Council estate renewal in London: the challenges of evidencing its gentrification-induced displacement

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Introduction

It was in London that Ruth Glass famously first diagnosed (classic) gentrification in the 1960s, alerting us to the class based improvement of inner city districts that, over time, resulted in significant displacements of low income groups and inverted many of the key assumptions of the Chicago School's ecological models dominant at the time (see Lees et al., 2008, Chapter 2). But this 1960s gentrification was by no means the first wave of activity displacing lower income residents from the capital, with earlier rounds of state-sponsored redevelopment having targeted inner city 'slums' in the post-war era, decanting large numbers of lower income residents to distant New Towns and satellite communities to enable the development of council estates built on modernist assumptions (Tunstall and Lowe, 2012). The scale of ambition was impressive, with mass production techniques used to produce subsidized council housing at an unprecedented rate, and nearly half a million new homes added to London's housing stock by the 1960s. Young and Wilmott (1957) famously documented the problems that beset those displaced from the East End 'slums' as they struggled to acclimatize to their new council estate surroundings: anonymity, isolation, status competition, lack of facilities, and even neurosis. The mass removal of established communities, and a programme of dispersal that tore apart existing social networks, was one that was to have long-lasting legacies, with the attempts to rebuild functioning communities often fraught and drawn-out affairs.

More recently, from the late 1990s and into the C21st, London's council estates have been facing a 'new' urban renewal[1] that threatens to repeat many of the mistakes of post-war urban renewal, which displaced and disrupted local communities and exacerbated the social problems slum clearance was meant to solve. With the nation's highest land values and greatest housing pressures, London is at the forefront of a 'new' urban renewal that has identified many of its council estates as fit only for demolition: the rhetoric of 'sink estates' has come to the fore, with politicians bemoaning the concentrated poverty and social malaise that they identify as characteristic of post-war council estates. The much-maligned Aylesbury estate in Southwark, for example, was the launching pad for New Labour's urban renaissance vision in the late 1990s, a vision that promoted mixed income communities to replace estates that were depicted (often wrongly) as crime-ridden and dysfunctional (Lees, 2014a). More recently, the Coalition and Conservative governments have similarly spoken of regenerating neglected estates, and used the imagery of brutal modernist architectural estates constructed in the 1960s as a way of promoting a new wave of regeneration which will supposedly re/connect or knit these estates 'back to the mainstream' (Campkin 2017). While the rhetoric of sink estates (Slater, 2018) glosses over the diversity of community and spatial forms these estates take, the idea that something needs to be done about London's

[1] Term taken from Hyra (2008).

post-war council estates is now largely taken for granted. Analyses which identified the pivotal role estate residents played in the English riots of 2011 (see Till, 2013), as well as current concerns about knife crime in the capital, help consolidate the idea that these spaces need to be regenerated. At the same time, the housing affordability crisis is also being used to argue that many of the larger, high rise estates - once depicted as high density - are not densely-occupied enough, with a government-sponsored report by Savills in collaboration with the Space Syntax group promoting the adoption of a 'complete streets' model of redevelopment rather than a 'block-based' one (Campkin, 2017; see Create Streets - http://dev.createstreets.com/). This type of model posits that high-rise development surrounded by communal and collective areas of public space (e.g. gardens, playgrounds and drying areas) breeds neglect of public space, an argument that can be traced back to 'defensible space' arguments in the 1970s and 80s (see Jacobs and Lees, 2015; Lees and Warwick, forthcoming), is wasteful of resource, and does not constitute 'the best and highest' form of land use. This implies that the redevelopment of London's council estates is morally, socially and economically necessary, with estates themselves being identified as *de facto* brownfield sites, and hence suitable for new housing even though they are already home to long-established communities, many of these multi-class, multi-cultural and multi-ethnic in character. Given current budgetary constraints, few local authorities are in a position to redevelop these estates alone, with the preferred solution being to transfer these assets to private developers who will demolish most of what currently stands, and replace it with a mix of affordable and market rate housing, increasing the overall number of housing units available.

