

Regenerating London

London's regeneration is closely linked to debates about globalisation, sustainability, urban renaissance, community and social inclusion. *Regenerating London* explores in a scholarly but accessible text the different ways in which these key ideas are shaping the metropolis's urban fabric and future. It also considers how urban policy practices are helping to influence the broader conceptual debates about urban changes and regeneration in London.

The use of select case material in the book helps to highlight the paradoxes and contradictions in urban policy ideas and practices in London, and enables detailed evaluation of the limits and potential of contemporary forms of sustainable urban regeneration.

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Regenerating London

Governance, sustainability and
community in a global city

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Chapter 5

Figuring city change; understanding urban regeneration and Britain's Thames Gateway

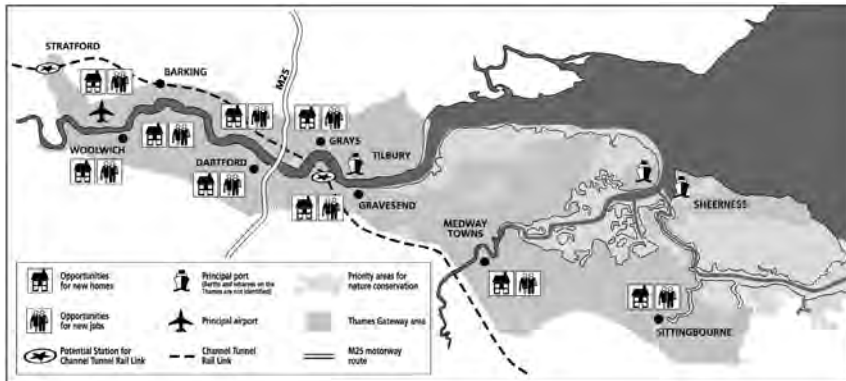
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Introduction

Is the Thames Gateway urban regeneration project in trouble? Looking at the headlines in the summer of 2007 one might be forgiven for thinking that this grandest of *grands projets*, which claims to be Europe's largest contemporary city transformation programme, might not be faring so well. In the spring of 2007, it appeared that the planning inquiry into the major new landmark Thames River crossing between Greenwich (Thamesmead) and Newham had run into trouble as the final judgement of the planning inquiry failed to give the new build the green light. In May 2007, the National Audit Office (NAO, 2007a) published the results of its investigation into the Gateway, *Thames Gateway: Laying the Foundations*, which was taken to be highly critical. It was accompanied by a companion (NAO, 2007b) on *How European Cities Achieve Renaissance*, a survey of 'good practice' across seven metropolitan centres.

And the political reaction was predictably hostile. The National Audit Office reports are subject to scrutiny by the parliamentary Public Accounts Committee (PAC) and its chair, Edward Leigh, was quoted as suggesting that the Thames Gateway was 'looking more and more like an expensive daydream' (e-politix, 2007). In an acrimonious PAC hearing, Leigh went on to criticise both the leadership and the delivery of the programme (PAC, 2007).

Indeed, the concept of the Thames Gateway itself has met with a considerable degree of scepticism in recent years. The formally designated regeneration area runs both sides of the river Thames for 40 miles, from the Tower and London Docklands to Southend in Essex and Sheerness in Kent. About 1.6 million people live in the area, about 500,000 work there. It covers about 200,000 acres,



5.1
The Thames Gateway.
 Source: The Editors

with about 8,500 acres of brownfield sites. Targets have moved up and down through time but it is hoped to generate 160,000 new homes and 180,000 new jobs by 2016. John Prescott, the former Deputy Prime Minister, suggested that it represented 'a huge opportunity to tackle the housing shortage in the South-East'

The Guardian newspaper has variously portrayed the attempt to transform the post-industrial pie slice of London east of Tower Bridge as 'Prescottgrad' (Weaver, 2006) or a Cockney Siberia (Glancey, 2003), whilst the IPPR (Bennett and Morris, 2006) has bemoaned the area's lack of identity or place within the public imagination. Jonathan Glancey (2006) has claimed that the area has become 'a tragic fiction of a non-place . . . the dumping ground of crass new housing for poor people'.

The NAO report was, in reality, slightly more balanced than the headlines. It did suggest that 'the complexity of the decision-making and the delivery chains makes it difficult for potential investors, developers and government itself to understand the programme and integrate investment as a whole' (NAO, 1997a: 5), highlighted weaknesses in leadership of the programme, the lack of a 'programme implementation plan' (NAO, 1997a: 22), uncertainties about the numbers of housing units planned and developed (NAO, 1997a: 32) and identified the need to distinguish long-term programme management from short-term project management.

