COASTAL GENTRIFICATION:
THE *COASTIFICATION* OF
ST LEONARDS-ON-SEA

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Abstract

This thesis advances knowledge of the diverse spatialities of gentrification by examining processes of change in coastal towns, drawing upon the case-study location of St Leonards-on-Sea, in the South East of England. Based on rich, empirical findings from semi-structured interviews, content analyses of local media sources, 2001 census data, and a household survey of 173 respondents, it is shown that processes of gentrification are unfolding in St Leonards. The findings suggest that it is beneficial to distinguish between coastal gentrification, and urban/rural gentrification. To emphasise this point, it is argued that there is merit in utilising the term 'coastification', in order to conceptualise the socio-cultural and economic transformations tied to in-migrants seeking the 'coastal idyll'.

The thesis disrupts some dominant theorisations of contemporary gentrification, identifying the presence of pioneer gentrifiers in a coastal town setting. It is contended that simply transferring the representations of urban gentrification to other socio-spatial locations along the urban-rural hierarchy is not a straightforward process. Therefore, gentrification-based regeneration policies should not be transferred in taken-for-granted ways from one location to another. A representation of coastification allows for a fuller appreciation of the effects of gentrification on coastal regeneration policies.

Key words: coastal regeneration; pioneer gentrifiers; coastal gentrification; coastal in-migration; St Leonards-on-Sea; coastal idyll.

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        "FEAR is the THIEF of DREAMS. DARE to DREAM …

                and, have the COURAGE to make those DREAMS come TRUE…"

Chapter 1:   Introduction to thesis

1.0   The diverse geographies of gentrification?

Although a contested term, there is a general consensus that gentrification remains an important concept in understanding processes of social class change and socio-cultural identity construction (Butler, 2007; Lees, 2011). Since its first use in the 1960's (Glass, 1964), the last half century has witnessed significant advances in understandings of gentrification. Gentrification has evolved from early associations of inner-city resettlement by the middle classes in large metropolitan centres in the developed world, and is now mapped at a global scale (Atkinson and Bridge, 2005), and across the urban-rural hierarchy (M.Phillips, 2004).

Nevertheless, understandings of how gentrification extends both across the global scale and across the urban-rural hierarchy are in their infancy. One such spatial context is those spaces on or close to the coast (and water). All of which suggests coastal towns are important, yet perhaps, under-researched spaces in the gentrification literature. But, this is not to argue that gentrification in coastal and waterfront contexts have not been documented. For example, Cook (2004) examines waterfront regeneration and gentrification in the redevelopment of Gunwharf Quays in Portsmouth. Likewise, Davidson and Lees (2005) examine the role of new-build gentrification in London's riverside renaissance, and Boddy (2007) explores designer-neighbourhoods along the waterfront in Bristol. Although these UK-based studies identify that gentrification unfolds along the waterfront, the role of the water as a landscape and symbolic commodity that gentrifiers are consuming is not explored.

Yet, in line with discussions of the rural idyll and nature in rural studies (Halfacree, 1995), it would appear that idyllic representations of the coastal landscape are significant to the dynamics of gentrification in waterfront locations. Moreover, there is evidence within media and popular discourses which, for example, suggest that coastal places have distinct gentrification and other stories (Wildin and Minnery, 2005). This is exemplified by the BBC series *Coast* which identified Sandbanks, Dorset, as the fourth most expensive place to live in the world (BBC, 2007). One example touched upon in the academic literature is D.Smith's

(2007) study of the Shoreham boat-people, which identifies a strong occurrence of 'nature' as one of the motivators of living-by-the-sea, and "many accounts were provided which drew upon the imagery of the quiet, calming and tranquil surroundings of the water" (*ibid*, p. 61). Despite some initial forays into the world of coastal gentrification, the role of the coastal landscape remains under-explored in academic debates on gentrification.

Of course, analysing the influence of the coast and the role of gentrification has to be set in the wider context of the processes that shape gentrification. Like all concepts, definitions and theoretical understandings of gentrification have evolved over time and space. Linked to deepening globalization, contemporary gentrification is more generalised then previous waves of the process (N.Smith, 2011), and there are claims that a gentrification 'blueprint' is being mass-marketed as part of political visions for urban renaissance (Davidson, 2008; Lees, 2008). The UK is no exception. Gentrification was promoted by the previous Labour government under the banner of 'urban renaissance', with their prescribed concepts and ways of living being closely tied to gentrification practices (Lees *et al.*, 2007). At the beginning of this century there has been renewed interest in the state's involvement in the facilitation of gentrification (e.g. Butler and Lees, 2006; Porter and Barber, 2006; N.Smith, 2001).

Gentrification is increasingly viewed by the state as a 'positive' tool for regeneration and has become a 'global urban strategy', linked to globalisation and related new urbanism (Lees, 2008; N.Smith, 2002). As Cameron and Coaffee (2005: 39) suggest, "the main engine driver of gentrification is 'public-policy' which seeks to use 'positive' gentrification as an engine of urban renaissance". The implication of this is that as the so-called gentrification blueprint is transferred down the urban hierarchy, there are fewer and fewer options to open-up new areas for gentrification. However, one set of frontiers yet to be fully exploited, I would argue, are declining coastal towns, which as D.Smith and Holt (2007: 146) rightly observe "have witnessed successive decades of social and economic disinvestment". Coastal towns are, one could argue, ripe for gentrification. It should, however, be noted that this does not relate to all coastal towns (nor all coastal locations), but specifically concerns those coastal towns that have experienced entrenched socio-economic decline (Beatty and Forthergill, 2003).

The need to regenerate coastal towns has been identified by policy-makers. In recent years there have been a number of strategies and reports focusing on the disadvantaged socio-economic circumstances many coastal communities in the UK have faced (e.g. British Resorts

Association, 2000; Communities and Local Government Committee [CLG], 2007; Department of Culture, Media and Sport, 1999; English Heritage, 2007a; English Heritage and Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment, 2003; English Tourism Board, 2001). There is general consensus across these strategies and reports that coastal towns require a regeneration framework, with Walton and Browne's (2010: ii) *Coastal Regeneration Handbook* intending to "maintain and extend the national debate on how to address the complex social and economic problems that are associated with English coastal resorts". Regeneration has come to the forefront as the state's solution for many declining coastal towns. This is just a driver, however, of the gentrification process.

Rent-gap theory identifies gentrification as a structural product of the land and housing markets (N.Smith, 1979). With roots in Marxist debates, the urban geographer Neil Smith uses the theory of a devalorisation cycle to explain the decline of inner-city neighbourhoods (Munt, 1987). His key contribution is to suggest that this cyclical process of devalorisation allows for the emergence of the rent-gap, that is "the disparity between the potential ground rent level and the actual ground rent capitalized under the present land use" (N.Smith, 1979: 545). From this, it can be argued that coastal towns which were once fashionable resorts, but have since experienced subsequent decades of decline, are sites that can be exploited by gentrification. In N.Smith's own words, these places could now form a "frontier on which fortunes are made" (N.Smith, 1996: 34). However, as many studies of gentrification have revealed the process of closing the rent-gap involves a number of institutional actors including developers, estate agents, government officials, the media and, of course, the in-migrants themselves (Hamnett, 1991). It is also important to note that both the devalourised market and reaction of the institutional actors influences how rent-gaps are closed. Redevelopment is a feasible option only once the negative social and physical barriers at the neighbourhood scale can be overcome (Lees *et al*., 2007).

Situated against this backdrop of debates around the role of the state in gentrification processes, existing rent-gaps, and the continuing (re)commodification of water landscapes, this thesis offers a critical appraisal of contemporary gentrification through a case-study of the socio-economic and cultural regeneration of St Leonards-on-Sea (hereafter, St Leonards).

St Leonards' origin in 1827 as a fashionable tourist resort in the South East of England and late-twentieth century decline make the town an ideal location to research the implications of

coastal regeneration by gentrification. Like many of coastal towns in Great Britain, St Leonards has witnessed decline and thereby experienced devalorisation and the creation of a large rent-gap. This is evident through economic factors such as the housing market and suppressed property prices in the location: - in 2007 house prices in St Leonards were approximately £59,000 below the national mean cost of a house in England and Wales of (£218,361) (Land Registry, 2011). This devalorised property market is also attributed to the poor quality housing stock: a quarter of all dwellings fail to meet housing fitness standards (as defined by the Local Government and Housing Act, 1989) and one-fifth are in conditions of serious disrepair (Hastings Borough Council [HBC], 2004b, 2009a). Social indicators such as poverty, crime, and joblessness also suggest decline and deprivation is prevalent (ECOTEC, 2008; HBC, 2004a). In 2004, the ward of Central-St-Leonards was in the worst 4% of wards in the UK for violent crime; with much of this crime driven by drugs and alcohol abuse (HBC, 2004a). The ward also has a significant proportion of people with low qualifications and high unemployment rates (7.2% compared to the UK average of 5.3%) (ECOTEC, 2008). Whilst demonstrating that St Leonards has a devalorised market, and in effect a large rent-gap, there is nevertheless evidence to suggest that local polices are being implemented to close this rent-gap, via state-led regeneration strategies and funding.

Since 1995, St Leonards and Hastings has received significant investment to drive renewal and regeneration, with a significant proportion of this funding being directed into the most deprived areas – notably within St Leonards. Furthermore, HBC is working with local, regional and national partners to deliver its regeneration plan, outlined in '*Making Waves: A Regeneration Strategy for Hastings & St Leonards*' (Hastings Regeneration Partnership [HRP], 2002). The report sets out the vision for St Leonards as an exciting place to live, work and visit by focusing on the social, physical and economic revitalisation of the area. It recognises the need for promoting the area with the vision of being the 'perfect coastal town'; an ambition that can be reached by improving the quality-of-life offers for residents, such, that more people want to live, and create businesses in, the area. Indeed, there are a number of governmental agencies involved in the delivery of the strategy which aims to provide "a framework for efforts to address social disadvantage and improve the incomes, wealth and quality of life of people in Hastings and St Leonards" (HRP, 2002: 3).

To this end, the academic rationale for this thesis can be summarised as follows:

1. The processes of gentrification in coastal towns, and links with gentrification-led regeneration are not fully understood.

2. There is evidence to suggest that coastal landscapes are important in the residential migration decision-making processes of some social groups (D.Smith, 2007). Important here is gauging a fuller understanding of these social groups and in-migrants to identify if they are gentrifiers themselves.

3. Based on contemporary understandings of gentrification, there is evidence to suggest that 'positive' gentrification is used as a state-led vehicle for regenerating many coastal towns (ECOTEC, 2008). A more critical perspective of 'positive' gentrification within the coastal regeneration framework may be valuable (Davidson, 2008).

4. Key stakeholders are playing a role in promoting concepts of 'positive' gentrification, that is the regeneration of St Leonards by gentrification.

1.1   Aim and objectives

The main aim of the thesis is to:

- Investigate the inter-connections between processes of gentrification and the regeneration of coastal towns using the case-study of St Leonards.

The main objectives are to:

- Explore the role of institutional actors and local residents in the regeneration of coastal towns using a critical perspective of the concept of 'positive' gentrification.
- Examine the (re)commodification of idyllic coastal/water landscapes for the regeneration of coastal towns
- Consider the social, economic, cultural and physical processes that underpin coastal gentrification.

1.2 The study area

St Leonards forms the case-study location for this thesis. This section identifies the specific reasons why St Leonards was selected to investigate the unfolding processes of coastal gentrification, and provides a description of the case-study location.

1.2.1 Choosing St Leonards

I first came across the regeneration of Hastings and St Leonards as part of an undergraduate fieldtrip to the town in 2004, which identified social deprivation in St Leonards, with St Leonards Gardens looking run-down and boarded-up hotels on the seafront. At that time, many of the seafront properties were in the process of being repainted as part of various regeneration projects. The town of Hastings and St Leonards was presented as an area undergoing early phases of regeneration. As a part of this fieldtrip I was introduced to some policy documents on the town, which could be read as 'gentrification'. Clearly, at that point St Leonards (or Hastings with the exception of Old Town) did not show visible signs of gentrification, but, the potential for gentrification to unfold was clearly evident. The idea of a town undergoing transformation appealed to me as an exciting location to understand processes of gentrification in coastal towns.

As I started examining the coastal histories of Hastings and St Leonards, Beauregard's (1990) notion that different places follow different trajectories of change became pertinent as I realised that both Hastings and St Leonards had very different histories, albeit both were originally coastal resorts. St Leonards appealed as an ideal research location because it was originally designed by James Burton in 1827 as a resort for the gentry. Despite the decline and deprivation of St Leonards documented in governmental reports, the physical appearance of the town seemed altered and improved from the image I had gathered on that fieldtrip, four years previously. Central to this was the explicit arts focus along the seafront in Marine Court. Scholarly discourses of gentrification identify that arts and artists are an important catalyst to the process of gentrification (see for example Cameron and Coaffee, 2005; Florida, 2002; Ley, 1996, 2003). At the same time, HBC (along with other stakeholders) was in the process of rolling out various regeneration schemes in St Leonards including Azur Marina Pavilion (a 1930's built entertainment venue), and the Kings Road Regeneration (public realm improvements in St Leonards town centre). These different factors suggested that St

Leonards was not only undergoing change, but it was an ideal location for considering the unfolding processes of gentrification, and the way in which regeneration polices affected the gentrification of coastal towns. In addition, it is important to note that change in St Leonards has resulted in tourism no longer being the main function of the area, such that St Leonards does not exist as a 'seaside town' in the traditional sense, but a coastal town in the post-resort phase (see Chapter 3).

1.2.2   Locating St Leonards

St Leonards is a town in the borough of Hastings located on the south coast of England (Figures 1.1 and 1.2). The town is 60 miles south of London, and the journey takes 1 hour and 49 minutes by train from London Charing Cross. To the west along the coast are Eastbourne and Brighton. To the east are Rye and Folkestone. The origins of St Leonards lie in the area initially developed by James and Decimus Burton between 1827 and 1860. The extent of this original town is situated within the political wards of Central-St-Leonards and Maze Hill. The success of St Leonards as a resort in the early-to-mid-nineteenth century encouraged further development at the edges of the town. The resort eventually incorporated Troup's development of Warrior Square (designed and laid out between 1853 and 1863), the boundary of which lies within the wards of Central-St-Leonards and Gensing. Further development over the years resulted in the expansion of the town both, to the north and to the west, with St Leonards today referring to an area encompassing half of the town of Hastings and St Leonards. In the context of this thesis, however, St Leonards refers to the boundary of the research area (Figure 1.3). The extent of the boundary was defined through the contextual study and relates to the boundary of the original strip of land purchased by Burton for his planned regency town of St Leonards (see Chapter 5) - an area that lies within the wards of Maze Hill, Central-St-Leonards and Gensing. The boundary is approximately 1km from west to east, and extend 1km north from the sea. As noted previously, the research focuses on the impacts of gentrification on the regeneration of coastal towns which traditionally prospered as seaside resorts, and then fell victim to entrenched decline. Coupled with Beauregard's (1990) concept of different places following different trajectories of change, the decision was made to keep the research area within the original extent of the seaside resort, instead of encompassing a larger area affected by different histories and trajectories of change.

Figure 1.1: Location of Hastings and St Leonards within South East England. (Source: www.1066online.com. Accessed, March 2011)
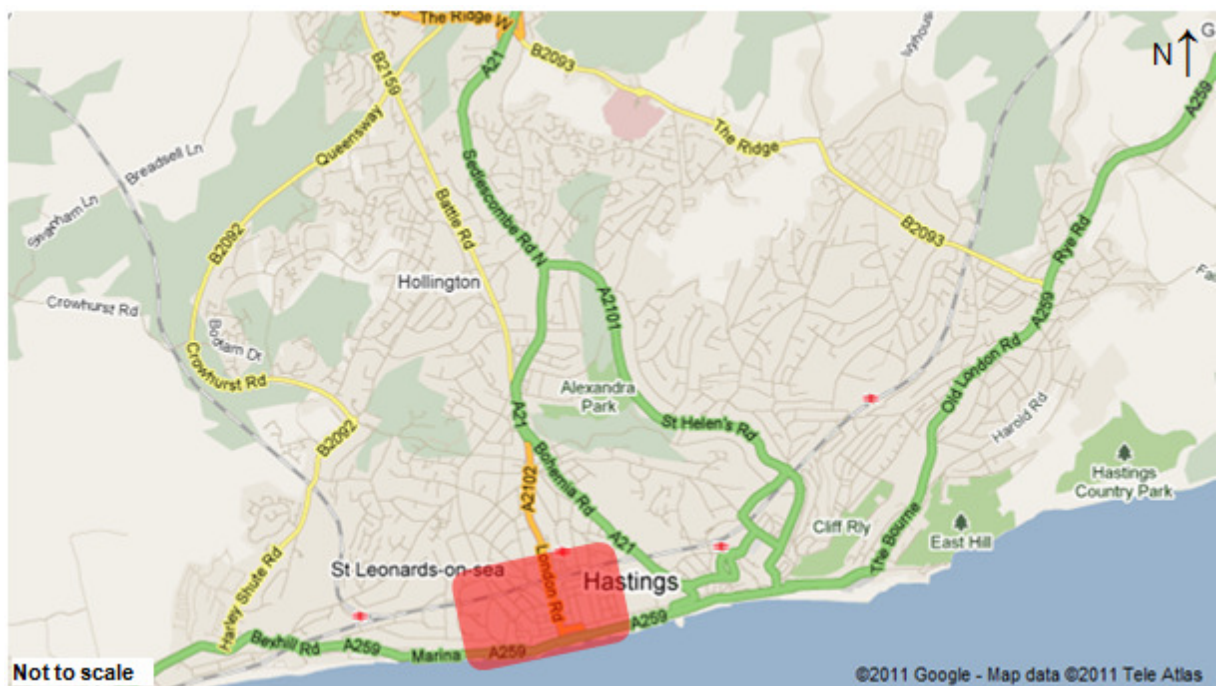
Figure 1.2: Location of St Leonards in relation of Hastings. *Note: rectangle is indicative of research area.* (Source: Map base from maps.google.co.uk. Accessed March 2011).
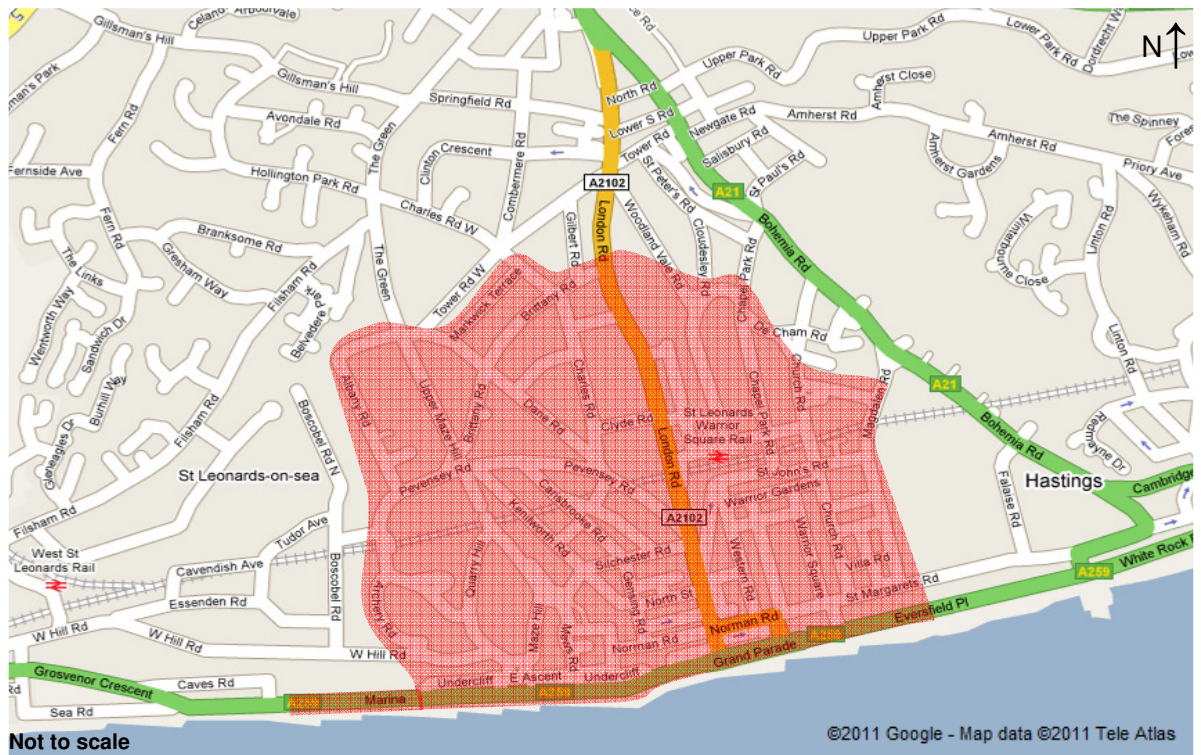
Figure 1.3: Boundary of study area of St Leonards (Source: Map base from maps.google.co.uk. Accessed March 2011).

1.3 Pathway through thesis

This thesis is divided into eight chapters. Chapter 2 provides a detailed exploration of the gentrification literature. The chapter focuses on contemporary gentrification and aims to critically evaluate the 'other' expressions of gentrification. It is argued that the conceptual boundaries of gentrification should be extended to embrace wider socio-spatial contexts. The chapter widens the lens of enquiry to consider the importance of the symbolism of water as an abstract commodity in processes of gentrification. It is shown that in the UK context, there is limited research that explores the importance of the coastal landscape (or seascape) itself as a commodity that gentrifiers are consuming.

Having introduced the spatial context of the coast, Chapter 3 focuses on the opening and closing of rent-gaps in coastal towns. The chapter considers the economic changes in the rent-gap itself, as well as the cultural changes to people's lifestyle with their association to the meanings and representations of the coast. This is achieved through an exploration of historical changes in coastal towns, which is presented through a portrayal of cycles of

investment and disinvestment. The chapter also focuses on contemporary portrayals of coastal towns in the political arena, and the impact these policies have on the regeneration of coastal towns.

Chapter 4 provides a discussion on the methodological framework adopted. A mixed-method approach has been utilised and the chapter addresses the three key phases of the research: the contextual study (primarily newspaper content analyses and the extraction and analysis of 2001 GB census data); semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders involved in the regeneration of St Leonards; and an in-depth household questionnaire survey. Chapter 4 will also illuminate theoretical, positionality, and ethical considerations.

Chapter 5 focuses on the case-study location of St Leonards and considers how historical factors, as well as recent policy initiatives have shaped the town. The chapter charts the history of St Leonards through its growth in tourism to its eventual decline as a coastal resort. Associated with this are concerns of housing quality, crime, the public realm, and employment opportunities. The chapter considers the regeneration history of St Leonards as portrayed through the newspaper analysis and local council documents. The roles of different stakeholders involved in the regeneration of the town are also explored. Importantly, the analysis suggests that processes akin to gentrification are unfolding in St Leonards.

Chapter 6 draws upon findings from semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders to consider the impact that in-migration has had on St Leonards.   By evaluating the role(s) played by these stakeholders, the chapter acknowledges the perceptions of change in St Leonards, and examines the 'push' and 'pull' factors attracting migrants to the town. This is achieved through an exploration of the roles of different stakeholders in the marketing of the coastal town.

Chapter 7 presents findings from 173 door-to-door household surveys of local residents in the case-study area. Through a consideration of the demographic, socio-economic, and cultural characteristics of the respondents, the chapter reveals social geographies within St Leonards which are shown to be integral to understanding the processes of change examined in earlier chapters. The discussion explores the key factors underpinning the diverse socio-economic and cultural characteristics of the areas, and how this influences perceptions of change in St Leonards.

Finally, Chapter 8 draws together the main conceptual, theoretical and empirical contributions of the thesis, and revisits the aims of the thesis. The chapter suggests that it is beneficial to distinguish coastal gentrification from urban and rural gentrification. To emphasise this point, the chapter argues that there is merit in utilising the term 'coastification'. The chapter also considers implications of coastification for public policy and poses the question: Can policies to regenerate coastal towns inherently embed the concept of 'sustainable gentrification'?

Chapter 2: Contemporary expressions of gentrification

2.0 Introduction

Debates about gentrification have been underpinned by different theoretical perspectives and conceptualisations. Debates have hence raged about: (1) the different stages of gentrification processes (Clay, 1979); (2) the conditions that enable gentrification to unfold (N.Smith, 1986); and (3) the effects of gentrification on various segments of society, in particular indigenous and displaced populations (Freeman, 2006; Slater, 2006, 2008).

Current debates within gentrification scholarship focus on the diversification and mutation of traditional gentrification. As Lees *et al.* (2007) suggest, the classical definition, as established by Ruth Glass and early researchers in the field, is no longer valid for understanding the process in contemporary settings. Thus, the conceptual boundaries of gentrification have needed to be extended to encompass emerging and new spatial expressions of gentrification. At the same time, there are other academics, such as Boddy (2007) and Buzar *et al.* (2007), who suggest that extending the boundary dilutes the term so that it is no longer a useful concept. Drawing on Sayer (1982), it might be argued that gentrification is a 'chaotic concept'. The result is some commentators argue that new forms of settlement change should not necessarily be compartmentalised into gentrification dialogues but should instead be conceptualised as processes of re-urbanisation and/or counterurbanisation (Boddy, 2007).

With this as its starting point, this chapter focuses on classic definitions of gentrification and aims to critically evaluate 'other', more recent, expressions of gentrification. In doing so, the chapter considers whether the conceptual boundaries of gentrification can be usefully extended to make sense of wider socio-spatial changes. To do this, the chapter is divided into four sections. Section 2.1 provides a critical interpretation to the author's understanding of gentrification. The section begins with a discussion on the multiple meanings of gentrification and how contemporary definitions have evolved (or mutated) from the original definition provided by Glass (1964) to assume today's status of gentrification as a generalised 'blueprint' across the urban-rural hierarchy. Key here will be the exploration of the changing

'waves' of gentrification, drawing upon N.Smith and Hackworth's (2001) conceptualisation of the temporal dimensions of gentrification. Section 2.2 explores emerging geographies of gentrification to identify whether these forms should be seen as simple extensions of classical gentrification, or need to be viewed as distinct processes and considered outside the gentrification umbrella. This section provides a detailed focus on rural gentrification as one of the 'other' expressions of gentrification, and draws upon the similarities and differences between urban and rural gentrification. Section 2.3 widens the lens of enquiry to consider the importance of the symbolism of water as an abstract commodity in processes of gentrification. In the UK context, there is limited research that explores the importance of the coastal landscape (or seascape) itself as a commodity that gentrifiers are consuming. Drawing on studies from Australia and North America, parallels are identified which suggest that the seascape is an important commodity that underpins the consumption choices of coastal gentrifiers. Finally, Section 2.4 offers a conclusion to the chapter, and considers the role coastal towns have to play as a socio-spatial context for exploring the unfolding processes of gentrification.

2.1 Biographies of gentrification

Gentrification as a concept was first introduced in the early 1960's by UK sociologist Ruth Glass (1964: xvii):

> "One by one, many of the working-class quarters of London have been invaded by the middle classes – upper and lower. Shabby, modest mews and cottages – two rooms up and two down – have been taken over, when their leases have expired, and have become elegant, expensive residences … Once this process of 'gentrification' starts in a district it goes on rapidly until all or most of the original working-class occupiers are displaced and the whole social character of the district is changed".

In this definition, gentrification has four specific conditions: (1) the displacement of residents; (2) the physical upgrading of the neighbourhood – particularly of housing stock; (3) change in neighbourhood character; and, (4) an inner-city phenomenon of the global north. It has been half a century since Glass first coined the term, yet gentrification remains a widely researched and contested phenomenon. Most notably what we have seen is the location, scale, impact and types of gentrifiers diversifying (D.Smith, 2002b; D.Smith and Butler, 2007; Rérat *et al.*, 2010a), leading to gentrification being seen as an umbrella term that encompasses many

derivatives. As a result, it can be argued that definitions like that of Glass need adapting to reflect contemporary expressions of gentrification, even if at its heart there remain consistent emphasis on class change and displacement.

2.1.1 The waves of gentrification

N.Smith and Hackworth's (2001) conceptualisation of the temporal dimensions of gentrification provides a useful first step in understanding why definitions have changed, as well as examining how and why gentrification has evolved. They argue gentrification has witnessed three waves (pre 1973, late 1970's to late 1980's, and since mid 1990's)[1], linked to the wider processes of globalisation in general, and recessions which have occurred between each. Taking each in turn, the first wave of gentrification (pre 1973) was seen to be a sporadic process that was highly localised in neighbourhoods of major cities in the US, Western Europe and Australia. Key here was the role of the state, which injected funds into declining and disinvested inner-city housing stock for consumption by gentrifiers.

The economic downturn of the 1970's set the stage for the second wave of gentrification from the late 1970's as "developers and investors used the downturn in property values to consume large portions of devalorised neighbourhoods" (N.Smith and Hackworth, 2001: 467). Revival of property markets in the late 1970's resulted in the rapid expansion and acceleration of processes of gentrification, including in non-global cities. Gentrification thereby became integrated into a "wider range of economic and cultural processes" (N.Smith and Hackworth, 2001: 468). The roles of artists and pioneer gentrifiers, had high levels of cultural capital, were seen to be of growing importance in fuelling the growth of middle class inner-city neighbourhoods. In addition, private investment was a key factor in the growth of neighbourhoods for the middle and upper classes. It was also at this time, however, that the negative impacts of gentrification also came to the fore of people's attention. Issues of homelessness, eviction and resultant social polarisation became increasingly prominent and a source for much debate (Paton, 2010; Slater, 2009).

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[1] Lees *et al*. (2007: 179) suggest that North America is experiencing a fourth wave of gentrification which is characterized by an 'intensified financialization of housing combined with the consolidation of pro-gentrification politics and polarized urban policies.

Gentrification began to slow down once more in the late 1980's – the result of constricted flows of capital into neighbourhoods experiencing processes linked to gentrification. By the early 1990's the impacts of the global recession were much more visible with "gentrification coming to a halt in some neighbourhoods and severely curtailed in others" (N.Smith and Hackworth, 2001: 468). As a result, scholars such as Bourne (1993a) argue that cities would start to experience degentrification, but by the mid 1990's it was clear that gentrification was not coming to an end. A third wave of gentrification was unfolding – contemporary gentrification (also referred to as ,post-recession gentrification, by N.Smith and Hackworth, 2001). Today, scholars such as Lees (2009) are considering the impact of the current post-2008 global economic recession and its possible impact of curtailing gentrification.

Arguably, contemporary gentrification is different from earlier waves of gentrification. Gentrification has become generalised across space, such that third wave gentrification is a "purer expression of the economic conditions and processes that make reinvestment in disinvested inner areas so alluring for investors" (N.Smith and Hackworth, 2001: 468). Linking gentrification to large-scale capital, four changes that distinguish the occurrence of contemporary gentrification are identified by Hackworth (2002) as:

1. The role of pioneer gentrifiers has demised, with corporate developers seen as the leading initiators of gentrification.
2. Local and National governments are key in providing opportunities for, and facilitating the occurrence of gentrification.
3. Anti-gentrification movements have become more marginalized as gentrification becomes integrated in regeneration policies.
4. Gentrification is diffusing into more remote neighbourhoods.

There are three main implications of this shift. First, the role of the state in gentrification practices has increased. In the British context this is demonstrated through the language of urban renaissance discourses in post-1997 urban policy, and documents such as *Urban White Paper: Our Towns and Cities – the Future: Delivering Urban Renaissance* (Department for Environment, Transport and the Regions [DETR], 2000) and *The Greater London Plan* (Greater London Authority [GLA], 2004) (Davidson, 2008; Lees, 2008; Paton, 2010; Rousseau, 2011; Wyly and Hammel, 2008). Furthermore, the role of the state is not just at the national level, but also important at the local level, with, for example, UK local authorities

playing an active part in the unfolding of state-led gentrification (Davidson and Lees, 2010; He, 2010; Kern, 2010).

Second, gentrification has diffused across spatial scales. Current expressions of gentrification have become somewhat generalised (with accusations of creating placeless 'blandscapes') (N.Smith, 2002, 2011) given "there is something there in most parts of the world which we would recognise as some form of the phenomenon that we call gentrification" (Butler, 2007: 164).

Third, Hackworth (2002) suggests that the role of the pioneer gentrifier has demised, but scholars such as Saracino-Brown (2009) disagree, suggesting that the pioneer gentrifier not only has an important role to play in the gentrification process, but there is now diversity in the types of pioneer gentrifiers. These three factors form the basis of the discussion that follows.

2.1.2   State-led contemporary gentrification

Symptomatic of how gentrification has become a 'global urban strategy' (N.Smith, 2002), linked to globalisation and a related new urbanism, the end of the twentieth century witnessed a renewed interest by the state in the facilitation, acceleration and expansion of gentrification. In the British context, scholars of gentrification argue that the post-1997 Labour Government promoted gentrification under the banner of 'urban renaissance' with their prescribed concepts and ways of living being closely tied to gentrification practices (Lees 2003). Making city living more attractive to the professional middle classes was at the forefront of the British policy agenda (Boddy, 2007), resulting in what N.Smith (2002: 438) suggests as the "generalization of gentrification in the urban landscape". The construct of this 'urban renaissance' can be attributed to a number of governmental reports including the Urban Task Force Report: *Towards an Urban Renaissance* (DETR, 1999); the 2000 Urban White Paper: *Our Towns and Cities – the Future: Delivering Urban Renaissance* (DETR, 2000) and the *Greater London Plan* (GLA, 2004). These strategies are packaged as positive change and varyingly promoted as promoting 'mixed communities' (Davidson and Lees, 2009; Wacquant, 2008); 'urban revitalisation' (Van Criekingen, 2010), 'knowledge-based economy' (Kern, 2010) and 'creative neighbourhoods' (Jakob, 2010; Kagan and Hahn, 2011) – indicative of the can-do bravado associated with new urbanist ideals (Grant, 2006). However,

an important point to note here is the lack of the use of the word gentrification in the policy arena. As Lees *et al*. (2007: xix) note, policy documents use terms like 'urban renaissance', 'urban regeneration', and 'urban sustainability', perhaps because these "neutered terms politely avoid the class constitution of the processes involved".

As gentrification increasingly becomes a 'tool-kit' for the promotion of urban renaissance by the state, "a gentrification 'blueprint' is being mass-produced, mass-marketed, and mass-consumed around the world" (Davidson and Lees 2005: 1167). Consequently, in Britain (as elsewhere) provincial gentrification has unfolded, often being state-led through urban renaissance programmes, and focuses on the social and economic regeneration of otherwise declining areas.