While this means that state assets are being ceded to the private sector, this is defended with reference to the need to increase the overall housing supply via densification of these estates. The Mayor of London's (2014: 59) Housing Strategy called for the "vast development potential in London's existing affordable housing estates" to be unlocked through private redevelopment. To "kick-start and accelerate" that process, the Tory government launched a £150 million Estate Regeneration Programme of loans to private developers "redeveloping existing estates" on "a mixed tenure basis" (HCA, 2014), continuing New Labour's mixed community policy of 'gentrification by stealth' (Lees, 2008; Bridge et al. 2011). The London Assembly (2015:14) estimated that in the preceding decade, fifty former council estates across London received planning permission for partial or complete demolition and redevelopment at higher densities. As we describe below, this appears a gross under-estimate of the extent of the demolitions being undertaken: irrespective, the number of households 'decanted' from these estates is clearly considerable and the cumulative impacts on residents, both tenants and leaseholders, who have already been displaced or are still awaiting decantment is potentially life-changing.

The displacements associated with the redevelopment of London's council estates are significant in number and escalating, but as yet there has been little attention given to these – most of the extant literature on this regeneration focuses on resistance rather than the rehousing of those who are removed on either a short or long-term basis (see, for example, Watt, 2016). There are manifold reasons for this, not least the fact that 'displacement is much harder to detect than gentrification' (Chapple and Loukaitou-Sideris, 2019): as we describe below, while it is theoretically possible to use existing sources to demonstrate the socio-economic uplift of specific neighbourhoods, the range of data available for actually

tracking the displaced is frustratingly limited. Governmental agencies are seemingly uninterested in where former council estate residents move to, only concerned that they have been 'decanted' to allow demolition to begin. This means we are left to piece together disparate evidence to try to estimate the extent of displacement associated with the redevelopment of London's housing estates – something that matters profoundly given the potential impact that rehousing has on the thousands affected by this 'new urban renewal'.

The challenge of evidencing gentrification-induced displacement re. the renewal of council estates in London

The focus on displacement (and those displaced) has a patchy history in the gentrification literature, with recent commentary lamenting the effective '"displacement" of displacement' (Helbrecht, 2018: 2). Work in gentrification studies has historically tended to focus on middle-class gentrifiers and the production of gentrified living spaces (Slater et al 2004; Paton 2014; Huse 2014), rather than the consequences of this for low-income groups. Helbrecht (2018: 2) hence describes the gentrification literature as 'a one-eyed cyclops that operates with an enormous intellectual bias because it observes only the upgrading aspect of the gentrification process while ignoring displacement'. Displacement has consequently been coined as the 'dark side' of gentrification (Baeten et al. 2017: 645), an observation that begs a more detailed investigation of the different forms and modalities of gentrification-induced displacement.

In many ways, the lack of data on the numbers displaced has allowed governments, policy-makers and planners to pursue strategies of gentrification unchallenged by statistical evidence of what is often mooted as its most negative impact: the displacement of long-term residents (Atkinson, 2000). This point is doubly relevant in the context of the state's effective hand-over of council estates in London to private developers: while local government appears to see displacement of tenants and leaseholders a price worth paying in return for an increased housing supply in the capital, if those displaced cannot afford (or find) decent housing elsewhere, or cannot afford to return to the redeveloped estate once complete, then the costs of renewal may well outweigh the benefits. Here, the social costs of displacement, in terms of the psychological impact of moving to a new neighbourhood, and potentially failing to re-establish meaningful social neworks and connections, are potentially massive if one considers the 'decanting' of residents as a form of violence.

