Re-urbanisation in Regenerated Areas of Manchester and Glasgow

New Residents and the Problems of Sustainability

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Many older industrial cities in the UK have been pursuing cultural strategies to promote urban regeneration. These strategies were designed, in part, to attract new residents to run-down central and inner areas of the city. This article, based on research in Manchester and Glasgow, examines the characteristics of new residents; their reasons for choosing to live there and their factors of satisfaction with their new place of residence. The findings of this research suggest that there could be problems in sustainability of the re-urbanisation process.

Keywords: cultural flagship development, re-urbanisation, sustainability of re-urbanisation, urban policy

Introduction

As in many other older industrial cities in Britain, there has been, in the cities of Manchester and Glasgow since the 1960s, a massive population loss generated by the process of decentralisation. In Manchester, the city’s population fell sharply from 661,000 in 1961 to 450,000 in 1985, a reduction of over 30%. The reasons for the massive population loss were manufacturing decay and a policy of re-housing outside the municipal boundary. In Glasgow, there was also a loss of population from just over one million in 1961 to 774,000 in 1981, a decline of 32%. Similarly, the reasons for the dramatic population loss there were a very high rate of out-migration in response to economic conditions, and, as well, in response to bad housing conditions, migration from the city to housing elsewhere at a faster than planned overspill (McCrone, 1991; Kidd, 1996).

From the mid-1980s, the population loss in both cities has slowed down, and the central city areas of both cities actually gained a considerable number of residents as housing schemes were built, or unused warehouse and office buildings were adapted for residential use in the city centre and on the edge of the city centre. Particularly, substantial numbers of housing units were built or renovated in regenerated areas, such as Crown Street and Merchant City in Glasgow and Hulme and Whitworth Street in Manchester.
Hulme and Crown Street were areas that had suffered from large-scale high-rise housing schemes that had become social and architectural disasters. In the early 1990s, new urban regeneration projects (eg Hulme Regeneration Project and Crown Street Regeneration Project) were set up for regenerating these areas. Mixed estates, private and social housing, were built to sell or rent at an affordable price for both local residents and people from outside, but ex-tenants were only eligible for social housing.

Whitworth Street and Merchant City had been commercial and industrial areas. Decades of industrial decline in these areas led to a large number of warehouses and offices being unused. From the late 1980s, these unused buildings were renovated, and also new residential buildings were put up. Housing in these areas was aimed at high-income residents.

Although the provision of decent housing is one of the main facts that has attracted new residents, another important initiative is the process of cultural upgrading policy in the cities. Culture-led urban regeneration has led to a rejection of older industrial images of the cities, and the establishment of a more positive image that attracts people to live in the cities. This study evaluates several important aspects about the effects of current urban regeneration policy in Hulme and Whitworth Street in Manchester and Crown Street and Merchant City in Glasgow. First of all, it examines the characteristics of people who live in the areas, for instance age structure, household size, occupational status, and household incomes. There has been no previous research published on this aspect of regeneration. Secondly, it evaluates reasons for moving to the areas and what factors new residents were satisfied with when living in the area. This evaluation would indicate factors that stimulate and sustain re-urbanisation in the areas. Thirdly, the study points out possible problems and the fragile nature of re-urbanisation.

In examining the four areas, two rather different types of area groups can be distinguished. Crown Street and Hulme are existing residential areas referred to as “inner city areas”; as the location of the areas is outside the Central Business District (CBD). On the other hand, Whitworth Street and Merchant City are called “central city areas” as the location is in the CBD.

Re-urbanisation policy in British cities

In Britain since the 1960s, there has been official recognition of the existence of an inner city problem, expressed in the existence of central government inner city policies (Lawless, 1989). The concept of an inner city problem suggests a concentration of deprived or disadvantaged people in inner city residential areas, and that inner city policies will in some way attempt to solve the problems of these people (Atkinson and Moon, 1994). In the 1980s, the Conservative Government retained a commitment to inner city policies, but the overall character thereof was altered radically by the government. For instance the main emphasis was given to strengthening the role of the private sector of the economy and limiting the role of the public sector, particularly that of local authorities. In line with the general direction of policy change, housing policies in the inner city have been greatly affected by the reduction in the role of the public sector. In particular, it has no longer been possible for local authorities themselves to undertake large-scale schemes of house-building and renewal in inner cities. Instead of the public sector, a combination of land and financial subsidies has been used to entice private house-builders to inner areas (Atkinson and Durden, 1990). The outcome has been the growth of more entrepreneurial approaches to local economic intervention, and an increasing stress on public – private sector partnerships (Painter, 1991).

