housing was built using industrialised methods. This modernist approach to housing architecture was favoured in many continental countries, both for inner urban and peripheral housing estates. Only in Britain were many peripheral social housing estates built along ‘garden city’ lines.

However, by the 1960s, especially in Britain, there was a growing reaction against modernist architecture and planning. Writers such as Ian Nairn (1955) and the American Jane Jacobs (1961) advocated a more humane, more organic post-modern approach to urban renewal. The British Government was also finding that slum clearance was becoming more expensive and that high-rise and industrialised housing solutions did not yield as much benefit as claimed. By the end of the 1960s, British policy was turning against slum clearance and looking more towards housing renovation and area improvement as the way forward. At a similar point in time in the Netherlands, comprehensive demolition went out of favour because of protests by residents and problems arranging financing for planned demolition (Stouten 2010: 64).

In Germany too, after the reconstruction and urgent needs of the post-war period, the late 1960s provided a time for reflection and a rethinking of approaches to urban renewal. After 1971, the
Städtebauförderungsgesetz (Urban Renewal Act) offered a broader approach that required an assessment of the personal and social costs and benefits of any proposed strategy. Nevertheless, until the late 1970s urban renewal projects still focused mainly upon clearance and reconstruction. In France, a country that had one of the greatest problems of housing shortage and where the post-war priority had been reconstruction and modernisation of the economic infrastructure, the need for mass housebuilding, particularly for large-scale peripheral social housing estates continued somewhat later than in these other countries. In later years French cities were to face difficult challenges as such estates grew to contain severe concentrations of social deprivation and social tension.

Other debates in the 1960s were also changing the face of urban regeneration. Urban heritage conservation, a matter of low priority in previous decades, became an important consideration. The French Loi Malraux in 1962 introduced the concept of a ‘Secteur Sauvegardé’ (literally: ‘safeguarded sector’) to support the protection and restoration of areas and buildings of architectural or historic interest. In Britain the Civic Amenities Act 1967 permitted local authorities to designate ‘conservation areas’ and the preservation of buildings of architectural or historic interest became an important dimension of the regeneration process. No longer could old environments simply be swept away; they had to be adapted to modern requirements in a much more sensitive way.

There was also a change in the way traffic problems were regarded. Until this time most cities pursued strategies of predicting traffic growth and providing road space and parking for its accommodation, with obvious impacts on urban regeneration. But as the financial and environmental costs of such an approach became apparent, policies shifted towards a more balanced approach of traffic management, restraint and modal shift towards alternative forms of movement.

Social issues were also becoming more important. The better availability of social data alongside the emerging requirement for public participation in planning and housing renewal improved central and local government awareness of the social context and the consequences of their actions. And in some countries, particularly Britain, France and the Netherlands, waves of immigration from former colonies were creating social tensions that required a new sensitivity in urban policy. In Britain, the ‘Urban Programme’, introduced in 1968 and often regarded as the beginning of urban policy in Britain, was a direct consequence of such social unrest (Tallon 2010: 37).

But the mid-1970s was a time of recession and after the post-war boom, many cities across Europe were faced with an economic crisis for the first time in a generation. The recession and increased competition between countries accelerated processes of industrial restructuring. Particularly hard hit were cities whose economies were dominated by older industrial sectors, such as mining, steel production, heavy engineering, and textiles. The consequences were rapidly rising unemployment, the emergence of swathes of vacant and derelict land, and the out-migration of residents. Urban regeneration took on a new task: local economic development. The question was how to attract or create new employment.

A new political debate emerged at this time: whether to ease the transition by protecting jobs and public services or whether to allow market forces to take their ‘natural’ course and even to support such change by making the public sector more efficient and so ‘free-up’ resources for investment in the private market sector of the economy. In Britain the 1979 Conservative Government led by Margaret Thatcher took the latter view. Their approach was characterised by offering little support for ‘failing’ industries, whilst streamlining public services and marginalising local authorities in a drive for deregulated, market-led economic growth and property-led urban regeneration. The strategy included ‘Enterprise Zones’ with relaxed planning and taxation regimes and the use of direct action through the use of ‘Urban Development Corporations’, with central Government funding and powers to bypass local planning concerns in order to achieve the re-use of derelict urban land (Imrie and Thomas 1999).

This neo-liberal approach was not immediately taken up in other countries. For example, despite facing similar urban and economic problems, Germany did not follow the Thatcherite strategy, ‘because of resistance from the majority of the Länder, parts of the Social Democrat Party (SPD), the Green Party
and large parts of the trade union movement and welfare organisations’ (Bömer 2001: 25). France too took a different route, decentralising power to strengthen local and regional governments and maintaining a high level of state expenditure and intervention in the economy.