It did also commend the scale of aspiration of the Gateway vision and the high degree of support from local and sub-regional partners. But the point that caused greatest ire at both the Public Accounts Committee hearing, and is at the core of the National Audit Office report, was the lack of a costed delivery programme with commensurable risk register and subsidiary project management for the Gateway as a whole. For Edward Leigh (PAC, 2007):

the truth is that after twelve years you still do not know what this is all going to cost, do you? One very basic piece of information: after twelve years, you do not know what this is all going to cost.

This might seem to be a quite reasonable, even ostensibly a devastating critique. And yet. The rhetoric of contemporary regeneration looks to flexibilities of the market to provide the driving force of inward investment and the public sector to provide a framework of planning certainty to synthesise public and private interests. But market forces have by definition autonomy of their own and the manner in which *the risk* of state investment is handled creates a tension between public investment and private profit.

In the past the cities and new towns built by state fiat have been seen to be deeply flawed. Equally, the determinants of purely market led city growth have generated – particularly in the USA – urban sprawl that is proving increasingly economically inefficient and ecologically problematic. This chapter argues that we might want to think carefully about the manner in which the contemporary rhetorics of partnership between private and public funding might demand that we think differently about the sorts of ‘future thinking’ that is appropriate for schemes of contemporary regeneration.

How do we conceptualise the future in the rhetoric and practice of urban regeneration? The languages that we use to describe city change and the practices of land use planning, development control, architecture, social engineering and social science all aspire to capture some sense of the future in their descriptions of the present. In imagining the future of east London, a number of key stakeholders and politicians at national, regional and local levels have shared a sense of the scale of growth that is possible, desirable and sustainable in the largely post-industrial landscapes of the Thames Gateway. But if we unpack the uncertainties of thinking that variously privilege the temporal or the spatial we might begin to unpack alongside this a sense of what we might describe as the Thames Gateway paradox. The paradox highlights a tension between long-term public interest and short-term rational outcomes. But in order to do this it is first worth considering how analysis of historical metropolitan legacies have changed in academic and policy concerns before thinking more generally about the manner in which we conceptualise the future.

The future of the past

How do we think about the ways in which the history of the city occupies the present? Because the urban landscape changes so rapidly there has been a tendency in literatures in several disciplines to emphasise the manner in which the past is obscured, buried or hidden by the pace and the forms of city change. Although this can move rhetorically towards the nostalgic, there is an impressive range of work that unveils, reveals or rediscovers such metropolitan archaeologies. But it is also possible to draw at least a heuristic comparison between two slightly different understandings of city history. *In the first* of these the past is merely that which precedes the present, an authentic vernacular that is at times overcome by an inauthentic commodification. *In the second*, the past actively disrupts the ways in which we think about yesterday, today and

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tomorrow through the manner in which it infests our understandings of the present day.

In this manner, over the last decade in both urban sociology and cultural geography, engagement with the past has moved beyond the notion of history as sentimental accumulation and towards a more active sense of *the history of the present*, a move from the first to the second historical modes. In the former, the past sits as a parent to the present but frequently as forgotten memory, commonly as redemptive experience. In the latter, the ways in which we speak through languages and values that are historically inflected, the sense that we are embossed, haunted and the assemblages of past constructions, tends to promote a reflection on the forms of urbanism that we take for granted and those we consider more problematic. To illustrate this point we might take as a contrast two pieces of work – both of great value – that have considered the relationship between memory, history and an understanding of the urban landscape. In her pioneering work *The Power of Place*, Dolores Hayden (1995) produced a powerful refiguration of the relationship between modernity, heritage and place, but did so within an essentially linear notion of the historical that exemplifies the first historical mode of address.

Through her explorations of the hidden city landscape of Los Angeles Hayden, in this landmark volume, explored the manner in which community struggles and individual lives can be erased by the turbulence of destruction, regeneration and city transformation. The book explores a number of instances in which the erasure of the past serves particular interests and a powerful exercise in community development, local empowerment and memory work valorises landscape and buildings whose identity has been written out of the story of the neighbourhoods she discusses. Such work is ethically powerful and provides an added spur to local campaigns that value their neighbourhood. This fundamentally redemptive project is similar to work carried out in the UK by groups such as Common Ground who attempt to trace the local histories of particular sites and emphasise and valorise the distinctiveness of the parochial.

In contrast, in Andreas Huyssen's (2003) *Present Pasts*, the historical is the site of the traumatic, an active force in the present, refiguring itself, perennially reconstructing our understanding of the present through new inflections, melancholic legacies and ethical contest. This sense of the haunting of the present has been picked up powerfully in some contemporary cultural geographies. This can lead us to a focus on the nature of psychoanalytic readings of repressed memories as in the work of Steve Pile (1996), or to an understanding of the incommensurabilities of historical commemoration that Karen Till (2005) describes in contemporary Berlin or the forms of sublime that are subsumed in trauma in Huyssen's (2003) own work. But what such approaches share is a sense that we cannot take chronology unproblematically. History can work backwards and forwards; teleology is a product of historiographic rhetoric as much as causal analysis and the history of the present remains a focus of intellectual inquiry.