Putting violence front and central in discussions of displacement may seem extreme when, in some studies, the effects of displacement seem relatively benign (but see Elliot-Cooper, et al., 2019). Young & Wilmott's (1957) classic study of kinship in east London, for example, identified many individuals who actually found displacement to have a beneficial impact on their lives, with an enforced move from the inner city to their new estates bringing them heating, running water, indoor toilets and multiple bedrooms. Longitudinal research in Glasgow by Kearns & Mason (2013, 2015) likewise suggests that there might be a difference in the 'psychosocial' impacts of displacement between those willing to move and those who are reluctant displacees. Reporting deleterious health outcomes for those displaced from central Glasgow housing estates, their conclusion was that 'most of those who moved considered that they had "bettered" their residential conditions, though again less so in neighbourhood than in dwelling terms' (Kearns & Mason 2013: 195). The latter observation

is important given the argument that 'working-class' people are said to exhibit a phenomenological understanding of their home and neighbourhood as a 'comfortable lived space' rather than a financial investment (Davidson & Lees 2010). So even if displaced residents receive the market value for their loss of property, this suggests it is impossible to compensate them for the longing and isolation that are often felt when their home is lost. In some cases, a new place may never feel truly like home, as no matter how many new friends are made or how much better a new house may be, the memories of their original home and neighbourhood will always remind the displaced of their loss (Jones 2015). The paradox here is then that the 'objective' social good which derives from moving to a 'better' neighbourhood becomes a form of 'systemic violence' – not always a physical violence directly executed by individuals, but one that 'operates anonymously, systemically and invisibly through the very way society is organised' (Baeten et al. 2017: 643).

Much here of course depends on where displaced residents relocate to, with Crawford & Sainsbury (2017) arguing that rehousing displaced residents across a range of locations may contribute to a loss of social networks and associated social capital (see also Posthumus et al. 2013). Given the choice, Lyons (1996) reports that lower-status households tend to move more locally than more affluent ones, reflecting both their restricted choices as well as their desire to maintain localised social networks. Atkinson (2003) suggests that this represents a somewhat 'desperate' attempt by residents to maintain a foothold near the locations they have come from. But where displacees relocate to ultimately has significant consequences in terms of their ability to construct meaningful social ties, with several US studies concluding that there is little successful integration of displaced households into more distanced communities (Goetz 2003; Newman & Wyly 2006; Greenbaum et al. 2008). This is of course a generalization, and it has been noted that younger residents find it easier to adapt than older ones: those who have lived longest in their original community appear to gain fewest benefits from relocation (van Criekengen 2008). Indeed, older residents are usually reluctant to engage with medical services in their new neighbourhood, and sometimes travel long distances to engage with GPs and pharmacists they are familiar with (Crawford & Sainsbury 2017). Kleinhans (2003) suggests that, in addition to age, 'personality' can be important in shaping experiences of displacement, with more resilient individuals able to take a more positive view of the 'relocation' process.

Although there is now emerging evidence of the negative impacts of gentrification-induced displacement, to date there has been little examination of the impacts of the redevelopment of London's council estates on those displaced. As such, we began our own investigation[2] with the aims of trying to *measure* the extent of displacement and *track* where council residents were being displaced to. Here, a first challenge was identifying the number of redevelopment schemes involving council estates in London since 1997 when New Labour's initial identification of the need for urban renewal began. While one would imagine that there is a central database of council estates in London, the situation is complicated by the fact that there are 32 London boroughs with their own council housing estates, and that although it is possible to get information on their current holdings, many of these estates have been ceded to the private sector through stock transfer and no longer

[2] PI: Lees,L., CoIs: Hubbard,P. and Tate,N. ESRC 2017-2020. Gentrification, Displacement, and the Impacts of Council Estate Renewal in C21st London *[ES/N015053\1]*

appear as council housing per se, indeed they are now typically operated by registered social landlords or housing associations (Watt, 2009). There is also the thorny question of what is meant by an estate, as not all council housing in London sits on the types of contiguous sites which fit into a common-sense definition of an ‘estate’, with the latter defined by the provision of certain shared amenities as well as a distinct ’sense of place’. Many ‘estates’ are actually low-rise houses which are relatively dispersed across a number of streets: in contrast, the estate redevelopment programme has tended to focus on estates which are a mix of high-rise blocks, maisonettes and houses which are morphologically distinct and managed as a single entity.