2.1.3   Gentrification generalised – the global manifestation of gentrification

One of the key differences between conventional and contemporary definitions of gentrification is the spatial extent at which the process unfolds. Gentrification is no longer a process specific to inner-city neighbourhoods, but extends to unfold across various spatial settings ranging from brown-field sites in the form of new-build gentrification (Davidson and Lees, 2005, 2010; Kern, 2010; Rérat *et al*., 2010b); to the suburbs of cities (Badcock, 2001; Robson and Butler, 2001; N.Smith and DeFilippis, 1999; N.Smith and Hackworth, 2001); university towns (D.Smith and Holt, 2007); rural locations (M.Phillips 1993, 2002, 2004, 2005; D.Smith 2002a; D.Smith and D.Phillips 2001; Stokedale, 2010); and coastal locations (D.Smith, 2007; Truder, 2009). It is suggested that this diversification of gentrification in the context of its geographical spread can be attributed to globalisation in terms of "the growth of an international professional managerial class and the new or rehabilitated residential enclaves which these social groups choose to colonise" (Atkinson and Bridge, 2005: 1). The question here is: 'why do some social groups choose to locate in specific locales and neighbourhoods'? For some people, residential choices are an important source of "identity construction for individuals" (Butler, 2007: 164). Sense of place has become a basis for the ontological security of professionals seeking the habitus of neighbourhood living, crucially with like-minded people. However, it is also important to note that:

> "local cultures clearly have a continued agency in shaping the gentrification process to an extent far greater than is recognised by those who paint a picture of

gentrification as broadly and blandly a process of global urban neocolonialism performed by upper professional groups" (Butler, 2007: 178).

Recent studies have shown that gentrification is not specifically an urban phenomenon concerned with cities of the global North (Atkinson and Bridge, 2005; N.Smith, 2011). These studies (discussed further Section 2.2) identify the occurrence of gentrification across the urban-rural continuum on a global scale. According to Atkinson and Bridge the extension of the spatial limits of gentrification raises important questions about the role of the gentrifier and the various types of neighbourhoods involved, requiring an:

> "expanded imagination and nuanced reading of the profile and contextual unravelling of the process. This has led to discussions about the emerging differences of provincial forms of gentrification and instances where the gentrification aesthetic has a weaker link to class identity.… In other words, the wider social, economic, political and cultural benchmarks within which gentrification has been interpreted have themselves shifted dramatically in a quarter of a century" (Atkinson and Bridge, 2005: 3).

Consequently, gentrification can be seen as a useful tool for both identifying and understanding the varying relationship between people and place across numerous settings throughout the world.

2.1.4   Artists as pioneer gentrifiers

As noted, Hackworth (2002) suggests the role of the pioneer gentrifier has demised. However, and in the context of this thesis it is useful to remember and consider who the gentrifiers are (in general) and the role of the pioneer gentrifiers in particular, within the gentrification process. This is because, along with unfolding of gentrification at different spatial scales, the types of gentrifiers involved in the gentrification process have also diversified. Moreover, different types of gentrifiers are assisting in different expressions of gentrification. Inner-city gentrification, for instance, is associated with young, upcoming professionals ('yuppies'), while rural gentrification is often associated with family-forming couples perceiving the countryside to be a safer environment for children (D.Smith and D.Phillips, 2001). Scholarly debates have also acknowledged the roles of, *inter alia*, women (Bondi, 1991; Lyons, 1996; N. Smith, 1987; Warde, 1991), gay men (Castells, 1983; Knopp, 1990; Lauria and Knopp, 1985; N.Smith, 1987, 1996), lesbians (Rothenberg, 1995; D.Smith, and Holt, 2002), students (D.Smith, 2002c, 2002d, 2004, 2009), financiers (Lees, 2002,

2003), Black and Minority Ethnic [BME] communities (Freeman, 2006) and retired professionals (Hall, 2004) in the gentrification process. The various impacts that these different groups have on the way in which gentrification unfolds should not be under-estimated, for as Rose (1984: 58) cautions: "what conceptual grounds exist for assuming that the 'first stage' and the 'end stage' affluent residents have anything in common other than the fact that their household incomes are higher than the original residents?" Quite simply, gentrifiers have different consumption and cultural patterns, giving rise to the different types of gentrification experiences visible in the current era (Butler and Robson, 2004).

Whilst gentrification is usually associated with the middle classes (Ley, 1996), these middle classes do not initiate the gentrification of neighbourhoods. Gentrification is typically initiated by pioneer gentrifiers, otherwise known as first-stage gentrifiers. With reference to the first stage of gentrification, Clay (1979) characterises the pioneer gentrifiers as a small group of risk-oblivious people whom move into a neighbourhood because they are interested in investing in, and renovating dwellings for their own use. The conceptualisation of the pioneer gentrifier has also diversified. Brown-Saracino (2004, 2007, 2009) critically unpicks our general understanding of the pioneer gentrifier to identify three types of pioneer gentrifiers based on their ideologies surrounding gentrification and how they define themselves as gentrifiers:

1) *Ruthless pioneers* who retake space from others;
2) *Social homesteaders* "who engage in transformation of poor and working-class neighborhoods to serve middle class purposes," (Brown-Saracino, 2009:10) yet do this cautiously as they are attracted to the idea of a neighborhood that remains diverse and affordable; and,
3) *Social preservationists* who "engage in a set of political, symbolic, and private practices to maintain the authenticity of their place of residence, primarily by working to prevent old-timers' displacement" (Brown-Saracino, 2009:9).

Important, not just in the context of this thesis, are the 'social homesteaders' and 'social preservationists' as both groups "express nostalgia for 'traditional' community rooted in fear of the constant evolution of space" (Brown-Saracino, 2009: 152): that is, they worry further gentrification will destroy the authenticity of place. However, at the same time, "social preservation is not an effort to return to an earlier era. Rather, it is an effort to prevent change,

to 'freeze' a place before gentrification alters it" (Brown-Saracino, 2004: 152-53). It can be argued that the practices of various groups of pioneer gentrifiers juxtapose their ability to freeze gentrification. This is because pioneer gentrifiers also become an attraction for future in-migrants. In addition they are not always able to resist regeneration practices of other stakeholders involved in the process such as private investors and the state.

As mentioned previously, there are different types of gentrifiers involved in the process. With reference to pioneer gentrifiers, a group acknowledged in scholarly debates are artists (and individuals from related creative industries) who prepare the way for future stages of gentrification to unfold (Jakob, 2010; Kagan and Hahn, 2011; Makagon, 2010). Ley (1996: 191) suggests that the "urban artist is commonly the expeditionary force for the inner-city gentrifiers", and the "advancing or colonising arm" of the middle class. In particular, artists are a pioneer for a specific fraction of the middle classes which Ley suggests are the 'new middle class' (also termed the 'new cultural class'). These are "professionals in arts and applied arts, the media, teaching, and social services such as social work and in other public – and non-profit-sector positions" (Ley, 1994: 15). The relationship between the artists and this fraction of the middle class can also be identified through their shared values:

> "The population that follows artists does not enter the field haphazardly, but in a succession that is shaped by their proximity to the aesthetic disposition and cultural competency of the artist. The aesthetic appropriation of place, with its valuation of the commonplace and off-centre, appeals to other professionals, particularly those who are also higher in cultural capital than in economic capital and who share something of the artist's antipathy towards commerce and convention" (Ley, 2003: 2540).

With reference to urban regeneration programmes, the role of art and creative industries are often cited as a successful tool for regeneration (Cameron and Coaffee, 2005; Florida, 2002; Jakob, 2010; Makagon, 2010). Noteworthy here is the concept of the creative class and the implications this has for urban regeneration as theorised by Richard Florida (a leading American urban studies theorist). Florida (2002) gives importance to the creative class as a driver of regeneration due to the ability of this group to spur economic growth through innovation. However it is important to make a distinction between the types of 'creativity' being referred to. Whilst Ley (1994, 1996) refers to a particular set of arts-based and related industries, Florida (2002) on the other hand provides a different definition where the creative

class is a demographic segment made up of knowledge workers, intellectuals and various types of artists.

Florida (2002: 69) suggests that the creative class is made up of two groups:

1) *Super-Creative Core:* a wide range of occupations (e.g. science, engineering, education, computer programming, and research), with those belonging to this group "fully engaging in the creative process".

2) *Creative Professionals:* the classic knowledge-based workers and includes those working in healthcare, business and finance, the legal sector, and education. This group of individuals "draw on complex bodies of knowledge to solve specific problems".

Clearly, this definition of individuals working within the creative sector differs from accounts of cultural geographers such as Ley (1994, 1996) and economic geographers like Markusen (2006). In Florida's definition occupations related to arts, design and media are only one subset, instead of the main driver (see Ley, 1994, 1996). Markusen (2006), for instance, suggests that Florida's definition of the creative class is based largely on educational attainment, suggesting that Florida's indices become insignificant after controlling for education. However, despite these differences Florida's indices of the creative class form the global urban strategy used within regeneration frameworks in this century (Clifton, 2008). The ability to attract creative people in arts and cultural fields is seen to provide a distinct advantage in spurring economic growth (Gertler *et al*., 2002). At the same time, there is wide criticism over Florida's definition of the creative classes and their role in regeneration: accordingly Florida's model for the creative classes is not adopted in the context of this thesis. Important instead, is the role of artists and creative individuals as pioneer gentrifiers. These are individuals with limited incomes and economic capital, yet high social and cultural capital (Ley, 2003). Therefore, for the purpose of this thesis, discussions on arts, artists and individuals from creative backgrounds refers to Ley's (1994, 1996) depiction of the 'new cultural class', as opposed to Florida's (2002) depiction of the creative class.

2.1.5   A definition of contemporary gentrification?

Glass' definition draws attention to gentrification as a class-based phenomenon affecting inner-city neighbourhoods in countries across Western Europe, as well as parts of North

America and Australia. However, if we apply this definition to contemporary expressions of gentrification, a problem arises with regard to the spatiality of the phenomenon. Scholars such as Davidson and Lees (2005) and N.Smith (2002: 390) argue that studies of gentrification to date have failed to "problematise the locations of gentrification adequately". This is not just limited to gentrification but a wider, globalization related, phenomena (see J.Robinson, 2002). As such, scholars recognise that it is necessary to widen the spatial lens of gentrification to consider different locales across the urban-rural continuum (M.Phillips, 2004; D.Smith, 2002b).

This is not to argue that Glass' definition is not valid in contemporary expressions of gentrification, but rather that, when adapted, it can provide a useful start point for understanding gentrification. Davidson and Lees (2005: 1187) suggest that we need to hold onto the core elements of gentrification which they state as:

> "(1) the reinvestment of capital, (2) the social upgrading of locale by incoming high-income groups, (3) landscape change, (4) direct or indirect displacement of low income groups; and that we do not attach it to a particular landscape or context".

These elements are linked to the broader processes of spatial, economic and social restructuring, where gentrification should not be considered as a unitary phenomenon, and instead "be examined in each case according to its own logic and outcomes" (Butler and Robson, 2001b: 2160). This suggests that place becomes important and must be central to accounts of gentrification. Furthermore, Freeman (2008: 186) suggests that "gentrification's impacts are multifaceted, affecting different people differently and even the same individuals in different ways". As a result, a definition is required that incorporates the above core elements. Slater *et al.* (2004: 1145) argue that gentrification should encompass all the processes related to the "production of space for – and consumption by – a more affluent and very different incoming population". Therefore, the concept of gentrification needs to be decoupled from being a process specifically connected to the deindustrialisation of metropolitan centres and its working-class displacement (Butler, 2007).

A useful definition that takes this into account is provided by Clark (2005: 258), who defines gentrification as:

"a process involving a change in the population of land-users such that the new users are of a higher socio-economic status than the previous users, together with an associated change in the built environment through a reinvestment in fixed capital. The greater the difference in socio-economic status, the more noticeable the process, not least because the more powerful the new users are, the more marked will be the concomitant change in the built environment. It does not matter where, it does not matter when. Any process of change fitting this description is, to my understanding, gentrification".

This definition is supported by a number of scholars (Butler, 2007; Uitermark, 2007) who suggest it is elastic enough to allow for new processes and the mutations of gentrification to be drawn under its umbrella, yet remaining focused to adhere to the core foundations of gentrification. Noteworthy is how Clark, unlike Glass and other early gentrification scholars does not tie gentrification to the central urban landscape, thus allowing for the process to be understood across different spatialities, where gentrification has both gone global (N.Smith, 2002) and cascaded down the urban hierarchy (Atkinson and Bridge, 2005; Dutton, 2003). In doing so, Clark's definition strikes a balance with contemporary understandings of gentrification and is employed for the purpose of this thesis.

2.2 Exploring the emerging geographies of gentrification

One criticism of traditional approaches to gentrification studies is that they were seen as a unitary phenomenon of inner-cities. With the spread of gentrification across different spatial locations, it is necessary to examine the occurrence of gentrification in each location based on its own logic and outcomes (Butler and Robson, 2001b). This concurs with the work of Beauregard (1990) who suggests that the gentrification of individual neighbourhoods follows different trajectories, and thus the nature of gentrification partly depends on the characteristics of the area, as well as the local people involved. Beauregard's notion has been well recognised in the third wave, as the lens of gentrification has been stretched to examine mutating processes operating along the rural-urban continuum, resulting in not only a "more diffused form of gentrification" (Bridge, 2007: 32), but also in new types of gentrification such as greentrification (D.Smith and D.Phillips, 2001), super-gentrification (Lees, 2003) and studentification (D.Smith, 2005).

What this has stimulated is a strong debate as to whether these mutated forms of gentrification should be included within the umbrella of gentrification studies. Scholars such as Boddy

(2007: 98) argue, for instance, that the conceptual boundary of gentrification has been stretched too far, and that it no longer remains "useful and credible as a means of understanding the processes at work". As such, it is necessary to examine the 'other' geographies of gentrification in order to understand if the term gentrification still remains useful, particularly when it is loaded with mutated forms and derivatives of classical gentrification.

2.2.1 'Other' geographies of gentrification – the mutation of gentrification

To examine this debate, it is necessary to first discuss a few mutations of gentrification - namely super-gentrification, studentification, new-build gentrification and provincial gentrification - before going on to provide a more in-depth discussion of rural gentrification. The latter is particularly pertinent since there are parallels with the coast in terms of representations of nature. These other geographies are explored in line with Clark's definition of contemporary gentrification to ascertain if they provide a useful input to our understanding of gentrification, or simply stretch the conceptual boundaries too far.

2.2.1.1 Super-gentrification

Whilst stage models of gentrification suggest the end point of the process to be mature gentrification[2], there is evidence to prove otherwise. Scholars such as Butler and Robson (2003), and Lees (2000, 2003b) suggest that certain, previously gentrified, neighbourhoods of global cities are witnessing (re)gentrification, a process which Lees (a leading scholar on urban gentrification) terms super-gentrification. Super-gentrification is identified as a further level of intensified gentrification, which is

> "used to demonstrate that this is not only a higher level of gentrification, but also one superimposed on an already gentrified neighbourhood; one that has global connections – social, economic, and cultural; and one that involves a higher financial or economic investment in the neighbourhood than previous waves of gentrification, and as such requires a qualitative different level of economic resource" (Lees *et al.*, 2007: 149).

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[2] Clay (1979) defines mature gentrification as the fourth stage of the gentrification process where the majority of properties in a neighbourhood are gentrified, and new residents are from the business and managerial middle class than from the professional middle class.

In essence, super-gentrification is the (re)gentrification of an already gentrified neighbourhood, the main driver of which is finance and financial sector workers (Butler and Robson, 2003). What super-gentrification does is complicate mainstream accounts of gentrification which identify mature gentrification as an end-stage. This expression of gentrification into super-gentrification raises important questions about our understanding of the end point of gentrification, allowing for future changes in areas already gentrified through a displacement of those who previously displaced others.

2.2.1.2 Studentification

The occurrence of studentification is attributed by D.Smith (2002c, 2002d) as the process of social, environmental, and economic change caused by the gathering of students in particular neighbourhoods of cities and towns where universities are located. The current expansion of studentification can be attributed to the growth in higher education over the last decade. However, this is not something new to our understandings of gentrification. Ley's (1996) research on first wave gentrification notes the role of baby boomers reaching college age in the 1960's, and the resultant opening of new universities for this cohort. Furthermore (D. Smith and Holt, 2007: 144) suggests that "higher education students were at the forefront of the redefinition of the symbolics and meaning of declining urban places during the early rounds of gentrification".

Appreciation of the role of students in the processes of gentrification is an important element in our understanding of the life-course geographies of gentrifiers. D.Smith and Holt (2007) view studentification as part of the 'gentrification factory', because "these apprentice gentrifiers represent potential groupings of future gentrifiers" (D.Smith, 2005: 86). For example, the cultural practices and lifestyle choices of students are changing the socio-spatial landscape as settlement growth areas in provincial locations such as Bristol, Edinburgh. Glasgow, Manchester, and Birmingham, are providing "the opportunity for cultural consumption and for continuing the conviviality of student life whilst setting out on a career" (Butler and Hamnett, 1994: 483). This decision-making process can also be attributed to the exclusionary nature of the London housing market for recent graduates (Buck *et al.*, 2002; Hamnett, 2003); suggesting the need to rethink our perceptions of contemporary geographies of gentrification.

2.2.1.3 Provincial gentrification

Whilst previous rounds of gentrification had a theoretical and empirical focus on global and large metropolitan cities (Dutton, 2003), in the current wave cascading effects of gentrification down the urban hierarchy are taking place (Atkinson and Bridge, 2005). This is not to suggest that "gentrification does not occur in cities further down the urban hierarchy until saturation occurs in high-order cities" (Lees *et al*., 2007: 171), but rather the mechanisms and conditions are in place that make it easier for gentrification to cascade down the hierarchy. Lees (2006) identifies three possible mechanisms that have facilitated the increased observance of provincial gentrification:

1. *Economic:* The rent-gaps of major metropolitan cities are now exhausted, and thus capital now seeks out new frontiers lower down the urban hierarchy. (Dutton, 2005). However, the associated risk is greater in smaller cities, one which institutional actors in the form of corporate developers are more able to bear compared to the individual pioneer household.

2. *Cultural:* Gentrification lifestyles have diffused from the centre to the periphery. Again the role of institutional actors, namely the mass media has been important in reproducing the values and meanings attached to gentrification from one locale to another (Podmore, 1998).

3. *Policy:* The role of the state has been influential in provincial gentrification, with smaller cities borrowing urban renaissance policies and plans from larger cities.

This 'tool-kit' approach used by the state, combined with the reproductions of the cultural values by the mass media, and the economic investment opportunities available, has resulted in a cascading pattern of gentrification. Thus, we are now witnessing a "more diffuse[d] form of gentrification" (Bridge, 2007: 38), which is rapidly descending the urban hierarchy (N.Smith, 2002).

2.2.1.4 New-build gentrification

New-build gentrification is probably the most contested of all contemporary expressions of gentrification. Whilst it is generally accepted that new-build developments can be characterized within the gentrification framework (Rérat and Lees, 2011; K.Shaw, 2008), there are still ongoing debates surrounding issues of displacement.. Lambert and Boddy

(2002: 139) suggest that whilst there may be parallels with gentrification such as "new geographies of neighbourhood change, new middle class fractions colonising new areas of central urban space, and attachment to a distinctive lifestyle and urban aesthetic", they argue that new-build developments are built on brown-field land and consequently do not displace a pre-existing residential population. For them, such developments should be seen as processes of re-urbanisation by people buying into a different version of urban living.

Drawing up the case for and against new-build gentrification, Davidson and Lees (2005) suggest that whilst new-build developments are different in character, there are parallels between them and previous waves of gentrification, as:

> "New-build `gentrification' is just that because it involves middle class resettlement of the central city, the production of a gentrified landscape, and lower income displacement in the adjacent residential communities" (Davidson and Lees, 2005: 1169).

There are a number of studies that support this argument. For instance, Hamnett and Whitelegg (2007: 122) identify loft conversions in Clerkenwell, London as:

> "a clear example of gentrification without displacement although it may well be accompanied by growing feelings of relative deprivation on the part of existing residents who have seen traditional working men's cafes and pubs replaced by swish restaurants, wine bars, kitchen shops and florists".

This suggests that displacement is a result of new developments acting as "beachheads from which the tentacles of gentrification can spread into the surrounding neighbourhoods" (Davidson and Lees, 2005: 1184). Furthermore, these developments attract what Rofe (2000, 2003) terms 'production gentrifiers', that is those who buy into an already-commodified gentrification landscape. Production gentrifiers are therefore different from 'consumption gentrifiers', who see gentrification as a process of place-making (Bridge, 2007).

2.2.2   Rural gentrification

Rural gentrification is probably one of the earliest derivatives of traditional gentrification, and early understanding of the phenomenon can be linked to research by Parsons in 1980. Parsons, a rural geographer suggested that rural settlement planning policies were influential in the occurrence of rural gentrification in south Nottinghamshire and north Norfolk. This

was a result of the lack of low- and medium-cost local-authority housing in areas not selected for growth. Rural gentrification is, in its simplest form, the process of gentrification in rural locations rather than the more commonly ascribed urban context which spawned the initial conception of the term. More specifically, it links the socioeconomic and cultural transformation of the rural landscape with new middle class resettlement patterns. Indeed, whilst occurrences of rural gentrification have been identified in previous waves of gentrification, it is noticeable that they have very much come to the fore in the third wave where there has been more acceptance of rural gentrification not as an opposite to the urban, but a complementary parallel (M.Phillips, 2002, 2004), and as an "illustration of a mutating process operating along a rural-urban continuum" (Lees *et al*., 2007: 137). The rural gentrification literature is however, very much developed in a British context with Darling (2005) identifying four key issues:

1. *Shifts in the class structure of rural Britain*: colonization of the countryside by exurban or suburban middle class home owners whose lifestyle choices are associated with the consumption of the rural idyll and nature. This leads to the displacement of working-class rural residents as a result of the increase in house prices.
2. *Movement towards a 'post-productivist' landscape* where industrial and agricultural production gives way to service orientated development, often including real estate conversion (Lowe *et al*., 1993).
3. *Changes to the composition of the rural housing stock* focusing on changes in patterns of ownership, changing housing polices and characteristics of the housing stock itself.
4. *Shifts in theorization between rural and urban gentrification*, focusing on the production and consumption debates of gentrification.

Of these the fourth point is crucial to the discussion here, because it examines the parallels and difference between urban and rural gentrification.

Focusing on the production side debates of gentrification, M.Phillips (1993, 2002, 2004, 2005, 2010) notes a number of parallels between urban gentrification and rural research:

1. Rapid monetary gains can be made from buying and selling houses in the countryside. Rural residents are also renovating properties to increase exchange values (M.Phillips, 1993).

2. Rural housing development studies focus on new-build construction as opposed to renovation of existing housing stock. This has parallels with new-build gentrification. Furthermore, urban gentrification practices in countryside/market towns contain rural analogues (DETR, 2001; Countryside Agency, 2001).

3. Rose's (1989) notion of marginal gentrification can be witnessed in residential refurbishments by people on moderate incomes seeking access in highly competitive housing markets (see also Cloke *et al*., 1995, 1998).

4. Early notions of the 'post-productivist' countryside such as those by Kneale *et al*. (1992) and Murdoch and Marsden (1994) focused on "the de-valorisation of land and building with respect to agricultural capital and its uneven revalorisation with respect to other capital networks" (M.Phillips, 2005: 479).

These parallels suggest that gentrification can occur regardless of the spatial context. If this is the case, then the question that can be posed is: 'does urbanity and rurality matter at all in our understanding of gentrification'? (M.Phillips *et al*., 2008). It can be argued that it is important to keep discussions of rurality and urbanity in gentrification studies as both involve different cohorts of gentrifiers who buy into different commodities. One of the major differences is "the integration of class positions within households and the influences of patriarchal gender identities" (M.Phillips, 1993: 138). Whilst urban gentrification is seen as a result of the breakdown of patriarchal households, rural gentrification can be attributed to the continuity of the patriarchal household (M.Phillips, 1993). Other differences between urban and rural gentrification can be identified in Table 2.1.

	Urban Gentrification	**Rural Gentrification**
Social Change	Middle classes displace the working class.	The middle class displace the working class and replace other middle class fractions (Cloke and Thrift, 1987).
Life stage	Single households and couples living without children.	Couples at a family forming stage of the life cycle.
Spatial Location	Inner-city: Reversal of the process of suburbanisation (N.Smith, 1992).	Countryside: Continuation of the flight of the middle classes from inner-city areas (N.Smith, 1992).
Migration Choices	Accessibility to services, entertainment located within city centers.	Attractions of a healthy, peaceful, natural, idyllic way of life associated with the countryside.
Reproductive Activities	Urban locations are favoured because they minimise journey-to-work costs, and result in the enhanced efficiency in household production (Markusen, 1981).	Residency in rural locations results in a relative deprivation in terms of access to services which are counterbalanced by the perceived potential of community provision.
Positional Goods and Consumption Activities.	The rise of 'public markets, restaurants, jogging paths and marinas (Mills, 1988: 181-182) and 'theme parks, tourist and recreational centres…museums, galleries …malls and shopping centres' (Featherstone, 1991:96-96).	Gentrification also includes an expenditure on 'commodities such as local craft production, countryside leisure pursuits such as horse riding, and rural tourism within country craft museums, heritage centres and historical market towns' (M.Phillips, 1993:126).

Table 2.1: Differences between urban and rural gentrification. Adapted from: M.Phillips (1993).

Understanding the similarities and differences between the specifics of gentrification in urban and rural contexts allows us to recognise (and understand) the diversity of gentrification. This also represents rural gentrification not as an opposite to its urban form, but rather "another illustration of a mutating process operating along a rural-urban continuum" (Lees *et al*., 2007: 137).

One of the key differentiations of rural gentrification from urban gentrification is identified as the "heightened presence of nature" (M.Phillips *et al*., 2008: 57, see also Stockdale, 2010) and

its associated idyllic representations of rurality – where the countryside is an illustration of ideal society, one which is "orderly, harmonious, healthy, secure, peaceful and a refuge from modernity" (Ilbery, 1998: 3). As Darling (2005: 1022) notes in the context of 'wilderness gentrification' in the American countryside, the key commodity that attracts gentrifiers is not the typical assumptions of "proximity to schools, central business districts (CBDs), and workplaces", but the proximity to wilderness areas and lakefronts. The commodity on sale here is "nature – wilderness, lakes, hiking trails, snowmobile trails, charismatic megafauna, open spaces, and the like" (Darling, 2005: 1022). Thus, it can be argued that both urban and rural spaces have different groups or agents identified as gentrifiers, and consequently, gentrification can be seen to unfold in different ways and for different reasons.

In order to understand the significance of the rural landscape as a cultural commodity, it is necessary to discuss the rural idyll and the role of nature as an attraction for migrants to rural areas. It is noteworthy that there are significant spatial variations in the representation of rural imagery (Cloke *et al.,* 1998; Darling, 2005; M.Phillips, 2004; D.Smith and D.Phillips, 2001), such that the result is the availability of a wide literature where the meanings of the rural have multiplied (Cloke and Thrift, 1994). Consequently, Short (2006) sees the rural idyll as a contested term, due to its ambiguity which allows room for interpretations to be applied to the concept as required. These multiple interpretations of the rural landscape do, however, invoke similar feelings, and cultural mediations because:

> "surrounding the phrase (rural idyll) is a cultural compound … referring to harmony, permanence, security, inner strength, refreshment and renewal. Somewhere there too are family values, community cohesion, a respect for necessary authority and an emblematic nationhood – all being set within surroundings that are aesthetically pleasing" (Short, 2006: 144-145).

These representations of the aesthetic values applied to the rural landscape evoke the sense of peace and tranquillity, and "a haven of sanity and security where the city represents uncertain mayhem" (Halfacree and Boyle, 1998: 9). This is depicted well in Short's (1991: 34) representation of the countryside, which is "pictured as a less-hurried lifestyle where people follow the seasons rather than the stock market, where they have more time for one another and exist in more organic community where people have a place and an authentic role", affirming the countryside's role as a refuge from modernity.

The idyll is built upon representations of landscapes that are perceived as natural, and it is this imagery which is a motivator for migrants to move to rural areas. M.Phillips *et al.* (2008: 70) note that in relation to Old Dalby:

> "for many people it was natural actants, such as the presence of flora, fauna and physical landscapes, in the village environments that held social significance, both through perceived contribution to the general rural character of Old Dalby, and to the specific attractiveness of particular properties and locations".

Being able to interact with such nature is important in consolidating the idyllic imaginations of the rural and helps to evoke feelings of peacefulness, relaxation and tranquillity for residents of such locations (Halfacree, 2006; D.Smith, 2007). These idyllic perceptions of the rural can be seen as attractions, which are constructed as commodities and commodity forms that rural migrants buy into. However, it should also be noted that nature does not only exist in rural areas but is visible in urban areas (for example, parks woodlands and urban beaches) and this has a role to play in some occurrences of urban gentrification (Bryson, 2010). One particular example of this is Central Park in New York City.

2.2.3   Diversified meanings of gentrification?

Whilst there are concerns that new and emerging forms of gentrification are resulting in a 'definitional overload', drawing together the above discussions on super-gentrification, studentification, provincial gentrification, new-build gentrification and rural gentrification serves to illustrate that the perceptions and understanding of the phenomenon by scholars has evolved and, consequently, a more open and broader definition of gentrification is beneficial. Although there is evidence to suggest that there are significant differences between these diverse expressions of gentrification, it is clear that they do "all share something in common – a socioeconomic and indeed cultural transformation due to the middle class colonization or recolonization" (Lees *et al.,* 2007: 159). For me, studying these mutations adds depth to the gentrification debate as it allows researchers to both question, and provide a more inclusive perspective on the geography and history of gentrification. The term should not be seen as a unitary phenomenon that unfolds in the same way regardless of different locations, but rather "examined in each case according to its own logic and outcomes" (Butler and Robson, 2001b: 2160). Therefore, a broader definition allows us to "open up to new insights and indeed

reflect the mutations in the twenty first century of this increasingly active and somewhat different process" (Davidson and Lees, 2005: 1187).

Furthermore, gentrification today is a politically loaded term and this is "one of the reasons why so many people have sought to keep new types of gentrification closely connected to the term 'gentrification'" (Lees *et al.,* 2007: 155). By allowing the word to disintegrate, we lose the political prowess of the term in our understandings of middle class colonization. Indeed, if as Dutton (2005) suggests that the rent-gaps of major metropolitan cities are now exhausted, and thus capital now seeks out new frontiers down the urban hierarchy, then allowing "gentrification enough elasticity to open up to new insights" (Davidson and Lees, 2005: 1187) is paramount in appreciating spatial and contextual differences of the phenomenon.

2.3   Extending the boundary: looking for water in gentrification

Although recent debates have recognised that the footprint of gentrification now extends both, across the global scale, and across the urban-rural hierarchy there are still spatial contexts where our understandings of gentrification are in their infancy. One such spatial context is the role of the coast (and water). As noted earlier, there are examples of studies exploring gentrification at the coast, yet these UK studies do not explore the role of the water as a symbolic commodity that gentrifiers are buying into. The parallels between rural and nature are important in the context of the coast

Although there is limited research on the UK context on coastal gentrification, research can be identified in Australia and North America. Murphy (2002: 1) identifies that it was "the sense of mutually supporting small town community values, anti-materialism and the coastal setting" which drew gentrifiers to Barwon Heads in Australia. Similarly, Kijas (2002: 1) identifies the coastal setting of New South Wales as a motivator in migration decisions:

> "The north coast of New South Wales is bathed in mythic representations… Its romantic allure stretches widely … a surfers paradise of lonely breaks and unpolluted waters, or family contentment on clean, white stretches of beach. It is an image of bounty and great spaciousness".

In the context of North American cities, Sieber (1991: 125) also suggests that:

> "there is a general growth in 'ecological consciousness' regarding water evident in most redeveloping waterfront cities, as the public, private, and especially nonprofits sectors work to enhance and promote their waterways as natural resources".

Furthermore, "new parklands and other leisure areas are designed to provide access – for the most part, passive visual access – to the water itself" (Sieber, 1991: 125). Parallels with rural gentrification can again be drawn in relation to Darling's (2005: 1023) research on 'wilderness gentrification' where she conceptualises the wilderness rent-gap, not as the urban models of distance from inner-city, but instead, as the "proximity to water" with "developable lakefront as the geographical centre of gravity for investment".

These examples from Australia and North America identify the role of the waterside itself as a cultural commodity the migrants to waterfront locations are buying into. Although it can be argued that there are clear parallels between representations of nature in rural and coastal locations; it would be wrong to assume the coast is a homogenous space, as settlements vary in terms of size and function and cross-cut the urban-rural hierarchy. Whilst there is evidence of gentrification research in the spatial context of the coast, these studies tend to be lost within the bounds of urban (coastal cities) and rural gentrification (coastal villages). However, spatial and theoretical gaps exist in relation to declining coastal towns. D.Smith and Holt (2007: 146) identify "declining coastal resorts … which have witnessed successive decades of social and economic disinvestment" as one of the few spaces left which are ripe for gentrification. Based on these observations, it can be hypothesised that coastal towns which were originally coastal resorts that went on to experience severe decline are another socio-spatial context where new geographies of gentrification are emerging. It is in this research lacuna in gentrification debates which this project sought to address.

2.4   Conclusion

This chapter set out to explore scholarly debates of gentrification, suggesting that gentrification still remains an important concept in understanding processes of class change and identity-construction based on residential location choices (Butler, 2007). The last 40 years has witnessed developments in our understanding of gentrification. It has evolved from

its early associations of inner-city resettlement in global cities by the middle classes, and can be mapped not only on a global scale, but also across the urban-rural continuum.

It can be argued that contemporary gentrification is more generalised than previous waves, and in effect a gentrification 'blueprint' is being transferred across the spatial scale. Accepting a more open and broader definition of gentrification allows scholars to question the perceptions of gentrification, and provides the opportunity to undertake more detailed research. As Lees (2000: 405) suggests:

> "more detailed research into the geography of gentrification … would enable us to consider the merits or dangers of cities further down the urban hierarchy taking on board the gentrification practices of cities higher up the urban hierarchy, cities with a very different geography".

These differences have been highlighted through the expressions of new and emerging geographies of gentrification across the spatial context. Important is the landscape and lifestyle that is consumed in each locale.

Whilst these diverse landscapes have been acknowledged, the chapter notes that to date there is relatively little research the focuses on the importance of waterscapes as a commodity in coastal locations. Exceptions here are D.Smith's (2007) research on 'back-to-the-water' movements of the Shoreham boat people, and Darling's (2005) research on 'wilderness gentrification'. Furthermore, as the gentrification blueprint is transferred down the urban hierarchy, there are relatively few options for capitalizing on gentrification activities. However, amongst Britain's varied coastline, there are a number of declining coastal towns "which have witnessed successive decades of social and economic disinvestment" and are therefore ripe for gentrification to occur (D.Smith and Holt, 2007: 146). According to Beatty *et al.* (2008) these include towns such as: Eastbourne, Hastings and Bexhill, Folkestone and Hythe, Thanet (Margate), and Southend-on-Sea. These coastal urban settlements provide an interesting arena for examining gentrification, as the 'waterscape' has strong symbolic parallels with representations of nature and idyll associated with rural gentrification.