In part, this might be taken as a reflection of the influence of Foucauldian thinking that returns us to the genealogical. In reality, the notion that the narration of the past makes problematic some aspects of city life and not others does no more than take us back to a sense of critical theory that echoes Max Horkheimer's injunction in his 1930 inaugural lecture at the Institute of Social Research in Frankfurt that there is 'no way of comprehending the structures of reason that does not involve sociohistorical inquiry' (Horkheimer, 1993). Horkheimer's sensibility and the frequently underestimated legacies of Frankfurt School curiosity implied a research commitment to engage in depth with the everyday as well as with the tropes through which the everyday becomes praxis, belief, idealism and enterprise.

But what is no longer challenged is a sense in which the present might bear the contested weight of past narratives and the past might seek to inhabit the quotidian. And so in a directly related manner we might also want to make something problematic that is in some ways banal and is commonly taken as self evident; the temporalities of the future city, its rhythms and its contingencies. In particular we might want to unpack some of the ways social policy and urban studies alike makes the city that is emerging a subject of study; tells its stories, identifies the contingencies of economic trends and attempts to shape these forms. This is not just about the accuracy or otherwise of such predictions and interventions – although accuracy is clearly important. It is also about the way that 'future thinking' might inhabit the cities of the present in a manner akin to the ways in which the past haunts the present, the way in which such thinking provides a plausible account of the development of the metropolis and how the calculus of the future structures the actions of the present.

Future thinking in the metropolis

David Harvey (1973) once famously suggested that the central question confronting scholars of urbanism was 'in whose image is the city made'. His answer to that question was that largely the city was made in the image of capital and the legacy of thirty years of Marxian scholarship has provided a rich tradition of analytical attempts to deconstruct the manner in which the production of space obeys the logic of capital. And whilst such work has been both influential and impressive I have argued elsewhere (Keith, 2005: chapter 1; 2007) that the consequent juxtaposition between attempts to *deconstruct* the logic of the built form on the one hand and analytical attempts to *promote* the functionality of the city machine on the other creates an essentially two-dimensional scale through which to understand writing about city change. The ethical dilemmas through which some parts of the city come to be subject to governmental intervention (for example in projects of post-industrial transformation) and some collective subjects (for example communities of interest or faith communities) become suddenly visible in the machine of city politics which demands a more thorough analysis of the problem of liberal government and the ethical frames through which city change is rationalised.

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In his work *For the City Yet to Come* Maliq Simone (2004: 3) has attempted to focus a study of urbanism on

the following problematic: in cities where livelihood, mobility and opportunity seem to be produced and enacted through the very agglomeration of different bodies marked and situated in diverse ways, how can permutations in the intersection of bodies in need, and desires in part propelled by the sheer number of them, how can larger numbers of bodies sustain themselves by imposing themselves in critical junctures, whether these junctures are discrete spaces, life events, or sites of consumption or production?

Simone's work is important because it takes as a starting point the creativity of the processes of dwelling in the African city and manages consequently to develop a descriptive understanding of African urbanism that recognises sub-Saharan metropolitan dysfunctionality, respectful of its multitudinous variations and permutations, whilst still framing the urban process within a larger context of transnational restructuring and global inequality. The new normalities of the mega city are acknowledged for their fecundity without being merely celebrated for their novelty in some of the more celebratory tracts of the architect Rem Koolhaas (2007) in his writing about the city of Lagos.

In one way, Simone's work returns us to a take on urban life that is most closely identified with Martin Heidegger, and in particular with the problematic that Heidegger addressed in his famous 1951 essay 'Building, Dwelling, Thinking' around the 'place-making' involved in what it means to inhabit and to build in the city (Heidegger, 1971). The juxtaposition of pastoral and counter-pastoral renditions of modernity are central to the debates in contemporary architecture that draw their inspiration from Heidegger's Building, Dwelling, Thinking and address the cultures of urbanism from starkly different starting points that consider whether it is more cultural or natural to live in the city (Heynen, 2000).

There is both a moral seriousness and – in some eyes – a deeply conservative sense that emerges from Heidegger's injunction that

the real plight of dwelling is indeed older than the world wars with their destruction, older also than the increase of the earth's population and the condition of the industrial workers. The real dwelling plight lies in this, that mortals ever search anew for the nature of dwelling, that they *must ever learn to dwell*.

(Heidegger, 1971: 161)

There is also though a real sense that we should question the self evident, think about the manner in which changing forms of bare life reconfigure, appropriate and reshape the built form through their relationship to time as much as their relationship to space. Our sense of *becoming* structures our sense of urbanism as much as our sense of *being*. Hence Simone's work attempts to address 'how Afri-

cans make cities they feel they can belong to, whilst at the same time open up multiple possibilities of becoming' (Simone, 2004: 136).