Freedom of information requests, analysis of planning databases and trawls of websites led us to ultimately identify 161 estates in London of more than 100 households where there has been a scheme to demolish and redevelop housing since 1997. This excludes those estates which had been stock transferred before 1997, as well as those which have always been run by housing associations, meaning some schemes identified by others were not included in our database. Nonetheless, we estimated that 190 schemes on these 161 sites entailed the demolition of at least 55,000 homes, with the ‘average’ scheme involving the decanting of 274 households prior to demolition and rebuild. Some schemes were relatively modest in scale: for example, the Triangle estate in Islington involved the demolition of just six maisonette dwellings, a garage and one retail unit, to enable the construction of 54 new infill homes, 50% of which were for affordable rent. In this case, one residential leaseholder and one commercial leaseholder were ultimately served with Compulsory Purchase Orders by the local council. On the other hand, some schemes have involved mass demolitions and drawn-out programmes of decanting whereby council tenants were moved elsewhere and leaseholders bought out: the Heygate estate in Southwark involved the demolition of 1200 units, the South Acton estate in Ealing 1998 units, and the Woodberry Down estate in Hackney 1980 units. In all, 12 schemes had more than 1000 units demolished, suggesting that in some cases very large and established communities were being broken up by processes of displacement.

But even knowing how many households might have been affected does not establish how many people have been impacted: according to the 2011 Census the average household rented from a council consisted of 2.4 people, suggesting around 131,000 people have been displaced, as a rough estimate. But we have no idea where these people have moved to. A couple of studies give us some clues. Davis and Thornley (2010) examined the compulsory purchase of the Clays Lane estate (Newham) in advance of the London 2012 Olympics. Here, 424 tenants were decanted to allow for the development of the Olympic site, the majority of whom were relocated to East London’s outer boroughs (Waltham Forest and Barking & Dagenham), with only a handful being rehoused in the same borough. In Lees’s work with local campaigners, displacees from the Heygate estate in Southwark were found through local contacts on the ground, as their maps show the council tenants were displaced from their SE17 postcode, some managed to stay in Southwark, some ended up in Lambeth, and some were rehoused in more distant parts of London. Leaseholders who were bought out ended up in a much more dispersed pattern, suggesting the sums they received were not sufficient to allow them to resettle in inner London: some relocated to parts of Kent, Essex and Berkshire, as well as outer London boroughs (see maps pages 8-9 in https://justspacelondon.files.wordpress.com/2014/06/staying-put-web-version.pdf).

Piecing together the extent of displacement from London's council estates is a task that relies on piecing together data that indicates when households left a given estate as well as the locations they relocated to. Doing this for all 161 estates which have undergone some decanting is a painstacking process, and we anticipated that instead of multiple individual freedom of information requests we would use the type of secondary sources routinely employed in studies of gentrification-induced displacement. The requirements (criteria) of the data needed to be as follows:

- The data needed be longitudinal (measured over time) – to enable the tracking of displacement from one timepoint to another.
- The data needed to cover as much of the last 20 years as possible i.e. from 1997 to 2017 – the study period selected for the research.
- The data needed to be available at a small area level e.g. output area or postcode – so that data could be located as near as possible to estate-level.
- The data should not have contained large gaps in time, noting people could have moved multiple times in the interim.

Most quantitative studies of gentrification-induced displacement (see Easton et al, 2019, for an extended review of studies in the UK, North America, and beyond) have employed national censuses and/or local survey data – data that come with significant limitations in terms of revealing actual patterns of intra-urban migration and displacement. The UK Census, for example, provides a snapshot of the social-economic make-up of small scale neighbourhoods every ten years, allowing some inferences to be drawn about the extent to which low income residents have been replaced by more affluent ones (see Figure 1). Invariably, the utility of such periodic data collection for inferring displacement depends not only on the currency of the data, but also the salience of the questions asked: for example, the omission of data relating to household income, rent or house prices in the UK census has long-frustrated attempts to explore housing affordability, and the lack of questions about someone's previous address and where they moved from makes it hard to distinguish between displacement and the replacement that Hamnett (2003) alone has claimed for London.