By the 1980s a number of German cities were beginning to take a more sensitive, community-responsive approach to urban regeneration. A milestone in the development of this new approach was the 1984/87 Berlin International Building Exhibition (IBA):

In addition to promoting and demonstrating innovative new urban architecture (Neubau) including designs representing significant advances in reducing environmental impact, there was a programme of urban regeneration and renewal (Altbau) based in the Kreuzberg district. This programme introduced the concept of ‘careful urban renewal/Behutsame Stadterneuerung’. Projects were oriented towards the principles of construction self-help, co-operative self-administration, living and working in the same area as well as the rehabilitation of the existing buildings at affordable costs. The effect was not just local. The approach stimulated an international debate on the concept of ‘careful urban renewal’ and had a significant influence on emerging policies in other countries.

(Couch, Sykes and Börstinghaus 2011: 29)

It became apparent, even in Britain, that industrial and urban change needed better regulation, partly because it seemed that synergies could be gained by better co-ordination of investment and partly because the social and environmental costs of unconstrained and inadequately controlled development were too high. This became abundantly clear in the London Docklands where the massive new Canary Wharf business district was being developed (within an enterprise zone and under the auspices of an urban development corporation) with little thought for its impact on the rest of the conurbation, or for the transportation and social infrastructure that would be required (see Carmona [2009] for a full discussion of the regeneration of the London Docklands).

There was a second reason for change: a growing concern for the environment. The World Commission on Environment and Development (The Brundtland Commission) identified the need for development to be sustainable, calling for ‘development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’ (World Commission on Environment and Development 1987: 43). Taking up this issue the UN Conference on Environment and Development 1992 (The Rio Summit) produced detailed proposals for more globally sustainable forms of living, better environmental protection and natural resource conservation (Agenda 21) (Lafferty and Eckerberg 1998). This strategy recognised the important role of local action as well as global policy.

The impact of this agenda upon city planning and urban regeneration began to be set out in policy documents such as the European Commission’s Green Paper on the Urban Environment (Commission of the European Communities 1990). The emphasis was to be on: more compact, higher density, mixed use cities; better public transport, less reliance on the car; protection of urban and rural heritage; and reuse of derelict land and buildings. This approach set the tone for urban regeneration strategies across much of Europe in the years that followed.

In Germany this led to the National Plan for Action towards Sustainable Development of Settlements (BMRBS 1996) and the start of local actions by individual towns and cities under the banner of Local Agenda 21. Whilst this certainly advanced the planning discourse in Germany, it also highlighted the emerging tensions between environmental protection on the one hand and local economic development on the other. This was particularly problematic in older industrial areas such as the Ruhr and in the new Länder (former East Germany) where economic decline and out-migration were happening at an alarming rate.
A new role emerged for local government, particularly in Britain, namely that of ‘facilitating’ development and of ‘co-ordinating’ the actions of the increasing number of public and private sector agencies that were involved in delivering and managing urbanisation. By the early 1990s, British cities were being encouraged to enter into ‘partnerships’ with other agencies, including local communities, non-governmental organisations and the private sector, to stimulate urban regeneration (see below). In this, Britain led an approach that was gradually taken up in other countries. Whereas most French, (west) German and Dutch cities had growing populations and relatively strong urban centres, this was not the case in many British cities, which by the 1990s, were in serious decline. In 1994, the URBED report *Vital and Viable Town Centres: Meeting the Challenge* provided a strategy for town centre recovery, and a new Government agency ‘English Partnerships’, which was to work with local authorities, provide financial support, and tighter planning controls on out-of-town development restricted competition. This new integration between tiers of government and between policy fields, with clearer strategies and co-ordinated funding, led to a rapid recovery in the fortunes of many town centres.

A key influence on British urban policy after the millennium was the report *Towards an Urban Renaissance*. The vision of the Urban Task Force was for integrated and multifaceted urban communities that would be well designed, compact and connected; support a diverse range of uses in a sustainable urban environment; be well-integrated with public transport; and be adaptable to change (Urban Task Force 1999). Through the following decade these ideas were incorporated into Government policy and into the plans of many towns and cities.

In the increasingly globalised economy competition between cities for footloose interregional and international investment was becoming ever stronger. Urban competitiveness and city marketing became important elements of urban regeneration and local economic development policies. In this context, Parkinson et al. (2004: 58) identified six critical features of urban competitiveness: economic diversity; skilled workforce; connectivity – internal and external; strategic capacity to mobilise and implement long-term development strategies; innovation in firms and organisations; and quality of life – social, cultural and environmental.