With the development of new private housing schemes, city authorities have also undertaken new urban development strategies through the provision of cultural facilities (eg concert halls, museums, art galleries, convention centres, theatres, etc) in their cities. By using cultural strategies, city authorities, particularly older industrial cities, tended to emphasise the positive elements of cities and to re-image their poor reputation. Urban re-imaging was closely interconnected with flagship property development to launch the new urban vision. Cultural strategies were drawn into this process of re-imaging (Bianchini et al, 1992). Although many British cities have undertaken the process, they have used culture-related initiatives in several different ways to remodel their city’s image. Three models mentioned by Griffiths (1995) are “the integrationist model”, “the cultural industries model”, and “the promotional model” (p 254). The latter emphasises the benefit of physical changes that attract people to come to town after work. This involves the multiple effects of office uses, shop, restaurants and cultural facilities in mixed-use development and cultural districts. The cultural industries model is to aim at the economic importance of cultural facilities, particularly high arts, in cities and their potential significance for future growth and a close relationship with cities. The integrationist model is to promote civic identity that involves the revitalisation of public social life and the revival of a sense of shared belonging to the city, which produces high expectations about the city life.

Within this emerging framework of urban policy, an increasingly substantial role has been played by cultural policies of numerous kinds, reflecting a strong belief that the cultural domain is destined to perform an increasingly significant part in the future evolution of cities. According to the joint study of

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1The term can be defined as being considerable, high profile developments that play an influential and catalytic role in urban regeneration, which can be justified if they attract other investment (Bianchini et al, 1992)
Rogers and Fisher (1992), the prospects for cities economically, physically and socially are intimately bound up with the creation of what they call a “new urban culture”, in which “artistic and cultural life is a central element of regeneration” (p 4). However, although it seems that culture-led urban regeneration can, in theory, be used as a tool to achieve more sustainable development, this type of urban policy is a relatively new one and many of its impacts, problems and effects have yet to be evaluated. Moreover, there are also scholars who argue that this kind of urban policy can be a source of tension and conflict. One of the key problems of cultural strategies for urban regeneration is that there seems to be a lack of clarity as to who the beneficiaries of cultural strategies are. Griffiths (1993) indicates that there are various groups who will benefit, both intended and unintended: these include real estate speculators, traders, hoteliers and so on. Loftman (1991) also argues that the costs of cultural projects are often borne by those who can least afford it. Therefore the distributional issue of culture-led urban regeneration seems to be an important question in this particular urban policy. Another issue is that the provision of cultural facilities for urban regeneration may encourage the kind of risk-free art that attracts commercial sponsors and large audiences (Lim, 1993). This is because there are dangers in linking cultural development too closely to property-led development (Imrie and Thomas, 1993). The need to design attractively in order to pull in investment has meant that most cultural schemes tend to take the form of prestige art events or flagship developments in well-managed areas (Bassett, 1993). More community-oriented art organisations and socially and culturally deprived areas might miss out on any potential developments. Moreover, the distributional problems of culture-led urban regeneration can generate the process of gentrification. According to Darlow (1996), sustainable development suggests some level of equity, but one of the major problems of urban regeneration through the provision of cultural facilities is the risk of gentrification of particular areas, driving away poorer groups, and effectively creating “cultural ghettoes” which restricts the use of cultural facilities to the local community (p 299). Loftman’s study (1991) of the International Convention Centre and the surrounding Ladywood area in Birmingham provides a good example of this process at work.

It seems that urban cultural strategies are an interesting issue, insofar as it needs to be evaluated whether the strategies can be used to achieve sustainable development.