In a similar fashion the urbanist Richard Sennett has become increasingly interested in his more recent work in the manner in which the temporalisation of contemporary capitalism restructures the city dweller's sense of a job, a career, a risk or a collective identity (Sennett, 2000, 2007). This feeds through at levels that are both deeply ethnographic and powerfully policy oriented. If we are to understand the cultures of ghetto urbanism in south London, New York or Rio we need to understand how the temporal horizons of the 'burbs differ from those of the ghetto (Keith, 2005).

Equally, if we are to think through the restructuring of the temporalities of urbanism we begin to unpack the manner in which in many places the conventional city life path and 'housing career' begin to fall apart in the early twenty-first century. The normative life-cycle that takes the heterosexual family unit as the defining patterning driver of the residential space of the twentieth-century city produces a characteristic formation of suburbs and gentrification. Until the insecurities of the new labour markets and the securitisation of future risk that is turned into stock market calculus in the commodification of sub-prime mortgage loans begins to unwind and the residential property market collapses in the mainland USA with significant impacts on the reshaping of city space. Until we begin to think slightly more carefully about the chances of children graduating from university in twenty-first-century Britain buying their own homes. Until, like Kate Barker (2004, 2006), we begin to think about the relative macroeconomic importance of mortgage debt in an equation that figures the future through stock market interests of pension funds generating one sense of the future, house builders and property developers' profit horizons generating another sense of the future and the technologies of land use planning, architecture, urban design and infrastructure construction constructing different senses of the future once again.

And, in turn, these senses of the future must be placed within a political context; within the regimes of both *the government* of places and regions and *the governance* of fiscal regimes of social, private residential and commercial property development and regulatory regimes (of development control and planning) of the built environment. In governance terms, there is a very real sense in which the roughly assembled sets of skills, technologies and aspiration that are involved in this process – that Bruno Latour (2005) might characterise as assemblages but most people would understand as the loosely convened discipline of 'city building' – has waxed and waned over the last five decades. In the immediate post-war years the governance regime and received wisdoms that Bob Jessop (2002) and many other political scientists have characterised as the Keynesian Welfare State fostered a notion of the potential to engineer the future. It promoted a sense of culture's domination of city nature. The notion that the future could be built, that dwelling in the city could be mass produced, led to a scale of urban planning, development and control that made juxtapositions between

either side of the Iron Curtain less striking than a shared growing confidence in state machinery to control, configure and deliver the built form.

It is striking to compare the minutiae of the Abercrombie Plan's identification of tiny land plots for London with the sort of regional generalisations evident in the nearest equivalents of the early twenty-first century (Keith, 2005: chapter 10). And although the interface of land use planning with national political culture and the temporalities of economic change is rarely the subject of academic scrutiny the waning of the social role of planners and social engineers of the urban in the late twentieth century is striking.

And it is in Heidegger's fourfold, where the twentieth century begins to unpack the tension between property development and the mass production of housing, that tensions between the sense of the future and the confidence of modernism reaches its crisis point first. Post-war housing estates on both sides of the Atlantic assume an iconic status. In the United Kingdom, Ronan Point, situated in today's Thames Gateway in the London borough of Newham and built in 1966, was subject to catastrophic collapse in 1968, killing five and injuring seventeen. Repaired in the short term but eventually demolished in 1986, Ronan Point assumes a paradigmatic status in the critique of both system-built estates in the 1980s and the hubris implied in systems of mass provision of housing (see chapter 9 in this volume). Across the Atlantic, Minoru Yamasaki, second generation Japanese American architect, later responsible for the architecture of the twin towers of the World Trade Centre creates the Pruitt Igoe housing project in St Louis Missouri. The project's demolition in 1972 prompts architectural theorist Charles Jencks (1989) to suggest that this represents 'the end of modernism'.

What Ronan Point and Pruitt Igoe share is that they precipitate a crisis of faith not just in the built form that they exemplified but also in the forms of social engineering implicated in the projects in the USA, the major council estates in the United Kingdom and the attempts to provide mass housing across the world. The roots of architecture's engagement with a social democratic recognition of the need for the majority to dwell in the city can be traced from the City Beautiful Movement through the Werkbund in Weimar Germany to the post-war imperatives across the world to sustain the right to live in the city. It is challenged simultaneously in terms of its built form and accompanying structure of provision and governance (Heynen, 2000; Frisby, 2001). The point here is that the manner in which public housing specifically and the mass production of homes generally comes to be problematic is about both architectural design and particular trade-offs between state and market that structure supply. A focus on the former comes to be the currency of certain strands of architectural debate in the 1980s (Jencks, 1989; HRH Prince Charles, 1993; Wright, 1985). A focus on the latter becomes less explicitly linked to the fiscal retrenchment identified with 1980s restraints on public sector spending and the ascendancy of macro-economic monetarism globally.