Chapter 3:   Uneven geographies of coastal societies

3.0   Introduction

As identified in the previous chapter, coastal locations have tended to be overlooked within academic discourses of gentrification. As noted previously, there is evidence within media and popular discourses which suggest that coastal places have distinct biographies of gentrification. A key focus here is placed on the more rural coastal environments (seaside villages, fishing villages), and less attention is given to the more urban contexts of previously declining coastal towns. This is surprising since there has been an upturn in the fortunes of some coastal towns over the last 10 years (Beatty and Fothergill, 2003; Walton, 2006a). To explore this issue within the context of gentrification, this chapter considers the opening and closing of rent-gaps in coastal towns. This is through the economic changes in coastal rent-gaps, and the broader lifestyle shifts tied to the coast. In addition, it should be noted that much of the literature available on coastal regeneration is not situated within the field of geography. Therefore, this chapter considers the available literature from a geographical perspective.

The chapter is divided into 5 sections. Section 3.1 provides a brief discussion on the definition of coastal towns which has been adopted for the purpose of this study. Section 3.2 discusses some of the historical changes in coastal towns and the role of these changes as a precursor in the contemporary expression of gentrification. Coastal restructuring is presented through the cycles of investment and disinvestment. The social, cultural economic and political factors that have influenced these changes are discussed. Section 3.3 focuses on contemporary portrayals of coastal towns in the political arena, which have led to an era of the post-resort. These policy debates are discussed in line with rent-gap debates of gentrification. Section 3.4 discusses the cultural qualities underlying the revalorisation of some coastal towns, and suggests that a particular type of coastal idyll is being constructed, promoted and sold. Key here is the valorisation of seaside histories and heritage. Finally, Section 3.5 provides a conclusion for the chapter and identifies the need to examine the coastal rent-gap.

3.1   Defining coastal towns

The history of the British seaside has been wide and varied, with a longstanding history as fishing towns (e.g. Whitby) and marine ports (e.g. Portsmouth), and concurrently also as spas (e.g. Scarborough), and coastal holiday resorts (e.g. Blackpool) (Howell, 1974; Walton, 1997).   The 2,700 miles of British coastline provide a setting to various environments, industry and settlements (Hassan, 2003:1).   Defining a specific coastal hierarchy is not a simple process, as locations are tied to the wider urban and rural classifications of place (Beatty and Fothergill, 2004).   Similarly, within the gentrification debate (as noted in Section 2.3), any expressions of gentrification in larger cities along the coast such as Southampton, Liverpool and Portsmouth (see Cook, 2004 on Portsmouth) have been integrated within wider discussions of urban gentrification; and coastal villages have been subsumed within discourses of rural gentrification (see M.Phillips, 2003 on Gower Peninsula).   Limited research has been undertaken that focuses on the gentrification discourses of coastal towns which are also the locations of the former Victoria spa resorts. The *Seaside Economy Report* (2003) notes: "there is no 'off-the-peg' definition of Britain's seaside towns" (Beatty and Fothergill, 2003).   More recently, Fothergill (2008: 13) argues that "socio-economic research on seaside towns needs a consistent and defensible definition of the towns" with statistical research feeding the evidence base on coastal towns requiring "a clear geographical definition of the towns" (*ibid,* p. 4).   This ambiguity in defining coastal towns is also echoed in the *Coastal Regeneration Handbook* (see Walton and Browne, 2010 for a fuller discussion).

However, the working definition as Beatty and Fothergill (2003: 13) have developed provides an ideal definition for the purpose of this project, since they examine particular coastal towns; "rather than everywhere that happens to be by the sea".   Whilst a fuller discussion of the empirical investigation employed in constructing this definition can be found in Beatty and Fothergill (2003), this section will detail a brief outline of the definition, and justify its use within the remit of this project.

Beatty and Fothergill identify four aims towards creating their working definition.   These are:
1. Focus on coastal towns, thus the exclusion of ports, industrial towns by the sea, and purely residential settlements with little resort function.
2. Include only locations that are places in their own right, and not just the suburbs of a bigger town.

3. Focus on the coastal towns rather than the districts of which they may be a part of. Many coastal towns are component parts of wider local authority districts of which they may be a part and thus pre 1974 local authority boundaries are used.

4. Those towns with a population below 8,000 in 1971 have been excluded from the analysis and thus focuses on larger coastal towns.

As a result of this analysis, 43 individual coastal towns were identified, the locations of which are shown in Figure 3.1.
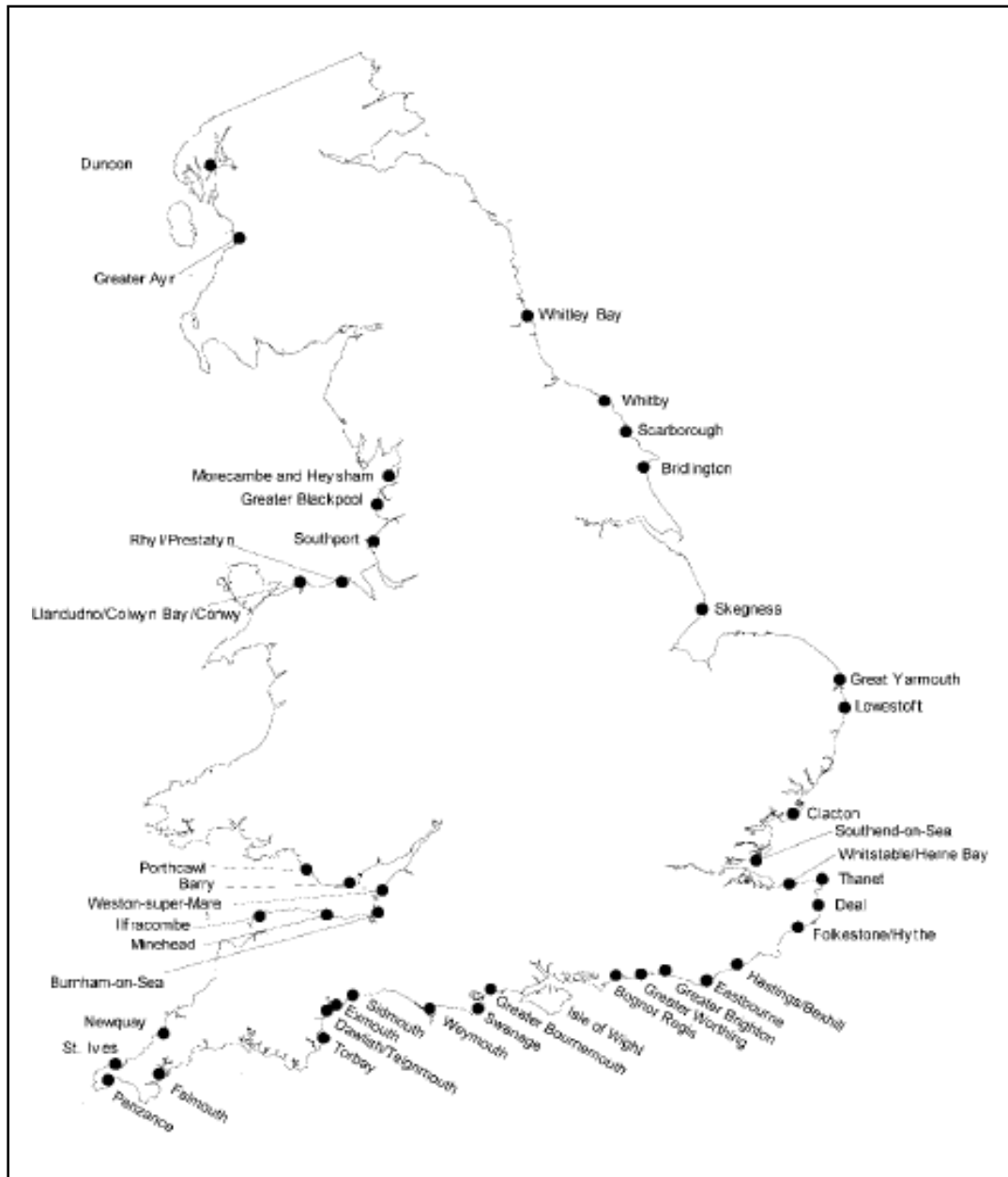
Figure 3.1: Location of Britain's 43 principal seaside towns (Source: Beatty and Fothergill, 2003)

It should be noted, however, that a large number of resorts have been overlooked on Figure 3.1, as they do not adhere to Beatty and Fothergill's selection criteria. Indeed, even within the sample here there is a significant difference in populations of individual towns, with, Greater Bournemouth at the top of the scale with a population of 342,600 in 2001, and Swanage at the bottom of the list with a population of 10,200 in 2001.

Apart from this difference in population, there are further factors that need closer examination in Beatty and Fothergill's model. Whilst the analysis provides a very useful tool for understanding economic trends across England, the importance of local markets, resort culture and place making, and spatial settings have not been considered in the model. Consequently, the use of different datasets, and further division of resorts by other factors such as function, population and tourist market, and the inclusion of smaller seaside resorts might indeed paint a very different picture of the seaside than the one provided by Beatty and Fothergill. (For a comparative discussion on the contrasting findings of Whitby see Walton, 2006b).

However, the further study conducted in 2009, which included another 37 smaller resorts (populations between 1500 and 10,000), showed that there was little difference between these and the original findings of the 2003 study (Beatty *et al.*, 2010; Walton and Browne, 2010). Moreover, Walton (2010: 14) notes that:

> "we could reserve the category 'coastal town' for a different kind of place; one whose economy and identity depends, and has depended, to a significant extent on seaside tourism, and the extended influence of a seaside tourism tradition on related activities or identities (commuting, retirement, fishing and maritime heritage), and on enterprises that are mobile because they deal in ideas; intangibles or easily portable items; which draw people to coastal locations because that is where, given a choice, they prefer to live and work".

Despite these concerns over the inclusion and exclusion of various coastal towns, Beatty and Fothergill's (2003) criteria provides a useful list for understanding the effects of regeneration on coastal towns. As Walton (2010: 16) notes:

> "Under all circumstances it is clear that theirs [Beatty and Fothergill] is the best list to work with... It deals with current circumstances, and is certainly not demonstrably inferior to any conceivable alternative".

As such, this working definition of seaside towns (coastal towns), as defined in the *Seaside Economy Report* (2003), has been adopted for this study.

3.2   The history of British coastal resorts: cycles of investment and disinvestment

Having established what a coastal town is, it is important to note that the resort images we witness today have evolved over time. Brodie *et al*. (2005) notes that the roots of the seaside holiday lie in the Georgian period, and thus the history discussed here can be traced back to this era. Prior to this period, sea-bathing was "unheard of in Europe; it was restored to only as a desperate and ineffective cure for a bite of a mad dog" (Howell, 1974: 7). This section examines the major changes in the history of the British seaside (in terms of type of visitors, and the shift from the medicalised seaside into one of pleasure and leisure) between the eighteenth century and the twentieth century.

3.2.1   The foundations of the seaside resort

According to Hembry (1989), the early years of the eighteenth century witnessed the first visitors to the seaside. At this point, the seaside was accessible by the fisher folk and those who could own or rent accommodation in a coastal town (Brodie *et al*., 2005; Howell, 1973). Early gentry and fashionable society set the trend for frequenting coastal spas instead of inland ones (Hembry, 1989; Granville, 1971; Havins, 1976). The decaying ports and fishing villages were visited by the fashionable society in search of the medical cure that the coastal spa waters were believed to have. As Hassan (2003: 15) points out: "like the taking of spring waters, bathing in and drinking sea water was believed to bestow vital (health) benefits". These exclusive eighteenth century watering places resembled in many ways small and self contained resorts similar in many ways to life on cruise boats and small winter sport hotels (Younger, 1973).

By the middle of the century, there was an increase in the number of gentry and fashionable society visiting the seaside. Other professional men and merchants joined them (Walton, 1983). Coastal spas were prospering although they did not rival the fashionable inland spas. However, their prospects were being transformed as a result of sea bathing and royal patronage. As Hassan (2003) notes, there was growing evidence (since the end of the seventeenth century) that the sea water provided health benefits to those who drank and

bathed in it. The coast was not a site of pleasure, but rather one of health and well being (Howell, 1974). Corbin (1994) suggests that coastal waters were recommended for the treatment of a variety of ailments both physical and of the mind.

By the end of the eighteenth century, the medical virtues of the sea were still boasted and the coast still attracted 'cure-takers'. However, as Walton (1983) notes the purpose of the seaside started to change and a visit to the seaside was no longer just about the medicinal virtues of the sea water, but also about enjoyment. Writers and artists now joined the aristocrats to the seaside resorts and thus began to portray various coastal landscapes to a growing audience (Corbin, 1994). This resulted in the growth in the vogue for recreational travel amongst the fashionable society, which Hassan (2003) suggests led to the increasing fascination with the different coastal landscapes, and further transforming and reinforcing the way in which coastal scenery was 'read'.

Coastal towns also became the meeting place for the gentry and the landed classes, and other social events apart from bathing and drinking sea-water were taking place (Brodie *et al*, 2005; Brodie and Winter, 2007). These enabled the gentry and bourgeoisie to partake in other social activities when not undertaking their prescribed immersions into the sea. Royal patronage aided in this process as they helped to build the reputation of a locale. To further enhance, and accommodate visitors, resorts started building new facilities such as hotels, boarding houses and shops (Hassan, 2003).

3.2.2 The growth in resort pleasurescapes

Hembry (1990:312) argues that the early nineteenth century witnessed established coastal spas mimicking the physical features of the inland spa towns (e.g. Bath): "their baths, assembly rooms, theatres, libraries, reading rooms, as well as their crescents, squares and terraces". Alongside, there was a growing interest about the beach – the space which created a boundary between land and water (Corbin, 1994; Urry, 1990). However, and as Walton (2000) notes, by the mid-nineteenth century the focus of the beach as a medicalised space changed into one where the beach was increasingly seen as a site of pleasure. Shields (1991) characterises the beach as a liminal zone. This was "a built-in escape from the patterns and rhythms of everyday life" (Urry, 1990: 29). Corbin (1994: 162) suggests that Romanticism was important in this movement towards pleasure as artists of this genre "were the first to

propound a coherent discourse about the sea" which powerfully enriched the means of enjoying the beach. Thus, "a play of interactions gradually developed between art and history and the history of the seaside holiday, giving rise to multi-faceted craze for coastal life" (Corbin, 1994: 173).

By the mid-nineteenth century, going to the seaside had become a cultural norm. Walvin (1978:65) attributes this to the growth of the railway network and the changing economic climate which brought "the formerly upper- and middle class holidaying habit within the reach of others". Consequently, a few days at the coast became a wonderful dream to look forward to and, as Hassan (2003) and H.Robinson (1976) suggest, the Victorian seaside became an escape - a healthy environment away from the illness, dangers, stress and worsening pollution of an urban existence.

The increasing affordability of a holiday/visit to the sea-side coupled with the desire of escape from the urban resulted in the sea-side becoming more available for all (Walvin, 1978). By the 1870's, the major coastal resorts had been established, and further development tended to be the occasional tourist accommodation. The high class resorts continued to attract the gentry and bourgeoisie although as Soane (1993) suggests their season now became the autumn months. The mainstream market of the summer months witnessed a rise in the tide of visitors, fuelled by easier transport links via the railway and changes in the working hours enabling people to come and visit for a day or a weekend. Walton (1983: 3) identifies that these visitors were increasingly "the plain, uncultivated shop keeping, trading and sub-professional or clerical groups which combined modest prosperity with economic insecurity and uncertain status".

Established resorts were successful in attracting visitors through advertising their attractions and quality of their sea (Hassan, 2003). However, towards the end of the nineteenth century, Walton (1997) suggests that there was a rapid growth in the number of smaller resorts in new areas close to population centres all over England competing with the established resorts. This growth in the late nineteenth century was a result of the seaside being "quickly absorbed into popular culture as the locus of leisure and tourism" (Williams and G.Shaw, 1997: 2). Many of the more accessible resorts had to cope with the novelty of a working-class presence of growing dimensions and spending power.

3.2.3   From 'golden years' to the decline of coastal towns

Since the start of the twentieth century, for millions of people, a visit to the seaside became a ritual of escape from urban lifestyles. Walton (1997) notes that every coastline had its own resort towns and villages catering for a vast range of social groups and cultural preferences. However, by 1911 majority of the resort population was found in Sussex, Kent and Hampshire with a high percentage along the Sussex coast - "five of whose coastal resorts featured among the 10 fastest-growing seaside watering-places in absolute terms between 1881 and 1911" (Walton, 1997: 22). Middleton and Lickorish (2005) note that the surge in growth of visitor numbers throughout the country was fuelled by summer holidaymakers, as spending from a week up to a month became more possible for the growing middle classes. Up to the first and second world wars, the coastal towns had been successful in presenting themselves as site of pleasure and leisure and the modern seaside holiday witnessed the breaking down of gender and class divisions.

During the first and second world wars, economies of resorts often suffered as a result of military activity.   However, the years between the wars saw an explosion in the 'pleasurescape' of the beach through sunbathing. Braggs and Harris (2000), Chase (2000) and Hassan (2003: 87) identified that the growth in enjoyment of the sun in these interwar years affected "fashions, beach dress, tanning, resort publicity and the design of shoreline amenities". Health at the seaside was no longer about prescribed baths, but rather fresh air, exercise, swimming and relaxation, amongst other sporting activities. Resorts created new facilities such as lidos and open air pools to cater for this boom in visitors seeking sunshine by the water. However, this boom also created problems for the coastline (Brodie and Winter, 2007). As Hassan (2003) suggests, resort growth along Britain's coastlines was socially progressive, yet at the same time environmentally destructive, as a result of the increasing conversion of coastal land to bungalow colonies, car parks and camping sites. Another factor was the ribbon development along the coastline which was contributed to suburban sprawl, commuting and retirement based populations.

Walton (2000) comments that the Second Wold War saw a huge change in the perception of the coast. Access was denied to the public and "trenches and barricades were built on the beaches, bays were mined and older structures were sometimes destroyed to foil enemy invasion" (Hassan, 2003: 134). Thus, Britain's coastlines became bleak, run-down and void

of that which made them pleasurescapes. Following the war, the stigma of seaside as a place of leisure and entertainment created difficulties in convincing governments that they "were, equally, important areas of economic activity deserving of government help and consideration" (Walvin, 1978: 130). However, as Hassan (2003: 135) suggests, by the end of the 1940's holidaymakers once again started to visit the seaside, and by the early 1950's "finance and entrepreneurship were again helping to rejuvenate the resorts, often, as in the past, in alliance with municipal enterprise". It is also important to note that resorts varied in terms of the provisions they had for visitors during the war, and that they suffered varied impacts during the war.

By the middle of the twentieth century, although the cost of the seaside holiday experience was rising, real wage gains and better employment opportunities meant that there was an increase in personal disposable income. Williams and G.Shaw (1997: 3) suggest that: "[t]his was to fuel the expansion of mass consumption and, in the 1950's at least, the epitome of this in terms of commodified leisure activities was the seaside". These were the 'golden years' of the seaside holiday. There are several reasons for this including: little competition from alternative holidays attracting mass tourism, and the Holidays with Pay Act (Demetriadi, 1997). However, this boom in mass tourism resulted in a gradual erosion of middle and upper class visitors. Howell (1974: 7) identifies that this is due to the loss of "sophistication, elegance, and above all exclusiveness" that once attracted the gentry and high society to seaside resorts.

By the 1960's the 'golden years' were at the beginning of the end and the seaside resorts were starting their journey towards decline. Brodie and Winter (2007) suggest that the key factor for this was the decline in railway use, combined with increased car-ownership, which provided people with greater flexibility and choice in regards to their holiday locations. Whilst resorts in the 1950's and 1960's were prosperous in terms of visitor numbers, they were also years of stagnation and missed opportunity (Walton, 2007a), with the leading resorts "still offering what to the more travel experienced customers was now recognizably the same tired product formula as they had 50 years earlier" (Middleton and Lickorish, 2005: 76). These factors, along with the erosion of middle- and upper-class visitors, led to growing concerns over the viability of the seaside resort (Demetriadi, 1997). By the mid-1970's there was also an increase in the numbers of people taking their holidays overseas – significant enough to create a negative impact on British seaside resorts. However, as Walvin (1978:

145) notes, in this period "almost three quarters of the 30 million holidaymakers who stay[ed] in Britain, continue[d] to head for the sea", with a growth in the number of people who took two holidays a year.

The 1970's therefore, witnessed a decline in the popularity of British seaside resorts. So far, the social and economic factors that have resulted in this decline have been identified. However, it is important to also examine the cultural factors. These are based on changing perceptions of values, beliefs and identities that were once tied to the seaside. Hassan (2003: 250) suggests that the resorts had lost "their magic and sense of wonder" as a result of the diminished contrast between urban living and the holiday resort. Similarly, Urry (1997), and Walton (2000: 21) argue that resorts at the end of the twentieth century experienced "a loss of the kind of 'placeness' or place-identity which previously rendered them desirable destinations". The physical image of seaside resorts are tied to Victorian and Edwardian architecture styles and concepts which do not necessarily sit within people's perceptions of the twenty-first century coast. This decline is not just a result of competition from abroad, level of investment and quality of accommodation, but also the cultural processes which have left resorts devalued in the British culture.

3.2.4   Politics, the 'role of the state' and the economies of decline

Apart from the social, economic and cultural processes discussed above, the role of the state (both at a national and local level, and the relationship between them) has also been an important factor in understanding the process of decline. Many seaside resorts experienced a slow but cumulative decline (unlike car factories and coal mines which closed over very short spaces of time) (South East England Development Agency [SEEDA], 2005; see also Walton 2006a, 2007a). There were significant levels of residual resilience from seaside resorts which were relatively better off than the towns and cities that fed them. Seaside resorts had been successful in their marketing strategies to portray themselves as:

> "embodiment[s] of pleasure" thus making it difficult to argue that equally they were "important areas of economic activity deserving of government help and consideration" (Walvin, 1978: 130).

Warning signs of economic decline and deprivation were slow to be recognised due to their physical isolation (distance from major towns and cities), perceived good quality of life, and

continued population growth (SEEDA, 2005). Regeneration was hindered due to the fact that tourism planning was not the sole responsibility of one particular organization. Instead, it was (and still is) based on a complex and changing hierarchy with competition between resorts and dilution of policy based on local authority needs (Agarwal, 1997).

The success of resort regeneration and growth was significantly dependent on the combined efforts of local governments and private sector enterprise in individual resorts (Middleton and Lickorish, 2005). Local governments played a vital role in promoting tourism both through providing public facilities and amenities as well as effectively marketing them to visitors (Agarwal, 1997). However, seaside resorts were generally Conservative strongholds, and with time "enduring Conservative strength reflected the over-representation of the middle classes and the elderly at the seaside" (Walton, 2000: 169). This residential and retirement conservatism became more powerful than entrepreneurial conservatism within resorts. Image, resources, local taxation and policing of contested spaces became more important to resort residents, and local governments grew increasingly inclined to provide for resident needs and thus fewer funds were made available to regenerate tourist amenities (Walton, 2000).   Indeed as the English Tourism Board (1991b) suggested, residents in resort locations did not wish to see tourism succeed due to the highly visible process of physical and social decline (Cooper, 1997). A related factor that hindered resort regeneration was the 1972 Local Government Act which saw "holiday industries threatened by the dilution of resort identities in the larger municipal units" (Walton, 2000: 188). Often political interest was transferred away from the directly involved resort operators towards the needs of residential districts in the surrounding residential, industrial and rural hinterlands (Agarwal, 1997; Cooper, 1997; Walton, 2000).

At a national level there was limited interest from the government in regards to coastal tourism activities, with the late 1960's being the first time that the UK Government took interest in the growing trade of tourism (although this was mainly because of the impact it had on earning foreign exchange) (Middleton and Lickorish, 2005). the Labour Government in 1968 changed the future prospects and visions of resort towns. For Labour, "tourism was helpful to the main thrust of government, regional regeneration and the need to encourage domestic tourism development to help offset the rapid switch of the UK market to destinations abroad" (Middleton and Lickorish, 2005: 139). The period between 1979 and 1989 under the Conservative Government saw the undermining of the organization structure

for tourism, with a "rapid diffusion of the practice of assisting development" (Agarwal, 1997: 150; see also Cooke, 1989). As Middleton and Lickorish (2005: 143) state:

"From the late 1970's onwards, in a rather unlovely and costly gavotte, an ever-changing cast of ministers, civil servants, chairmen and senior board officials grappled with 'reviews' for the best part of twenty years. A review took place every three to five years and tourism responsibility was shifted from Trade to Trade and Industry, to Employment, to National Heritage and at the end of the period to Culture, Media and Sport".

This endless review process combined with less funding for regeneration at the local authority level; and the withdrawal of tourism subsidies for development under the 1969 Act resulted in the downward spiral of decline that has been witnessed in seaside resorts in the last quarter of the twentieth century. Coastal towns simply did not have access to regeneration funds. As the British Resorts Association argues, struggling resorts did not receive central government support or money for regeneration (Beckett, 2005), and indeed, there was no targeted regeneration programme for coastal towns until the late 1990's (SEEDA, 2005). Political attitudes continued to reflect the stereotypes. The decline in the traditional one or two week holiday by the sea in the 1970's (with no hope of a revitalised market), the 1980's and early 1990's witnessed no valid reason to regenerate and were thus left to stagnate.

Resort area municipalities have actively tried to rejuvenate their failing resort economies since the late 1980's with limited success until the late 1990's. Most revitalization strategies have had two common elements: to refocus the holiday market to growing segments of specialist and short-breaks, and attempt to innovate and diversify the tourist product through conference centres, museums, marinas and sea-side heritage (Williams and G.Shaw, 1997). This boom in second and subsequent holiday, weekend and mid-week breaks and many more day trips fuelled an alternative market which gave seaside resorts and the government a valid reason to facilitate their regeneration.   However, it should be noted that this market effected different resorts in different ways, each depicting alternative futures.

3.3   Changing seaside resorts: post stagnation, revalorisation and the 'post-resort'

It can be argued that Britain's coastal towns are now at a stage of post-stagnation where Agarwal (1994) has identified a range of possibilities for the future of coastal towns.   These include:

- Continued decline – visitors are lost to newer resorts. A smaller catchment focused on day trips and weekend visits.
- Change of function – high property turnover with tourist facilities including accommodation converted into other uses.
- Rejuvenation – re-vamp the tourist resort with focus on new uses and attract new customers.

Coastal towns have been to varying degrees of success been actively trying to rejuvenate their failing economies. A key factor facilitating this process has been policy changes and New Labour's vision for the regeneration of coastal towns.

3.3.1 Coastal regeneration in the policy arena

Following years of under-funding and neglect, the late 1990's witnessed a change in attitude to coastal towns. The UK government began to refocus on coastal towns with "injections of funding for regeneration and new incentives for business development" (M.Smith, 2004: 20). Over the recent years there have been a number of strategies and studies that have focused on coastal regeneration (Beatty and Fothergill, 2003; British Resorts Association, 2000; CLG 2007; Department of Culture, Media and Sports, 1999; English Heritage 2007; English Heritage and Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment, 2003; English Tourism Board, 2001; Fothergill, 2008; Walton and Browne, 2010).

In 2001, the English Tourism Council identified "tourism as one of the priority development sectors at the heart of successful social, urban and coastal regeneration" (M.Smith, 2004: 20). Meanwhile, the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure were instrumental in piloting Local Authority Cultural strategies across a number of coastal towns. The Department of Culture, Media and Sport having carried out a seaside consultation exercise in 1999 were also committed to support resort regeneration. However, it should be noted that these studies have a strong focus on tourism rejuvenation which although is a very specific regeneration activity, it does impact the overall regeneration strategies of a coastal towns. Within the context of national policy, regeneration extends beyond the bounds of tourism and planning and policy documents have a greater focus on local community needs and economic regeneration.

More recent studies of coastal towns include: Beatty and Fothergill's (2003) report on '*The Seaside Economy*' and; the House of Commons: Communities and Local Government

Committee Report on '*Coastal Towns*' (CLG, 2007). The *Seaside Economy* report identifies five key trends over the last 30 years. These are: growth in employment; growth in sectors related to tourism; growth in populating through strong immigration patterns; and a substantial problem of joblessness.

Based on this research, Beatty and Fothergill went on to focus on '*Economic change and the labour market in Britain's Seaside Towns*' (2004). Whilst four hypotheses were made as to the explanations for unemployment and the coastal labour market, the two which were verified as major contributors to this occurrence were a transient population relying on housing benefits, and that in-migration is out stripping jobs. This second hypothesis is relevant to understanding some of the dynamics of coastal gentrification. Normally an area losing jobs results in net out-migration as people move elsewhere for work. However, coastal towns are witnessing a countervailing process. One factor is the wider urban-rural shift in population and the residential attractiveness of coastal towns, driven by changing locations of jobs and residential preferences. The second factor is "the residential attractiveness of coastal towns – indeed the same environmental factors that helped fuel their growth as resorts" (Beatty and Fothergill, 2004: 463). These hypotheses put forward by Beatty and Fothergill suggest that the labour market imbalances that are found in many coastal locations are more likely a result of rapid population growth then they are a result of a slump in local employment.

These findings are also echoed in the *Coastal Towns* report (CLG, 2007). Other key issues in this report include: shortage of affordable housing fuelled by immigration and second homes; large amounts of low quality private sector housing; and that although coastal areas are too diverse to warrant a focused approach, there are a set of common factors experienced by all coastal locations which can be addressed at a national government level. However, the first response by the government failed to acknowledge "that many coastal towns face significant challenges based on their combination of characteristics, and that as such coastal towns warrant specific attention and action by Government to address their challenges" (CLG, 2007: 6). Although these studies have identified the need for the regeneration and rejuvenation of many coastal towns, there are a number of studies which have identified a gap between policy and practice in the UK (Bianchini, 1990; Colenutt, 1991; Keith and Rogers, 1991; McGuigan, 1996). These studies have focused on polarisation of urban environments, gentrification and social exclusion.

Findings of both Beatty and Fothergill's work on the *Seaside Economy* as well as CLG's *Coastal Towns* report suggest that people's perceptions of the British coastal towns are changing. This chapter has already discussed the changing representations of coastal towns, and Figure 3.2 is a useful tool to explain the relevance of these representations in the modern perceptions of the coast. It can be suggested that the phase of resort growth (Sections 3.2.1 and 3.2.2) was attributed to changes in society that brought the resort into the reach of mainstream society. Coastal resorts were the escape from everyday life and a site of health and medicine. The golden years saw the peak in the numbers of people who had access to resort facilities and their popularity. The phase of economic decline (Section 3.2.3) witnessed the downturn of the resort with a dwindling number of visitors and resort buildings in a state of dilapidation, coupled with changing cultural practices that saw the coast in a negative light. The late 1990's saw once more an upturn in some resort locations. This is partially a result of regeneration practices and, as highlighted in Beatty and Fothergill's (2004) study, the urban-rural shift in population. As we approach the phase of the post-resort there is an evidence base that suggests that the qualities that once resulted in the growth in popularity of the coastal resorts are in fact the same qualities that are fuelling the in-migration of residents into coastal towns. Indeed, as Lowenthal (1985) suggests, the past is like a foreign country where "escapist imaginaries are found in the fantasies that 'old stuff' can invoke" (W.Shaw, 2005: 70).
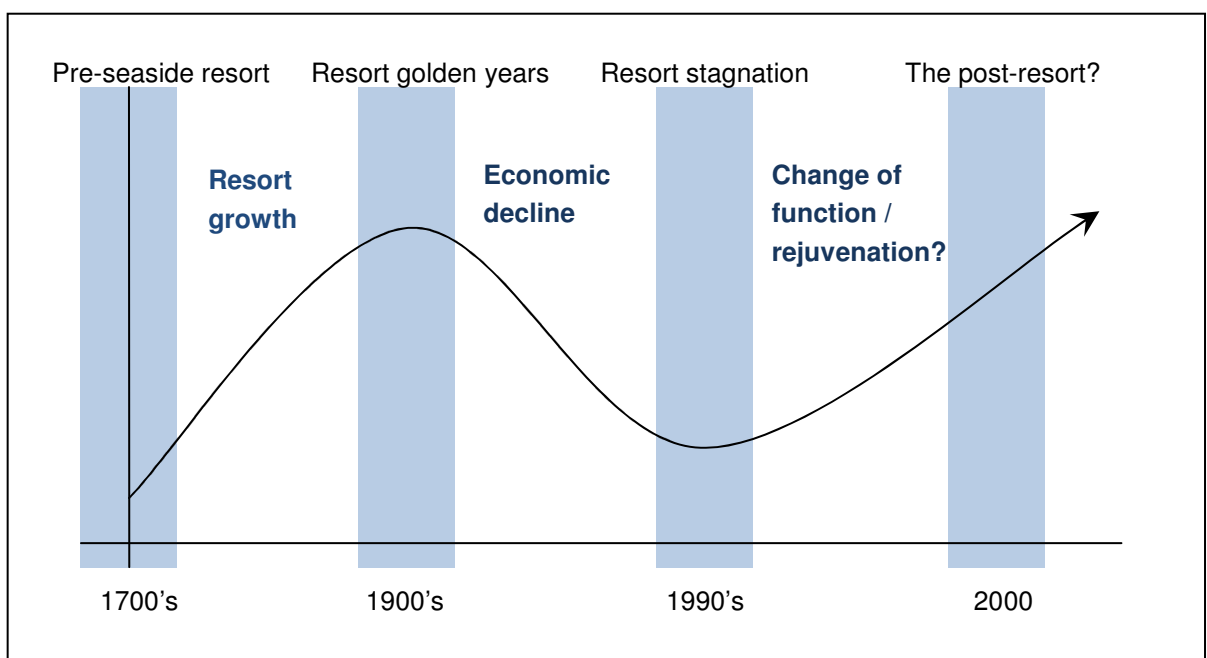
Figure 3.2: Changing perceptions of the seaside resort

3.3.2   Gentrification and the rent-gap

Coastal towns have witnessed cycles of investment and disinvestment. An important question that arises here is: 'why are some of Britain's coastal towns ripe for regeneration while others appear not to be'? Parallels can be drawn to gentrification based practices in relation to economic, social and cultural transformation. One of the key explanatory theoretical representations of gentrification is the rent-gap. This might be pertinent in the context of coastal towns and their recommodification.

Discourses of rent-gap theory identify gentrification as a structural product of the land and housing markets (N.Smith, 1979). With roots in Marxist debates, N.Smith used the concept of the devalorisation cycle to explain the decline of the inner-city neighbourhoods, suggesting that this cyclical process allows for the emergence of the rent-gap, that is "the disparity between the potential ground rent level and the actual ground rent capitalized under the present land use" (N.Smith, 1979: 545). The rent-gap forms as there becomes increasing economic pressure to disinvest in the fixed capital of a site, rendering it inappropriate to the site's best value use, and eventually more economic pressure is applied to redevelop at a higher intensity and type (Clark, 1995; Diappi and Bolchi, 2008).