The characteristics of new residents in regenerated areas of Manchester and Glasgow

As in other urban areas in Britain, there has been in Glasgow and Manchester, since the 1980s, a new willingness by private developers to provide housing in inner urban areas. In particular, areas such as Merchant City and Crown Street in Glasgow, and Whitworth Street and Hulme in Manchester, have been profoundly affected by the provision of new private housing (though some housing was built by housing associations, the new form of social housing providers). With the provision of new housing in central city and inner city areas, Manchester and Glasgow resumed the transformation of their older industrial images through the use of cultural upgrading policy. This involved a rejection of negative images of the past, and the reworking of positive elements of local heritage to construct an image of a new postmodern, consumption-oriented city, attractive to inward investors, and with a good quality of life for executives, managers, and skilled workers, and, which, in turn, would generate the improvement of the overall social and economic life in the cities (Glasgow District Council, 1986; Manchester City Council, 1992). By examination of the characteristics of new residents in the four regenerated areas (Crown Street, Merchant City, Hulme and Whitworth Street), one can evaluate whether or not the cities have achieved their intention to attract high-income groups through their cultural upgrading policies. As mentioned above, there are no comprehensive studies about the characteristics of residents in the four regenerated areas of Manchester and Glasgow. However, brief surveys of Merchant City were conducted by the Glasgow District Council and Glasgow University. In 1987, the GDC undertook a survey of flat buyers in Merchant City. In Ingram Square, the majority of flat buyers were young — 16% of the Ingram Square buyers were under 25 and 70% under 29 years (Glasgow District Council, 1987). A more general Merchant City survey conducted by Glasgow University in 1986, however, found a slightly older age profile (Glasgow University, 1986). The occupational status of house buyers in Merchant City was predominantly non-manual, with about three-quarters of these homebuyers having white-collar jobs. A survey conducted by the author in 1998 showed similar age structure to the survey conducted by Glasgow University. Just over 55% of respondents were aged under 30 years and 77% under 40 years in the central city areas (Merchant City and Whitworth Street). However, only 34% of respondents in the inner city areas (Crown Street and Hulme) were under 30 years and 66% under 40 years of age.

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2Ingram Square is a part of Merchant City.
3Early in 1998, for the PhD research, a large number of questionnaires (2065) were distributed to residents in Glasgow (970 questionnaires) and Manchester (1095). The overall response rate was 33.0 – 33.8% from Glasgow and 32.2% from Manchester. In Crown Street, 340 questionnaires were distributed to residents, and the response rate was 34.4% (117). In Merchant City, 630 questionnaires were distributed to households, and the response rate was 33.5% (211). In Hulme, 376 questionnaires were distributed to residents, and the response rate was 34.0% (128). In Whitworth Street, 719 questionnaires were distributed to households, and the response rate was 31.3% (225).
As the figures indicate, there are large numbers of young people living in the areas. Age structure seems to reflect household structure of the areas. More than 50% of respondents have a single adult household, and more than 90% are up to two-person households in the central city areas (Figs. 2 and 3).

In the inner city areas, household size is greater than the central city areas, although a large proportion of respondents also have a small household (46% are one-person households and 79% are up to two-person households). Moreover, a large proportion of respondents in both the central city and inner city areas come from outside the city limit (80% in the central city areas and 51% in the inner city areas). It clearly illustrates that large numbers of young people who are from outside the city, live there. Looking at occupation, 61% of respondents in the central city have professional and managerial occupations, compared to respondents in the inner city areas where only 42% have professional and managerial occupations. However, the major difference in occupational status of respondents between the central city areas and the inner city areas appeared in the percentage of respondents who are economically inactive (eg unemployed, retired, and sick or disabled). Only 4% of respondents in the central city areas are economically inactive, but 25% of respondents in the inner city areas are economically inactive. The survey found that most respondents who are economically inactive are those who live in social housing, particularly in the inner city areas. However, in Whitworth Street there are no substantial differences in occupational status between residents of social housing, private renters and owner-occupiers. The differences in occupational status also reflect differences in household incomes. In the central city areas, 28% of respondents have household incomes over £35,000, compared to only 8% in the inner city areas. At the bottom of the income scale, 27% of respondents in the inner city have household incomes under £8000, compared to only 14% in the central city. However, most of the respondents in the central city areas with household incomes under £8000 are students. Over 50% of respondents in the inner city areas who have low household incomes, however, are social housing renters, whereas only just over 1% have household incomes over £35,000.