A separation of one from the other either aestheticises the social problems of need in the city (frequently in a debate about the social pathologies of

public sector housing) or detaches the built form from the ideological consensus of macro-economic political economy (by ignoring the opportunity costs of diminished investment in public sector housing from the 1980s onwards across the globe).

The connection is important to sustain for two reasons. The first of these is that conceptually we need to understand that how the built environment comes to be problematic within studies of the city can too easily detach the macro-economic from the cultural, built form from inhabitation, lego building from community building. We might want to reconsider this sense of 'making problematic' in ways that challenge the conventions of the past in urban studies and the present in social policy received wisdom.

Theoretically, though not the central focus of this chapter, this might make us think critically about the ways the objects of academic scrutiny become visible in both mainstream academic debate and in social policy intervention. This chapter draws on – but does not expand – some of the influences in this strand of thought that can be traced to the rejection of conventional nature/culture oppositions associated with the work of Bruno Latour (1993) and a critical examination of the histories of subjects of the city that can be traced to the *biopolitics* of the late Michel Foucault. The virtue of such an approach is that it might be helpful in sustaining some of the links that tend to be broken in studies of urbanism that tend to detach architecture from planning, from development control, from political economy, from politics, from community development. Indeed for Rabinow and Rose (2003),

Whilst Foucault is imprecise in his use of the terms, it might be helpful to suggest that, within the field of biopower, 'biopolitics' designates the specific strategies and contestations over the forms of knowledge, regimes of authority, and practices of intervention that are desirable, legitimate and efficacious.

In short we might wish to think about the ways in which certain kinds of 'future thinking' become legitimate, heard and acceptable in the early twenty-first century and others that are unheard, silenced or scoffed.

The second reason is that in broad-brush terms the governance forms that Jessop identifies as the Keynesian Welfare state in the post-war era were displaced in his terms by the Schumpeterian Workfare state of the Reagan–Thatcher years, commonly identified with putatively 'neo-liberal' macro-economic orthodoxy (Jessop, 2002) but in other theorists' less pejorative vocabulary the advocacy of 'small government', market-based reforms and a diminishing role for the grand ambitions of state controlled city building. Importantly, whilst the hubris of the city builders was challenged by the successive spectacles of demolished tower blocks from Pruitt Igoe and Ronan Point onwards, the whole project (along with some of its social democratic redistributive ethics) of state sponsored housing supply was seen to be discredited as a direct corollary of the discrediting of other forms of social engineering: in the welfare state, the labour market and the fields of both production and consumption.

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Practically, there is something much more simple at stake here, a recognition that there is a need to 'join up' not only the institutional forms of local governance through placing them in a single Department of State (in turn the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister or the Department of Communities and Local Government) but also reconcile the incommensurable logics of governance policy. In short we need to think of the logical drivers and the temporalities of different policy programmes and initiatives that may share laudable social motives but appeal to distinct economic logics.

So when we extrapolate development projections for some of the post-industrial areas of contemporary London there needs to be an understanding that we synthesise a combination of public expenditure subsidies (on physical and social infrastructure and in forms of housing subsidy) and private sector investments (in the supply and demand side of the housing market). And yet the former subsumes normative understandings of the right to dwell in the city (in subsidies of key groups – the 'most deprived', the key worker, the recipient of mortgage tax relief). And the latter assumes trends of disposable income, social polarisation/equalisation, household configuration, that collectively configure the demand not only for the quantum of future homes but also their size, their commodification as 'buy-to-let' investments and the opportunity costs of investment in the built environment.

The former is the product of an ethical debate about the definitions of social need, the prioritisation of public expenditure and is properly subject to a moral and political debate today and tomorrow. The latter is the function of micro and macroeconomic variables, whose future risks reside quite properly in the dynamics of market equilibrium and disequilibrium. The calculus of the future determines actions in the present. In short we are at times putting together quite different sorts of things, responsibly so. But what is less helpful is to fail to recognise such incommensurability in making sense of the future city.

This can be seen in two extensive and academically rigorous pieces of work that sit at the heart of contemporary British government housing policy which help us to understand the nature of the Thames Gateway paradox. The first of these is the extensive body of work carried out by Treasury economist Kate Barker in considering the nature of housing supply and her subsequent review of the planning system in Britain. The second is the review of the future roles of social housing in England by John Hills. There is neither space nor intention to summarise or critique these pieces of work, both of which are strongly rooted in empirical detail and theoretical sophistication. However, it is important to draw out a significant contrast between the two.

Housing supply and the Barker report

Kate Barker (2004) figures the supply of housing in Britain in broadly neo-classical terms of market failure and the obstacles to market optimisation of supply. Working within an assumption that steadily rising prices of the commodity of

housing would be expected to generate a greater response in build-out rates, Barker effectively focuses on the inelasticities of housing supply. The analysis consequently focuses principally on the barriers to sustaining development of greater numbers of housing units in the United Kingdom.