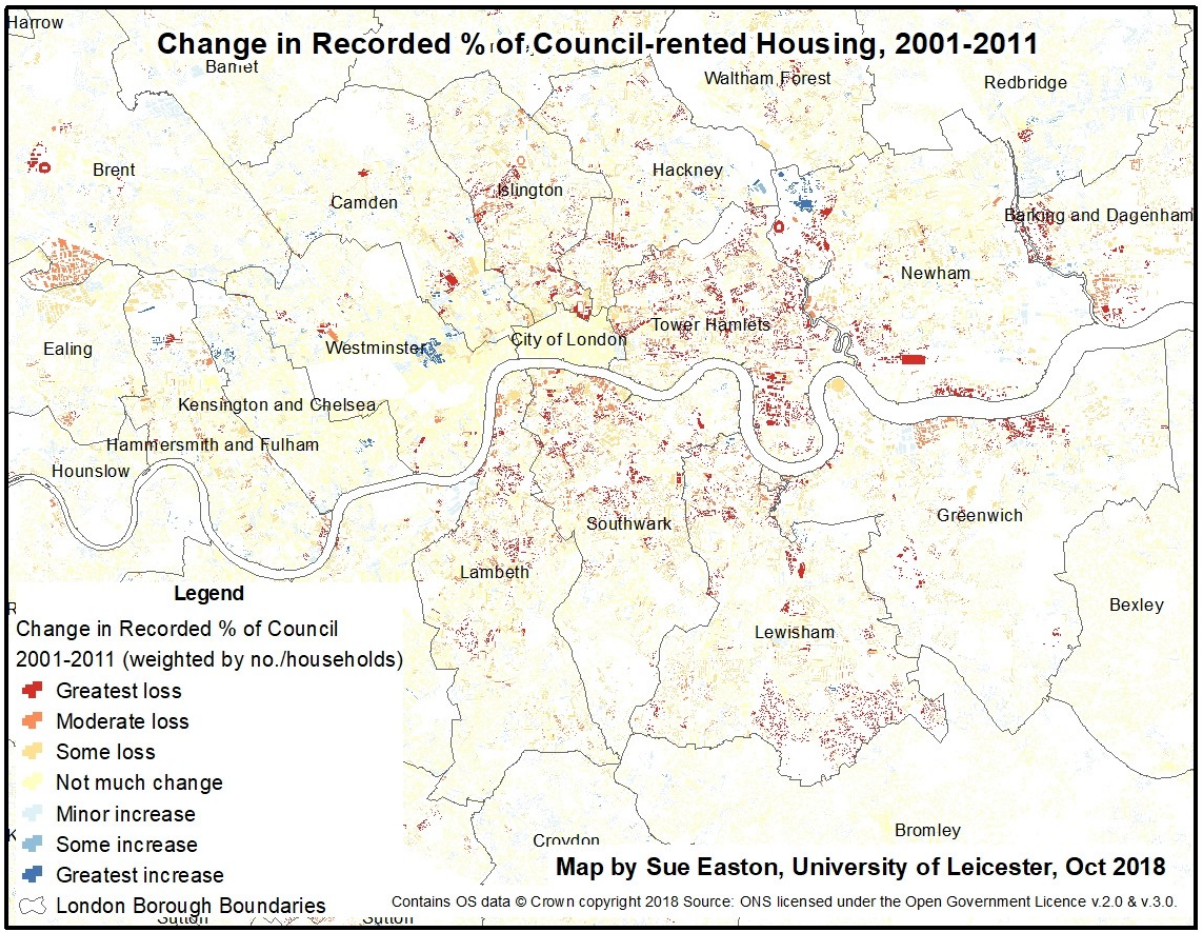

Figure 1

The problems of tracking in and out migration from London estates using published census sources led us to apply for census "flow" data. This data gave an origin and destination output area for all respondents included in the 2011 census who lived somewhere different in 2010. We applied for this secure dataset which is broken down by tenure (social rented/private-rented/owner-occupied) at the level of output area. Using the list of schemes we had previously identified, we were able to map migration flows for social tenants and identified outflows from several renewal estates, where the timings of the demolition fitted. This delivered our best evidence to date - see Figure 2 - but the disadvantage was that the data was only available for a single year, 2010-11.