As the gap between capitalized and potential ground rent widens, there is a stronger incentive for land-use change with residential gentrification being one way of closing the rent-gap. Therefore:

> "gentrification occurs when the gap is wide enough that developers can purchase shells cheaply, can pay the builders' costs and profit for rehabilitation, can pay interest on mortgage and construction loans, and can then sell the end product for a sale price that leaves a satisfactory return to the developer. The entire ground rent, or a large portion of it, is now capitalized: the neighbourhood has been 'recycled' and begins a new cycle of use" (N.Smith, 1979: 545).

The gentrification process is triggered when speculators purchase the low-cost properties in the hope of high rates of return further down the line, and consequently setting off a new wave of gentrification (Darling, 2005). It is important to note that the phenomenon does not occur at an individual building level, but rather affects districts at a neighbourhood scale, with the whole process seeming to be a "result of many individual decisions interacting and cooperating for a mutual advantage" (Diappi and Bolchi, 2008: 7).

Indeed, gentrification is a "frontier on which fortunes are made" (N.Smith, 1986: 34), which is related to the flows of capital (Wildin and Minnery, 2005) and involves a number of institutional actors ranging from developers, estate agents, government officials, the media and, of course, the in-migrants themselves. Both the devalourised market and the reaction of the institutional actors are influential in determining whether (and by how much) it is possible to close the rent-gap, and "redevelopment is only a feasible option if the negative social and physical barriers at the neighbourhood scale can be overcome" (Lees *et al*., 2007: 58).

3.4   Recommodifying the coast – selling and consuming the 'coastal idyll'

It has been suggested that many of Britain's coastal resorts are at the end of their resort life-cycle and a key response to this has been rejuvenation and regeneration. This has provided an opportunity to close the rent-gaps of some coastal resort towns. Whilst the portrayal of rent-gaps is generally in the economic sphere with capital value tied to the land rent, the factors that are attributed to the closing of rent-gaps are equally cultural and social led, with:

> "the calculus of capital becom[ing] interwoven with the entire range of social and cultural dimensions of individuals' choices of where and how to live in the urban environment [which are also] bound up with larger social and collective processes" (Lees *et al*., 2007: 54-55).

The decline in popularity of coastal towns has led to a widening of the rent-gap, and the potential returns to be gained by closing this rent-gap have been realised by institutional actors. Here, place marketing is increasingly becoming important in the recommodification of the coastal towns and attention now turns to discuss how and why rent-gaps are closing in the post-resort.

Referring back to Figure 3.2, and the themes discussed in this chapter there is evidence to suggest that in recent years, the perceptions of the British coast, and the symbolism of coastal towns is changing. There are a number of resorts where the rent-gap is starting to be exploited, as the negative social and physical barriers are being overcome and, the result of this is the opportunity for gentrification. Having gone through the cycle of decline and stagnation, one alternative future is the post-resort which in essence is a recommodification of the original resort.

The creation of the post-resort is very much influenced by traditional perceptions of the seaside resort and the economic decline they experienced. Central to this is the role of the institutional actors whom are playing on the features, attractions and the initial factors that led to the growth of the resorts; and repackaging them as a cultural commodity to be sold as part of the post-resort experience. Indeed, the economic decline has been a key factor in facilitating this process as a significant rent-gap has been created, which can then be exploited to benefit the institutional actors economically by recommodifying the coast. Whilst the economic factors have been discussed in regards to the rent-gap in Section 3.3.2, the focus now shifts to the social and cultural factors, and considers why and how the symbolism of coastal towns is changing.

3.4.1 Culture, heritage and regeneration

Culture is increasingly being seen as an important element in the quest for the successful regeneration of an area (Serota and Hyslop, 2011). However, the cultural meanings and associations that people once held with the sea are now lost (Howell, 1974). Although coastal towns have witnessed a decline in their popularity, there is a strong pattern of in-migration to coastal towns as noted by Beatty and Fothergill (2003). These towns are amongst those down the urban hierarchy that have been winners in the wider 'urban-rural population shift' being experienced in Britain since the middle of the last century (Champion *et al.*, 1998). Here, people looked forward to escaping the cities due to the polluted, stressful and grimy conditions of everyday urban life (Williams and G.Shaw, 1997). Similarly today, the increased pace and tensions of daily life has made the allure of the coast no less desirable.

Culture has always been an important part of the seaside experience. As Urry (1997: 103) comments "the seaside was synonymous with the holiday; to be on holiday was to be by the seaside in England". Today, culture is increasingly being used as a focused strategic tool in regeneration strategies for economic growth and development, and the prioritization of community needs (Scott, 2000; Wirth and Freestone, 2003). The marketing of cultural experiences is important to achieving economic transformation and growth (Hall and Hubbard, 1998), and central to this is its use in the formulation of policies and projects that address urban revitalisation (O'Connor, 1998; Wirth and Freestone, 2003).

In the context of contemporary coastal regeneration, of particular importance is the role of heritage gentrification (English Heritage, 2007a; Hassan, 2003; Walton, 2002). As Walton (2007b: 195) notes:

> "this is an important time to be studying the cultures of seaside tourism, as many 'traditional' seaside resorts are seeking to reinvent themselves and revive their fortunes by calling upon and celebrating the surviving distinguishing features, images and cultural associations of their own past, whether through architecture, artefacts, events, or artistic, musical or literary associations".

The histories of locales and their heritage are increasingly seen as useful assets to drive development and contribute to the place-making agenda by combining renewal and innovation with tradition and identity (Walton and Wood, 2007). Furthermore, the "recognition of inherited diversity, distinctiveness, character and contrasting historical trajectories within a common idiom is essential to the success of seaside regeneration schemes" even when they encompass a strategy for moving away from tourism as "the presentation of a distinctive identity in local heritage terms is likely to be an asset, especially in attracting highly mobile business and migrants" (Walton, 2007a: 9-10). The self-image of a location is important to both locals and visitors, and thus it is beneficial to make improvements to infrastructure and the environment to create a "positive sense of place identity" (M.Smith, 2004: 21).

Ploger (2001: 64) suggests that discursive planning that encompasses local history, culture and architecture in the planning practice can produce "a sense of place, place identity and common cultural schemes". Effective marketing results in mature heritage imaginary which then becomes part of the gentrification investment (W.Shaw, 2005), and urban management can successfully reuse this heritage history for the saleable purpose of social and class distinction (W.Shaw, 2005; Thrift and Glennie, 1993; Wirth and Freestone, 2003). The maturing of the gentrification cycle causes cultural capital of heritage to become increasingly attractive to the consumer, and thus increases the value of the local resulting in the closing of the rent-gap (W.Shaw, 2005). However, it is important to note that 'heritage' is not a universal product, and its preservation can provoke different responses from different people (W.Shaw, 2005). Indeed, the distinctiveness of seaside heritage can be generic to all coastal towns, wanting to both, revive, and reinvent seaside cultures, but more important are the unique heritage selling points of individual coastal towns and, "the ways in which they can

draw upon their pasts and adapt them to the present and future in order to sustain their difference and keep it alive" (Walton, 2007b: 207).

3.4.2 Consuming the coast

As Beatty and Fothergill (2004: 477) assert, the pattern of in-migration to the coast can be partly understood "as a reflection of their attractiveness as places to live – indeed as a reflection of the features that made them resorts in the first place". This has already been identified in case studies from Australia and North America, and the Shoreham boat people (Section 2.3). Coastal locations are both unique and different to their urban and rural counter-parts, and key to their attractiveness is the issue of liminality associated with the coast (Shields, 1991). As Walton (2002: 118) suggests, the coast:

> "had attractions of 'liminality', as gateway between land and sea where some of the inhibitions of everyday life could be cast aside, and where a carnivalesque spirit of reversing and upending the convention of 'civilization' could be conjured up".

This quote neatly sums up the abstract and aesthetic qualities associated with the coast and the sea. Attached to these are the cultural meanings of the seashore as a place of escape, of pleasure, of peace and of refuge (Corbin, 1994; Walton, 2007b). These are the abstract concepts associated with the seashore that create the coastal idyll.

There is a very limited literature that looks at the concept of a coastal idyll. What information is available is connected with the history of the seaside - notably Corbin, (1994) on the changing perceptions of the sea-side, and migration choices of those who move to the coast. However, similarities can be drawn with literature that looks at rural idyll and the search for rural arcadia (Halfacree, 1995).

3.4.3 Artist, aesthetics, and the coast

The value of the coastal aesthetic is closely bound to art (Feigel and Harris, 2009). Art and the seaside have a long standing relationship, as the varied coastline provides an emotional setting for artists. As Walton (1983: 3) comments, the "jagged rocks and tumbledown cottages on the shoreline could appeal to the taste for the picturesque … while the devotee of the sublime and the awe-inspiring could achieve his pleasurable *frisson* of horror by

contemplating the vasty deep, especially in a storm". Although this latter image was traditionally the common pre-eighteenth century view of the seaside, the picturesque gained importance throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Romanticism was key in influencing aesthetic qualities and conditionioning people to derive pleasure from the ocean during the nineteenth century, and thus the Romantic painters knowingly painted more coastal sceneries to attract a wider audience of seascape lovers (Corbin, 1994). These paintings were reflections of the raw emotion experienced at the coast combined with scenic nature as they "stimulated the longing inspired by this fluctuating boundary" (Corbin, 1994: 163). Thus romantic painters redefined the value of the shore from horror into one of contemplation pleasure, and emotion, and consequently transformed the general aesthetic perception of the coast. Visitors came to experience the marvel of nature at the coast for themselves. Visitors generally had some degree of choice in their seaside experiences as there are 2700 miles of varied coastline in England and Wales which can offer varied natural and scenic qualities (Hassan, 2003).

The role of art and artists still plays an important contribution to the aesthetics of the coast. The long standing relationship between artists and the seashore has led to the development of artistic colonies on every coastline, and to the establishment of numerous galleries including the Tate Gallery at St Ives, the Turner Gallery at Margate, and the Jerwood Gallery at Hastings. The coastal association with art has also evolved to include public displays of art (Cameron and Coaffee, 2005). Examples here include the Tern project at Morecambe, the art installations on the south beach promenade in Blackpool, the clam shaped East Beach Café in Littlehampton, as well as the Stream and Winds of Change installations as part of the Wanderlight project in Hastings and St Leonards (Brodie *et al.*, 2007; Walton and Wood, 2008). As Cameron and Coaffee (2005: 45) note, there are now more explicit links between public art and its exploitation by public policy as "instruments of physical and economic regeneration of declining cities" and consequently the occurrence of gentrification. Indeed, art installations and cultural quarters are a successful model for regenerating "redundant commercial spaces in predominantly waterfront or 'edge of city' sites, creating 'symbolic capital' through constructing a distinctive' post-modern' urban aesthetic" (Cameron and Coaffee, 2005: 46).

3.4.4 Refuge in nature, and escape into the self

As Walton (2007b: 198) notes:

> "older seaside resorts have come to encapsulate and represent their own histories as providers of health and pleasure over (in some cases) a quarter of a millennium, and are able to turn their relative antiquity, properly presented and suitably refurbished, into an emblem of distinctiveness, of 'place identity' and 'place myth', that turns a visit into a unique experience and provides the destination with a depth of field that a new, purpose-built, sun and sea location cannot match".

The natural landscape of the sea is a distinct cultural aesthetic associated with the coast. Walvin (1978:13) suggest that the most obvious attraction of coastal towns is the sea itself, with its invigorating climate and breezes, coastline vistas and its sharp contrast to inland urban life". Although villages, towns and even cities have developed along much of Britain's coastline, this wildness of the coast still exist. Even with sea-walls, and other man-made features in place, the ocean represents indisputable nature which "remain[s] unaffected by falsehood" (Corbin, 1994: 62). The sea-shore offers a 'stage' where the confrontation of nature's elements of air, water and land can be witnessed (Corbin, 1994). This confrontation of nature does not only provide pleasant scenery but is also capable of drawing a powerful emotional response to the seaside experience.

As stated previously, the liminality of the beach provides a "built-in escape from the patterns and rhythms of everyday life" (Urry, 1990: 29). As Shields (1991: 84) notes:

> "the ill-defined margin between land and sea… (and its) shifting nature between high and low tide, and as a consequence the absence of private property, contribute[d] to the unterritorialised status of the beach, unincorporated into the system of controlled, civilised spaces".

Much of the work on the emotional response to the sea is incorporated in Corbin's (1994: 233) '*Lure of the Sea*':

> "Listening to the populations of the sea stimulated reverie, and made it possible through imagination to reconnect with humanity's and each individual's buried past. It gave foundation to a newly confirmed homology between the depths of the sea and the depths of the psyche. The beach, once deserted, became dense with fantastic beings who invited those who so desired to rediscover the openness of childhood and to share the primitive beliefs of this child-like population. Here,

in a single process of social regression and psychological involution, poplar legend and children's stories came together and merged into one. The revelation of this image brought about a new way of delighting in the shore, and heightened sensitivity to the contact of the elements. The way of appreciating the solitary sound of the evening waves or the shadows cast by the rocks across the shore became loaded with images produced, or so it was thought by the minds of simple fishermen".

This quote identifies the emotional response associated with the coast. The setting allows for emotional contemplation, and an escape from the stress and tensions of daily life. The landscape values of the coastline, and the pictorial and written representations of the coastal experience have influenced people's perceptions of the coastal landscape. In a similar strand to the way in which perceptions of the rural help to form the rural idyll, the values and perceptions of the coast shape the abstract qualities that help to create the coastal idyll. Whilst the idyll representations of the rural are tied with open fields and 'green landscapes', the idyll of the coast is associated with representations of rolling waves and 'blue seascapes'.

3.4.5   Site of difference

Coastal towns and the shore itself are also sites of difference. Shields (1991: 11) suggests that remote places like coastal towns, are ideal settings where unconventionality flourishes, "with the stress on 'aliveness' and freedom from oppressive codes of conduct, the carnivalesque beach represents the antithesis of the rational productivism of the everyday". The shoreline allows for a clash between the natural and the social, this is the "interaction between a wild environment and the bustling masses at play" (Hassan, 2003: 28). This can be seen throughout history with the less formal bathing clothes in the Victorian era, to the informal coastal settlements of the 1930's (Walton, 2000). As Hardy and Ward (1984) note, the makeshift marginal settlements have been interpreted as expressing a libertarian spirit, as well as "signifying a search for experimental, alternative models for living together and owning property" (Hassan, 2003: 115). At the same time, residents of coastal towns are also seen as 'different', particularly by tourists. An example here are fisherman. Walton (2000: 20) notes:

"to the eye of these strollers, … the port, a space of fisherfolk separate from that of the bathers, is henceforth another world. Isolated, distanced or marginalized that world over there, beyond the wall, outside the leisured universe of the holiday maker,… is an exotic world".

Therefore, the coast can become a site of difference, as it can depict a marginalised way of life, whilst celebrating difference and diversity, and, allowing for non-conformity from more rigid societal expectations.

As noted in this section, there are a number of social, cultural, physical and economic factors that combined provide a representation of a coastal idyll. These factors are market and sold as cultural commodities by institutional actors, which in turn attract in-migrants to locate to coastal areas. Representations of the coastal idyll play an important factor in the closing of these rent-gaps.

3.5   Conclusion: towards a 'coastal' rent-gap?

The history of the British seaside can be visualised as cycles of investment and dis-investment. Many of England's coastal towns have experienced large-scale disinvestment and deprivation. However, in recent years coastal towns have been at the forefront of the regeneration agenda. Evidence presented in the *Seaside Economy* report (2003), and CLG's *Coastal Towns* report (2007) portray processes in coastal towns that are suggestive of gentrification occurring. These include, factors such as high-levels of in-migration resulting in rapid population growth, and a shortage of affordable housing fuelled by this in-migration and the purchase of second homes in coastal locations. Both, Beatty and Fothergill's (2003) work on the *Seaside Economy*, as well as the *Coastal Towns* report suggest that people's perceptions of British coastal towns is changing.

Following cycles of investment and disinvestment, in the post-resort phase, there is the potential for investors to profit from the regeneration of these towns. The rent-gap can be seen as a "dynamic 'see-saw' of investment and disinvestment over time and across space, in an ongoing process of uneven geographical development (see also N.Smith, 1982, 1984; Harvey, 1973, 1982, 2003). Indeed it could be argued that for many coastal towns, regeneration policies are tipping the sea-saw to attract capital investment. However, it is important to note that not all coastal locations will have a large-rent-gap, or that it is viable to close these rent-gaps.

In order to close these rent-gaps, there needs to be sufficient investment; as well as sufficient pull factors to attract in-migrants to coastal towns. These factors can be identified as a series

of social, cultural, economic and physical factors- a theme that will be recurring through this thesis. This chapter suggests that these factors can be understood as the coastal idyll.

Having suggested that there might be a coastal rent-gap in some towns, the next stage is to consider where the coastal-rent-gap is being identified and exploited. In line with the ambiguity over the definition of coastal towns, it can be argued that not all declining coastal towns will witness gentrification. However, the potential for coastal rent-gaps can be seen in downgraded coastal resorts that were never revitalised and are therefore ripe for gentrification, such as St Leonards - the case-study for this thesis.

3.5.1   Reviewing the research aims and objectives

Chapters 2 and 3 examined the gentrification literature and considered the spatial context of the coast as a 'frontier' of gentrification. What follows is a discussion of how the literature review demonstrates the need for addressing the research aims and objectives identified in Chapter 1. The main aim of this thesis is to '*investigate the inter-connections between processes of gentrification and the regeneration of coastal towns using the case-study of St Leonards*'. The literature review shows that whilst gentrification has evolved and extended into locations beyond the inner city, there is limited academic discussion of the unfolding of gentrification in coastal towns.   A discussion on the opening and closing of rent gaps in coastal towns suggests that coastal towns can be viewed as a new frontier of gentrification. Important here are current processes of change leading to the regeneration of coastal towns. This link between gentrification and regeneration is important given discourses of gentrification stress that regeneration policies often employ gentrification blue-prints. This suggests that there is value in exploring if regeneration policies in coastal towns also use gentrification-blue prints.

With this in mind, the first objective of this thesis is to '*explore the role of institutional actors and local residents in the regeneration of coastal towns using a critical perspective of the concept of 'positive' gentrification*'. The literature review has identified that there are many different stakeholders involved in opening and closing rent-gaps, inducing (and resisting) gentrification. Moreover, there is a perception that the importance of different stakeholders has changed over time with N.Smith and Hackworth (2001) arguing that current forms of gentrification are state-led, and that the role of the pioneer gentrifier has demised.   Thus, the

project provides an opportunity to understand how the stakeholder relationships are portrayed in the location of St Leonards, and, in doing so, considers the demise of pioneer gentrifiers in coastal gentrification.

The purpose of the second objective is to consider how and why coastal living has once more seemingly 'become fashionable'. The onus is placed on the coastal landscape, with the documentation of the history of the British seaside identifying that a revival of the coastal landscape is underway. Parallels are drawn here to the role of the rural idyll and, from this base it can by hypothesised that coastal areas also have their own 'idyll' – one that focuses on the blue seascape, as opposed to the green landscape of the rural idyll. Important here is how these representations are packaged, marketed, sold, (and bought) as part of strategies to regenerate coastal towns. Therefore, the thesis seeks to '*examine the (re)commodification of idyllic coastal/water landscapes for the regeneration of coastal towns*'.

Discourses of rural gentrification identify that the rural idyll underpins the unfolding of the gentrification in such locations. Similarly, if, as the second objective suggests, there is a coastal idyll, it becomes useful to consider how and why coastal gentrification may differ from its urban and rural counterparts. The literature review identifies that different spatial contexts have different sets of social, cultural, economic and physical factors that underpin gentrification within those spatial settings. By placing emphasis on the coast, it also becomes important to '*consider the social, economic, cultural and physical processes that underpin coastal gentrification*'.

Having considered how the key findings of the literature review maps onto my research aim and objectives, Chapter 4 will provide a discussion on the different methodologies that will be used to collect data to answer the research questions.

Chapter 4:   Methodology

4.0   Introduction

Methodological approaches to gentrification research have depended on the theoretical standpoints of academics conducting the research, and these different approaches have resulted in the different expressions and explanations for the gentrification process. Van Weesep (1994: 80) identifies that the:

> "signs, effects and trajectories [of gentrification] are to a large degree determined by its local context; the physical and the social characteristics of the neighbourhoods in question, the positions and the goals of the actors, the dominant functions of the city, the nature of economic restructuring and local government policy".

This suggests that a methodology is required that allows for a complementary analysis of gentrification in a localised context, as well as allowing for the different accounts of gentrification from the perspective of different stakeholder groups to be considered. In the case of this project, a mixed-methods approach was deemed necessary as the research sought to examine the overall patterns and trends related to in-migration and regeneration in St Leonards, as well as consider the 'abstract' processes (such as the subjective decision-making processes of migrants) underpinning coastal gentrification and the formation of coastal lifestyles (the coastal idyll).

This chapter is split into 7 sections. Section 4.1 provides detail on the four areas that make up the research site. Section 4.2 considers the research design and methodological approach, defining the author's use of a mixed-methods approach. A discussion is provided in Section 4.3 on the secondary data collection methods and the reason for their inclusion in this project. The methods of content analysis for the newspaper review, as well as the census data extraction, are considered. Attention then shifts to the primary data collection methods, focusing on the methodological approach, sampling framework and analysis framework for the interviews in Section 4.4, and the household surveys in Section 4.5. Section 4.6 then

discusses the ethical considerations and provides details on the theoretical approach, and the positionality of the researcher. Finally, Section 4.7 offers a summary to the chapter.

4.1   The study area

The rationale for choosing St Leonards as a case-study location has already been discussed in Chapter 1. This section identifies how and why the study area was split into four research areas, and the reasons behind excluding the 'seven streets' area in the remit of this thesis. Chapter 1 notes that the extent of the research boundary was defined through the contextual study and relates to the boundary of the original strip of land purchased by Burton for his planned regency town of St Leonards (see Chapter 5). As the research focuses on the impacts of gentrification on the regeneration of coastal towns, it was felt important to keep the area within close bounds to the original extent of the seaside resort (as discussed in Chapter 5).

The study area is located within the wards of Central-St-Leonards, Maze Hill and Gensing. According to the 2001 Census, these three wards have a combined population of 16,625 people; and includes 9,133 dwellings of which 8,350 are occupied. The entire Central-St Leonards ward is contained within the study area as are parts of Maze Hill and Gensing. In order to examine the micro-geographies within the study area, four neighbourhoods have been identified based on the characteristics of the properties within each neighbourhood. These four research areas are presented in Figure 4.1 and discussed in greater detail below.
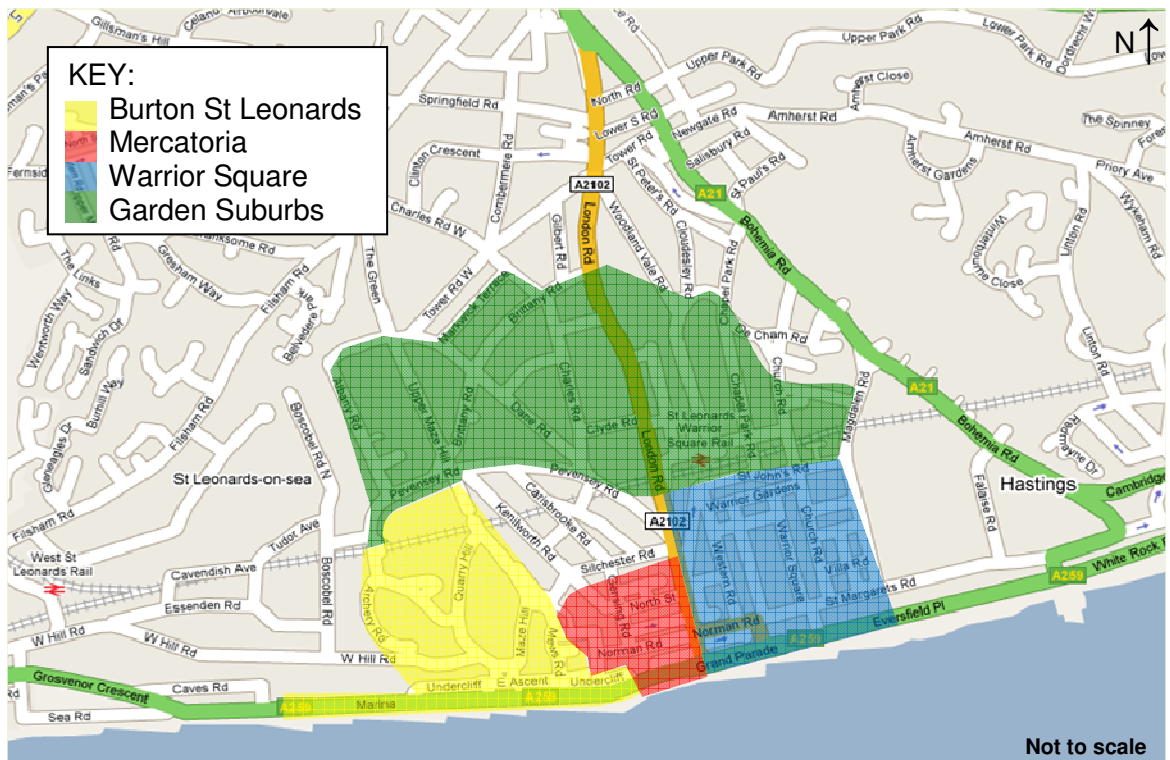
Figure 4.1: The four research areas. (Source: Map base from maps.google.co.uk. Accessed March 2011).

The research area forms the extent of Burton's resort and the Victorian resort of St Leonards. The Burton-St-Leonards area is covered by the red and yellow areas in Figure 4.1. This area has been divided into two areas due to the size and type of housing. The yellow area refers to the large villas that Burton built for the gentry (see Plate 4.1), and the red area is the Mercatoria and Lavatoria area (see Plate 4.2), and the extension of the working class accommodations. The growth of the resort meant a growing settlement in Victorian times. With this era came a change in the type of housing. The Victorian extension of the town is located in the green and blue areas of Figure 4.1. The blue area refers to the Warrior Square area (see Plate 4.3) which forms James Troup's Regency development of Warrior Square. This has been separated from the rest of the Victorian housing due to the nature and style of the properties. Although of a similar era, the Warrior Square properties are dominated by flats and lack private gardens. However, the green area still in the main has large owner-occupied houses, with some flat conversions, and the properties are more typically family homes with private gardens. These are more common with suburban residential areas (see Plate 4.4), and thus for the purpose of this thesis, this area is termed 'Garden Suburbs'.

Plate 4.1: Villas on Maze Hill

Plate 4.2: Cottages on Mercatoria

Plate 4.3: Terraced flats on Warrior Square

Plate 4.4: Large family homes on Albany Road

Within the overall boundary, a triangle in the middle has been excluded. This area is called the 'Seven Streets Area' and is located in the Central-St-Leonards Renewal area (see D.Smith, 2010). This area has not been included within the research for a number of reasons. First, this research sought to examine the unfolding of gentrification in St Leonards. Data gathered in the contextual study (and interview) phases identified that the Seven Streets Area was not undergoing processes of gentrification. Furthermore, taking into account ethical and health and safety concerns, this area was deemed not suitable for conducting field work. The reason for this is was due to the perception of high levels of crime, and the related risk that this put on the researcher's safety. Yet of course, it should be noted that had these ethical and health and safety considerations not been upheld, a different story as to why St Leonards was not regenerating (or even not gentrifying) would unfold due to the socio-economic status of the population in this area.

4.2   Research design and methodological approach

Scholars of gentrification have consistently utilised both qualitative and quantitative methodologies to understand processes of change that underpin gentrification. Although academics debates exist over the quantitative/qualitative dualism (Bryman, 2006), there are benefits of multi-method research (see Sullivan, 2007) combining both qualitative and quantitative methods (McKendrick, 1999). As such, a mixed method approach has been utilised to collect data that explores the unfolding processes of regeneration (and gentrification) in St Leonards. The principle reason for employing this approach was that it allowed the different facets of gentrification to be explored. As McKendrick (1999: 43) notes, different methods need to be employed to "address different aspects of the same different question". Consequently, to answer the research aims and objectives the following methods were employed:

- Contextual study
- Household questionnaire survey
- Stakeholder Interviews

A set of tasks were undertaken within the contextual study stage which underpinned the design and execution of the household questionnaire survey and stakeholder interviews. Whilst each of the stages will be discussed in further detail in the following sections, Figure

4.2 provides an overview of the methods and data collection process employed to conduct the research and how these various stages informed subsequent work.
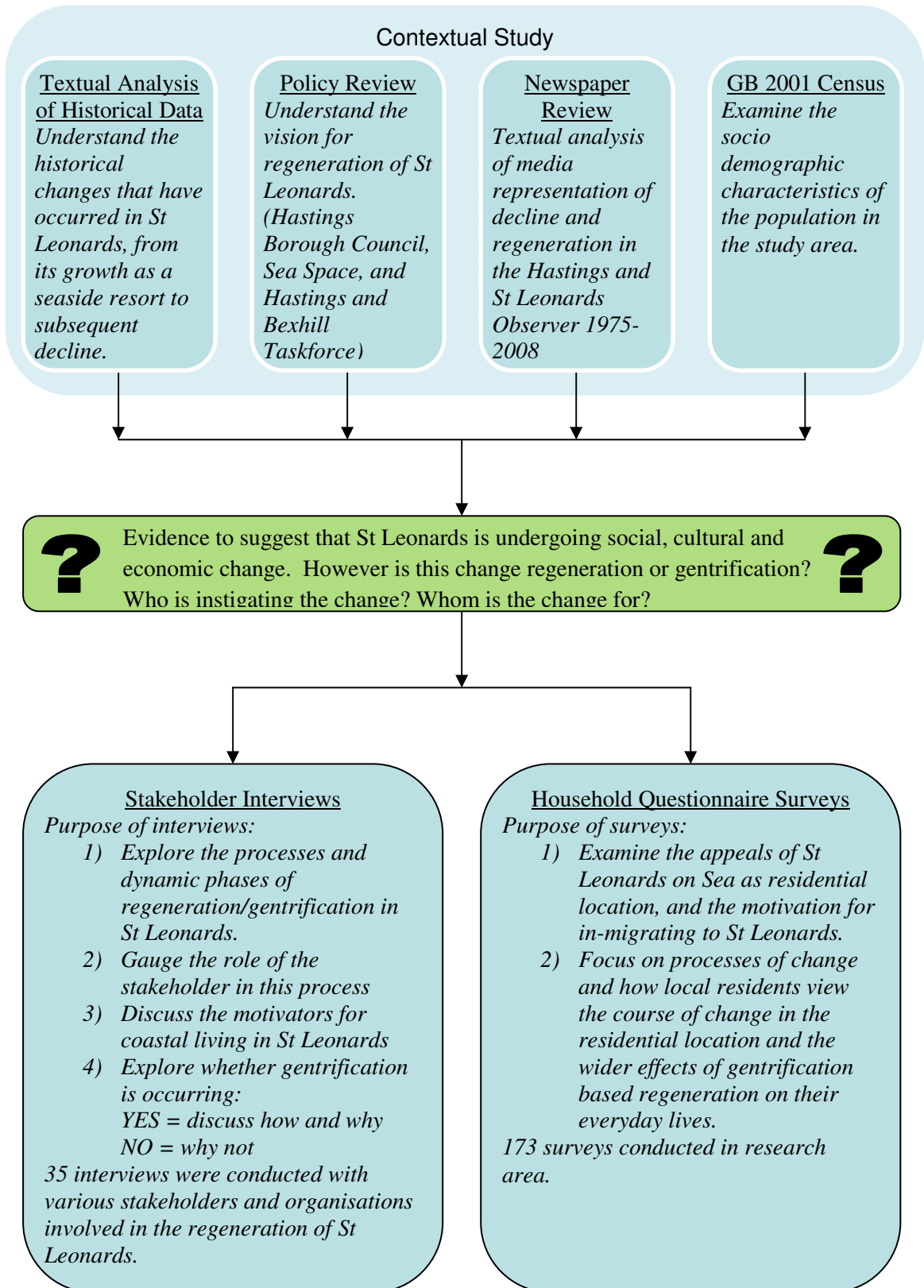
Figure 4.2: A flow chart showing the stages of data collection and the reasons why these steps were performed.

4.3   Conducting the contextual study

Qualitative content analysis was employed as a technique for analysing secondary data sources including historical texts, policy documents, and the local newspaper. Content analysis is a type of textual investigation, applied generally "in the field of mass communication" (Silverman, 2006: 159). In the context of this thesis, this method was required to analyse the findings from the local newspaper. Indeed, Marvasti (2004: 91) notes that content analysis offers convenience in "simplifying and reducing large amounts of data into organised segments". Given that the newspaper review considered all editions of the HSLO from January 1975 to December 2008 (which in the main part has been a weekly local newspaper), there was clearly a vast amount of information to analyse. Therefore, this method enabled regulation of large amounts of data in these early stages of the research.

4.3.1   Content analysis of the Hastings and St Leonards Observer

An in-depth review of the Hastings and St Leonards Observer [HSLO] was undertaken with the aim of charting media representations of decline and regeneration. This element of the research was seen as key source for giving temporal accounts of local events, news and change; and therefore, imperative to build a picture of the local stories of decline and regeneration affecting the town. The method was deemed useful for also identifying specific regeneration parameters to consider in the questionnaire-survey. Question 53 which considered the effects of change on various regeneration themes (such as employment, education opportunities, crime, transport) was collated from the stories of regeneration identified in the newspapers (see appendix A for details of the question).

These past editions of the HSLO were available on microfiche at Hastings Library. The titles of articles within the 'news' section of the paper was considered and any article relating to decline, regeneration or population change was printed. Once these 'stories' were gathered, they were analysed using an open-coding method, whereby the printouts were sorted to create piles of specific themes. Relevant sections of text were transferred into a Microsoft Word document, and these sections of text were further analysed to identify patterns and differences which resulted in the creation of sub themes. The information gathered formed the basis of Chapter 5 – the contextual study of St Leonards.

4.3.2   Policy review

It has been noted how gentrification is often used as a blueprint for regeneration. As such it was anticipated that policy documents would also require careful analysis. The newspaper review identified a number of regeneration documents and polices that required a closer inspection. Further documents were identified through HBC's website. Again, an open coding approach was utilised to identify policies that were relevant to the regeneration of St Leonards and this information was also used to help write the contextual study on St Leonards.

4.3.3   Census analysis – 2001 GB Census data

The 2001 GB Census was identified as an important part of the research process, as this data can provide an insight into the different micro-geographies within the case-study area, and identify the demographic and socio-economic make up of the town.