An unintended consequence of these approaches has been that the appearance of regenerated city centres and nearby former industrial and dockland zones was beginning to look remarkably similar across Europe. Retail centres increasingly benefitted from the same investors, the same mix of uses and the same retail chains with their standard facades and logos. Office developments became an increasingly standardised product to cater for a globalised property investment market. Flagship heritage buildings became art galleries, museums or exhibition halls. The same hotels appeared in major cities across the Continent and even the floorscape began to look the same as cities applied similar traffic-calming methods, using similar materials.

In terms of neighbourhood renewal all these countries were, by the millennium, learning to proceed in more sensitive and careful ways. In Britain a national strategy – ‘A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal’ – was based on the idea of combining the activities of relevant agencies in a ‘joined-up’ holistic approach to solving the inter-related problems of unemployment, crime, low educational attainment, poor health, and housing and the local physical environment. New ‘local strategic partnerships’ (LSPs) were to bring together all the major agencies concerned with regeneration – including local authorities, housing providers, public utilities, development and community organisations – so as to formulate agreed strategies and oversee their implementation. Thus, housing regeneration became firmly placed within a much broader, more holistic, regeneration policy context.

At a similar time in Germany, a new programme was developed: ‘the Social Integrative City’ (Die Soziale Stadt). Its goal was to counteract the widening socio-spatial rifts in cities by fostering participation and co-operation. It was seen as a new political approach to urban development in Germany as a whole (Ansprechpartner der Bundestransferstelle Soziale Stadt im Deutschen Institut für Urbanistik 2012). Soziale Stadt’s integrative approach led to projects and interventions being developed across several policy
fields at the same time (for instance, housing improvement, community development and environmental improvements) and to co-ordinated action between public sector agencies and the private sector (Häußermann 2006).

Similarly in France, under the general umbrella of the ‘politique de la ville’ a new approach was being adopted, with attention focused on the most deprived urban quarters and based upon contractual agreements between different tiers of government (state, region and commune), focused upon a goal of socially, economically and environmentally sustainable regeneration, and fundamentally embedded within a participative democratic approach (Sintomer and De Maillard 2007).

**The urban context**

Within this narrative a number of themes can be identified that have been significant in shaping the need for urban regeneration and the nature of the intervention that has taken place. There are clear trends in changing economic contexts, which are often the most direct cause necessitating intervention. Demographic and social changes can also be observed, and a further relevant factor is the geography and urban form of a location.

The underlying economic structure has a fundamental bearing on the need for urban regeneration. Cities based upon buoyant economies, such as Munich (with traditional strengths in electronics, motor industry, financial services), Amsterdam (finance, business, tourism), and Bristol (aerospace, IT) have had to cope with very different problems to cities such as Dortmund (coal, steel, brewing), Rotterdam (port and port-related industries), or Manchester (textiles, engineering).

These latter cities have experienced substantial economic restructuring and decline, which have often had severe consequences that require state intervention. Land and buildings become vacant and derelict. The removal of derelict structures and the decontamination of land is a cost to development that detracts from the profitability of redevelopment. So it becomes necessary for the state to either subsidise redevelopment or take direct action itself. Many such sites require additional attention in order to bring them to a marketable state, for example the assembly of sites into larger parcels or the provision of modern access and utility infrastructures. A further consequence is unemployment and its wider impacts on the local economy and society. Such trends require short-term state social expenses in the form of benefits to the unemployed and longer-term support for job creation and retraining.

Both these aspects of economic change – the need to find new uses for land and the need to find new jobs – lead to a field of policy known as economic development. This typically comprises: ensuring an adequate supply of employment land; marketing investment opportunities to potential external investors; investment in key elements of infrastructure supporting economic development, such as transportation, advanced education and training; provision of support services; and environmental improvements.

But it is not only economic decline that can lead to urban regeneration. Economic growth can be an equally important driver for urban change. If developers or property owners perceive that density of development is below that which the market could stand, or if the market would support a higher value land use, then there will be pressures for change. Often this will be undertaken within the private market but as a minimum, state intervention will be required to regulate (namely, plan) such changes in order to ensure compatibility with wider goals, to minimise social costs and maximise social benefits. Sometimes the state will intervene and support change as a partner, for example through assisting with land assembly or the provision of infrastructure. A further important response to economic restructuring and decline is the idea of making the city more competitive, often linked with city marketing (see below).