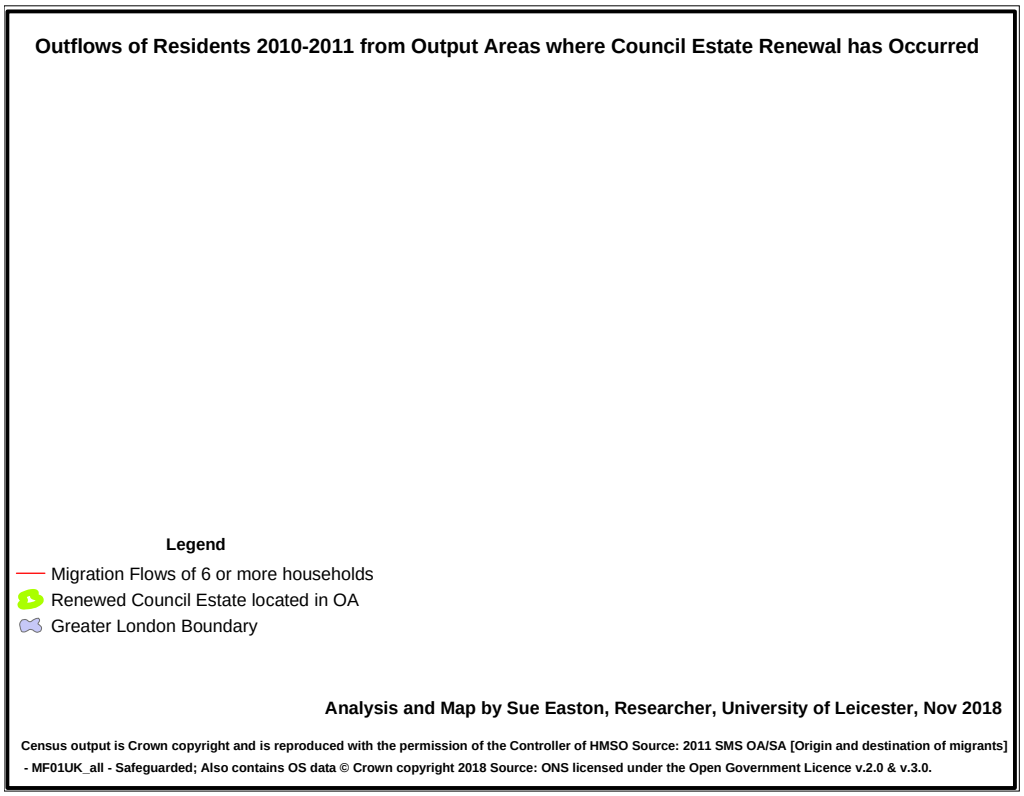

Figure 2

Another key dataset that we proposed for analysis as part of the project was GP Patient Registration (GPPR) data from GP/health centres. This data would in theory, we speculated, have located potential council estate residents and show the migration of the key population groups we wanted to track. However, after completing a labourious application we were not given access. As such we applied for other sources of data, such as National Pupil Data from the Department for Education. With this we undertook a pilot analysis of outmigration flows for 9 large “test” estates which we thought we might expect to see evidence of the displacement of families with children. However, significant outflow was only observed for one of the estates - the Heygate estate in Southwark, between 2005 and 2008 (see Figure 3).

Heygate Estate			
	Moved?		
Year	No	Yes	Total
2002	31	20	51
2005	30	29	59
2008	--	67	--
2011	0	0	0
2014	0	0	0
Total:	61	116	--

Note: -- denotes suppressed due to statistical disclosure control

Data Source: from National Pupil Database extracts provided under licence from the Department for Education.