The extraction of the census data was undertaken using Casweb. Casweb is a web-based interface which allows the end user to extract data at a range of different geographical resolutions, and considers different census datasets. Data was selected based on the ward boundaries of the area (Central-St Leonards, Gensing, and Maze Hill). The data was also compared to the results of the South East as a whole (excluding London) in order to identify how the study area compared to the regional average. A number of variables were considered in line with previous studies of gentrification. These datasets were grouped under the headings of:

- Age structures
- Occupational information
- Household demographics (people)
- Household demographics (dwelling)
- Car ownership (since income is not recorded in the GB Census, car ownership is used as a proxy (Boyle *et al*., 1999)).
- Health
- Migration and ethnicity

The findings were tabulated into percentages, and this information was also used to help write the contextual study on St Leonards. It should be noted that a comparative analysis between two different censuses was not undertaken. The findings of the previous elements of the contextual study identified that St Leonards was undergoing significant processes of change (since 2001) and therefore a comparison between the 1991 and 2001 Census would not have identified the impact that these regeneration policies of 2001 and beyond were having on the regeneration of St Leonards. Whilst the data from the 2011 Census would be ideal to present a comparative study, this data set is not yet available within the timescale of this thesis.

4.4   Interviews

The information collated from the contextual study suggested that St Leonards was undergoing change and that there were a number of individuals involved in the regeneration of the town. Semi-structured interviews were utilised to explore in greater detail some of the key themes that arose from the contextual study, as well as allow for other themes that the author had not previously considered, to present themselves.

4.4.1   Semi-structured interviews as a methodology

A semi-structured interview technique was used, as the author believed this would provide a more intricate framework.   Longhurst (2003) identifies that semi-structured interviews are useful for teasing out valuable information from the interviewee. Valentine (1997) suggests that this methodology entertains a more fluid conversational form, often steering away from fixed, rigid questions. This style of eliciting information can be visualised as an exploratory framework, and therefore the use of interviews was seen to be ideal given the need to develop detailed knowledge of the regeneration of St Leonards.

Semi-structured interviews were favoured rather than structured or unstructured interviews. This is because the format allowed for keeping the conversation within the context of the research agenda, whilst allowing the respondent to raise issues unknown to the author. Dunn (2000: 52) suggests that semi-structured interviews have "some degree of predetermined order but still ensures flexibility in the way issues are addressed by the informant". Therefore a strict pattern of questioning was not followed, rather a set of themes were recognized that the

author saw as important in exploring the regeneration and gentrification of St Leonards. These themes were discovered through the extensive context analysis carried out on gentrification literature and will be discussed in more detail in Section 4.4.3

Interviews as a method of data collection are often favoured as they provide the opportunity to gather detailed information. However, interviews do have their limitations. The main limitation arises from interviewer bias which can lead towards specific answers and because of the unequal relationship between interviewer and respondent (Kobayashi, 1994; Longhurst, 2003). This was avoided by placing emphasis on the respondent by using phrases such as *'can you tell me about the current housing situation'?*, and *'why do you think people want to live in St Leonards'?* This reverses the power from the interviewer to the interviewee, as the interviewee has the knowledge that is required by the interviewer. However all bias cannot be removed because the author went in with a set of themes to be discussed and also because the author's interpretations of what the respondents said could vary from what they meant.

4.4.2   Identifying the interviewees

Interviews were conducted with key stakeholders involved in the regeneration of St Leonards. As some interviewees have asked to remain anonymous, where appropriate no names will be given in the thesis and instead pseudonyms will be provided instead. Various individuals were contacted from a number of organisations. These are identified and the reasons for interviewing them are noted in Table 4.1.

Organisation	Pseudonym	Role	Reason
Hastings Borough Council	Councillor 1	Council Leader: Peter Pragnell	These different individuals were interviewed to gain a political insight to the regeneration of St Leonards.
		Councillors of the wards of Central-St-Leonards and Maze Hill. (Note that the councillors of Gensing Ward declined to take part in the interview. Reasons were not provided).	
	Councillor 2	Jeremy Birch	
	Councillor 3	Trevor Webb	
	Councillor 4	Joy Waithe	
	Councillor 5	Mayor Maureen Charlesworth (and Cllr for Maze Hill Ward)	
	Regeneration Officer 1 and 2 Crime and Safety Officer Housing Officer	Regeneration Officers (Neighbourhood manager (x2), Crime and Safety Officer, Housing Officer,	To understand regeneration from the view point of the officers that work with the community in St Leonards.
	Tourism Manager	Marketing and Tourism Manager	Tourism in St Leonards
	Arts Officer Public Arts Officer	Arts Officer Public Arts Officer	Role of arts from a council perspective
	Planning and Policy Officer	Forward Planning Officer	Planning and Policy decisions for St Leonards
East Sussex County Council	Councillor 6	Councillor in HBC and member of Cabinet for ESCC.	To understand the role ESCC had to play in the town.
Member of Parliament	MP, Hastings and Rye	MP Michael Foster, Hastings and Rye Constituency	Role of Central Government in regeneration
Hastings and Bexhill Economic Alliance	Regeneration Manager	Regeneration Manager	Multi-body, stakeholder organisation responsible for the economic regeneration of Hastings and Bexhill. Provide a insight into how different organisations are working together to deliver the regeneration projects.
Sussex Police	Sussex Police	Police Officer in Hastings	To appreciate the process involved in reducing crime in St Leonards.
1066 Enterprise	Business Coach	Business Coach	Understand the business regeneration in St Leonards
Business owners	Business Owner 1, 2 and 3	3 business owners	
St Leonards Business Association	SLBA	Chairperson	
Arts community	Artist 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5	5 Artists/individual from creative industries background	Artists are often cited as pioneer gentrifiers. So understand their reasons for migrating to St Leonards and

			their involvement in the regeneration.
Estate and Letting Agents	Estate Agent 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5	5 estate/letting agents	To understand residential migration patterns
Burton-St-Leonards Society	Chair, BSL Society	Chairperson	Consider the role of voluntary and community organisation in St Leonards
Central-St-Leonards and Gensing Forum	Chair, CSLGF	Chairperson	
Hastings Arts Forum	Chair, HAF	Chairperson	

Table 4.1: Identifying the interviewees

The individuals and organisations identified in Table 4.1 were contacted via telephone and/or email to ask for their consent for taking part in the interview.   Of all the interviewees contacted, 3 declined to take part. These included the Councillors for Gensing Ward and a representative from Hastings Trust.

The main aim of the interviews was to gauge an understanding of the role these various stakeholders have in the regeneration of St Leonards, and how this fits within the wider Hastings framework. These interviews were exploratory, and the data collated would be used to help construct the survey.

The consent form was used to obtain permission to tape record the interviews for transcribing and subsequent analysis (see Appendix C).   A semi-structured interview technique was employed to 'control' the context of the conversation within the research agenda, whilst allowing the respondent to raise issues unknown to the researcher.   Consequently, a set of themes were identified for the interviews and will be discussed further in Section 4.4.3.

All interviews were tape recorded with the permission of the interviewee. All interviewees were made aware that their responses were to be treated anonymously unless they gave consent to be named and that these interviews would only be used within the remit of this project.   Using a recording device allowed the researcher to concentrate on the interview without added pressure of struggling to get the conversation on paper, and allows the interviewee to engage in a 'proper' conversation without trying to pause or talk more slowly so that the researcher could keep up.   This also meant that a more accurate and detailed record of the conversation was available for analysis as the researcher could re-visit the interview on more than one occasion to pick up on ideas and inferences which may have otherwise been missed (Kobayashi, 2001).

4.4.3   Structure of the interviews

The interviewees were briefed that the researcher was interested in processes of regeneration, and change specifically in the three census wards that form the study area.   Although this thesis focuses on the processes of gentrification, the interviews consisted of a discussion on regeneration rather than gentrification. The reason for this was due to one of the objectives of the thesis: *to explore the role of actors and residents in the regeneration of coastal towns using a critical perspective of the concept of 'positive' gentrification.* Lees *et al.* (2007) suggests that it is difficult to be 'for' gentrification. Whilst the regeneration of St Leonards is celebrated by its proponents (as evident in Chapters 5 and 6), it was perceived that the stakeholders would not speak as openly about the impacts of gentrification. However, towards the end of each interview, the interviewer suggested that gentrification was occurring in St Leonards and asked the interviewee to comment on their views to this statement.

As noted previously semi structured interviews by their nature mean that a set list of questions is followed, rather a set of themes for discussion are identified.   These included:

- Views on regeneration of St Leonards
- Role/involvement of organisation in the regeneration?
- Exploring the migration into St Leonards:

    Who is moving into St Leonards?

    Why are they moving here? (prompt social, cultural, economic and physical factors)

    Impact of migrant community

- Negative and positive impacts of migration
- Current housing situation –

    Private rented?

    Owner occupied?

- Retail and Hospitality offering
- Considering the role of the coast (also heritage?)
- Successful regeneration? What will happen in 5 years time?
- Is St Leonards undergoing gentrification? Why (not)?

Whilst these themes were explored, the interview was not bound to a particular order and also allowed the interviewee to raise other themes which they thought were important in reference to the regeneration of St Leonards. In order to let the interviewee guide much of the conversation, the first question that was posed by the interviewer was: *'Can you tell me a little bit about the regeneration of St Leonards since 2000'?* This broad question allowed the interviewee to discuss many of the themes identified above. The interviews lasted approximately one hour. Once the interviewee was confident that they did not have any more information to add regarding the regeneration of St Leonards, the interviewer introduced the concept of gentrification and asked the interviewee to consider if the process of gentrification was unfolding in the town.

4.4.4   Analysis framework

Due to their nature of being exploratory, it was not in the remit of this study to draw conclusive statements from the interviews. Instead, they were used to identify key patterns and processes which would feed into the design of the questionnaire survey. Grounded theory was employed as an analytical framework for the interviews. Grounded theory refers to theory that is derived from data (Strauss and Anslem, 1998). It is an inductive approach that is likely to offer insight and enhance understanding to develop ideas and concepts.

The first stage of the process involved transcribing the interviews, and checking the transcripts to minimise any word-processing errors. Each interview was then read through to compile an overall picture using Silva's (2007: 13) interpretation:

> "What you see in research largely depends on a combination of what you want to see, what you ask to see, what you are allowed to see and how you frame the research".

In the case of this thesis, this interpretation was important. This is because whilst the interviews focused on the processes of regeneration, the findings were unpacked to understand not only the regeneration of St Leonards, but also the unfolding processes of gentrification. In this first stage of analysis, a list was compiled of particular themes that identified that gentrification was occurring.

The interview transcripts were then read again with the purpose of coding the data. An open coding approach was used for the content analysis. Qualitative content analysis refers to the subjective coding of events and/or topics that eventually help to create a picture or tell a story (Wilkinson, 2004). The open coding method involved colour-coding the data from the interview transcripts to group specific topics or issues (Crang, 1997). This data was then 'cut-and-pasted' into new Word documents based on the coding of each theme. Thus a number of 'piles' (documents) were created ready for the next stage of the analysis.

Using the 'long couch or short hall' approach each theme was revisited to further define and categorise the data (Agar, 1986). As Crang (1997: 186) notes:

> "What generally happens is that some codes 'break down', that is, although chunks of text apparently referred to the same thing, later on the researcher realizes the actually have some differences. Then the researcher has to go back to that 'pile' to check and if necessary recode all those cases".

This stage of the coding process can be referred to as 'axial-coding' which refers to "a set of procedures whereby data are put back together in new ways after open coding by making connections between categories" (Strauss and Corbin, 2007: 96). This phase allowed for the data to be re-constructed using comparative methods to further define the categories and identify any links between them. The most regularly occurring categories were through refinement of the data developed into solid concepts. From this a set of narratives was formulated that charted various regeneration and gentrification themes.

This methodology allowed the researcher to gain a detailed insight into the roles that different stakeholders including recent in-migrants played in the regeneration of the area, as well as identify the reasons why individuals and households were relocating to St Leonards. These narratives have been presented in Chapters 5, 6 and 8 through the use of quotes from the interviewees. The purpose of these quotes within the thesis is to identify key points of concern. A similar process was used for the analysis of the open-ended survey questions.

4.5   Questionnaire surveys

The questionnaire surveys formed the last stage of the research process. The findings from the contextual study (Chapter 5) and the interviews (Chapters 5 and 6) identify a number of

themes that warranted further exploration. Indeed, this questionnaire survey provided an ideal opportunity to gather primary, empirical qualitative and quantitative data on household information and the migration decision-making processes of in-migrants to St Leonards.

4.5.1   Questionnaire surveys as a methodology

Questionnaire surveys are useful for eliciting people's attitudes and opinions of a specific issue and are useful for finding out about complex behaviours and social interactions (G.Robinson, 1998; Parfitt, 1997; McLafferty, 2003). In the context of this project, surveys were used to identify the migration decisions of the gentrifiers and the choices behind their decisions. This was achieved through a balance of both open-ended and fixed-response questions. In the case of this thesis, 26 open-ended and 44 fixed-response questions were asked. Formats for the questions were decided based on the information each question was to obtain. Open-ended questions were included to allow the respondents to express their personal attitudes, preferences and emotions (McLafferty, 2003). Fowler (1993) identifies open-ended questions as useful because they allow for unanticipated responses and describe more closely the real views of respondents. Fixed-response questions were used for demographic data and the characteristics of the respondents. Fixed-response questions provide a guide for the respondents, and thus make it easier for questions to be answered (Fink and Kosecoff, 1998). The questionnaire surveys also employed Likert scales to elicit respondents' views. This type of question presents a range of answers anchored by two opposing positions (G.Robinson, 1998). For this thesis a five-point scale was utilised with the middle-point representing a neutral answer. In addition, an extra option for 'don't know' was also included. The Likert scale was useful for some of the questions in this survey as it allowed respondents' opinions to be expressed on a scale, but also allowed for comparison between different respondents as the opinions were recorded quantitatively (McLafferty, 2003).

4.5.2   Structure of the survey

The purpose of the survey was two-fold. First, the survey examined the appeals of St Leonards as a residential location, and the motivations for in-migrating to St Leonards. This strand of the research aimed to understand the main reasons why respondents reside in St Leonards, and the decision-making processes that led them to reside in their current home, as

well as any migration within and between St Leonards and Hastings. The second strand of the survey focused on processes of change, and the regeneration of St Leonards. The purpose for this is to gain insights into the opinions of how the local residents viewed the changes in their neighbourhood, and, the wider effects of gentrification based regeneration on their everyday lives.

The survey considered all households who had resided in the case-study location, irrespective of how long they have resided in St Leonards. The sample was targeted to ensure that the collective opinion of adults in the household was being surveyed as accurately as possible. Clearly, in order to effectively capture the opinion of the household each member should have been surveyed, however this is not a feasible survey methodology, and thus only one adult in each household was surveyed.

The survey was constructed so that questions would reflect the aims of the research, evaluating the migration decision-making process of residents, as well as their perceptions of regeneration in St Leonards. The questions were charted against 8 themes as noted in Table 4.2. Sections C, D and E were influenced by the findings of the semi-structured interviews.

Section	Heading	Question numbers
A	Residing in St Leonards	1 - 23
B	Finding your home in St Leonards	24 - 30
C	Residential history in St Leonards	31 - 35
D	Previous place of residence	36 - 40
E	Change in St Leonards	41 - 58
F	About household	59 - 64
G	About you	65 - 66
H	Respondent record	67 - 70

Table 4.2: Details of questionnaire sections

The survey design entailed 70 questions, printed over 5 pages (double sided) with a front explanatory page introducing the research, researcher, details on how data would be used and stored, contact details and how participants can gain feedback. Questions were numbered to allow the respondents to navigate through applicable sections, as well as simplifying the data input process (Wisker, 2008). Each questionnaire took approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. A full copy of the questionnaire is provided in Appendix A.

The first theme within the questionnaire asked about 'residing in St Leonards' and was identified as one of the key themes for exploration within the survey. The section elicited information regarding their residential patterns in terms of length of stay, patterns of stay and their future plans for residing in the area. Furthermore, the respondents were also asked to discuss the social, cultural, economic and physical factors that attracted them to St Leonards. The second theme: 'finding your home in St Leonards' dwelled deeper into the residential decision-making process and considered the decisions involved in finding their current residential home, as well as details of any improvements made on the property. The third theme considered the respondents 'residential history in St Leonards'. The purpose of this was to identify if there was any significant movement within Hastings and St Leonards. The fourth theme focused on the 'previous place of residence'. A comparison between themes A and D would allow the researcher to identify patterns of tenure and locational changes between St Leonards and respondents previous place of resident. The fifth theme asked questions relating to 'change in St Leonards'. The main remit of this section was to consider the regeneration of the town, as well as identifying resident's perceptions of the roles of different stakeholders involved in the regeneration. The final three themes ('about your household', 'about you', and 'respondent record') focus on providing quantitative data that would reveal the demographic and household characteristics of the sample.

4.5.3   Identifying the sample frame and sampling method

Prior to starting the data collection, it was envisaged that a total of 150 responses would be collected. In line with previous studies, a response rate of 30% was expected (Higgs *et al.*, 2003). Consequently, it was estimated that a sample size of 450 households would be needed, with every n^{th} household approached based on census ward as shown in Table 4.3. In reality, a total of 173 surveys were collected with a minimum of 40 responses in each of the four areas.

Survey Area	Total Number of Dwellings (including empty homes)	Total Number households	Resultant sampling method
Central-St-Leonards	3864	3473	1 in 11 houses
Maze Hill	2304	2172	1 in 7 houses
Gensing	2965	2705	1 in 9 houses

Table 4.3: Household composition data and resultant sample size calculation

The data was collected by way of a door-to-door survey, which was conducted by the researcher, with agreement from the participant on the doorstep of their property. The survey remained anonymous, and no data was recorded that could have been used to identify the participant. All respondents were asked to supply their postcode to help with mapping purposes (question 66). Once completed, hard copies of the surveys were stored in a locked filing cabinet. Data loaded on an electronic file was stored on a secure computer (not on networked file space), protected by password access. Hard copies of the survey will be kept until the end of this research degree, upon the completion of which they will be destroyed.

A pilot study was conducted to identify if there were any problems in the questionnaire. All 10 respondents were happy to answer the questions without needing further explanation. The strategy used for conducting the surveys was face-to-face doorstep surveys. This approach was preferred to telephone and postal surveys. The author believed this method would enable a representative sample to be obtained with a good response rate. It allowed for the interviewer to encourage the respondents to fill in the survey and provide explanations for any aspect not understood by the respondent as well as "clarify vague responses and, with open-ended questions, probe to reveal hidden meanings" (McLafferty, 2003: 93). The author conducted all the surveys to maintain consistency. The author also chose to fill in the responses for the respondent, as several of the pilot questionnaires were very difficult to read due to handwriting. This adequately solved the problem of misinterpreting words.

4.5.4   Analytical framework

It is important to consider the analysis of the data before the data collection exercise is conducted. Bryman (2008) suggests that this ensures that not only are relevant questions asked, but in a way which can be usefully analysed. The first step in analysing the data involved the creation of a spreadsheet, as descriptive analysis required the questionnaire data to be available in a spreadsheet format. Data from the questionnaires were condensed onto a spreadsheet using Microsoft Excel. The questionnaires were already pre-coded for each category and thus the task was simplified by simply inserting data by row. Using the principle of grounded theory, some of the rich empirical data gathered from open-ended questions was also categorised and recorded into quantifiable categories which would later be required for analysis using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). Due to the vast

amounts of data, this has to be done carefully and the spreadsheets were rechecked manually to omit any errors.

Once the spreadsheets were created, data was imported into SPSS to enable the descriptive analysis of the data. The respondents were grouped based on the research area their residential property was in. Cross tabulations were then conducted between the research areas and the other variables from the survey to indentify the similarities and differences related to the residents identified in each area. The data was then presented in tables using both values and percentages (value / total in each research area that question applied to). The analysis undertaken using SPSS helped to form a fuller understanding of the residential decision-making process and socioeconomic make up of the area, as well as understand the respondents' perception of regeneration in the area. Data from the 2001 GB Census was also compared to the research data to identify similarities and differences between the research sample and the census data. This process in known as triangulation which offers "cross-checking of results and methods in order to provide insights into a given problem" (Winchester, 1999: 62).

Statistical tests were not used for this project. Initially, it was expected that chi-square tests would be employed to identify significant differences and associations between survey variables. This methodology would have been appropriate for the original sample size of 150 responses, noting data was mainly nominal or ordinal. However, in the processes of conducting the surveys it quickly became apparent that the data would need to be divided into the four areas identified in Figure 4.1. As a result of this, a small numbers problem arose with a minimum of 40 respondents in each of the four areas.   Whilst splitting the sample in this way allowed me to conduct descriptive and comparative analysis between the four areas, the numbers were too small for conducting chi-square tests given the associated degrees of freedom.

4.6   Positionality and ethical considerations

4.6.1   Positionality

A key issue within qualitative and quantitative research is to consider the position of the researcher within the research process. This involves a consideration of how the boundaries

between researcher and research subjects are acknowledged and negotiated throughout the research process. As Clifford and Valentine (2003: 557) suggest, important here is the role of the researcher:

> "Recognising and trying to understand the implications of the social position of the researcher with respect to the subjects, particularly with regard to power relations or cultural differences that may influence the process of the research and its interpretation. For example, how we are positioned in relation to various contexts of power (including gender, class, 'race', sexuality, job status etc.) affects the way we understand the world. Likewise, the information given by informants to a researcher may depend on how the researcher is viewed in that particular context (threatening, insignificant, powerful)".

As the researcher, my positionality will have added certain biases to this project as evident through the data collection methods of the semi-structured interviews and the household questionnaire surveys, and the interpretation of census data and the HSLO (Dowling, 2005). The perceptions that interviewees and survey respondents had of me as the researcher could colour their responses. In order to enable the effect to be minimal, it was important to remain neutral and impartial whilst administering the surveys and conducting the interviews. At the same time, all interviewees and respondents were encouraged to be open about their thoughts, and assured them that they would remain anonymous throughout the process (as will be discussed in relation to ethical considerations). Furthermore, as the researcher, the author had a grounded understanding of gentrification and regeneration prior to the interviews. Identifying a set of themes to discuss already steers the conversation to certain aspects, which the interviewee may not consider to be important. This bias was minimised by ensuring the interviews were focused on the narratives of the interviewee, rather than following a set list of questions. In reference to the household surveys, respondents were asked if they had any further information they would like to add, and the researcher was also present at surveys to answer (neutrally) and questions the respondents may have.

As the questionnaires were conducted by knocking on every n^{th} door, there is the possibility that the sample is not representative of the population in the area. In addition, it was assumed that most people would have a day time job and therefore majority of the surveys were conducted on evenings and weekends. It is also possible that certain individuals who work during the time periods when the surveys were conducted would have potentially been missed. The household survey sampling framework was also constrained by considerations

of risk to the researcher. Whilst the methodology suggested that every n^{th} household should be approached, there were instances where some houses were avoided due to seeing someone apparently drunk go inside, or hearing shouting etc.

The qualitative data analysis method of grounded theory also had significant problems with it. Grounded theory is identified to be hermeneutic as it includes coding, constant comparison and theory building (Hoven, 2003). Themes are identified by the interpreter whose analysis will be based on their understanding of particular concepts. Coding data into categories can lose the context of the response. Coupled with this are the problems that arise in interpretation where the researcher misunderstands what the respondent is saying. As the research examines how gentrification is used as a 'positive tool' for regeneration, throughout the data analysis process, it was important that the researcher did not automatically assume that the data referred to gentrification, and thus was cautious to consider the quotes used for the purpose of this thesis, in line with the wider context of the conversation that the quote was taken from.

4.6.3   Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations are important for any research. They protect the providers of information, innocent or vulnerable people, and the researcher or the university from harm or litigation (Graham, 2005; Hay, 2003; Wisker, 2008). Consequently, it is imperative that the researcher is ethically responsible at all stages of the data collection, analysis and write-up (Martin and Flowerdew, 2005). This include the planning of the questionnaire, conducting the household surveys, conducting the interviews, and the storage and use of the information given. This research was approved by the University of Brighton's School of Environment and Technology Research Ethics Committee and will be discussed in this section in greater detail.

Participants of the household surveys were given the opportunity to receive a summary of the survey results by emailing the researcher before the end of June 2009. By asking the participant to contact the researcher to express interest in receiving feedback, the researcher did not need to note personal/identifiable data. An information sheet detailing the nature and purpose of the study and the reasons for the researcher carrying out the survey was left with

the respondent, along with contact details should they wish to know more about the project or receive feedback on the findings of the survey (see Appendix B).

Participants of the interviews were also given the opportunity to receive a summary of the interview results by emailing the researcher before the end of June 2009. Interviewees were briefed that the researcher was interested in the process of regeneration and change, specifically in the three census wards that form the study area. A consent form was used to obtain permission to tape record the interviews for transcribing and subsequent analysis. All interviewees were made aware that their responses would be treated anonymously, and would be used only within the remit of this project, and any subsequent dissemination of findings. A copy of the interview participant information sheet is provided in Appendix C

The potential risks considered were those associated with a lone researcher conducting door-to-door surveys and interviews (Martin and Flowerdew, 2005). To minimise these risks, the researcher ensured that her colleagues and/or family knew which research site she was visiting on which days, and when she planned to enter and leave the field. The researcher did not enter household settings, wore a University badge, and carried with her a letter from the Head of School. In reference to the interviews, the researcher ensured that interviews either took place in a public place or within the office building of the respondent.

4.7 Summary

This chapter has explored the methodological approaches adopted in this thesis, and has demonstrated that a scoping approach was utilised to obtain contextual and empirical data. The chapter began with an exploration of the study area and considered why this was split into four research areas. A mixed-methods approach has been used for the purpose of this thesis, as the research sought to examine the overall patterns and trends related to in-migration and regeneration in St Leonards, as well as consider the 'abstract' processes (such as the subjective decision-making processes of migrants) underpinning coastal gentrification and the formation of coastal lifestyles. The mixed method approach gave a balance to the research. The data collection process was then described including the purpose of the primary and secondary data and how these different streams of research complemented each other. A detailed contextual study was conducted to identify the temporal change in St Leonards. The main focus of this element included a detailed newspaper review as well as a census data

analysis. The findings of the contextual study identified a set of themes which were used to frame the discussions of the semi-structured interviews. These interviews were conducted with key stakeholders involved in the regeneration of St Leonards and provided an opportunity to explore in further detail the effects of regeneration and gentrification in St Leonards. These exploratory interviews gave rise to a number of questions that warranted further analysis and the household questionnaire-survey was used to 'test' the key theories and themes that arose from the interviews. Finally, the chapter presented a discussion on the ethical considerations review that was conducted prior to undertaking the primary data collection. Finally, the principal ethical considerations that were upheld in this project were discussed.

Having provided a detailed discussion on the methodologies conducted for the purpose of this thesis, attention now turns to the presentation of the findings of the data collected. Chapter 5 considers the findings of the contextual study, as well as portraying a discussion from the interviews on the role of stakeholders in the regeneration process. Chapter 6 utilises the information gathered from the interviews to provide a portrayal of the role of the in-migrant in the regeneration of St Leonards, and also considers the push and pull factors resulting in in-migration to the town. Chapter 7 then portrays the analysis of the household survey. These various data streams finally come together in Chapter 8, which offers a discussion and conclusion to the thesis.

Chapter 5:   Contextualisation of St Leonards

5.0   Introduction

This chapter focuses on the case-study location of St Leonards.   Whilst St Leonards is currently integrated within the Borough of Hastings, it was originally designed and developed as a separate town. The town was designed as a purpose built resort for the wealthy and like other resort towns, St Leonards became victim to the decline of tourism in the late twentieth century (HSLO, 26/6/76: 13). The decline that followed resulted in high levels of social and economic deprivation. The 2000 Index of Multiple-Deprivation ranked Central-St-Leonards as the 191st worst ward in England, making it a part of the worst 3% of wards in England[3] (CLG). However, since the late 1990's, St Leonards has received significant investment through regeneration projects in order to alleviate the deprivation in the area. These factors suggest that St Leonards forms an ideal case-study location to understand if coastal rent-gaps exist, and the processes of change involved in closing these rent-gaps.

The chapter is split into 7 sections.   Section 5.1 provides information on the study location and population demographics. Section 5.2 explores the history of the seaside resort and the factors that have shaped the contemporary community and lifestyles of St Leonards today. Section 5.3 explores the 'tourism crisis' and the decline of St Leonards as a seaside resort. Section 5.4 examines current regeneration schemes in St Leonards, as part of the HRP, as well as a detailed newspaper review on the regeneration of St Leonards between 1975 and 2008. Section 5.5 considers the roles that various stakeholders play in producing, marketing and selling the attractions of St Leonards to potential migrants. This has been achieved through the information gathered from the semi-structured interviews. Section 5.6 then considers the rationale for viewing St Leonards as a location that can portray the opening and closing of a

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[3] The 2010 Index of Multiple Deprivation presented the findings at a super output area (SOA) level. The four SOA's that make up Central St Leonards ranked as follows: E01020982: 331; E01020983: 966; E01020984: 1134; and, E01020985: 2425. (Where a ranking of 1 is for the most deprived ward and 32482 is the least deprived ward).

coastal rent-gap. This is done through analysing the housing market and exploring the arts and social capital in the area, before finally providing a conclusion in Section 5.7.

5.1   Locating St Leonards

Unlike many of Britain's coastal towns which grew from fishing villages, St Leonards was built as a planned regency town for the wealthy, which became popular with royalty and aristocracy (1066a, 2008). Originally St Leonards referred to the development of a coastal resort by James Burton in 1827, and latter added to by his son Decimus Burton in the 1850's and 1860's (Hastings Coastal Treasures Database [HCTD], 2006) (see Figure 5.1).
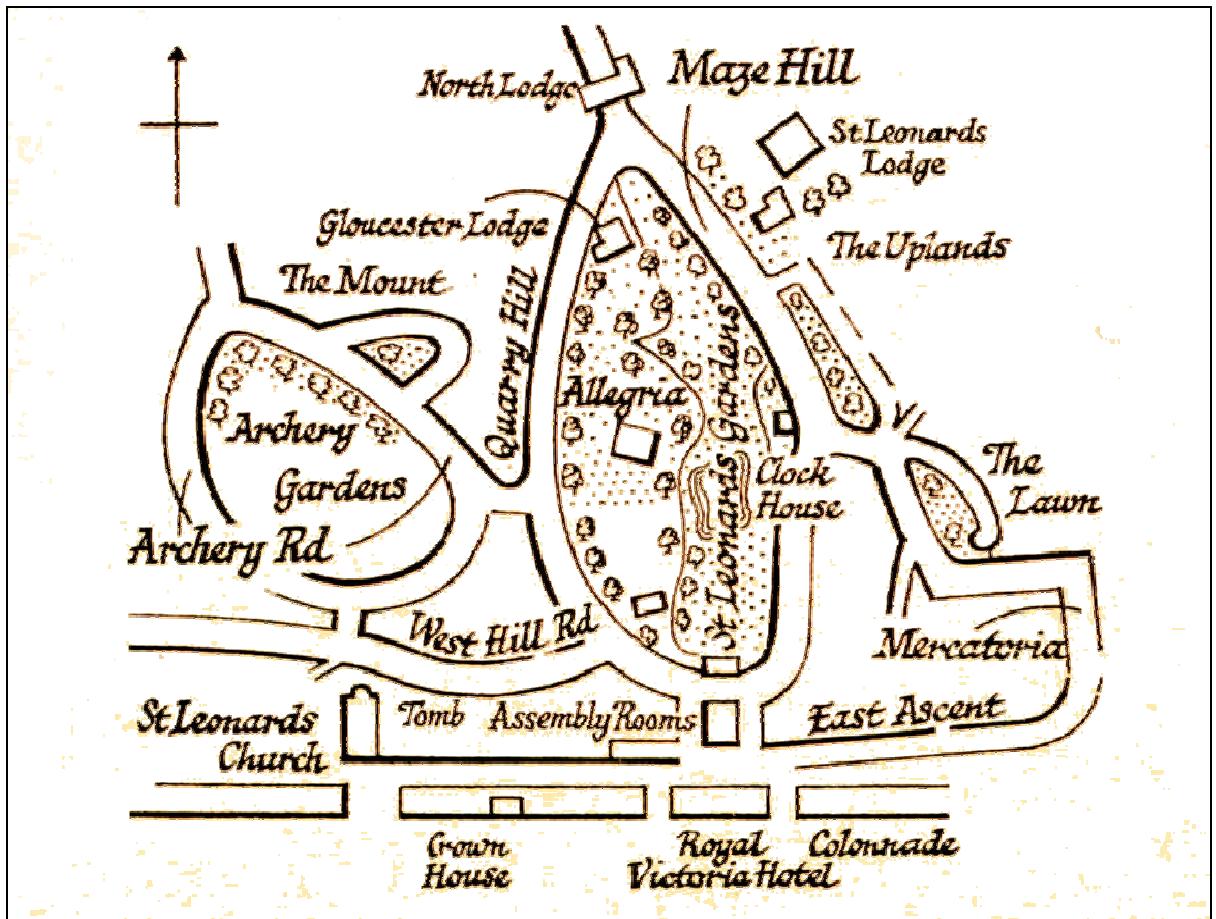
Figure 5.1: Map of Burtons St Leonards. (Source: HBC, 2003)

This thesis focuses on a selective area within St Leonards, as noted in Chapter 4: the area of Burtons St Leonards and extends to cover the wards of Central-St-Leonards, Maze Hill and Gensing.

5.2   Historic St Leonards

5.2.1   The birth of a retreat for the gentry

Burton's plans for a seaside resort were conceived in 1827, and were not drawn up with the topography of St Leonards in mind. Having negotiated with the Eversfield Estate for a section of Gensing Farm the plans were adapted to the landscape. The account in the local newspaper described Burton's plans as:

> "Diversified Promenades are intended to be formed; and enchanting villas near a luxuriant wood, independent of the Crescent, will be erected; and a spa-room, and warm and cold sea-water baths, upon a superior scale, are also in contemplation" (HCTD, 2006: 20).

The land purchased was a coastal strip three quarters of a mile wide and half a mile inland at its centre (Hastings Museum and Art Gallery [HMAG], 2002). The plan for the town was very much influenced by Burton's involvement with Nash in Regents Park, London – copying the grand and classical styles of Nash's stucco terraces along the seafront, and picturesque citing of villas among the wooded slopes and groves. Apart from the residential development, service areas (Mercatoria and Lavatoria), public buildings for entertainment such as the Royal Victoria Hotel and the Assembly Rooms and the Subscription Gardens (see Plate 5.1) were also planned (HMAG, 2002). These were the social centre of the town and designed for the enjoyment of the wealthy, with families paying 25 shillings a year, or 5 shillings a week admission into the gardens (HCTD, 2006: 22).

Plate 5.1: Subscription Gardens in St Leonards. Source: www.ourpasthistory.com

Burton's plans for St Leonards as a settlement catering for permanent well-to-do residents and visitors was a success, drawing, a more genteel clientele. As noted in a guidebook of 1831:

> "The peculiar advantage of this place as a residence is that its visitors are not exposed to any disagreeable associations which occur in most places … where the most sudden transitions from grandeur to wretchedness and profligacy may be observed" (McKie, 2006).