The survey clearly showed that, overall, in areas of re-urbanisation there are a large number of young people who have a small household size,
Why do residents choose to live there?

It is important to know what people look for in an ideal place to live and where people can come closest to finding a place with these desirable characteristics. City living has many attractions, including easy access to modern shopping facilities or proximity to leisure activities, such as cinemas and theatres. Unfortunately, however, city living is also associated with negative features (e.g., higher levels of pollution, burglary, and a range of social tensions), which can take away from the quality of life.

It is assumed that people may expect many different benefits from relocating their residence in a certain area before choosing it. A specially commissioned survey was conducted by a national opinion poll company in 1987 (Findlay et al., 1988) to establish the relative importance of different features of quality of life. The survey identified the seven most important characteristics of the urban environment; people wanted to live in places with:

- minimal crime both violent and non-violent;
- best possible health services;
- low levels of pollution;
- low cost of living;
- good shopping facilities;
- cultural diversity.

However, according to the survey both employment and housing are not perceived as being amongst the most important aspects of quality of life. Other factors regarded in the national survey and listed as less important features of quality of life were access to areas of high scenic quality, the cost of owner-occupied housing, the provision of education facilities, employment prospects, wage levels, unemployment levels, climate, time taken to travel to work, the provision of sports and leisure facilities, easy access to, and the quality of, council housing and the cost of privately rented accommodation. The performance of 38 cities in the UK on specific aspects of quality of life had been measured and weighted in terms of the opinion poll results. The city of Glasgow was ranked in 25th position out of 38, which was better than Manchester (30th). Edinburgh was the UK’s most desirable city because of its excellent health, sports and leisure facilities, as well as its fine record in the provision of education facilities.

As mentioned above, Manchester and Glasgow city authorities tended to provide cultural leisure facilities in the cities to attract high-income people to live there.

Looking at the characteristics of new residents in the four areas, it seems that the intention of both city authorities have been achieved. However, the provision of cultural and leisure facilities in the cities seems to be less effective in attracting new residents in the four areas. Moreover, reasons for residence were found in this study to be very different from the above factors found by the national poll. The reasons given by the respondents are listed in Fig. 4. The most important reason given by the respondents in the inner city areas was “value for money” (22%), which the respondents in the central city areas regarded as much less important (4%). It seems that the availability of affordable housing had considerable impact on the residential decision of the respondents in the inner city areas. However, the respondents in the central city areas considered other factors as important reasons, such as “close to work” (25%) and “central city location” (21%) as most important. These reasons were also considered as important factors for the respondents in the inner city areas (15% for “close to work” and 17% for central city location). The location factors (“close to work” and “central city location”) are largely related to the location of their workplace. The study found that a large proportion of respondents in both areas actually work in the CBD (61% in the central city areas and 47% in the inner city areas). Thus, easy access to workplace from their residence seems to be an important factor in residential location. However, types of tenure were also seen to be an important factor that divides reasons for residence in the areas, particularly respondents in the inner city areas (there were no noticeable differences in reasons for residence between types of tenure in the central city areas). Owner-occupiers regarded factors, such as “value for money”, “close to work”, “close to all social amenities”, and “central city location” as important reasons for residence in the areas. On the other hand, for social housing renters, the above factors did not affect their residential decision, but factors such as “born in the area” and “relatives living in the area”, were considered as important reasons. The differences in reasons for residence between types of tenure are inevitable because owner-occupiers chose to live there, but social housing renters

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6 The respondents were given 11 close-ended choices to give their reasons for residential relocation to the survey areas in the questionnaire. However, the respondents were asked to choose only the two or three most important reasons for moving to the areas. The respondents, who gave more than three answers, were withdrawn from the evaluation as there is a suspicion that they might have given invalid answers.
Reasons for residence in the inner city and the central city were “chosen” to live there. Owner-occupiers had opportunities to consider beneficial factors before moving to the areas. For social housing renters, however, good housing with family-related factors might be only reasons that were relevant to them.