Analysis by Sue Easton, Research Associate, July 2017

Figure 3

We also sought permission to analyse the secure-version of the Continuous Record of Social Housing (Ministry of Communities, Housing and Local Government) for 2007-2017. This dataset contains administrative data from local authorities on social lettings, evictions, reason for rehousing in council housing, and so on, for both council and social (housing association) managed homes. But again only minimal migration flows were detected among council tenants. In addition, we applied for various other datasets such as Electoral Roll and Consumer Register data covering 1998-2017 from the Consumer Data Research Centre, which can be used to produce local estimates of population turnover at lower super output area level. However, upon analysis the degree of year-on-year variability in the data was found to be too great to support robust longitudinal analysis.

In frustration over the various issues with official data and the fact that we were not getting the quantitative evidence we desperately desired, in late summer 2018, we decided to request data on the displacement of council tenants, leaseholders and homeless households in temporary accommodation outside of London, directly from London Borough Councils via Freedom of Information requests. This was undertaken for all 33 local authorities including the City of London Corporation. However, as we expected, there was considerable variability in the type and quality of the data returned, which prevented comparability of most of the data. A key obstacle was that no local authorities seemed to be able to separate out

whether households had been placed “out-of-area” due to persecution - e.g. fleeing domestic violence - or for other reasons, including estate renewal. Thus it was not possible to identify the precise level of displacement resulting from estate renewal as opposed to domestic violence, anti-social behaviour or other. The frustration here is, of course, that councils should have this information (for example, through council tax change of address data) and be able to reveal it when subject to Freedom of Information requests. But clearly, councils have little interest in collating this information for estates themselves – especially in situations where it demonstrates that large numbers of tenants being decanted from council or ex council estates are now being rehoused outside the borough.

The frustrations of trying to estimate the extent and form of displacement from London’s council estates are manifold. However, most important of all in a displacement context is access to viable sources of data enabling the tracking of individuals through space and across time. Until such data are collected or made available, the extent of residential gentrification-induced displacement will remain largely unrecorded and invisible. In the meantime, we appear reliant on proxies for actual displacement, such as broad indicators of population churn, changes in owner occupation, or changes in the ethnic and class make-up of particular neighbourhoods (as revealed in Census profiles, for example). While such measures can be suggestive of involuntary displacement occuring, they are rarely conclusive (see Easton et al, 2019). Rather than being measures of displacement per se, these are perhaps best thought of as measures of *displacement pressure* (Marcuse, 1986).

Conclusions

Our failure to reveal actual flows of displaced people from council estates being redeveloped in London suggests that, for the moment, we must rely on a mixture of proxy measures, approximations and predictions that reveal tendencies but which cannot be relied upon to distinguish between involuntary displacement from council estates, voluntary outmigration or incumbent socio-economic uplift. Part of the problem here is of course working out when a given scheme for redevelopment begins. In many cases, plans for regeneration are mooted years before any formal decanting or demolition begins, meaning that displacement actually starts much earlier than any formal decision or ballot about estate redevelopment. This can mean that leaseholders and others who are more socially-mobile may be looking to move from the estate long before they are required to leave: tenants might also seek re-housing through a variety of means, not wanting to wait until they are formally decanted (see for example Thompson et al, 2017, on the way tenants can use mental health status as a means to acquire better housing elsewhere in estates awaiting redevelopment). In many estates awaiting development, it is apparent that councils have enacted a gradual decline in services and facilities, this is known as ‘managed decline’ and it pushes people out. In estates that have been fully decanted bar a few people refusing to move, London council’s have even enacted a more aggressive ‘state Rachmanism’ designed to force those residents out - on the Heygate esate the council turned off their gas and electricity, mail was no longer delivered, and baliffs literally carried residents out in the end (see Lees, 2014b).