Similarly to other coastal towns, the presence of royalty was the defining factor for the town to become a fashionable resort. 1834 was significant for St Leonards as during the winter months, the Duchess of Kent and the 15 year old Princess Victoria came to stay, affirming St Leonards' emergence as a fashionable resort (Baines, 1990).

5.2.2   Societal divisions

Burton's St Leonards also had a community of labouring and lower classes. However, the design of the town allowed a firm segregation between the classes with accommodation for domestic staff, shops and laundries discreetly hidden at the top of East Ascent in the quarters known as Mercatoria (the shopping area) and Lavatoria (the laundries) (HCTD, 2006). The upper classes lived in spacious opulence with generally two or three people occupying a villa,

boasting three or four large reception-rooms, several bedrooms, servants' accommodation, and gardens; whilst the working class people were overcrowded into small terraced houses where it was not uncommon to find between 8 and 11 people (sometimes 2 to 3 families) sharing the house (Wojtczak, 2003a) (see Plates 5.2 and 5.3). Although accommodation of the poor classes was hidden away from the well-to-do residents and visitors, St Leonards had problems with public displays of the underclass. Furthermore, street drinking was a huge problem amongst this group as they made the place look untidy. This was a serious concern for the town as the street drinkers would have "repelled the well-bred visitors upon whose patronage the economy of the two towns almost entirely depended" and consequently it was normal practice for a person to be arrested and jailed for being drunk in a public place or even sleeping in the open air (Wojtczak, 2003b).

Plate 5.2: Cottages on Shepherd Street – showing small cottages built and used by the Italian builders whom were employed by Burton.

Plate 5.3: Cottages on Norman Road (originally Lavatoria Area of Burton-St-Leonards).

Apart from social class divisions, St Leonards attracted a high number of female residents. By 1841, 12% of the female population of Hastings and St Leonards was of independent means and did not require financial support of men (an extraordinary figure as the corresponding figure for men of independent means was just 5%) (Wojtczak, 2003c). When Decimus Burton added The Uplands and Lawns developments to the area, they were inhabited mainly by women, with the 1871 and 1881 Censuses showing that 14 of the 16 houses were headed by women (Wojtczak, 2003d). Whilst the labouring class women were occupied with work, the wealthy gentry were ladies of leisure who spent their time:

> "promenading on the seafront, visiting reading-rooms and libraries, shopping, enjoying rural carriage-rides, holding 'At Homes', musical soirées and dinner parties. They attended lectures and concerts at the Public Hall and Assembly Rooms" (Wojtczak, 2003c).

This sub-population played a significant role in the cultural landscape of St Leonards, establishing many of St Leonards institutions and societies, and were instrumental in the creation of The Society of St Leonards Archers in 1833: "they planned, ornamented, improved and maintained the archery grounds, which Burton donated for the purpose, until

they were among the best in Britain" (Wojtczak, 2003d). During this time, archery was a popular sport amongst the gentry, as it was one of the few opportunities where men and women could mix informally.

5.2.3   Therapeutic St Leonards for the gentry

In a similar vein to some other eighteenth and nineteenth century coastal towns, St Leonards provided a therapeutic space providing health benefits. This can be seen in Burton's plan itself via the provision of the salt water baths and the open spaces in the design of the townscape. The marina hosted salt water baths which were built low in order to not interfere with the sea views from the hotel rooms. They were designed as three linked classical temples containing both hot and cold water baths, as well as a bank and library. These baths were demolished around 1935 (HCTD, 2006). The Subscription Gardens also provided the opportunity for fresh air and exercise, as did the promenade and the surrounding countryside. Accounts of the settlement described the houses as:

> "a little paradise to invalids; … the houses, whether those detached as Italian or Lombard villas with gardens, or those placed in rows like a series of Gothic cottages, all equally desirable, are much sought after" (Granville, 1971: 595).

Similarly, the Pigot and Co 1840 directory entry for Sussex describes St Leonards as:

> "a beautiful and fashionable watering place, in the borough of Hastings and partaking of its municipal privileges, one mile west of that town – seated in a most healthful and delightful situation, having a southern aspect, and well sheltered from the keen winds of the north. The erection of this elegant little place was commenced in 1828, by the late Mr. J. Burton, of London, an architect of distinguished ability, under whose plans and management the buildings were completed; and it is but just to state, that, for taste, convenience, and beauty of architecture, they are not surpassed by any marine residence of similar size in the kingdom. From the esplanade (which extends to Hastings,) the views are expansive and picturesque – embracing, towards the east, the castle and cliffs of Hastings; to the west, Bexhill, Pevensey, Beachy head and the South Downs; and inland the delightful and interesting vale of St. Leonards. There are numerous handsomely furnished lodging-houses, in charming situations; five superior hotels; together with baths, libraries, reading rooms, public gardens and archery grounds – the entire presenting attractions of no common order" (Sussex OPC, no date).

James Burton was keen to see St Leonards prosper as a healthy place to live and issued Cottage Regulations in 1831 which were recommended for the preservation of health within homes (HMAG, 2002). Another important factor in maintaining the portrayal of St Leonards as both a therapeutic place and a pleasurable landscape for the gentry was the May 1823 Act "for better paving, lighting, watching, and otherwise improving the Town of St Leonard in the County of Sussex" obtained by James Burton (Baines, 1990: 28). This Act provided the legal authority for governing the town and allowed rates to be levied to pay for local services (HCTD, 2006).

5.2.4   The growth of St Leonards

The arrival of the railway was an important factor that allowed St Leonards to develop further. A temporary station was erected at Bulverhythe in 1846, followed by Gensing Station in 1851 (renamed Warrior Square station in 1862). The railway initially connected the town with Tunbridge Wells and then London a year later. Its success as a resort meant that St Leonards grew beyond the boundaries of Burton's original plans with the development of Kings Road and Warrior Square (HCTD, 2006). Warrior Square was designed and laid out between 1853 and 1863 by James Troup and also catered for the gentry, being described as the largest and finest square in England (Brooks, 2004: 34). James Troup wanted to call this development a town called St Mary's after the church of St Mary Magdalene. However, the extension of both St Leonards and Hastings meant there was no physical space for another town, and the development was subsumed into St Leonards (HSLO, 28/7/88: 23). Indeed, the growth of St Leonards, and its separation from Hastings can be seen in Figure 5.2, which is a map of the towns of Hastings and St Leonards in 1890.

Figure 5.2: Map of St Leonards and Hastings in 1890. (Source: Bacon, 1895)

Although the town was successful in attracting wealthy residents and holidaymakers, the 1870's witnessed increasing competition from other new seaside developments, such as Eastbourne and Bexhill-on-Sea. By 1888, St Leonards had grown significantly in size. This growth led to the loss of its separate identity from Hastings, and a merger with Hastings took place in 1888 (HCTD, 2006). Indeed, the merged identity of Hastings and St Leonards is held responsible for the decline of St Leonards. This has also been very much evident in the last 15 years where St Leonards has been seen as second to Hastings by the residents of St Leonards. The HSLO (20/10/1995: 5) reports that the area "is rarely top of the list when it comes to cash investment and upgrading", with concerns that regeneration of St Leonards is being sacrificed due to the demands of major investment of cash and commitment required for Hastings Town Centre (HSLO, 22/3/96: 8; January-March 1997). However, both the Burton's St Leonards Society and the Kings Road & Central-St-Leonards Association have been lobbying against HBC to address the regeneration issues facing St Leonards, This will be discussed in-depth in Section 5.4.

Like other coastal towns St Leonards (and Hastings) had to keep ahead of the times to keep their market share of holiday makers. The 1930s witnessed this through developments such

as Bottle Alley (the covered seafront promenade between Hastings and St Leonards), a cinema and the bathing pool (HCTD, 2006). The pool was successful in its first year with 33,000 people admitted solely in the month of June. However, it was eventually closed down by the Council in 1959, on the premise that it had only made a profit in its first year of operation, and the losses were not sustainable. It was eventually bought in 1960 and converted into Hastings Holiday Centre which included chalet hire for 300 guests and catered increasingly for a working class market (1066b, 2008). Another key development was Marine Court (Plate 5.4) built in 1937-38. This ocean liner shaped building replaced one end of Burton's Western Colonnade and was perhaps the last demonstration of confidence in St Leonards as a chic and fashionable resort before its relative decline after the war (HCTD, 2006). Considerations were made in 1976 to include the building (as well as Warrior Square) within the Burton's St Leonards conservation area (HSLO, 8/5/76: 15).

5.3   Contemporary St Leonards

Similar to most of England's coastal towns, the post war period saw a decline in St Leonards fortunes, with the loss of some historic buildings and new development not being sympathetic to the original character of a Regency coastal town. Today this decline can be readily witnessed in several areas of St Leonards, namely Warrior Square. Although originally an area designed for the wealthy, the decline in the popularity of coastal towns also resulted in a downturn in the fortunes of the square. As evident in other coastal towns, hotel accommodation is increasingly being turned to HMO use for those on benefits and asylum seekers. Indeed, MP Jacqui Lait in a story in the HSLO states she is "very concerned that in Hastings an awful lot of the hoteliers have only been able to survive by offering DSS customers accommodation" (HSLO: 18/3/94: 4). Many of the hotels in the area are being targeted to enter long-term contracts for bed and board for refugees at £100 per week (HSLO, 23/6/00: 8).

One example is the Adelphi Hotel on Warrior Square (Plate 5.4), which has since 2001 been used as temporary housing for 400 asylum seekers at any given time (HSLO, 13/12/02: 3). Through its use as asylum seeker accommodation, the Adelphi recorded profits of £1,367,420 in 2001 compared to £184,341 in 2000 (HSLO, 14/6/02: 9). In 2006, the decision was made to stop using the Adelphi as asylum seeker accommodation, and instead to convert the hotel into a series of luxury flats (HSLO, 21/3/03: 11; HSLO, 18/5/06: 2). The management of the

Adelphi was taken over by Roost Regeneration whom in 2008 gave University Centre Hastings a five year lease to use the Adelphi as halls of residence (Estate Agent 1).

Plate 5.4: Renovation works on the Adelphi Hotel in 2008 (prior to it being used as student accommodation).

5.3.1   The tourism crisis

For both Hastings and St Leonards, decline was deep-seated in the tourism crisis experienced by majority of England's coastal towns (Walton, 2000). The town was seen as a:

> "haphazard tapestry of gift shops, hotels and houses, crying out for care and attention. Rusty railings, battered seats and derelict shelters are relieved only by the occasional tired shrubbery or town poster boarding. Take-aways, antique shops and gaudy amusement arcades jostle for custom while the miniature railway and boating pool are a half-hearted attempt at variety. The houses, huts and fish stalls that cluster round the fishing boats at Rock-a-Nore ooze charm, in contrast to the grime and squalor of Bottle Alley, where opposing armies of pigeons and seagulls fight over the remains of someone's fish and chips. The pier is a predictable attraction with its slot machines, hamburger stalls and souvenir shops.

Like the rest of the town it has suffered from years of neglect" (HSLO, 13/11/82: 18-19).

Much of this decline was blamed on HBC and the local hotel industry "whom combined had failed to uphold the standards and reputation of the resort" (HSLO, 26/6/76: 13). Over the years the number of hotels and guest houses in the area has declined, with 80 establishments in 1983 compared to the +300 50 years previously (HSLO, 11/6/83: 19). The conversion of some of the top hotels in the area such as the Alexandra, the Warrior and the Marlborough Hotels into flats resulted in a loss of quality accommodation for staying visitors. Even as recently as 2003, the decline in visitor accommodation has been a problem that the local Council has had to deal with, and consequently, "The Local Plan which guides town development now has the stipulation that hotel owners would have to prove their business was economically unviable in order to get planning go-ahead" for conversion of use (HSLO, 13/3/03: 8)

Nevertheless, it is important to note that people have not lost sight of the natural assets that Hastings boasts in the form of the sea itself (HSLO 13/11/82: 19), and since the late 1980's both the council and private sector have been investing in the local tourism industry. As Roger Dennett (Borough Tourism Chief) notes:

> "The 78 tourist schemes in our programme this year, worth over £35 million, is a recognition by the council that tourism is big business. There has never been this level of investment since 1930's, and this is the most exciting period the town has seen for a long time. Even the private sector in injecting cash into the market, with the completion of the Royal Victoria Hotel and the development of the Cinque Ports Hotel. Projects like the town centre development, marina complex at St Leonards and the refurbishment of many tourist attractions will all help pull the crowds this year" (HSLO, 11/8/88: 25).

A decade later HBC went on to publish its '*Tourism and Visitor Strategy'* which "presents a vision for the town as prime tourism and visitor destination … (covering) key priorities for improving the town's attractiveness to visitors and action points for marketing", including the promotion of areas of historical and cultural significance such and Burton's St Leonards and Old Town (HSLO, 29/1/99: 11; HSLO, 2/7/99: 13). Before turning to the recent regeneration of the town, attention first turns to the impact of the tourism crisis.

5.3.2   Stories of despair

St Leonards' recent history (post-1975) is a picture of despair and decline, suffering from high crime rates and the area is among the most deprived in the country in terms of health, unemployment, low incomes and childhood poverty (HBC, 2004a: 3). Indeed, as common for most of Britain's coastal towns today (see discussion in Section 3.3) St Leonards is also at a stage of post-stagnation. This section explores the problems that St Leonards has faced in recent years, (some of which the town still faces) and the role of the state in regenerating the area to overcome these problems.

5.3.2.1 Inner-city at the seaside?

Since the mid-1980's Hastings has been identified as 'inner-city by the sea' which has more in common with suffering inner-cities than with prosperous resorts.   In 1986, the town ranked "42nd out of the 45 local authorities in the department of environment's index of social deprivation" (HSLO, 23/10/86: 4). It is suggested that the combined effects of being one of

> "Europe's highest proportions of elderly residents, larger than average numbers of one-parent families, north-eastern levels of unemployment, and the wholesale 'dumping' by other councils of mentally ill people" has created a problem that Hastings has not got the resources to handle (HSLO, 8/10/87: 24).

As recently as 2007, the area has once again been branded as one of the poorest places in Britain to live in with Central-St-Leonards, and Gensing featuring in the ten poorest wards across the South East, with figures suggesting that "more than 46 per cent of all children being brought up in Central-St-Leonards live in poverty" (HSLO, 23/10/2007: 17).   The borough is also being used as a "dumping ground for old people from London" putting a strain on health facilities (HSLO, 6/12/99: 3), and almost one in four people in St Leonards are either divorced or separated (HSLO, 6/12/02: 3).   Combining these factors with the placement of asylum seekers in the area has created a population demographic that has deep roots in poverty, similar to declining inner-city areas.

5.3.2.2 Quality of housing

The condition of some housing in parts of St Leonards has been likened to depressed inner-city areas (Plate 5.5). Substandard levels of housing have been a long-term problem with "2,200 home are unfit to live in. 779 are overcrowded and more than 6,500 old people live alone" in the borough (HSLO, 23/10/86: 1). A survey conducted by Building Research Establishment found Hastings to have "the second highest proportion of sub-standard dwellings out of the 14 authorities studied" with "52 percent of the 621 vacant units … in privately rented buildings of up to 4 storeys in Central-St-Leonards" (HSLO, 23/1/82: 9). In addition, the national housing condition survey identified that "there are 1,600 unfit houses and flats in the borough's private sector" with at least a further 4,400 likely to be in a state of poor repair and another "600 lacking basic amenities such as indoor toilets and bathrooms" (HSLO, 12/10/89: 1).

Plate 5.5: Photo showing run-down property on Norman Road

The extent of dilapidated housing meant that £50 million worth of repairs were needed to renovate unfit housing, concentrated in the central areas of Hastings and St Leonards (HSLO, 29/1/93: 5). This eventually led to money being made available to improve the quality of the housing stock:

> "Social housing grants and housing renewal grants hav(ing) DOUBLED since the year 1997/1998, and a total of £7 million will be available for housing projects in the year 1999/2000." (HSLO, 11/6/99: 1).

Examining the 2001 Census on accommodation type (Table 5.1), we can see that the study area has a high proportion of vacant dwellings (8%) with a further 2% used as second/holiday accommodation. Although initially the area in Burton's time contained large family houses many of these have since been converted into flats and bed-sits which make up 40% of the housing stock, with a further 27% being purpose-built flats.

	Central-St-Leonards	Gensing	Maze Hill	Study Area	South East
All with residents	n=3473	n=2705	n=2172	n=8350	n=3287489
Vacant	9%	9%	5%	8%	3%
Second residence/ holiday accommodation	3%	1%	1%	2%	1%
Detached	4%	7%	31%	12%	30%
Semi-detached	5%	9%	24%	11%	30%
Terraced	16%	25%	5%	16%	24%
Purpose built flat	36%	18%	23%	27%	14%
Converted flat including bed-sit	45%	47%	23%	40%	4%
Converted flat in commercial building including: office, hotel, or over shop	5%	3%	0%	3%	1%
Caravan mobile or temporary	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%

Table 5.1: Accommodation type. Source: 2001 GB Census, Key Statistics (KS016 Table)

In 2003 the Central-St-Leonards ward was declared as a Housing Renewal Area with a quarter of all dwellings failing to meet fitness standards and one fifth in conditions of serious disrepair (HBC, 2004c). More than 80% of dwellings in the ward are HMOs; with nearly half of all dwellings being privately rented. Results from the 2001 Census (Table 5.2) identify that 33% of all housing is privately rented.   This is almost four times the average for the South East. Home ownership (both, owning outright and with a mortgage or loan) is much

lower than the South East average with the exception of Maze Hill where 36% own-outright and 36% own with mortgage. In contrast only 19% of housing in Central-St-Leonards is owned with a mortgage or loan. Consequently, the private rental pattern of tenancy has resulted in the concentration of people on very low incomes, single person households and the high levels of turnover (HBC, 2004a). The area has a high transient population with around 40% of households moving each year. This level of turnover is restrictive in forming a strong community as households are being uprooted very often (HBC, 2004a). The ward also contains a high concentration of long-term empty properties with 30% of all long-term empty homes across Hastings found in Central-St-Leonards (HBC, 2004b). Based on the 2001 Census, 8% of all dwellings are vacant (equating to 631 properties), which is significantly higher than the South East average of 3%.

	Central-St-Leonards	Gensing	Maze Hill	Study Area	South East
All	n=3469	n=2702	n=2178	n=8349	n=3287489
Owns outright	24%	23%	36%	27%	31%
Owns with mortgage or loan	19%	31%	36%	27%	42%
Shared ownership	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Council rented	1.0%	0%	0%	1%	7%
HA, registered social landlord rented	12%	5%	7%	9%	7%
Private landlord/letting agency	39%	37%	19%	33%	9%
Other	4%	3%	2%	3%	3%

Table 5.2: Housing tenure. Source: 2001 GB Census, Key Statistics (KS018 Table)

Furthermore, the study area suffers from high levels of overcrowding, with 11% of all households requiring at least one more room per dwelling (Table 5.3), which equates to 910 dwellings. This problem is worst in Central-St-Leonards with 14% of all households requiring at least one more room per dwelling. A further 16% in the study area do not have central heating, rising to 20% in Central-St-Leonards and 17% in Gensing.

	Central-St-Leonards	Gensing	Maze Hill	Study Area	South East
All households	n=3473	n=2705	n=2172	n=8350	n=3287489
Average household size	1.7	1.7	2.1	1.8	2.4
Average number of rooms per household:	4.2	4.2	5.2	4.6	5.6
With an occupancy rating of -1 or less	14%	11%	6%	11%	6%
With central heating and sole use of bath/shower and toilet	79%	83%	91%	84%	94%
Without central heating or sole use of bath/shower and toilet	1%	0%	0.0%	0%	0%
Without central heating; with sole use of bath/shower and toilet	19%	16%	9%	16%	6.%
With central heating; without sole use of bath/shower and toilet	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%
Lowest floor level Basement or semi-basement	21%	19%	7%	17%	2%
Lowest floor level Ground level (street level)	35%	51%	71%	49%	87%
Lowest floor level 1st/2nd/3rd or 4th floor	39%	29%	22%	32%	10%
Lowest floor level 5th floor or higher	6%	1%	0.%	3%	0%

Table 5.3: Rooms and amenities Source: 2001 GB Census, Key Statistics (KS019 Table)

5.3.2.3 Population characteristics

In 2001, these areas had a combined resident population of 16,652, with the age breakdown shown in Table 5.4. The study area has a higher percentage of people in the +65 age group (22%) compared to the South East average of 16%, with the highest concentration in the Maze Hill area for this cohort at 27% Whilst Gensing is quite typical of the South East distribution it has a slightly higher population in the 20-24 age group (7%). Greater variations in the age ranges can be seen in the Central-St-Leonards and Maze Hill areas. the Central-St-Leonards has very low numbers of people aged 15 and under compared to the SE, but significantly more people in the 20-24 and 25-29 age groups.

	Central-St-Leonards	Gensing	Maze Hill	Study Area	South East
All people	n= 5790	n= 5798	n= 5072	n= 16660	n= 8000645
-9	10%	13%	11%	11%	12%
10-15	4%	7%	7%	6%	8%
16-19	4%	5%	4%	4%	5%
20-24	7%	7%	4%	6%	6%
25-29	7%	7%	6%	7%	6%
30-44	20%	23%	20%	21%	23%
45-64	24%	23%	23%	23%	24%
+65	24%	16%	27%	22%	16%

Table 5.4: Age structure Source: 2001 GB Census, Key Statistics (KS002 Table)

Table 5.5 also shows, the study area has significantly lower numbers of married couples at 26% when compared to the South East average of 45%. Accordingly the area experiences high occurrences of single people with 35% never having married (SE: 28%), 4% separated (SE: 2%), 15% divorced (SE: 8%) and, 12% widowed (SE: 8%). As the HSLO notes, almost one in four people in St Leonards are either divorced or separated (HSLO, 6/12/02: 3) Taking this further to examine living arrangements (Table 5.6), of all households in the area, only 35% are married/re-married couples compared to the South East average of 53%.   Similarly there are more than double the rate of divorcees (12%, compared to 6% in the South East as a whole).

	Central-St-Leonards	Gensing	Maze Hill	Study Area	South East
All people aged 16 and over	n=4956	n=4634	n=4206	n=13796	n=6406426
Single (never married)	38%	40%	28%	35%	28%
Married	19%	25%	34%	26%	45%
Re-married	6%	8%	10%	8%	8%
Separated (but still legally married)	5%	4%	3%	4.%	2%
Divorced	19%	14%	11%	15%	8%
Widowed	13%	9%	15%	12%	8%

Table 5.5: Marital status. Source: 2001 GB Census, Key Statistics (KS004 Table)

	Central-St-Leonards	Gensing	Maze Hill	Study Area	South East
All people aged 16 and over living in households	n=4825	n=4327	n=3696	n=12848	n=6232799
Married or re-married couple	25%	34%	48%	35%	53%
Cohabiting couple	13%	14%	12%	13%	10%
Single (never married) not couple	29%	30%	21%	27%	21%
Married or re-married not living in a couple	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Separated (but still legally married)	4%	4%	2%	4%	2%
Divorced	16%	11%	8%	12%	6%
Widowed	13%	7%	8%	10%	7%

Table 5.6: Living arrangements. Source: 2001 GB Census, Key Statistics (KS003 Table)

Table 5.4 demonstrates a large presence of individuals at the pension age. Consequently, a higher than average ratio of pensioner households would also be expected as portrayed in Table 5.7. Furthermore, there is also a lower prevalence of married couple households with no children (8% in the study area compared to 19% in the South East). Statistics for married couple households with dependent children are also similar with 9% in the study area compared to 19% in the South East. There is also a higher presence of lone parent families with dependent children accounting for 7% of all households in the study area, compared to the South East average of 5%.

	Central-St-Leonards	Gensing	Maze Hill	Study Area	South East
All households	n=3496	n=2695	n=2174	n=8365	n=3287489
1 person households					
Pensioner	25%	15%	18%	20%	14%
Other	36%	32%	20%	31%	14%
1 family households					
All pensioner	5%	5%	11%	6%	10%
Married couple					
No children	6%	8%	12%	8%	14%
With dependent children	5%	10%	14%	9%	19%
With all children not dependent	1%	2%	3%	2%	6%
Cohabiting couple					
No children	5%	6%	6%	6%	5.%
With dependent children	3.%	4.%	4%	4%	3%
With all children not dependent	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Lone parent					
With dependent children	6%	9%	7%	**7%**	5%
With all children non-dependent	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%
Other households					
With dependent children	1%	2%	1%	1%	2%
All student	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
All pensioner	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%
Other	3%	5%	3%	3%	4%

Table 5.7: Household composition. Source: 2001 GB Census, Key Statistics (KS020 Table)

The key figure that stands out in Table 5.8 is the ratio of people born in Other EU countries: 5% in the study area compared to 2% in the South East.   This equates to just over 800 people in the study area.

	Central-St-Leonards	Gensing	Maze Hill	Study Area	South East
All people	n=5770	n=5804	n=5067	n=16641	n=8000645
England	86%	89%	91%	89%	88%
Scotland	2%	2%	1%	2%	2%
Wales	2%	1%	1%	1%	2%
Northern Ireland	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Republic of Ireland	2%	2%	1%	2%	1%
Other EU	6%	4%	4%	5%	2%
Elsewhere	1%	1%	1%	1%	6%

Table 5.8: Country of Birth. Source: 2001 GB Census, Key Statistics (KS005 Table)

5.3.2.4 Crime

In 1985, the HSLO (7/11/85: 25) states "you are more likely to be burgled living in Hastings than anywhere else in Sussex" with high unemployment rates and the town's drug problem being identified as the primary factors contributing to crime. In the last 30 years, the local newspaper is littered with stories of crime and violence in St Leonards. Not much has changed in the 15 years since 1985 with Hastings still being identified as one of the most crime-ridden places in the country in 2000. Home Office findings showed that "more than 21 offences of violence against the person per 1000 population were recorded" - double the average for towns across the country. The figures showed that in 1999, Hastings had "1,800 crimes of violence (21.6 per 1000), 130 sex attacks, 134 robberies, 1,100 burglaries and 3,800 car crimes" (HSLO, 21/7/00: 1). Consequently, in 2001, the Home Office earmarked £246,500 for a massive crack down on crime in the St Leonards town centre, with the money "to be used to improve the security of up to 200 small shops and businesses by providing measures such as toughened glass, locks, alarms and even closed circuit television cameras" (HSLO, 30/11/01: 9).

However, crime problems still prevail reports suggesting that half of all residents of St Leonards feeling unsafe in going out in broad daylight, with fears of being attacked or mugged as well as growing concerns over car crime and burglary (HSLO, 5/4/02: 13). These findings from HBC's crime audit blamed low wages and large numbers of people with drugs, drink and mental health problems in the area for the high levels of fear experienced in the area. Indeed, St Leonards has been labelled a haven for criminals with levels of drug dealing in the area being some of the worst in the borough (HSLO, 13/8/04: 1). Central-St-Leonards is in the worst 4% of wards in the country in terms of local crime rates, and the 13th worst place in the country for violent crime; with much of this crime driven by drugs and alcohol abuse (HBC 2004a: 7). Due to the levels of crime (a car crime nearly every day, a violent crime nearly every day and a burglary every other day) people in the area are afraid to use the public realm at night, and feel intimidated in the day (HBC, 2004a: 5).

5.3.2.5 Physical environment

Arguably, the layout of the public realm within the neighbourhood promotes crime and disorder to flourish, with the narrow alleys and laneways being used for open drug dealing and other criminal activity (HBC, 2004a). Warrior Square has been identified as one problem area which is home to many of the town's street-drinkers, creating problems for people in the area. It is "an accepted fact that many especially women and the elderly – fear stepping outside their door at night" (HSLO, 14/7/88: 29). A research project on street drinking in St Leonards reveals that many of the 'winos' in the area "have lived in Hastings for years, many have a background of being in homes and of broken relationships … and generally drink together because they like to belong to a group" (HSLO, 10/6/94: 11). Furthermore many streets are persistently littered with furniture and bin bags left out are torn apart by seagulls, foxes and rats (Plate 5.6).

Plate 5.6: Litter in St Leonards. Source: www.hastings.gov.uk. Accessed August 2008
http://www.hastings.gov.uk/about/issue33_birds.aspx

There are concerns over the dilapidated appearance of the town and Sue Funnel chairman of the Kings Road and Central-St-Leonards Association notes:

> "It's such a shame, because St Leonards was always a prime part of the town. We're seeing the area falling apart before our eyes … Now it's a bedsit area, and we've got problems with drunks and unsavoury people. We've never known so many windows broken as in the last three or four years. And we get people come

in the shop who we know are shoplifters, but we daren't say anything or we'd get a mouthful of abuse and maybe a knife stuck in us" (HSLO, 22/3/96: 8).

This negative image of a place in decline is being used in a bid to win EU money for the town. As the HSLO notes:

"A derelict seafront hotel, a homeless beggar in a doorway and a boarded-up shop are the misery symbols of Hastings on the document which is aimed at winning the town special status to gain European millions for regeneration" (HSLO, 6/11/98: 17).

Such portrayals of poverty show the depth of decline St Leonards has experienced and it is important to both acknowledge and accept this decline in order to benefit from various regeneration funds. In 1999 HBC was awarded £1.88 million of Government money for vital projects to bring back life into Central-St-Leonards. The HRP identifies four key project areas that need addressing:

"(1) the poor quality of the living environment and fear of crime, (2) the high level of unemployment and support for vulnerable residents, (3) support for local small businesses, especially shops and, (4) involving the local community in the regeneration of the local area" (HSLO, 16/7/99: 3).

Although the process has been slow to start, the council have made attempts to address the problems of the physical environment. Decaying buildings along St Leonards have been served enforcement notices to get owners to renovate their dilapidated buildings (HSLO, 14/04/00: 1). Yet poverty still prevails as evident in the area and particularly in Central-St-Leonards where in 2004:

"people in the ward are more likely to have health problems and die younger than elsewhere in Hastings and the UK. A quarter of homes are unfit to live in and over a third do not meet fire safety standards. Many streets are persistently littered with furniture and dog's mess and bin bags left out are torn apart by seagulls, foxes and rats. Crime, despite a recent downward trend, is still too high and residents fear they will become victims" (HSLO, 6/8/04: 4-5).

The unsociable use of the public realm, combined with a dilapidated atmosphere of rundown houses, closure of businesses due to fear, high levels of crime, burglary and vandalism have created an atmosphere of poverty and dismay.

5.3.2.6 Employment

An early attempt at regeneration affecting the growth of Hastings and St Leonards was the Greater London Council's (GLC) plans in 1976 to reverse the trend of encouraging people to move out of the capital (HSLO, 10/1/76: 1). It was hoped that by 1981, Hastings would have become both a home and a place of work for 15,000 Londoners, with a further 3,000 in-migrants by 1986. However, at this time there were also reports of approximately 2000 jobless people in Hastings and St Leonards (HSLO, 27/3/76: 1). After much debate, and reversal of policies, the GLC in 1979 finally agreed to provide some assistance to Hastings resulting in the opportunity for 10,000 in-migrants and 6-7,000 new jobs – some of which would go to current residents (HSLO, 5/5/79: 10). Moreover, over the years Hastings experienced significant levels of unemployment with 3000 people unemployed in November 1980 (HSLO, 29/11/80: 3), rising to 5000 in January 1982 (HSLO, 30/1/82: 1). The jobless counts in the 1990's also included Bexhill as part of the Hastings travel-to-work area and the HSLO (29/1/93) reported 13.9% of the population out of work, a level of unemployment which was last witnessed in 1987.

These high levels of unemployment and lack of job opportunities for residents of the town sparked discussions over the cause of these problems. David Woods of Hastings Community Service Council, suggested that the

> "Council should be attracting employers with the potential to give work to large numbers, and pay decent wages … tourism only gives seasonal employment. Hastings can only thrive with big industry. You can talk about conservation and the inconvenience of heavy lorries and so on, but employment must have a priority over all these things" (HSLO, 19/7/80: 21).

Newspaper stories from the 1980's held strong concerns in regards to the employment situation in relation to the loss of the tourist trade as discussed in Section 4.4.2. Furthermore in 1992, the HSLO reported that the high unemployment rate could result in Hastings applying for the Department of Education City Grant which could mean "an injection of millions of pounds into the town … to help with special projects – shops on the cricket ground? – and boost industry here" (28/2/92: 1). However in the same article, the Conservative prospective parliamentary candidate, Jacqui Lait raised concerns over whether

people were prepared to live with the stigma attached to declaring the town as an area of urban deprivation and the impact this would have on the tourist industry.

Contrastingly at the same time, the HSLO was also reporting on employment opportunities in the area. In 1989 the HSLO suggested that the area was experiencing a jobs boom with an increase in the number of local jobs available and major developments in the town meanings "hundreds more will be on offer soon" (HSLO, 16/2/89: 1). The article reported that Christine McCormick of the Argosy Employment Group attributed this job boom to in-migrants from London:

> "There is a jobs boom – the fact that a lot of people who were working in London bought property down here while it was cheap - they now have experienced their first winter of commuting, haven't liked it, and have started to look for jobs locally" (HSLO, 16/2/89: 1).

Then almost a decade later in 1998, Hastings was reported to be the 17th most profitable place to run a business in Britain in a survey of 285 key towns and cities (HSLO, 4/9/98: 17). The Central-St-Leonards Renewal Strategy [CSLRS] in 2004 still found high levels of unemployment levels (13%) and benefit dependency rates (18%). Furthermore, they noted that of all households in Central-St-Leonards, almost half had a household income of under £10,000 (HBC, 2004b). However, as part of the Hastings Regeneration Strategy (see Section 5.4.1) the HSLO (7/8/06: 20) reported strong optimism about growth and job prospects:

> "73% of firms expect their turnover to increase in the next two years and 54% expect their staff numbers to grow. Savills estimates that 528 new jobs could be generated - representing a 15% increase in employment - and remarked that the firms were 'markedly more optimistic than in any other survey' of recent years. … Keith Sadler, Deputy Director of SeaSpace, said, 'The survey is heartening for East Sussex. It shows business confidence is strong and growing - which is good news for entrepreneurs and good news for jobs."

Looking at the socio-economic data from the 2001 Census (Table 5.9), compared to the South East there is a significant number of people not in the work force, both those that have never worked (4%) and those that are long term unemployed (2%). Within the study area, only 2% of people aged 16-74 are large employers or have higher managerial occupations (195 people) compared to the South East average of 5%. However, it is important to note that these 'top-end' occupations are more common within the Maze Hill area rather than Central-

St-Leonards and Gensing.   Residents in the area are more likely to be employed in semi-routine (12%) and routine occupations (9%) compared to the South East. These findings are also echoed in the Census occupation group's data (Table 5.10). Of all those people working, there are fewer numbers in the managers and senior officials (14%) and professional occupations (10%) categories; and more people employed as process, plant and machine operatives (7%) and in elementary occupations (12%) compared to the South East averages.