One interesting finding from the study is that the factor that both city authorities considered as a catalyst for drawing in potential residents, namely “the availability of cultural and leisure facilities” seems to be relatively ineffective in attracting new residents (2% in the inner city areas and 7% in the central city areas). Overall, the reasons for residence indicated by respondents seem to be closely related to practical factors of their everyday life; “value for money”, “close to work” and “central city location”, all are important features of their living in or near the city centre.

What do new residents like about living in the area?

Although new residents considered beneficial factors for residential relocation before moving to the area, they might face unexpected problems when living in the areas. Thus, it is interesting to see whether new residents were satisfied with living there (Fig. 5).

The study found that an overwhelming majority of respondents, regardless of social and economic backgrounds, both in the central city areas (89% of the respondents) and in the inner city areas (88%) were satisfied with the areas. Therefore, it seems that the cities of Glasgow and Manchester seem to have provided what new residents expected to have when choosing to live in their areas. The important point in this analysis is that the vast majority of respondents in the inner city and the central city were satisfied with living there. In examining factors of satisfaction, one interesting result was found in this study. Factors of satisfaction expressed by respondents seem to be very different from the reasons for moving there. Respondents were given an open-ended question about what gave them satisfaction. The study found “central city location” as the most important factor for both respondents in the central city areas and in the inner city areas. Moreover, the previously seen “less important” factors for respondents in the central city areas, such as “close to all social amenities” and “availability of cultural and leisure facilities” become valuable benefits for living in the areas. For respondents in the inner city areas, housing itself was seen as an important benefit for living in the areas. However, 8 Respondents were given an open-ended question (What do you like about it?), and were allowed to give more than one factor. A one sample Chi-square test was conducted to evaluate statistical significance.

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Footnotes:

7 Most residents of social housing are ex-tenants. As they lived there before the regeneration, they were eligible to have social housing in the area. Therefore, they had little ability to consider any advantages in the areas, as city authorities chose them to live there.

8 Respondents were given an open-ended question (What do you like about it?), and were allowed to give more than one factor. A one sample Chi-square test was conducted to evaluate statistical significance.
important reasons for choosing to reside in the areas, such as “value for money” (for respondents in the inner city areas) and “close to work” (for respondents in the central city areas), seem to be less valuable factors once living there.

Possibly the most important thing to emerge from this analysis is that respondents consider different factors to be important as reasons for moving (“close to work”, “value for money”, and “central location”) to their new residence, than appear to be important after they moved in (eg “central location”, “close to all social amenities”, “availability of social and cultural facilities”, and “satisfaction with housing”). This indicates that one set of factors is important in the re-urbanisation process, to persuade people to move, but another set of factors is important in sustaining the re-urbanisation. This is a very important finding of the study in terms of future urban policy. The finding implies that although a certain set of factors might primarily lead to re-urbanisation in previously troubled urban areas, this set of factors might not guarantee sustainability of population in the areas. This is because decisive factors in residential relocation may be different from beneficial factors of day-to-day living. It could be much more difficult to sustain re-urbanisation than to make it happen. This is because the sustainability of re-urbanisation is a long-term commitment. The preference of city-living people might consistently change, thus it would be difficult to provide all their demands effectively. Therefore, it is important to consider ways of sustaining the re-urbanisation once it has happened.