If we accept the premise that displacement can be a form of violence (cr. Elliot-Cooper et al, 2019), the implication is that we need to be watchful for both direct, short-term displacements and longer-term, indirect ones, and not leap to conclusions about whether displacement is causing harm on the basis of one-time snapshots of change (e.g. migration data that looks at changes over a single year). While the decanting of residents from London's council estates appears be a singular act, enacted and enforced by local authorities pursuing compulsory purchase orders and removing council tenants, it can also occur through a series of smaller aggressions which displace industries and businesses, as well as residents, over a much longer time-span. The Carpenter's estate in Newham, East London, for example, was first ear marked for renewal in 2000 and residents have seen (off) numerous plans since then. Most recently, the estate was earmarked for redevelopment in 2017, with the council issuing a tender to find a commercial partner to start redeveloping it in 2020. But this search was abandoned in November 2018, with a major reconsideration of the plans for the estate mooted. In the meantime, some residents in James Riley Point, one of the three tower blocks on the estate, have had to contend with flooding issues as water poured down through their roof as workmen struggled to access flats vacated by tenants when the block was infested with ants some years earlier: while some tenants were able to argue living with the ant infestation was intolerable, those who had bought their flats under the 'right to buy' scheme remained in situ, awaiting for news about what they might be offered for their flats. The potential psychological and physical consequences of living in this state of abeyance are multiple, with the tortuous and exhausting processes of establishing how displacement will impact on one's home-space leading to feelings of shame, stress and anxiety (Wallace, 2015). This can ultimately wear down individuals, leading to an inertia that makes effective resistance to displacement impossible (Lacione, 2017) or to necessary practices of 'survivability' that are themselves a form of resistance (see Lees, et al., 2018).

The displacement associated with the renewal of London's council estates is rarely the product of a one-off event, more often it is a form of slow, percolating violence. Displacement is not just about direct replacement of poorer by wealthier groups, it also involves forms of social, economic and cultural transition which alienate established populations. This can entail forms of slow violence, which render particular neighbourhoods less hospitable and accommodating to established residents over time, as well as direct and forceful acts of expropriation which the vulnerable and precarious seem least able to cope with. In this regard, in addition to quantitatively tracking displacement itself, it appears vital that we evolve better qualitative measures of *displacement pressures* in order to predict, and ideally help prevent, future displacements.

London is at the forefront of a 'new' urban renewal that deems council estates as viable sites for redevelopment where 'affordable' (not council) housing can be added by interspersing it with new market rate housing sold on for profit. From the developers' perspective, this is attractive as it represents an opportunity to make large profits by selling on 'luxury' flats and homes whilst fulfilling a social obligation by selling affordable, intermediate and shared housing at a time when it is in high demand. From the local authorities' point of view, such schemes enable the delivery of new 'affordable' housing whilst updating and renewing housing estates viewed in need of investment which they can not afford given current budgetary constraints. From the perspective of central government, such schemes are attractive in so much as they deliver urban regeneration by introducing

more affluent residents to such estates, alledgedly reducing deprivation through social mixing (Lees, 2008; 2014a). All of these logics can of course be questioned, not least the idea that estate densification delivers more affordable housing. On the 168 estates we have examined, redevelopment will be adding around 45,000 additional units, but the majority of these (52%) are sold at a market rate, and many schemes still fall well short of the 35% affordable target set by London Mayor Sadiq Khan in 2016. Moreover, residents wanting to move back onto the redeveloped estates as social (not council) housing tenants will often face inflated service charges, rents and council tax: much of the 'affordable' housing developed is not genuinely affordable (affordable housing is categorised as 80% of market rents) and the new 'social housing' (around 25% of the total) is not council housing (the cheapest form of housing in the UK).

We have to ask the question: is this worth the disruption and displacement that is necessary to allow for the redevelopment of these estates? Given over 50,000 families and households have seen their home demolished, and experienced anxiety and uncertainty, sometimes over a prolonged period, all for the sake of around 7,000 additional affordable homes for Londoners, the answer appears to be negative. Yet it is hard to be definitive about this given the data deficit that surrounds estate redevelopment. To challenge current orthodoxies concerning the 'sacrifice' of existing communities for the sake of additional housing in the capital, we not only need further qualitative evidence of the toll this has taken on some households, we also need better understanding of where the displaced have relocated to – or been relocated to. So while some urban scholars have stridently challenged the very idea of estate renewal as 'gentrification by stealth' (Bridge et al, 2011), intended to privatize social housing and socially cleanse the inner city of low-income communities, the lack of empirical evidence of the negative impacts of displacement means effective opposition remains difficult.

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