A trend often linked closely to the economic characteristics of a locality is that of population change. Whilst many countries and cities across the globe are growing in population, a significant number have been or are shrinking – that is, losing population. A recent study by Turok and Mykhnenko (2007)
found that whilst 60 per cent of all European cities of more than 200,000 inhabitants have seen consistent growth in recent decades, the remainder have seen significant periods of population decline. Many cities in eastern and central Europe fall into this category along with a number in the British Isles, Italy and elsewhere. According to Bernt et al. (2012), shrinkage results from the interplay of macro-processes such as economic, demographic and political change or the shape of such urbanisation processes, which can lead to population losses at the local scale. The principal contemporary causes of population decline can be:

- Economic decline, generally leading to net out migration from the city region in search of work.
- Suburbanisation or urban sprawl, where the population disperses from the core city toward more peripheral locations within the city region.
- Natural demographic change, whereby, usually in an ageing population, death rates exceed birth rates and the population naturally declines.

These causes are mediated by other intervening factors, such as the political system and its impacts at different spatial levels (national, regional, urban, local), the shape of regeneration policies, and the physical structure of the city, ecological conditions or cultural factors. The causes and consequences of shrinkage are often interconnected (Bernt et al. 2012: 3).

The reverse is also generally the case. Growth follows economic success and/or positive natural population change. In certain circumstances, such as in some Scandinavian cities, a strong policy favouring the compact city model of urban development has led to the core city growing faster than the periphery (Couch, Leontidou and Petschel-Held 2007: 42). Furthermore, three decades of strong urban regeneration policies complemented by strict controls over suburbanisation have seen many British cities reverse decades of inner city decline, particularly through an increase in city centre living.

Population structure and distribution of the population also forms an important backdrop to urban regeneration. Age structure and dependency are important variables that influence the nature of problems facing urban policy makers. Typically, net out migration leaves a residual population containing lower proportions of young people and higher proportions of the elderly. This has direct implications for the provision of schools, community transport services and other amenities.

The physical structure of urban areas, the disposition and mix of land uses, the nature of the housing stock, and its form and tenure, all have an influence on the nature of the urban problems facing the authorities and the range of possible solutions available to them.

The age of the housing stock is an important influence on the need for maintenance, repair and renovation but this is mediated through the housing economy. Where demand is high and prices are increasing, the capital for such investments is easily released through the market and the economic life of a dwelling will be extended. Where this is not the case, the economic life of the dwelling will be foreshortened without public intervention. But housing form is also important. The perimeter tenement block of flats commonly found throughout the cities of central Europe requires very different approaches to renovation and renewal than the terraced, single-family houses more common in British cities. The age of buildings, as well as their form and design, will also determine whether they are judged worthy of preservation and thus profoundly influence choices between renovation and demolition (Couch, Sykes and Börstinghaus 2011).

There are differences too in housing tenure. It is mainly in Britain that owner occupation occurs widely in inner urban areas. In many European countries such areas are generally characterised by high levels of renting, whether at market or social rents. In France many inner urban areas contain a high proportion of apartments, often including substantial middle-class populations, but it is in areas of high-rise social housing, especially in peripheral housing estates, that many French urban social problems are concentrated.
The governance and policy context

As we have seen above, the past 50 years have seen the development of two global trends that have provided a significant context for urban regeneration in North West Europe and elsewhere. These are the rise in a neo-liberal agenda – and resultant approaches to macro-economic management – and increasing attention being paid to issues of environmental sustainability. However, these two trends have been in many ways, and continue to be, antagonistic towards one another. According to Jennings, the political economies of the contemporary world – most especially the advanced capitalist nation states – are on a collision course with natural limits, biodiversity constraints, and ecosystem health (2010: 77).

Neo-liberalism has been increasingly embraced in some form by almost all states across the world since the early 1980s, sometimes by choice and at other times in response to coercive pressures. For Harvey, it 'has . . . become hegemonic as a mode of discourse. It has pervasive effects on ways of thought to the point where it has become incorporated into the common-sense way many of us interpret, live in, and understand the world’ (2005: 3).

In practice, as alluded to earlier, the results of this have been an increasing deregulation of private capital, privatisation of state functions, and a movement away from interventionalist policies for the redistribution of wealth. The belief that market transactions are able to provide the greatest conditions for social good frequently leads states and international institutions to prioritise economic growth and the creation of conditions to foster market transactions over other concerns. Such concerns include unemployment, social welfare and environmental sustainability.