### Sustainability or fragility? Re-urbanisation in the four regenerated areas

The overall characteristics of the residents in the survey areas may suggest a sign of “gentrification” in the areas, particularly in the central city areas, as many of the residents in the areas are young, single adults or families without children. Many of them are also owner-occupiers and white-collar workers with high household incomes. The term, gentrification came into use in Britain in the 1960s and was closely associated with the rehabilitation of older inner housing areas culminating in a change of class from working-class to middle-class, and tenure from private renting to owner-occupation (Hamnett, 1984). The creation of new housing in the central city areas is, however, physically separate from existing inner residential areas and use land and buildings which were previously not in housing use. The process of new housing developments in the areas does not, therefore, directly displace existing inner city residents. Taking the most direct concept of gentrification, the process that has happened in the central city areas is not gentrification. However, in a study of gentrification, Smith and Williams (1986) argue that the current restructuring of cities, turning the process of sub-urbanisation and bringing high-income residents back to city centres, has a wider implication than the narrow traditional definition of gentrification. They imply that gentrification reflects in spatial terms the reorganisation of the labour market in cities, creating an increasing polarisation between high-income, white-
collar workers and an underclass of poorly paid, insecure employment in the service sector. Although, the process that has happened in the central city areas does not directly prevent low-income households from living in the areas, it systematically discourages low-income households by providing expensive housing. It also encourages high-income households to live in the areas by providing the best possible means of attractions, such as cultural facilities. Therefore, the current urban policy in both cities directly creates gentrified areas for high-income, white-collar workers, and generates spatial separation between residential areas of poorer people and residential areas of affluent people. A case of Baltimore in the USA is a clear indication that this type of gentrification can bring a disastrous result. Baltimore had been experiencing long-term decline and its poor image was a product of divestment, deprivation and the social unrest of the 1950s and 1960s. However, Baltimore also experienced a remarkable revitalisation process, such as the regeneration of the CBD through a mixed use development proposal consisting of offices, retailing and apartments, and the creation of Harbour Place by constructing the Maryland Science Centre, the National Arena, Convention Centre, etc in the Inner Harbour, which has attracted attention from all over the world. Szanton’s “Baltimore 2000” (1986), however, takes a decidedly pessimistic view of current trends, arguing that the immediate future of Baltimore is one of decline, not renaissance. This process of decline is seen as a pattern of uneven development that would, in effect, create two Baltimores — “the centre would contain a business, cultural and entertainment centre that remained strong as it served the whole metropolitan area, and attractive housing for the well-to-do”.

The re-urbanisation through flagship developments (eg the provision of prestigious cultural facilities) could face financial problems that might undermine its process. To build prestigious cultural facilities (eg Bridgewater Hall, G-Mex, Museum of Science and Industry, etc in Manchester, and Glasgow Royal Concert Hall, the Burrell Collection, Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre, etc in Glasgow) would require substantial state and public funds. However, some facilities in both cities were funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), but these and other cities in Britain would now find it difficult to access this fund as the current economic boom in Britain (actually in 1999 the Commissioner of the ERDF announced that no more large funds would be directed to Britain from the ERDF).
the cost of maintenance for the facilities is another matter, and it would be more costly. One might suggest that new revenue generated by new residents could go to funding upkeep of facilities. There are, however, no clearly outlined policy strategies about the upkeep of the prestige facilities in the cities (Glasgow District Council, 1986; Manchester City Council, 1992, 1993). To maintain the prestige facilities in the cities might be more important than to build the facilities. Any failure to maintain the facilities could ruin the cities’ new images (a cultural city and a centre for tourism and business) that were created by very expensive flagship developments, which, in turn, would undermine the re-urbanisation process. One instructive example is that the failure of sufficient funding for the Museum of Modern and Popular Arts in Sheffield eventually led to bankruptcy, which seems to damage the city’s effort to regenerate their city through flagship developments. Without any clear policy outline for the maintenance of the existing prestige cultural facilities in the cities, potential problems of maintaining the facilities would appear in the near future, especially in times of economic recession.

Overall, the re-urbanisation through the culture-led urban regeneration in Manchester and Glasgow seems to be successful. Both cities’ residential central areas are socially and economically flourishing and expanding at present. The sustainability of this success is, however, very much unpredictable. It seems to be largely dependent on the economic condition of the cities. Thus, the vulnerability and strength of the culture-led urban policy could only be judged through more rigorous evaluation of the effects of this urban development policy on re-urbanisation, particularly in time of local economic recession.

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