	Central-St-Leonards	Gensing	Maze Hill	Study Area	South East
All people aged 16-74	n=4130	n=4136	n=3315	n=11581	n=5766307
Large employers and higher managerial occupations	1%	2%	2%	2%	5%
Higher professional occupations	3%	3%	4%	3%	6%
Lower managerial and professional occupations	16%	19%	21%	18%	21 %
Intermediate occupations	9%	9%	10%	9%	10%
Small employers and own account workers	9%	9%	9%	9%	8%
Lower supervisory and technical occupations	6%	7%	6%	6%	7%
Semi-routine occupations	13 %	13%	11%	12 %	11%
Routine occupations	10%	9%	7%	9%	7%
Never worked	4%	5%	2%	4%	2%
Long-term unemployed	3%	2%	1%	2%	1%
Full-time students	5%	5%	5%	5%	7%
Not classifiable for other reasons	21%	18%	21%	20%	16%

Table 5.9: Socio-economic class Source: 2001 GB Census, Key Statistics (KS014 Table)

	Central-St-Leonards	Gensing	Maze Hill	Study Area	South East
All people aged 16-74 in employment	n=2138	n=2413	n=1998	n=6549	n=3888756
Managers and senior officials	14%	14%	15%	14%	17 %
Professional occupations	9%	10%	12%	10%	12%
Associate professional and technical occupations	14%	14%	15%	14%	15%
Administrative and secretarial occupations	12%	13%	15%	14%	14%
Skilled trades occupations	12%	12%	12%	12%	11%
Personal service occupations	11%	11%	10%	11%	7%
Sales and customer service occupations	8%	7%	6%	7%	7%
Process, plant and machine operatives	7%	8%	7%	7%	6%
Elementary occupations	13%	12%	9%	12%	11%

Table 5.10: Occupation groups. Source: 2001 GB Census, Key Statistics (KS012 Table)

Although data on the socio-economic class and occupation groups show variation between the study area and the South East as a whole, there are similarities in the industry of employment (Table 5.11), with the exception of real estate, renting and business activities being 5% lower than the average, but double in the health and social work sector (18%). These variations could be attributed to there not being a significant housing market in the area due to its declined state, as well as a large population suffering from health problems (as discussed in Section 5.3.2.7).

	Central-St-Leonards	Gensing	Maze Hill	Study Area	South East
All 16-74 in employment	n=2150	n=2400	n=2001	n=6551	n=3888756
Agriculture, hunting, forestry	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%
Fishing	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Mining and quarrying	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Manufacturing	10%	12%	12%	11%	12%
Electricity, gas and water supply	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%
Construction	7%	7%	8%	7%	7%
Wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles	16%	16%	14%	15%	16%
Hotels and catering	7%	5%	4%	6%	4%
Transport and storage communication	6%	6%	5%	6%	8%
Financial intermediation	4%	4%	4%	4%	5%
Real estate, renting and business activities	11%	11%	11%	11%	16%
Public administration and defence	6%	8%	7%	7%	6%
Education	8%	8%	10%	8%	8%
Health and social work	19%	18%	19%	18%	10%
Other	6%	6%	5%	6%	5%

Table 5.11: Industry of employment. Source: 2001 GB Census, Key Statistics (KS011 Table)

These findings do suggest that St Leonards is an area that has suffered from social and economic disinvestment, and consequently is ripe for gentrification. This is amplified through the rent-gap in the area (Figure 5.3), where in 2007 house prices in St Leonards were approximately £59,000 cheaper with the average cost of a house being £159,208 compared to the average cost for England and Wales of £218,361 (Land Registry, 2011).
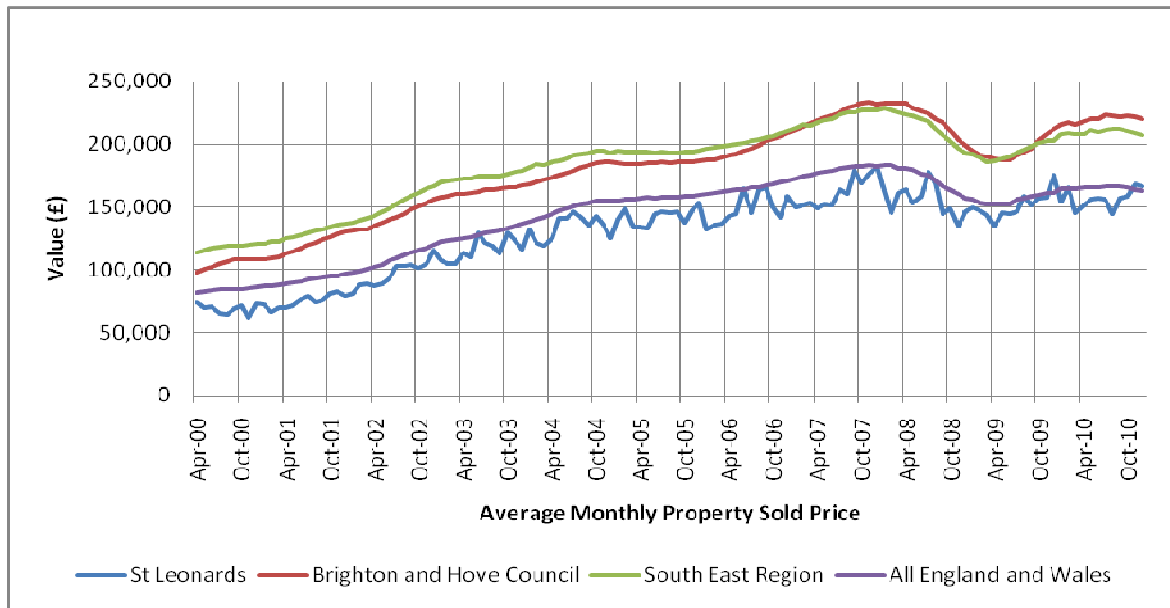
Figure 5.3: Average price history for all properties in St Leonards in comparison with Brighton and Hove, South East Region, and England and Wales. (Data obtained from Land Registry and Home.co.uk (March 2011))

Figure 5.3 suggests that house prices in St Leonards are comparatively cheaper than the average of South East England. However, the newspaper analysis reveals that the regeneration of the town is resulting in property prices increasing in St Leonards (and Hastings). This is as a result of more people from out of the town interested in purchasing in the town:

> "House costs there have risen from £86,529 average price in 2001 to £133,996 today. ... There is an increasing demand from home buyers from Brighton as well as London for properties in St Leonards. They are being tempted to snap up homes here because of the quieter lifestyle Hastings has to offer, plus the combination of bigger houses for less money than in other parts of the South East" (HSLO, 18/10/02: 23).

> "Just one week on from the announcement of a £400 million regeneration package, Hastings is buzzing. Suddenly everyone wants to live, study or start a new business here! … The news has also created a property boom. Estate agents say that since Friday they have been flooded with calls mainly from London and Brighton. Buildings are being snapped up with the prospects of 2000 students flooding in" (HSLO, 29/3/02: 1).

> "House prices in Hastings have more than doubled in the last ten years, the sixth largest seaside town increase in the country" (HSLO, 27/8/05: 18).

These quotes are suggestive of the rent-gap in St Leonards closing. Despite the town overall

having a relatively 'affordable' property market, these quotes suggest that the regeneration of the town is increasing the demand from the London and Brighton market. The perception here is that in-migration is occurring in St Leonards. In order to explore these ideas further, Chapter 6 will provide a discussion on the in-migration into St Leonards as noted through the semi-structured interviews.

Although St Leonards clearly has had a longstanding history of social and economic disinvestment, the above section has portrayed some of HBC's plans for rejuvenating and regenerating the area. However, since the mid-1990's the council has been more proactive in its regeneration aims of making the borough a better place to live, work and visit (HRP, 2002).

5.4   Regenerating St Leonards

The buzz word in the start of the twenty-first century in St Leonards is regeneration. HBC is seeking to regenerate both Hastings and St Leonards not only from a physical perspective, but also looking at social and economic factors. As noted in Section 2.1.2, the role of the state has been increasingly significant in the occurrence of gentrification and thus it is useful to explore and examine the council's policies for the regeneration of St Leonards (and to some extent Hastings overall). This section therefore explores key council policies, and regeneration projects addressing the revival of Central-St-Leonards area which forms part of the study. It also provides a reading on the portrayal of regeneration through the local media source of the Hastings and St Leonards Observer.

5.4.1   Key council policies

5.4.1.1 Making Waves - A Regeneration Strategy for Hastings & St Leonards:

One of the key documents that address regeneration in the area is *Making Waves - A Regeneration Strategy for Hastings and St Leonards* (HRP[4], 2002). The report sets out the vision for St Leonards as an exciting place to live, work and visit by focusing on the social,

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[4] HRP was set up in 2002 and the partnership brings together the voluntary, public and private sectors to spend £26 million Single Regeneration Budget money provided through SEEDA. With matched funding, the 100 local projects pull in a total of £128 million for social, economic and physical regeneration.

physical and economic revitalisation of the area. The strategy aims to provide "a framework for efforts to address social disadvantage and improve the incomes, wealth and quality of life of people in Hastings and St Leonards" (HRP, 2002: 3). It realises the need for promoting the area with a vision of being the perfect coastal town; an ambition that can be reached by improving quality-of-life offers for residents, such that more people want to live, and create businesses in the area.

The report suggests that the location of St Leonards in the South East of England and proximity to London provides an ideal opportunity to grow as a dynamic town. The strategy sees a strong starting point for regeneration being the physical and cultural attributes of the area, with the advantage of being a town that has

> "an important cultural heritage and beautiful architecture, and is set in an area of outstanding natural beauty. The townscape, with its stunning topography and its wealth of attractive streets and buildings, plus the seafront setting, provide huge opportunities for regeneration - and hence opportunities for a genuine urban renaissance" (HRP, 2002: 12).

Furthermore, businesses and employment opportunities in the area have a strong cultural focus with "a fledgling media sector, a longstanding artistic community and some successful technology-based manufacturing companies" (HRP, 2002: 12). It is thought that these attributes are integral to the vision of a high quality and exciting coastal town where people want to live and work.

The strategy highlights 4 key areas that need to be addressed in order to fulfil this vision:

1. Transformation of housing stock and the built environment to encourage a 24-hour town, which has a lively nightlife to complement both leisure and sporting daytime offers. This involves a transformation of the urban experience, which is a more socially inclusive place for those who already work and live in the town, whilst encouraging higher spending visitors and new professional people. And new-build or renovated housing needs to be ideal for contemporary living and be of a high quality. Considerable investment will be required in areas of poor housing stock.

2. Increase hospitality opportunities by encouraging the establishment of strong brand named hotels, restaurants, cafes and bars, whilst at the same time focus on those aspects of the town which can create a remarkable and unusual place. This will help to

raise the perception of the area and what it has to offer, and position the town as a destination for cultural tourism.

3. Support for local businesses and retailers, and new enterprises wanting to offer a better quality product. This can be achieved via effective town centre management, as well as property and business grants, as well as pro-active planning policies to encourage residential use in business spaces to aid in the prosperity of town centres.

One of the key boosters for successful regeneration has been identified in the employment sector. It is proposed that the town targets the creative industries sector to nurture the town's economy. A number of companies in this sector are already located in the area, and by re-modelling the town as an attractive and exciting place, a growth in this sector is envisaged as more firms and individuals move to the area and through encouraging talented local people to create their own businesses. The council will have a key role in providing opportunities for encouraging the development of this sector, namely through providing affordable living and working space.

4. The preparation of a high quality masterplan for the area, which marks Hastings and St Leonards as one of the most forward thinking coastal towns in England will help to not only raise the towns profile but also boost its commercial confidence. Indeed, the CSLRS (HBC, 2004a: 24) also notes that a masterplan framework that examines the "area's landscape and its townscape, pedestrian and vehicle movements, views and vistas, textures and forms" would be the key platform for bringing Urban Renaissance to the area (HRP, 2002).

Whilst the strategy reviews regeneration across the town, these improvement plans and policies do have a great bearing on the case-study area of Central-St-Leonards. These concepts are discussed further by focusing on specific policies and projects in the study area.

In the Hastings Regeneration Strategy – '*Making Waves*', in St Leonards there is evidence to suggest that gentrification is unfolding. The strategy realises the need for *promoting the area* with a vision of being the perfect coastal town, an ambition that can be reached by *improving quality of life offers* for residents, such, that *more people want to live*, and create businesses in the area. These aims (in italics) of the strategy are indicative of a changing town with the intention that these changes will attract wealthier individuals to the town. It can be argued that the strategy suggests that the town should be marketed as an ideal residential location – one where people can live, work and play.

5.4.1.2 Hastings Local Plan 2004

As part of the 2004 Hastings Local Plan [HLP], there are a number of key polices that impact on regeneration in the Central-St-Leonards area. These are discussed below:

Historic Environment: Conservation Areas

Within the study area, three distinct locations have been designated as conservation areas. Two form the extent of Burtons St Leonards (including the Lavatoria and Mercatoria areas, and the third referring to Warrior Square. Burtons St Leonards in 1977 acquired recognition by the Secretary of state as an area of outstanding architectural and historic interest, and Warrior Square is identified as one of the most important features of urban form along the seafront representing the link and transition between Hastings and St Leonards. As a result, the study area is subject to a number of development policies to safeguard current characteristics and appearance of each area. Consequently any:

> "new development should be of high quality and respect the overall character found in the particular conservation area or part of it, rather than be designed in isolation or necessarily imitate earlier styles. The character of a conservation area is determined by factors such as the existing pattern of development, architectural form, local materials and any open spaces, trees, hedges and landscape or townscape features" (HLP, 2004).

Central-St-Leonards

The plan identifies a strategy for improvement incorporating:

- Support for local shops and businesses to promote an individual image of St Leonards.

- Upgrading of streetscape around Kings Road/Warrior Square Station area - The area is a valuable asset in architectural and social terms. Improvements to the area are vital to lift the image of St Leonards as a whole. The council aims to achieve this by (i) preserving and architecturally enhancing buildings; (ii) supporting the continuing economic use for existing buildings; (iii) improving streetscape and station surroundings in design with the character of the local architecture, and (iv) managing traffic in the interest of shoppers and pedestrians.

- Upgrading the built environment through direct funding for specific schemes such as housing improvement grants, single regeneration budget projects and conservation grants.

- Introduction of environmental, transport, traffic and safety improvements with a streetscape that promotes pedestrian access and safety.
  Improvements to the A259 to offer better pedestrian and townscape linkage between the built-up area and the seafront. Possibilities include carriageway width reductions, improved crossings, bus and cycle enhancements, street furniture and paving improvements. (HLP, 2004).

Seafront Strategy

The strategy notes that almost all of the seafront sits within designated conservation areas. Key features in the study area are Marine Court and Burtons St Leonard seafront. With Marine Court being a Grade II listed building, the council seeks to conserve the architectural character of the building. Furthermore, comprehensive proposals are to be formulated for the conservation of the 'original' 1828 seafront buildings of Burtons St Leonards.

The above policies from Hasting Local Plan build on the positive attributes of the area and identify regeneration strategies for bringing about successful urban renaissance to the area. By addressing specific transport, housing, tourism and environmental issues, the plan identifies opportunities for supporting the vision of a revived town. Indeed, the community strategy states that:

> "by 2013 we want our town's strong community spirit, culture, young population and extraordinary natural environment to be the foundations of a safer, healthier and more prosperous place with lasting opportunities for everybody" (HLP, 2004: 5).

5.4.1.3 SeaSpace and the Five Point Plan

The Five Point Plan was initiated in 2001 to coordinate the town's regeneration based on five points of activity: education, business, urban renaissance, broad band and transport

improvements by the Hastings and Bexhill Task Force[5] (SeaSpace, 2003). The task force set up a company called SeaSpace to help develop and fulfil the vision of the plan. As a regeneration company, SeaSpace retains the broad characteristics of an urban development company and performs as an 'executive delivery vehicle' with the remit of taking the Five Point Plan to completion. It should be noted that St Leonards is one of several projects within Hastings and Bexhill that SeaSpace are responsible for.

One of the projects is the renovation of Marina Pavilion in St Leonards, with the aim of becoming a year-round seafront entertainment and conference venue. It is hoped that the development will provide a positive contribution to the seafront, bringing vitality to the area (SeaSpace, 2007). After much controversy and speculation in the media (for example, see HSLO, 6/7/07: 10) in regards to the future of the pavilion, SeaSpace has let the building to Lightning Leisure, and Marina Pavilion finally opened as Azur in 2008 as a "landmark restaurant, entertainment, wedding and conference venue, beach-front bistro café and state-of-the-art complementary health and beauty suite clinic using the latest technologies" (SeaSpace, 2008) in June 2008 (Plate 5.7).

Plate 5.7: Marina Pavillion: Azur

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[5] The Hastings and Bexhill Task Force was established in July 2001 to bring together a regeneration strategy for the Hastings and Bexhill area

5.4.1.4 Heritage Lottery Fund – Townscape Heritage Initiative

Another key project aiding the regeneration of the area is the Townscape Heritage Initiative [THI]. The THI has awarded St Leonards £1 million from the Heritage Lottery fund towards regeneration activities. The fund acknowledged the need for renovating the regency buildings of Burtons St Leonards as many terraces have been left in a poor state of repair due to high renovation costs exceeding the value of the buildings. Thus monies have been made available to pay for building renovation, thus bridging the gap between repair costs and building values. A key example is the Regent Court development where developers and external investors have converted derelict disused former holiday flats into contemporary luxury apartments. The THI, linked with other regeneration policies, has been influential in changing the negative image of St Leonards and attracting developer investment (Heritage Lottery Fund, 2008).

In line with the discussion provided in Section 3.3.1, the above description of some of the key council policies, and projects impacting the area do suggest that a transformation is occurring. M.Smith (2004: 20) notes, coastal towns like St Leonards are receiving "injections of funding for regeneration and new incentives for business development". Social, economic and physical regeneration policies are resulting in the revival of St Leonards as a cultural landscape attracting the creative classes through employment opportunities and contemporary living spaces. This renaissance is portrayed in both local and national media.

5.4.1.5 Grotbusters

Grotbusters is a council initiative set up in 2000 to help improve the physical appearance of many dilapidated buildings in the area. Since then more than 350 buildings have been transformed to enhance the physical landscape of both Hastings and St Leonards. The council's planning team work with building owners to renovate the exteriors of the buildings, and when owners fail to comply, enforcement action is undertaken under Section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. A large number of properties in St Leonards has benefited from the scheme including 44 Marina (as shown in Plate 5.8).

Plate 5.8: Before and after: 44 Marina, St Leonards Source:
http://www.hastings.gov.uk/about/issue15_grotbusters.aspx. Accessed 10.09.06

5.4.2 Regeneration in the media

As noted at the 2008 North West Coastal Forum conference there needs to be a general harmony between local media and resort regeneration activities if place marketing is to be successful. Over the years St Leonards has been portrayed in both positive and negative light in both local and national press. Whilst media stories of decline have been woven in-relation to particular buildings and areas in St Leonards, as outlined in the above sections, this section focuses on the popular media representation of regeneration in St Leonards (and Hastings).

Arguably, 1995 was a key turning point when St Leonards became the subject of a major 8 year investment programme under the direction of Onyx UK (HSLO, 3/11/95: 5). Although initially small scale, the various regeneration projects helped to get recognition of St Leonards declining condition and the need of funds for regenerating. One of the early vital projects was for a Single Regeneration Budget bid for a major revamp and clean up of Warrior Square

station, with the plan "to knock down the walls and the old café and toilets and put up wrought iron fencing both sides, so it is more environmentally friendly and less of a target for vandals" (HSLO, 22/3/96, 8). In 1996 HBC prepared a bid for £12.5 million in government grants, with the funds to be "used primarily to target Central-St-Leonards, recognised as deprived, for a package of regeneration, particularly through building improvement grants" (HSLO, 14/6/96: 1). In December 1996, HBC received £9.4 million of the government's £12 million Single Regeneration budget, with a further £38.5 million obtained via partners such as the local and county councils in match funding (HSLO, 20/12/96: 1). The regeneration projects included £15,000 for renovating the shop fronts on Kings Road; £82,800 on renovating other buildings in the area; £392,200 on converting empty floor space to living-over-the-shop accommodation, and a £2 million-plus project on the restoration of the Marlborough - the derelict hotel on the corner of Warrior Square Gardens. These projects are seen as a "serious package of measures to kick start the renovation of Central-St-Leonards area" (HSLO, 30/5/97: 11).

Then in 1999, HBC won a further £1.88 million of government funding to spend on vital projects in the most deprived areas of the town, including Central-St-Leonards with the aim of addressing the issues of poor quality of the living environment, fear of crime, high levels of unemployment and support for local businesses, and "involving the local community in the regeneration of the local area" (HSLO, 16/7/99: 3). In 2000, the town received a further £1 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund to spend on 'doing up properties'. As a result:

> "owners of prominent buildings along St Leonards seafront, in Warrior Square, London Road, Kings Road and Norman Road, will be able to apply for a grant of between 50 and 75 percent of the costs of repair and improvement works if the bid is successful" (HSLO, 24/11/00: 23).

Added to other initiatives such as the empty homes grant, living over the shop and local bus corridor highway improvement schemes, the funding will enhance and help to upgrade the commercial heart of St Leonards. The next key stepping stone in the regeneration of St Leonards (and Hastings) was the award of £400 million through a package on investment from the government, supported by private sector money in 2002. One of the key proposals was for university status for the town bringing about "a wind of change to sweep through decaying central areas of Hastings and St Leonards with disused buildings pulled back into life for lecture rooms and possibly as halls of residence" (HSLO, 22/3/02: 1). The package

formed the basis of the five point plan as previously mentioned. However, the key focus for St Leonards was to declare the Central-St-Leonards ward a Housing Renewal Area in 2003 (HSLO, 18/10/03: 3), at a cost of around £5 million a year for the next 10 years. Improvements include "the installation of a trouble shooting team with cash injections to tackle bad housing, improve community facilities and the environment" (HSLO, 29/11/02: 8). Councillor John Humphries, Cabinet Member for Housing states:

> "We are determined to dramatically raise the standard of homes and streets in Central-St-Leonards to improve living conditions, health and public safety. Presently, over a quarter of all properties are unfit for human habitation and another fifth are in serious disrepair - we are committing to improve this situation. We intend to declare the whole of Central-St-Leonards a Housing Renewal Area so that the council can address poor housing conditions, and improve the local environment." (HSLO, 23/12/03: 9)

The scheme will see 1000 homes which are considered unfit for human habitation to be renovated. Two years later in 2005, £12 million of capital investment was planned to make the area cleaner, greener and safer. Schemes included £4 million for the Sea Front Strategy which highlights "how the seafront could boost the economic development of the town as well as attracting visitors and residents to engage in it" (HSLO, 17/6/05: 1); and more than £1.5 million for the Central-St-Leonards Urban Renaissance Scheme (HSLO, 21/1/05: 2).

5.5   How is regeneration orchestrated in St Leonards?

As noted in Chapters 2 and 3, regeneration is often conceptualised as a state-led activity with a number of stakeholders involved at various stages of the process (N.Smith and Hackworth, 2001). However, as other gentrification scholars have also noted, there is a network of stakeholders involved in the unfolding of the regeneration and gentrification process (Bridge, 2001; D.Smith, 2002a). This is also reinforced by interview respondents:

> "I would say that there is different levels of regeneration happening. There is the formal, council, local authority driven agenda, but there is also an organic locally driven agenda that is happening" (Business Coach, 1066 Enterprise).

As this quote suggests, there are two facets to the gentrification of St Leonards. One side is comprised of governmental and other official organisations that may have a more top-down agenda. The other side is made up of local and grassroots stakeholders with a vested interest

in different aspects of St Leonards from community to investment opportunities. (The in-migrant pioneer community falls within this group and their role will be discussed in Chapter 6). In light of this, what follows is a discussion of the roles that various key stakeholders have played in the regeneration and gentrification of St Leonards; and how these roles intertwine to produce, market, and promote the town as a residential location.

5.5.1   Role of the local and regional state

The remit of regeneration is often the responsibility of local and regional councils (i.e. SEEDA).   This remains true for St Leonards and evidence of this can be seen through the detailed analysis portrayed in Chapter 5 of various plans and policy documents from organisations such as HBC and SEEDA with reference to the regeneration of Hastings and St Leonards. A key report produced at the time by MVM Planning Ltd identified Central-St-Leonards as a key point of regeneration:

> "They said if Central-St-Leonards did not regenerate, the regeneration of a town as a whole would be held back. So whatever you kind of do in Hastings town centre, if you've got that particular concentrated deprived area, you didn't tackle that, you hold back. Because it was the worst of the worst in the whole borough and if you didn't tackle that, and if you tried to improve the town as a whole it would hold you back" (Regeneration Officer 1, HBC).

This report provided recognition that there was a need for regeneration in St Leonards. HBC recognised that it would take concentrated investment Central-St-Leonards over 10 years to improve the quality, social mix and prosperity of the area, with interviewees confirming this:

> "They [HBC] realised fairly quickly that just investing on the housing stock wasn't going to kind of bring in long term sustainable improvements to the area, because it didn't kind of address some of the economic conditions and offer of that particular part of the town. And what would have happened, and what is considered to happen, is that if you invest in a property, then in 5 to 6 years it would go into ruin again" (Regeneration Officer 1, HBC).

It can be suggested then, that the regeneration of St Leonards was seen to be of key importance to the regeneration of Hastings overall: failure to address the problems affecting the area was seen as problematic for the borough and as such HBC actively sought to regenerate the area.

HBC had a key role to play in the early stages of regeneration through accessing funding for the regeneration work. The majority of the funding was made available via Central Government. The MP for Hastings and Rye identifies that:

> "the big money started flowing when the then regeneration minister Charlie Faulkner said we think your 5 point plan works ... The thing we want to prove is not that you need money but can you use the money. And he agreed that we could and we got 37 million pounds at that time. And that enabled setting up of SeaSpace, the regeneration partnership and many of the projects that we have since".

This funding for Hastings, coupled with other streams of funding resulted in £23 million to spend in the Central-St-Leonards area (Councillor 6, ESCC). The availability of these various funding streams allowed the town to undertake extra regeneration work in order to help improve the offer of the town.

Initial regeneration work did focus on the seafront, and the success of the project was heralded by the interviewees. For some of the interviewees that have been resident in St Leonards for a relatively long time, the change has been dramatic. As one artist notes:

> "I was just thinking back to the early 1990's when the area was very down on its luck and a lot of the sea front buildings were boarded up with pigeons flying in and out of the windows. And the council had an initiative to make property owners clean up their properties and I think that had an enormous psychological effect on making everything look better and start to feel better and that might have been an important turning point really" (Artist 2, St Leonards).

According to the interviewees, this focused stream of work on the seafront had a positive impact on the area, with the regeneration being regarded as a beacon of hope. The role of officers involved in the regeneration department of HBC has also been recognised:

> "There are some good officers working out there, politically and culturally well informed about things ... There is ideologically a strong, driving cultural agenda towards community cohesion" (Business Coach, 1066 Enterprise).

In the case of St Leonards, there has been significant investment in terms of time (dedicated officers) and money (governmental funding) from HBC to help propel the regeneration of the area. Arguably, having a vision or a need to regenerate is not always enough; it is a combination of time and money that helps to start the regeneration process.

In addition, it should however be acknowledged that partnership working is important for the administration of successful regeneration projects.

> "there are a number of different individuals and organisations that have come together to make the regeneration in St Leonards work. It is both, council driven and the organic grassroots community as well. HBC have an important role to play in bringing everyone together" (Business Owner 3).

This quote suggests that HBC is central to the regeneration process. One of the regeneration officers responsible for St Leonards identifies the role of HBC to primarily be:

> "about reshaping services to fit the needs of the neighbourhood. To work and bring the deliverers and receivers of the services together to make sure the reshaping was working effectively and using neighbourhood renewal funding to address the inequality" (Regeneration Officer 2, HBC).

What has been interesting is that it is not just about HBC and other organisations working together in a joined-up way, but cohesion between different council departments focusing on particular areas/projects:

> "Big difference now because it's all partnerships. One of the greatest success stories in community coordination and area management is the matched teams. Someone brings a problem, you've got the borough council, the police, the social services, housing associations, everyone gets together around for a conference, everyone does their bit and soon problem gone. Unsung successes" (Councillor 1, HBC).

According to the interviewees, this approach to partnership working has meant that different departments and organisations are working together and prioritising particular projects as regeneration becomes a standard goal. Furthermore, HBC have taken a very active role in ensuring that the regeneration projects are successful, as energy from different departments is channelled into particular areas. Much of this is evident through physical regeneration projects which include public realm improvements and housing renewal (as discussed in Chapter 5).

Furthermore, the discourse presented in Chapters 2 and 3 highlights the role of the state in the gentrification process. This model of partnership working can also be accounted for within

the *Making Waves Strategy,* which has been prepared by a partnership of various governmental and non-governmental organisations as noted previously in this chapter.

The points addressed so far in Section 5.5.1 signal that the state (at different levels) has a significant role to play in the regeneration (and gentrification) of a town.   This is grounded in the ability to provide funding (Central Government) and the ability of regional agencies and Local Councils to deliver projects (N.Smith and Hackworth, 2001). Some of the interviewees suggest that one of the key practices that has worked for HBC is partnership working to ensure that the various projects are delivered in the best way possible to maximise their benefit. Although many of these projects have been focused on physical regeneration and the public realm, some of the interviewees feel that the importance of this (as opposed to social regeneration) should not be underestimated as evident in the following quote:

> "The Kings Road corridor works that are about to start this month is about physical change and you do need to physically change the environment sometimes to allow other things to happen. So it's understandable that they [HBC] are quite focused on that because that is not something that individuals can afford to do on their own. So it is important that that has happened" (Business Coach, 1066 Enterprise).

This perception by some of the interviewees suggests that the role of the state in regeneration and gentrification is increasingly important because through their policy decisions, as well as the funding opportunities they secure for the town, there are opportunities for successful regeneration.

The regeneration agenda has also been about addressing crime as levels of crime in St Leonards have been considered to be detrimental to the regeneration of the area as discussed previously in this chapter. These fears of crime can be deterrent to potential migrants seeking a safer residential location. Crime levels and regeneration are interlinked as suggested below:

> "You can't have regeneration where crime levels are high. It doesn't work. You have to have a secure neighbourhood where people feel safe otherwise the rest doesn't follow. Parking has to be safe. In the last 5-10 years we have honed up on how we tackle night time town centre crime, and licensing issues" (Sussex Police).

Some of the interviewees noted that in St Leonards a number of initiatives have been introduced to help address some of the problems and these have been successful as noted in the following quotes:

> "One of the key factors is the fear of crime being reduced. People have to feel safe and happy to go out of their doors in the evening so that they can pursue social activities etc. The mind-set that St Leonards is a regeneration area is going in the right direction, the citizen's panel tell us whether people feel safe and that has gone up from 42 to 70%. People feeling safer both in the day and night, so they can go out eat and drink and socialise" (Regeneration Officer 2, HBC).

Conversely, regeneration projects help to address fear or crime and perception of safety. In St Leonards partnership working has been successful in addressing peoples' fears of crime. All this has a knock-on effect. Perceptions of increased safety mean that the public realm is used more frequently (Carr *et al*., 1992). A resulting factor is that businesses receive more passing trade and this encourages more businesses to open in the area as they start seeing an increased footfall in the area. There are more people in the public space and this increases perception of safety. This suggests that addressing issues of crime is very important for regeneration and for gentrification to unfold in a neighbourhood where there has previously been an increased prevalence of crime.

5.5.2   Private investment in St Leonards

It can be argued that for regeneration to be successful, there needs to be the availability of both public and private funding. According to some of the interviewees, in St Leonards, HBC has been relatively successful in accessing governmental funding for large scale regeneration projects. At the same time there has also been private investment in the retail offering and residential offering in the area. Important here is the role of property developers through businesses such as 'Roost Regeneration' and 'We Love Property' whom manage property portfolios for their clients, as well as individuals opening businesses within the area. According to the interviewees the investment in the retail and residential offering has managed to tackle some of the regeneration issues of the town, and in doing so portrayed an 'improving' image of St Leonards.

5.5.2.1 Not a 'clone town': business investment

Apart from the physical regeneration projects led by HBC with regards to the public realm, there has also been a focus on improving the retail offer of St Leonards. Part of the remit of improving the public realm was to make shopping offer for Kings Road a more pleasant environment for pedestrians (About Magazine, 2009). Coupled with this were the grants from the THI funding to improve shop fronts. These are examples of work that fall in the remit of HBC to revitalise the retail offer of St Leonards. The other stakeholders in this stream of regeneration are the business owners themselves. All of the interviews described how important it was to regenerate the retail hub of St Leonards (Norman Road, Kings Road and London Road) to encourage businesses to the area:

> "The council obviously have to look after the look and feel of the town, but the entrepreneurs, they're the ones that are really going to make a difference to whether it becomes a really popular town or not. Because the offering, the council can't open shops and businesses" (Estate Agent 5).

It can be argued that the investments made in the retail offering in the town will have a positive impact on the economy of the area. This is because more high quality shops encourage more money to be spent in the town (as long as there is a cliental available). There has been a growth in independent, boutique style shops in the area and many of these shops provide a service for some of the in-migrant population:

> "Well I am filling a niche and I have listened to what people here want and I am providing them with what it is they want. Maybe I am a year ahead but I don't see that as a negative. I know what my target market is" (Business Owner 1, St Leonards).

> "So you have got local professional people in St Leonards who like the thought of shopping locally. They morally want to keep local shops and so they will go to local shops, the local butcher, the local baker. You have got 2 or 3 good local butchers in St Leonards and they will try and support the businesses. Not because it's cheap in local shops because in fact it is often not but because they think it's the right thing to do" (Tourism Officer, HBC).

As these quotes suggest, the shopping and retail offer in the town is changing and accommodating the needs of more professional people. The impression given is one that suggests that the local shops are being frequented more and thus adding to the vibrancy of the

town. Some of these businesses have been operating in the area for quite some time such as the local butchers and local bakers. The interviewees noted that businesses that have opened more recently serve primarily the higher income households:

> "I think the shopping area has changed and you know Norman Road and that area has started to get little you know junky junk shops and now its trendy junk shops. So it is changing a bit and things like nice restaurants coming into the area. They are all like upwardly mobile indicators for an area" (Planning and Policy Officer, HBC).

> "Places like Norman Road are a classic example of self-regeneration. It's become a centre for slightly quirky shops, antiques, quirky coffee shops, funky junk shops, gift shops, a gallery at the back, there's a Michelin star restaurant, all done by itself, not by the Council" (Housing Officer, HBC).

These new businesses are aimed towards clientele that has significant disposable income. These are not necessity goods but rather luxury goods. For an area that has for a long time been associated with deprivation, the presence and resilience of this new genre of businesses suggest that there is a large enough clientele (both locally and visitors) to sustain those businesses. At the same time, the idea that in-migrants are opening-up businesses in the area also suggests that one attraction of moving to the town if linked to the opportunity for opening a business in the area. In addition, these quotes raise questions about who the in-migrants are, as they allude to a more affluent in-migrant moving to the area. This group is different from the pioneer gentrifiers which form the focus of this thesis. The presence of both communities suggest that St Leonards is on the border of one stage of gentrification and the next, and this allows for the emergence of more affluent in-migrants, but also raises concerns over the displacement of pioneer migrants – a theme that will be discussed further in Chapter 6.