In short at the heart of Barker's comprehensive, scholarly (if economic) analysis is a sense that housing matters because of the macroeconomic dynamics of the effects of mass home ownership and the potential challenges to this in the longer term. Barker is sanguine about the long-term power of the market to correct itself, less optimistic about the short-term obstacles in it so doing. The latter are identified with the structures of the state that regulate the supply and governance of land through processes of conservation (such as green belts, historic preservation) and most strongly in terms of an asserted sense of barriers within the planning and development control process. And whilst it is fair to say that the report demonstrates a strong sense of the macroeconomics of housing and the implications for the national economy – not least in distorting the value of sterling – it is less strong on the detail, the process and the ethnographic understanding of the institutions of the state that interface with the housing market.

Ends and Means: the Hills report

In contrast the Hills report provides a fascinating account of both the moral taxonomies of contemporary Britain and the sorts of future thinking that are implicit in these constructions of need and eligibility. The report focuses on three questions;:

1. What can social housing do in helping create genuinely mixed communities?
2. Can the way we run it encourage social mobility and opportunities, including in the labour market, for people to get on in their lives?
3. Can social housing and other support be more responsive to changing needs and enable greater geographical mobility?(Hills, 2007: 1)

It is striking for the ways in which it demonstrates systematically that the switch over recent decades has been from supply side to demand side (Hills, 2007, 3); that in 2007 approximately one-third of the £16 billion annual public expenditure targets supply (principally through grants to housing associations to build homes) and almost two-thirds is focused on demand (principally through payment of housing benefit that pays the rents of those deemed in sufficient need of state support). The cumulative effect of this is to focus the beneficiaries of social housing increasingly on those people on welfare benefits, arguably residualising public sector housing.

The argument of the report, that such a trend will not generate 'mixed' communities – in fact it promotes polarisation almost as much as the gated communities brought forward by the private market – has been contentious in

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some quarters. But for the purposes of this chapter what is interesting is that the analysis of each of the key questions in the report – a sense of *creating* communities, social *mobility*, *changing* needs and spatial *mobility* – all imply a sense of a normative future based on state intervention. Barker's work is acknowledged, if only fleetingly in two substantive references in the body of the report.

Both are scholarly documents. Both address candidly the problematisations that are constructed for them in their commission; housing supply on the one hand, social need on the other. They exemplify two different ways of conceptualising the future city. And what is striking in the social democratic moment of the British present is that whilst their logics are explicitly articulated, their incommensurabilities are not. The calculi of the future that provide drivers of the actions of the present in Barker are those of the market, those in Hills are the proper (politically contested) moral taxonomies of the state. They imply different logics of governance and the compromise between these logics remains implicit within contemporary policy pronouncement.

What is perhaps the most powerful answer to the critics of the Thames Gateway project emerges from the interstices that separate these two pieces of work, that structure the legitimate ways of future thinking, address head on the sorts of compromise between state and market that might be fit for purpose in the twenty-first century and take as their heart the problem of liberal government to structure what it means to dwell in the city.

Again some parts of this relate to the specificities of the National Audit Office investigation of the Thames Gateway. The institutional architecture of regeneration agencies and institutions is Byzantine, the priorities are unclear and the scale is daunting. But what is equally true is the level of consensus about the desired outcome. There is a sense that the more just city, a socially inclusive sense of urbanism that appeals to a notion of the urban renaissance and a high quality of city life, might be both desirable and economically efficient for the east of London in a manner that both redresses the spatial injustices of London's geography and restores economic activity to its post-industrial landscape (Cohen and Rustin, 2007).

And the reason for the asymmetry between the consensus about desired outcome and the contest around proper means is at heart about the failure to consider the contradictory strands of future thinking that are at the heart of policy interventions. So in the rest of this chapter the intention is to outline firstly the sense of the paradoxical understandings of the Gateway that emerge from these tensions and tentatively suggest that we might want to reconsider the sorts of future thinking that might be more appropriate for the sorts of compromise or stand-off between state and market that the logics of partnership based urban regeneration imply.

The dynamics of change: the background to growth numbers in London

There are three reasons that all point towards an increased need to provide housing numbers in the Thames Gateway area of London.

Economic production

The year 2003 saw a collapse in the commercial office market in London. The landmark Swiss Re building designed by Norman Foster struggled to let its new space. There was considerable turbulence around the future of the Canary Wharf Group, which was once an FT100 listed company on the basis of a single property portfolio on the Isle of Dogs. By 2004 London was witnessing a levelling in London's job growth. Despite all this, the potential for continued employment growth in the east of London appears widely in the forecasts of the financial and business services sectors and in the investment decisions of major corporates such as Citigroup, Clifford Chance, Barclays, and HSBC that have located on the Canary Wharf Group estate in recent years. The numbers of jobs on this estate itself will exceed 100,000 in the near future on the basis of buildings coming through the ground at the moment.