Thus, since the late 1980s, it is the compatibility between the capitalist system and environmental sustainability that has become a major issue for debate. Porritt summarises the current situation as follows:

Sustainable development is still a relatively young and unfinished concept, and has had to establish itself over the last 20 years or so at precisely the time when those political philosophies which would have given it more space (social democracy and democratic socialism) have surrendered the field to today’s dominant, neo-liberal free market ideology. Organisations and individuals championing sustainable development as a radically different model of progress for humankind have had their work cut out simply trying to mitigate the worst externalities of today’s global economy. There has been little time or opportunity to map out more positive visions of what a sustainable world would look like.

(Porritt 2005: xxii)

Writing about urban regeneration in Berlin, Colomb (2011) illustrates this conflict. The policy debate over recent years has been between ‘careful urban renewal’ based upon endogenous, sustainable development or turning Berlin into a more globally competitive ‘service metropolis’. Political choice favoured this second approach but in reality the city’s economic regeneration has been based upon knowledge-intensive and creative industries. However, these sectors are threatened by public spending cuts, as she points out:

On the one hand, public investments in infrastructure, police, healthcare, education, research are often argued to be fundamental to safeguarding or raising the attractiveness of the city to external investors and tourists. On the other, the hegemonic policy narrative of the ‘city-in competition’ and the ‘city-as-enterprise’ which underpins most forms of place marketing leads to strong attacks on public administration, public services and the public provision of social infrastructure.

(Colomb 2011: 265–66)
A key contextual trend during recent decades that has been particularly significant for regeneration at the local level is a changed local governing context. In the decades following the Second World War it was primarily local elected authorities that managed and provided local services, including the building of housing, social services, transport and waste management etc. However, during the 1970s and 1980s this changed, and the delivery of services was frequently delegated to quasi-public bodies. Urban areas themselves became ‘entrepreneurs’, competing on a national and global scale for mobile capital investment.

This change has been referred to in a number of ways, including a change from ‘government’ to ‘governance’ (Stoker and Mossberger 1995), the ‘entrepreneurialism’ of local areas (Harvey 1989) and the New Urban Politics (Cox 1993). These terms describe the resulting new networks of governmental, semi-government and private agencies/groups, which developed to govern the affairs of a locality.

The rise of governance in practice has also included a more substantive role for the private sector – often in the form of public/private partnerships (Osborne 2000; McCarthy 2007). The weakening of the local state, and the parallel emergence of semi-state bodies, has been embedded within this movement and, along with increased private sector involvement in decision making, this has had inevitable consequences for the characteristics of local governing arrangements.

The context for the financing of urban regeneration in North West Europe has seen an ongoing evolution. Since the Second World War the majority of countries in North West Europe have made funds available for urban regeneration. However, initial approaches in the post-war years involved regional redistribution policies, which aimed to better balance the regional distribution of economic activity (Armstrong and Taylor 1993). Whilst the European Union and countries such as France and Germany continue to have strong policies for regional convergence, this is less the case today (as of 2012) in Britain. Recently, British policy especially has shifted from redistributive measures to more ‘endogenous’ models, which have sought to foster the development of regions by encouraging them to draw on their attributes and ‘territorial capital’.

Throughout the 1990s such funds became increasingly ‘holistic’ in purpose, and sought to address the social aspects of need in deprived communities. In France, the state has played a supportive role, for example, through the use of territorial ‘contracts’, whereby the partners in a particular territory set out and agree the aims, content and financial requirements of their strategy. Since the 1990s there have also been attempts by central Government to encourage partnership working at the local level. The ‘Loi Chevènement’ of 1999 was aimed at simplifying and encouraging intercommunal co-operation in such areas. In the UK, the City Challenge programme of the early 1990s included partnership working as a requirement for the receipt of funds. The late 1990s in the UK also saw the introduction of Local Strategic Partnerships by national Government, aiming to promote greater cross-policy working at local levels.

The rise of entrepreneurial cities, set within the context of a globalised economy, led to increased competition between cities for mobile investment. But there has undoubtedly been a strong degree of convergence in urban strategies as a result of observed and shared best-practice. Cook and Ward have documented these ‘trans-urban networks of learning’ (2011: 2520) in the case of Manchester’s hosting of the Commonwealth Games in 2002. They note that:

On the one hand, Manchester officials would seek inspiration from, visiting in the process, a number of other Commonwealth and Olympic cities from Los Angeles to Lillehammer as part of the Olympic and Commonwealth Games projects. On the other hand, Manchester’s hosting of the 2002 Commonwealth Games and the associated regeneration of east Manchester would also serve as a point of reference for other cities seeking to host major sporting events and regenerate inner-city areas.

(Ibid.)