The cyclical trend of oversupply and depression of commercial office markets should not detract us from the scale of the change. In the early drafts of the various national Sustainable Communities Plans the ODPM recognised the new financial and business services sectors on the Isle of Dogs as having the medium-term potential to drive the employment base on the estate up to 200,000. The impact of such change on housing demand is considerable and is mediated through the uneven impacts of poor transport infrastructure and the emerging new travel to work areas and geographies that respond to this economic engine.

Social reproduction

Following the 1990s boom and related population growth, the south-east in general and London in particular faces labour shortages in key public sector job markets. In essence the city faces a problem of producing affluence whilst effectively reproducing itself. The need to provide affordable housing for such a labour force is in part about the production of affordable dormitory space within plausible travel to work distances of the new areas of growth.

Household demographics

A third reason for the growth in households is cultural rather a direct result of commercial demand. Long-term reductions in household size and increasing

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household numbers have generated demand for increasing numbers of residential units. Many of the estates in the inner part of the Gateway demonstrate mass overcrowding and suppressed residential demand. Meanwhile areas of gentrification often service a demand for smaller family sizes at rental and purchase prices beyond the range of most households.

These three sources of demand generate different dynamics of spatial preference. The Barker housing review (2004) highlighted supply side constraints in bringing land forward; cited the rational tendency for private developers to protect profits by deliberately limiting supply in some contexts; and put a spotlight on the relationship between housing subsidy and the role of both developers and registered social landlords. The review has three consequences. It makes it essential to reconsider the appropriate mediation of public interest and private profit. It demands a reconsideration of the institutional architecture of regeneration agencies and social housing provision. Perhaps most significantly, it raises a question about the trade-offs between quality development in specific places and achieving housing numbers quickly in large tracts of lands.

It is clearly the case that the vast majority of the housing numbers in the Gateway will need to be developed by the private sector, even in models that maximise the proportion of social housing. A series of institutional changes might restructure the relationship between the public interest, the market and the way such a relationship translates into housing outcomes. Post-Barker, housing subsidies may be paid to property developers and Registered Social Landlords are increasingly likely to become developers in their own right. Planning law might facilitate value capture through hypothecating future tax revenues in areas of physical infrastructure change and the principles of 'polluter pays' could be compromised by brownfield subsidy. Such changes suggest thinking carefully about the spaces of the Thames Gateway that will be developed in the coming years. They logically demand a politics that accepts the role of the market but re-introduces a much stronger sense of the potential to plan the city.

Thinking spatially and Mulgan's London

In an important piece of research, led by Geoff Mulgan and produced by the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit, a diagnosis of London's present and prognosis of its future was produced in the London Analytical Report of 2003 (Prime Minister's Strategy Unit, 2003). The report covers a wide range of material but in considering the growth agenda for London it is worth making two points.

Mulgan's London has no explanation of where London's economic growth will be realised. It extrapolates exponentially from trends, which is a reasonable exercise. However, it neither analyses the dynamics behind these trends nor develops an understanding of where the jobs growth will be located. The report envisages putatively an additional 300,000 skilled jobs by 2010. Given that there are approximately 300,000 daily commuters to the geographical area of the City Corporation we could be talking about a 'new square mile' of jobs

added to the London economy in the next six years. Where will they be located and where will the employees live?

Mulgan's London did not recognise the Thames Gateway at all as a possible spatial answer to either housing growth or job growth. The housing sections of the report (Prime Minister's Strategy Unit, 2003: 48–71 and particularly 70) highlight the limited potential for London housing growth eastwards and suggest instead that the resolution of the housing supply problems are to be found in the inner suburban and central rings of London. This is a result of using extrapolated trends rather than thinking through the dynamics. The current numbers of 10–15 thousand new builds a year in London that the report describes reinforces Barker's complaint of supply-side problems and underplays the possibilities of intervention by regeneration agencies. By 'making places' such as Docklands it was possible to create a new market for housing expansion in a part of London where previously there was secular long-term low demand. The London Analytical Report's silence highlights the need for policy intervention both to transform current housing supply trends and to think spatially about how this might be translated into brownfield rather than greenfield city growth.

Temporality and the Gateway investment paradox

Consecutive updates of the Sustainable Communities Plan has population growth numbers for Thames Gateway that are possibly too high over the short term and too low over the long term. This arises because:

1. *Of the understandable need* to deliver a vision that is financially realistic and not over-ambitious on the longer term supply side. With current trends of new house build at 10-15k units p.a. a very large proportion of London's annual build would need to take place in the Gateway to meet even the modest targets for housing new build given in the Sustainable Communities summer 2003 update, let alone the more ambitious numbers outlined in plans for the Gateway publicised by the Department of Communities and Local Government in 2006.
2. *Of the understandable manner* in which there is a desire to be seen to deliver over the electoral cycle.
3. *Of the understandable manner* in which the model in the Sustainable Communities update is driven by the historically low numbers of new build rather than by the regional employment potential of the Gateway.

A paradox thus arises: the current model of growth in the Gateway aims at financial modesty and limited demands on the Treasury but because of its modesty is fiscally wasteful and economically sub-optimal. However, lower aspirations could translate into suburbanised low-quality development at below 'urban renaissance' densities. At lower densities physical infrastructure becomes more expensive

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because of higher per capita costs for each public sector infrastructure decision. For example, in public transport investment decisions the numerator (population growth) diminishes and the denominator (investment costs for any specific public transport project such as Crossrail) remains fixed. Already at least one consultant has attempted to claim that if population targets are set at the levels in the summer 2003 targets then there is no need for some of the major physical infrastructure projects that are so central to the future of the Gateway.

Consequently the worries must be:

1. As a housing driven model the planning framework of the Sustainable Communities Plan will not cater for the economic drivers which would demand greater transport infrastructure investment. It would be possible to realise modest housing targets in east London without infrastructure spend but not possible to realise a jobs-driven economic model on this basis. South-eastern economic growth is potentially jeopardised if places such as the new business district of the Isle of Dogs and growth sites such as a post-Olympics Stratford cannot be made to work.
2. The buy-in at regional governmental level to the London Gateway will potentially dissipate as the 'Global City' thrust of the London Plan is jeopardised.
3. The buy-in at local government level will be jeopardised if boroughs to the east of London that are the subject of medium-term continued patterns of de-industrialisation see the future they are offered in terms of low-quality suburbanisation that will bring few new jobs, limited social infrastructure and the 'export' of the overcrowded inner East End to the less densely populated outer London boroughs. A caricature of these arguments generated the council by-election victory for the British National Party in Thurrock and the strength of the BNP in the 2006 local elections in Barking and Dagenham.

Conclusion

In considering the future of the eastern pie slice of London that maps the Thames Gateway, higher housing numbers and densities are not only possible, they are imperative if we are to deliver both high-quality urban change and social inclusion. High numbers can be achieved. In an institutional maze that might confuse Theseus, they depend on achieving an institutional architecture that is congruent between the new London Housing Board, two Urban Development Corporations, the developing role of the Housing Corporation as it merges with English Partnerships, the London Development Agency, the big spending departments and regional and local government.

There is a default model. The concentrations of brownfield land within the perimeter of the M25 have the potential to provide plentiful housing land and

serious residential growth if the lessons of the Barker review are read principally in terms of planning-induced supply constraints. Although density can become a fetish it is the case that high density costs more in the short term whilst yielding financial and social returns in the long term. Managing this temporality is essential. Relatively low-cost intervention could produce low density numbers in East London that created residential numbers in some post-industrial areas. It would be a future of low-cost mixed estates of low quality. It is not quite the post-1945 nightmare of social engineering gone wrong. The default is a model of low quality, economically sub-optimal suburbanisation. But this would be a waste of the opportunity of a generation.

But there is a more interesting and hopeful alternative. Experiments in governance are creating hybrid forms of trade-off between state and market, such as the new Registered Social Landlord/developers, as some of the major housing associations become increasingly involved in the regeneration of major sites and some of the private developers construct special purpose joint ventures with RSLs. The development of the entity out of the merger of Housing Corporation and English Partnerships that has been variously described as Communities England and the 'new homes agency' will be a novel social engineer of considerable budget and contested mission. There is recognition of the need to synthesise design obligations and economic imperatives (Williams, 2007).

In practical terms this demands a more honest debate about the sort of hybrids of state and market that are already emerging and will continue to do so. There are emerging examples of good and bad practice but the debates about land trusts, ecological sustainability, carbon footprint, mixed communities, community cohesion and urban renaissance all share an *implicit* pay off between forms of market completion and forms of social engineering that needs to be rendered *explicit*. It also might open up thinking around fiscal risk that could lead to the development of experiments in city bonds, securitised rental revenues and uplift associated with infrastructure investment, that recognises the potential for innovation in instruments of regeneration, that can accommodate the paradox of the Thames Gateway rather than guarantee its failure.

Theoretically, this might imply a consideration of such hybrid forms that focus thinking on the city yet to come that is neither the functional outcome of capital's imperatives in the Marxian tradition of urbanism nor the technocratic functionality of mainstream paradigms of urban studies. But such a theoretical focus itself demands a more sophisticated understanding of the pluralities of the future that already inhabit the present, the sense that the production of space assembles around a multiplicity of temporal horizons that might place 'future thinking' at the heart of a contemporary urban studies.