The presence of these independent shops adds to the quality of the retail offer of the town and helps reinforce St Leonards' identity as a town with independent businesses rather a 'clone town':

> "I like the way that Kings Road is the butcher, the baker, the stationer and I like that actually and so I think that is already its personality. So I would be tempted to encourage that sense of real community so you get back and you buy and you do your shopping there" (Business Owner 2, St Leonards).

"People get criticised when towns develop because you get the standard of the type of shop like Next and Vision Express, all those open up. We haven't got that in Central-St-Leonards as yet and so the signs of gentrification in terms of the retail hasn't happened" (Regeneration Officer 1, HBC).

According to interviewees, the economic regeneration in St Leonards is effective due to the presence of independent shops and businesses in the area. It is not a 'clone town' that has chain shops (New Economic Foundation, 2010). A common sign of gentrification in a town is the opening of more expensive chain shops such as Starbucks (Lees, 2000). However, St Leonards is thriving because of its individuality and niche offering for those with higher disposable income. This has more parallels with rural gentrification where again there is a focus on more independent niche shops (Bell and Jayne, 2010). This suggests that gentrification can still occur without a town being an identikit town.

5.5.2.2 Profiting on the residential market

This growing retail offer of St Leonards suggests that there is private investment in the town with entrepreneurs opening new businesses and shops in the area. Private investment has also had an impact on the residential properties in the area. Discourses of gentrification identify partnerships between the state and private investment as vital in the regeneration process (Dutton, 2003). Private investment impacts St Leonards in two ways. One is the 'domino-effect' created by large scale projects which results in speculative purchasing:

"I think in Central-St-Leonards when we had this announcement of millennium communities money the buy to let market went mad. People bought up properties and when Hastings was going to get a university then again there was this speculative buying of properties" (Planning and Policy Officer, HBC).

The interviewees suggested that regeneration is linked to the opportunity for people to profit from the improvements made in a town. As a town improves and creates new opportunities, it encourages people to move to the area. The initial phase of this allows for investors to purchase in the area under the assumption that regeneration will increase the chance for them to get a higher return on their original investment. This process is still apparent in St Leonards:

"There have been more people coming in as landlords buying up properties, doing them up to better standards, again they are coming in and seeing the potential to

lift it in terms of its rental value, so there have been decent amount of restorations, a decent amount of properties moving up ... it's reducing the high turnover of population" (Business Coach, 1066 Enterprise).

According to some of the interviewees, private investors are purchasing residential properties in the area with an aim to create high quality luxury rentals. These properties are attracting wealthier tenants who are prepared to set down roots in the area. Private investors are part of a chain in the regeneration story. The investment they make in the area benefits them financially, whilst also providing a product to potential migrants in terms of high quality rentals. As a result, it is likely that these private investors will help to close the rent-gap in St Leonards (Yung and King, 1998).

5.5.3   Selling a new and improved town

The private and public investment in the area appears to have made a positive impact on the regeneration of the town. It could be argued that the HBC's vision of making the town an exciting place to live, work and play is actually being met through the actions of these key stakeholders in creating and exploiting the attractions of St Leonards as a residential location. Whilst these stakeholders are creating an 'image' of St Leonards, it is necessary to market and sell this new image to potential migrants. Important here is the role of media (especially local and national newspapers), and the role of estate and letting agents in encouraging pioneer gentrifiers and more professional individuals in choosing the 'right' residential locations within St Leonards.

5.5.3.1 Managing media portrayals

The focused approach to physical regeneration projects has knock on effects to the portrayal of the town as a whole. One example of this is through the way in which media portrays this aesthetically improved St Leonards. Media portrayals play an important part in forming people's perceptions of a place and the role of national newspapers has been significant in encouraging in-migration to the town by painting St Leonards as an attractive residential location. Between 2006-2010, there have been at least 11 positive portrayals of St Leonards in national newspapers. These are identified in Table 5.12.

Newspaper	Article	Date
Guardian	Ghosts of St Leonards	02/02/06
Telegraph	My kind of town: Hastings	17/05/06
The Sunday Times	The coast's next wave	06/08/06
The Times	Property is still cheap in St Leonards	01/08/08
Daily Telegraph	Why the smart money is on the sea	10/10/08
The Independent	This stretch of coast is blooming	07/12/08
Financial Times	Seaside sea change	24/10/09
The Times	We still like to buy beside the seaside	28/03/10
Guardian	Hymn to the sun	04/09/10
The Independent	Jobs boost for pier blaze town	09/10/10
Guardian	Let's move to St Leonards on Sea	06/11/10

Table 5.12: Portrayals of St Leonards in national newspapers

While important for encouraging migration into the town, interviewees did raise concerns over some of the media portrayals of the town, especially with reference to the differences between local and national media representations:

"Probably nationally we have had quite a good representation. But locally, The Hastings and St Leonards Observer is shocking. It should be allowed, the vision of the town they flog it does no one any good and it is so negative and it makes people angry reading the newspaper its very very negative view of the town. And it could be doing the opposite, it could be bringing up Hastings and St Leonards every week and celebrating it but it's not ... until the negative press changes that is going to be a problem because that is so much part of our collective vision about where we live but also the outside perception" (Business Owner 2, St Leonards).

This quote is a typical example given by interviewees. There was consensus the local newspaper (HSLO) could portray some of the more positive things occurring in the town rather than focusing on the problems. This would actually make a difference because through the expansion of the Internet such local papers are readily available to potential migrants. A concentration of stories focusing on the problems in the area would certainly put people off from moving to the town. Some of the more recent in-migrants interviewed suggested that the national newspapers on the other hand have focused on the positive aspects of living in the town, and have at the same time provided what they call more 'honest' portrayals of the town:

"I think the articles I have read recently they all say that you know it's the start of the regeneration, they have been quite balanced actually. Sometimes people get annoyed, they write things like the Portobello and I have been telling people hang on let's get realistic about this because we know it's not ... The ones I have read

recently have been balanced. And what they have focused on is yes that some bits need to change, but it's happening and there is a lot of interest. So they have been balanced on the regeneration" (Business Owner 1, St Leonards).

For some of the recent in-migrant community, this type of media representation is seen to be a realistic representation of the town as it identifies the promise of change for them but also portrays the negative issues still prevalent in the town. In recent years there has been an increase in national newspapers documenting the revival of coastal towns. Yet not all places are the same and thus it is important that media sources provide a realistic portrayal of different coastal towns as the media have a role to play in managing the expectations of the migrant:

"there was one in The Independent recently which I thought was a little bit more honest and it talked about landmark businesses like St Clements and Zanzibar and that sort of thing. But it was also quite realistic about generally walking round how it feels to walk around and live here. So that's probably more useful actually because we don't want people moving down here thinking it's going to be London-by-sea because it's not and they are clearly going to be disappointed and that's not the sort of person we want moving here anyway" (Business Owner 2, St Leonards).

"I think it has raised a lot of awareness of St Leonards. You know yourself we have been a lot in the press. It's a rolling ball of moss, its gathering you know the art, people from arts moving here from all over the place they hear about it, I just think it's been quite positive. It's really raised awareness. I think in the long term it will change people's perception" (Business Owner 1, St Leonards).

As the above quotes suggest, the recent migrant community feel the media has a significant role to play in managing the expectations of potential migrants. This could be attributed to the determination of this community to prevent the town from experiencing later waves of gentrification. Media representations could be also seen as gate-keeping strategies as they sell the image of a particular life-style that they associate with a place. As noted, this can be problematic when media portrays a place in a way that encourages gentrifiers that want to purchase a lifestyle, rather than pioneer gentrifiers (recent in-migrants) who help to shape the town.

5.5.3.2 Estate and letting agents: gate-keepers

Previous studies of gentrification have shown that estate agents employ gate-keeping strategies to encourage certain types of people to move into an area (see D.Smith 2002a). The estate and letting agents acknowledged that they employed similar strategies in St Leonards as noted in the following quotes:

> "We haven't got any bedsits; we tend to find that bedsits tend to attract a certain type of person. We want a better type of person, out with the old, in with the new" (Estate Agent 1).

> "We don't have many older people; we have people from 21 to about 50. Older people don't like to live where there are kids. Older generation tend to have their own community. We don't really cater for that. We aim for people who are younger and more vibrant" (Estate Agent 4).

> "Like they say, certain housing is for social housing. The thing is, by doing that; is that going to put people off from buying properties there? I don't know, me personally it would put me off. If I spend 250,000 and the person next door is sitting in an identical house but in social housing, a single mum with 4 kids and dogs. I would feel cheated" (Estate Agent 5).

Through these quotes we can see that estate and letting agents in St Leonards play a role in terms of how some neighbourhoods are reproduced to accommodate different types if residents. The quotes imply practices of 'ghettoising' and displacement by changing the type of tenant in different properties and residential locations. Whilst this is one area of control they have over the residential market, another is the way they publicize and create a new image of the town for migrants. One way this is achieved is via changing perceptions of a neighbourhood:

> "We do have certain properties which have a stigma attached to it whereas history says there are drug dens, and always will be and its very very hard to lose that stigma from such properties especially if you have a block altogether... If people out of the area move into that block, they have no knowledge of the history of it and they see it for where it is and what it is" (Estate Agent 1).

An 'out-of-towner' would not necessarily know the stigma associated with certain properties or neighbourhoods. Estate and letting agents can create the impression of a more suitable

lifestyle and thus change the dynamics of particular neighbourhoods. Another way estate agents influence publicity is through interactions with media and selling coastal living:

> "You know, we were the press's whipping board, we were the Costa del dole and god knows what you know. But of course we years ago experienced a lot more internal movement, where the press got a lot better about it and that started about 98/99, we were a major contributor that because we actually bought the Sunday Times down here and we spent a day with them and showed then round and, said look you have been writing all these articles about us, really you're not listening or actually looking at what the town is, and they went back and they wrote a sensational piece and then it sort of escalated from there" (Estate Agent 2).

Estate and letting agents have been proactive in marketing and promoting St Leonards to potential migrants through their interaction with media outputs such as newspapers to sell a particular concept of 'coastal living' that is attractive to the creative classes. The positionality of estate agents as gatekeepers to the town could also be harnessed to create sustainable communities by providing better quality accommodation for people on benefits:

> "The other things as well we tried to do was buy on streets where it didn't have a good reputation, there were crack problems, but we worked together with the local police force and other local agencies like environmental health and building control to get the properties up to standard. Because one it was beneficial to us because it increased the value of the property by cleaning up the area, but it was also good for the community. You know some roads literally went up in value because we had invested so highly and heavily in key areas like Warrior Square for example" (Estate Agent 4).

Partnership working practices employed by estate and letting agents can help with the regeneration of 'problem-areas'. In the long term, this allows for the creation of sustainable communities. However, as Estate Agent 4 suggests the improvements also potentially mean that the rent-gap closes as property prices increase as a result of the regeneration (Turok, 1992).

According to estate agents, most migrants looking to move into a new area will generally, as a first point of contact, approach estate and letting agents to get an idea of different properties and neighbourhoods in that area. Important are the marketing campaigns of the estate and letting agents, and one example of this can be see through the marketing campaign of Roost Regeneration as portrayed in Plate 5.9.

Plate 5.9: Roost Regeneration marketing boards

As such, the role of an estate/letting agent is vital as they can actively choose to allow or constrain access to particular neighbourhoods. In the case of St Leonards, this has been demonstrated by previous quotes which identify their gate-keeping practices. This is even more prevalent in the case of investor based agencies where the letting agents are trying to find tenants for their own investment portfolio. At a business level, all companies want to maximise profits and therefore their strategies to allow access to certain groups of people means that ultimately they are increasing the value of their investment portfolio and indeed closing the rent-gap.

This section has identified the key stakeholders involved in the regeneration of the town. One of the apparent successes for the town seems to be partnership working between various 'groups', where the end result for each is the successful regeneration of the town. However, the motives are different for different groups. For some it is an investment opportunity that in the end will close the rent-gap. For others, it is the opportunity to create ideal residential neighbourhoods for their own community and other local communities. The role of the local and regional state has been important in facilitating the regeneration of the town. At the same time, the incipient regeneration that has been a result of the activities of migrants in the town

should not be under-stated. The activities of these various migrant groups attract inward investment and perpetuate migration to the town. Important in this process has been the role of media to both market and promote a coastal lifestyle in St Leonards, whilst managing the expectations of the in-migrants. Linked to this is the role of estate and letting agents who act as gatekeepers by influencing access to residential properties to different social groups.

5.6   Gentrification in St Leonards?

In order to address the decline that St Leonards has suffered, there have over the years been numerous attempts to regenerate Hastings and St Leonards. Since 1995, Hastings has received a significant sum of economic capital to aid in this process of renewal and regeneration.   Important in this process has been the introduction of institutional polices. These support the regeneration of the area and increasingly involve creating an ideal town for creative industries (and in doing so attracting the creative classes).   These policy texts draw upon regeneration and renaissance blueprints from other locales across the urban-rural hierarchy – indeed applying the gentrification blueprint.   Linking back to debates on gentrification and regeneration portrayed in Chapters 2 and 3, a key question to pose here is: 'are there signs of gentrification and the closing of the rent-gap in St Leonards'?

Evidence to suggest that this is the case has been presented throughout this chapter.   The potential for growth has been readily acknowledged by key stakeholders such as HBC, investors and developers. However, discourses of gentrification identify that the process results in population change with each wave of in-migrants of a higher social, cultural and economic stature then previous waves (N.Smith and Hackworth, 2001). If the process of gentrification is indeed unfolding in St Leonards, then it is expected that there would be significant population change. Consequently, Chapter 6 considers population change as an outcome of gentrification and identifies the in-migrant communities which can be classified as pioneer gentrifiers as defined in Chapter 2.

Chapter 6:   In search of the coastal idyll in St Leonards

"What I think is interesting, the artists are not rich people, but it's the art they produce that brings interest. We don't want to be pushing these communities away, it is part of the attraction of the area. There is some physical regeneration which is important for the artists here, and that is important for these artists – affordable housing, we have to keep what we've got here rather than force them out" (Housing Officer, HBC).

6.0   Introduction

Different theoretical accounts of gentrification have noted the role of artists and creative individuals in the gentrification process. Markusen (2006) notes that this social group plays multiple roles in stabilizing and upgrading neighbourhoods, and, that they are an important agent in initiating gentrification in old working-class neighbourhoods. Ley (1996: 15) suggests that artists are the pioneer gentrifiers for what he terms a 'new middle class'. These are professionals in media, higher education, design and caring professions. Furthermore, as Cameron and Coaffee (2005: 39) note, that other theoretical debates of gentrification have recognised that "capital follows the artist into gentrified localities, commodifying its cultural assets and displacing original artists/gentrifiers". These scholarly discussions all suggest that pioneer gentrifiers – that is the in-migrants from an arts and creative background have an important role to play in the unfolding of processes of gentrification. It is important to reiterate here that for the purpose of this thesis, discussions on arts, artists and individuals from creative backgrounds refers to Ley's (1994, 1996) depiction of the new cultural class, as opposed to Florida's (2002) depiction of the creative class as noted in Section 2.1.4.

The purpose of this chapter then is to focus attention on the impact that the in-migration of social groups moving into St Leonards has on the regeneration of Hasting and St Leonards. In contrast to the accounts of Hackworth (2002) and N.Smith and Hackworth (2001), the discussion that follows contends that the role of social groups, akin to previous conceptualisations of the pioneer gentrifier, is clearly evident and still important in the regeneration and gentrification of St Leonards. To develop this argument, this chapter presents findings from 37 semi-structured interviews conducted with stakeholders involved in the regeneration of St Leonards. By evaluating the role(s) played by these stakeholders in the

regeneration and gentrification of St Leonards, the chapter also acknowledges the perceptions of change in St Leonards and examines the 'push' and 'pull' factors attracting migrants to the town. This is critical to any discussion of gentrification-led regeneration because without an understanding of how the various stakeholders are (re)producing a certain image and representations of the town affects not only how the town's 'attractiveness' is marketed but how these locational qualities are then seemingly 'discovered' by prospective migrants.

To develop these and other arguments, the chapter is divided into three sections. Following this introduction, Section 6.1 conceptualises the (St Leonards) migrant and the role of in-migrants – particular pioneer gentrifiers – in influence regeneration processes. Section 6.2 then explores the motives and aspirations of in-migrants in St Leonards through a critical examination of the town's appeals to incomers and investors. Finally, Section 6.3 teases out the key findings presented through the analysis of semi-structured interviews in the previous sections in order to advance the argument that there is a new socio-spatial pattern emerging with reference to the timescale(s) at which gentrification is unfolding in St Leonards. Critically this differs from our dominant academic understandings of contemporary urban and rural gentrification and considers the unfolding of coastification.

6.1 Conceptualising the in-migrant – the pioneer gentrifier of St Leonards

As noted in Chapter 5, the regeneration policies for Hastings and St Leonards aspire for the town to be an exciting place to live, work and play (HRP, 2002). But beneath this headline, the intention is that regeneration activity will attract migrants who will set down long term roots and contribute to the town. Media analysis has already shown that 2001 signalled the beginning of a new era for regeneration in Hastings and St Leonards. The use of census data to investigate population change is therefore limited. Nevertheless, interviews with the key stakeholders involved in the regeneration and marketing of St Leonards allows the opportunity to shed light on the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the in-migrant – a discussion which portrays a social group of migrants which can be labelled as the pioneer gentrifier and provides insight of their 'agency' in creating and resisting gentrification in St Leonards.

An important finding from the interviews is that there is not one dominant stereotype of a in-migrant moving into St Leonards. Nevertheless, the interviewees did provide some commonalities between the migrants, as evident in the following quotes:

> "There seems to be two strands, there seems to be a lot of kind of young, actually late-twenties, early-thirties, either about to have a kid or have one young kid and want to have another and that kind of. And there is an older generation as well" (Business Owner 2, St Leonards).

> "I would say they tend to be from their mid-twenties to their late-forties and fifties - something like that. Some of them will have young families or will be having young families or some have more grown up children. I would say they all have some kind of creative side to them" (Business Coach, 1066 Enterprise).

Interviewees also suggest the majority of the in-migrants are from a professional background - either employed in a creative-based industry or partake in creative leisure-based activities (Pratt, 2008). Moreover, these in-migrants appear to be at one of two different life-stages. The first group are what we might term those migrants in the 'young family' life-stage, where they are either thinking about starting a young family or already have a young family. The second is what we might recognise to be a 'pre-retirement' in-migrant group whose children have often grown up and moved away to establish their own work/family lives. One of the implications of this appears to be that there are fewer families with primary and high school-aged children moving to St Leonards. A potential reason for this is attributed by interviewees to the quality of schools in the area:

> "At the moment schools in Hastings are the worst in the country so what can we actually do to bring that up which at the moment will be a barrier to anybody that's got children moving to the area" (Councillor 6, ESCC).

Generally, state schools in Hastings and St Leonards tend to be low performing in the school league tables. This is a deterrent to many in-migrants.

This idea of change necessitated by a mass of people moving into an area is a theme which emerged throughout the interviews. Much of this is attributed to the lifestyles of the migrant population which can be classified as that of pioneer gentrifiers. Ley (1996) identifies artists as pioneer gentrifiers for a specific fraction of the middle class. Here are professionals in the media, higher education, the design and caring professions, especially those working in the state or non-profit, as opposed to the commercial sector. This is a group of people with high

social and cultural capital and (possibly) low economic capital (Ley, 2003), a theme picked up by a number of interviewees:

> "They are often people with not massive economic gain, but significant social talents" (MP for Hastings and Rye constituency).

> "This area draws a particular type of person and a particular type of personality. It's not about money. I think it's more to do with a lifestyle really. Its people who are artistic or learned or have a skill but they don't have money. Where we moved from there was a lot of money but it was very pretentious and I think people have got talent and money but they do not have to show off about it. I think they [migrants] quite like the edginess. I think some people coming over [to St Leonards] who have moved out of London, and have lived in certain areas that have now become too gentrified, want to go back to that" (Business Owner 1, St Leonards).

These quotes point to a group of people that form a pioneer gentrifying community - or as Bridge (2007) suggests, 'consumption gentrifiers', who view gentrification as a process of place making (compared to production gentrifiers who buy into an already commodified landscape) (Rofe, 2004). This group fits the profile of 'pioneer gentrifiers', something the artists themselves appear to be aware of themselves:

> "If it gets too gentrified the whole place waters down to middle class boringness. I like the rough edge on things. Most artists do actually. We are a strange breed really. One foot in the working class and one foot in the middle class" (Artist 3, St Leonards).

This group can be described as 'pioneer' in their capacity to transform the area and facilitate the economic upgrading of the area:

> "People are turning up with more money and they want to spend that in the local economy ... People who come from outside are gravitating to build that potential. You can see that revealed a bit in a way that people who have been living here for a while don't. So they have got that visionary thing as well. People want to have that particular type of life so it's investing particularly in the local community and adding [value to it]. Lots of the businesses are people from outside I think." (Business Owner 2, St Leonards).

The suggestion is therefore that St Leonards is becoming a more wealthier area, as a direct result from an increase in higher-income households moving to the town. These households are viewed as an important part of the local community, as they help support and sustain some

of traditional local independent shops – especially the more upmarket boutique businesses in the area.

6.1.1   The impact of the pioneer gentrifier

Through their residential decision-making and migration processes, pioneer gentrifiers play an important role in changing the social, cultural, physical and economic characteristics of towns like St Leonards:

> "It's my hope that all the DFLs, OFB's, wherever they come from will actually start to get things going - which they have because *it is* changing. St Leonards has changed" (Artist 5, St Leonards emphasis added). *(note: DFL and OFB are shorthand for Down from London and Over from Brighton, respectively).*

The perception is that much of this population movement is from larger cities such as London and Brighton. Interviewees consistently noted that these in-migrants are having a major impact in the area since they seek to get involved in the community, and work in partnerships and in joined-up ways to propagate changes in the coastal town:

> "The only plus side is attracting people with energy that might make something happen because they are capable of doing it themselves" (Artist 4, St Leonards).

> "Yes their social capital is important and it's important to society because they join things and do things, they are doers rather than receivers. That's very important because it enables the local community to share and benefit from their input. And that's inevitably the case" (MP for Hastings and Rye constituency).

Importantly, it was asserted that these in-migrants want to get involved in regeneration projects for the benefit of wider community, and work together to 'get their voice heard'. Possible motives for the involvement of these in-migrants include opportunities for raising the socio-economic levels of the residents of the town, as well as safeguarding the history and heritage of the town. Clearly, this resonates with Brown-Saracino's (2009) depiction of the social homesteaders and social preservationists fractions of pioneer gentrifiers. Examples of involvement by these groups in St Leonards include community-based organisations such as

the 'Hastings Pier and White Rock Trust[6]' and the 'Save the Archery Ground[7]'. An influx of in-migrants with relatively high levels of social capital extends the social and cultural capital of the town; factors which are important for facilitating the economic regeneration:

> "Hopefully the people moving here will bring wealth and money, not just financial wealth but opportunities because if I start a business I am going to employ somebody. I will employ somebody locally and it has to be the right person and they have to be interested. So they will bring that money. But with that money they will bring opportunities for other people who don't have opportunities" (Business Owner 1, St Leonards).

This business owner also noted that in-migrants have opened pottery classes, art classes, creative businesses, and are contributing to the skills set of the town; both through their skills, and the learning opportunities these ventures provide for other residents. Clearly the opportunity to engage in local community activities is a major appeal of St Leonards for many in-migrants - extending the social and cultural offering in the area as they do. In part, this illustrates that the pioneer gentrifiers are not specifically buying into a ready-made lifestyle, but are forming and (re)producing a new lifestyle:

> "A lot of the successful stuff that we celebrate here it's because people have done it themselves ... I think basically it's the people who live here getting on and doing it themselves really" (Business Owner 2, St Leonards).

> "The people here, you kind of don't choose St Leonards for an easy ticket. In lots of ways it's not an easy ticket. If you want an easy ticket there is lots of other places that you buy into, and just buy into a lifestyle" (Business Coach, 1066 Enterprise).

Some of the impacts this social group are having on the social landscape of St Leonards is clearly visible to people. Bennett *et al*. (2009) and Butler (2007), identify that people like to live in proximity to like-minded people whom share similar experiences and interest. This is also pertinent for St Leonards with reference to the creative in-migrant social groups. Interviewees discussed the importance of these social groups for creating support networks:

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[6] The Hastings Pier and White Rock Trust is a community organisation raising funds to restore Hastings Pier after the fire of 2010.

[7] Save the Archery Ground is a community group resisting the over-development of the Archery Ground site. This location was until 2010 used by Hastings Arts College, and the proposal will see 163 new housing units. Before it was seized by compulsory purchase in the 1960's the Archery Ground was a public open space and an important component of James Burton's St Leonards.

"For many years I wasn't too sure about it. I thought I should probably sell up and move somewhere else and I suppose I gradually got to know like minded people and got to know the creative community and began to feel more and more at home. I have certainly reached a point now where I can't imagine living anywhere else really" (Artist 2, St Leonards).

"I found like minded people that I could talk to. It was almost a refuge in that way. But that then encourages me to think no its okay for me to do this, I shouldn't feel guilty about work and its okay for me to do this, that and the other as there is other people doing it. So socially it's a wonderful wonderful place to be" (Artist 1, St Leonards).

These quotes are from individuals who could be defined as part of that 'creative social group', and suggests that the social communities they belong to provide supportive networks. These may be through businesses working in partnership, or individuals who share similar work ethics. However, as one artist stated, these creative communities did not always exist in St Leonards. Rather, they are a more recent phenomenon of the gentrification process. The fact these communities are operational in St Leonards' perpetuates the in-migration of similar social groups, who settle in the area with 'like-minded' people. What is particularly interesting about St Leonards though is the way these communities are inter-leaved with many different types of creative skills:

"There is an incredible mix. There is artists, writers, musicians, you name it they are here. It's not just that you have got a lot of writers together and a lot of artists together but here writers, artists it all seems to match. So the one good thing is that it puts you out of your normal social field. You see in London you probably hang out with other people that are kind of similar in terms of your work ethic or whatever you are doing, teachers or musicians or artists. But here, because it's a small community it's not just a community of musicians or artists, people interact across the social boundaries too so that's a very interesting aspect of this place. You do bump into the most weird and wonderful people" (Artist 3, St Leonards).

It can be argued that a small town like St Leonards allows for a creative community to develop that is not 'exclusive' to a particular group of people, but one which embraces different types of creativity. Residents are therefore exposed to a diverse community, exemplified in the St Leonards Festival[8] "which is a huge community cohesion event" (Chair,

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[8] The St Leonards Festival is an annual free festival. It started in July 2008 and is organised by the Central St Leonards and Gensing Forum with support from HBC. The festival showcases local youth and community group talent, conducts a carnival procession, provides live entertainment, as well as hosting a bustling open market.

CSLGF). The interviewees also commented on how the community allows individuals to remain anonymous in the town:

> "There is a very nice social network which I think we all really appreciate. Hastings is quite special in that respect, it's not sort of snooty of show-off-y perhaps like Brighton is. You just come here and do your own thing and everyone gets on with it" (Artist 3, St Leonards).

> "It's about the vibe of the place where they want to live and the affordability. So it's worth mentioning that there are loads of creative people that you wouldn't even know were here because they are hidden away" (Artist 1, St Leonards).

These quotes suggest that the community spirit of St Leonards allows individuals to focus on their creative energies, without that creativity becoming the defining factor of individual identity. It can be argued that in the same way rural and coastal towns provide an escape from hectic urban lifestyles, they also provide an escape from the everyday work based roles of an individual can be realised. The concern is that this anonymity, and opportunities for privacy, may get disturbed as the gentrification process gathers momentum and enters subsequent phases of its biography.

6.1.2   In-migrants and discourses of displacement

Theories of gentrification note that each wave of gentrification often results in displacement, with second- and third wave gentrifiers displacing first wave or pioneer gentrifiers (Butler and Lees, 2006). Pioneer gentrifying communities create an 'attractive' lifestyle which becomes more and more tempting to those migrants who form the second, third and n^{th} waves of gentrification. Some of the interviewees noted this in the case of St Leonards:

> "It is interesting to me. Are artists part of that gentrification? Are they the first wave of the gentry? Do they attract gentry? Are they the first to throw the hoi-polloi out? ... There is a perception that artists are gentry" (Arts Officer, HBC).

> "In positive terms the gentrification with the Arts community is promising. It's creating a buzz, bringing fresh people and money in. I see it as a positive because of the potential knock-on effects." (Councillor 1, HBC).

There is a perception then that the pioneer gentrifying community of artists and creative individuals are part of the gentrification process and suggestive of gentrification unfolding in St Leonards. This reflects academic discourses of gentrification which identify artist and

creative individuals as pioneer in-migrant communities instigating gentrification (Ley, 1996, 2003; Cameron and Coaffee, 2005)

Having considered the direct impact of the pioneer social groups, it can be suggested that the decision-making processes of this group of pioneer gentrifiers is extremely significant to wider processes of coastal regeneration in St Leonards. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, this group of migrants would intentionally move out of St Leonards if their expectations were not fulfilled. However, this raises questions whether pioneer gentrifiers are displaced; that is, they have no choice, or do they in fact choose to move? Interviewees in St Leonards offered an interesting take on this important aspect of the gentrification debate:

> "This generation of people will move on if that's what happens because we don't want to live in places like Brighton. We have got friends who have moved from Brighton for that very reason because they got too chi-chi[9] or trendy. And they want to come here with different communities coming up. Because it is a pioneering community which is not just white middle class. ... There is this pockets of people who are just getting stuck in and trying to make things happen. So that's fascinating" (Business Owner 2, St Leonards).

> "I don't think they are forced out. They bought properties cheap, and their property gets to a price where they think I can't resist this, and they sell" (Artist 3, St Leonards).

As these quotes demonstrate, the agency of the pioneer gentry is clearly important because they are making the active decision to choose to reside in an area or move elsewhere. This questions some of our current understandings of gentrification, and suggests that not all pioneer gentry get displaced; rather some gentrifiers may choose to move away from the area, as opposed to being forced out of the area.

Based on these interviews it appears that processes are underway in St Leonards that are more akin to pioneer phases of gentrification. Evidence of this can be seen through a social group of creative classes, in this case the pioneers of gentrification in St Leonards.   The importance of the pioneer gentrifier in St Leonards contradicts Hackworth's (2002) theory that the role of the pioneer has declined within processes of contemporary gentrification.

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[9] Chi-chi is an urban-slang word used to describe something to be ostentatious stylish. In this context it suggests that Brighton became overtly stylish, or 'too gentrified'.

6.2   The attractions of St Leonards

Having identified a perception of change in the type of in-migrant in St Leonards, it is also necessary to consider the reasons why these social groups have chosen St Leonards as a residential location. To investigate this further, this section considers a number of social, cultural, physical and economic factors that make St Leonards an attractive offering to entice migrants to move into the area, and in the process narrow the rent-gap.

6.2.1   The 'green' and 'blue' qualities of St Leonards

Sandwiched between sea and countryside the physical location of St Leonards is vital in understanding gentrification processes. Moreover, it is important to emphasise the relations between St Leonards and other proximate towns and cities, especially London which is some 60 miles to the north. With this in mind, this section discusses the role the sea, the countryside and the location of the town in attracting migrants to St Leonards. For as we have already discussed earlier in this thesis, the coast provokes a unique emotional response, thereby attracting people for a whole variety of different reasons (Corbin, 1994). For St Leonards, the sea remains an important selling point for the town. Indeed, stakeholders' initial thoughts when attractiveness was raised in interviews always seems to gravitate toward St Leonards being a coastal town:

> **"**There is something very powerful about the sea. It can be very relaxing. It can be very energising. It can be quite threatening. There is a whole thing about it being a quite an emotional experience ... So I mean it does have a huge role, as there are attractors there of a change in environment, change in perspective, that sort of thing" (Business Coach, 1066 Enterprise).

In this way, St Leonards' seafront caters for many different needs, from contemplation: through sitting on the beach, to being on/in the sea, sailing, swimming, or kayaking. The typology of the landscape also means there are increased opportunities for viewing the sea. Indeed, many of the properties that were developed by Burton were located such that they had the sea views. Today, those very same (sea)views are promoted and marketed within St Leonards a century later, as evident in the following quote:

> "People love the sea. People will pay money to have sea views. There is no two ways about it. You know a 1 bedroom seafront flat will sell for probably 15-20,000 pounds more than a comparison flat that hasn't got a sea view. You know,

people will pay. It will draw people in. They will pay for it, and as far as that they love to see the sea" (Estate Agent 2).

This 'love-affair' with the sea is played out through interventions by HBC, which has been pro-active in opening up the seaside by creating pathways and linkages to the seafront through public realm works on Kings Road, London Road and the widening of pavements in front of the Colonnade. Academic discourses on rural gentrification discuss the importance of nature and the representation of the countryside (for example, see Short, 2006) in the decision-making processes of migrants. As the above quotes suggest parallels can be seen in coastal towns with the value added of the coastal landscape.

This is important here because St Leonards also boasts a number of public gardens (Warrior Square, St Leonards Gardens and Gensing Garden). According to the interviewees the sense of space that these gardens, as well as the coastal landscape, provide is an important, somewhat unique selling point for St Leonards:

> "For me it's a sense of space but after a while that turns in on itself. You are in a small town with a huge horizon. The sense of space is fantastic and I like it in the winter, the sense of space because it is daunting" (Artist 1, St Leonards).

> "You can get upon the downs and walk and get a view of the English Channel, and see to Beachy Head and Eastbourne" (Chair, HAF).

Whilst it can be expected that the focus within coastal towns is the sea, the importance of the countryside surrounding St Leonards (and Hastings) is also significant for a variety of reasons:

> "If one is interested in the natural environment, Hastings has some very undeveloped and unspoilt countryside on its doorstep. So much of the southeast has given way to mechanised agriculture with the removal of hedgerows etc. Round here the lay of the land is so hilly that it is impossible to do anything but small scale farming. But I mean just round and about Hastings you have got the Wealden clay and that is one environment. If you go to the west you have got the chalk download. And if you go to the east of here you have got marsh land going up towards Dungeness. So there is three very distinct areas you can explore should you choose to and its really only 5 minutes, 10 minutes outside of where you live. So I mean for me that's one of the great attractions for Hastings" (Artist 2, St Leonards).

Such representations identify a number of natural environments that are relatively accessible from St Leonards. St Leonards can be defined as an urban town surrounded by the rural

countryside and coastline. This raises questions about where coastal towns like St Leonards are placed on the urban-rural hierarchy because albeit they might be urban in their form, they do bear some comparisons to rural market towns. This juxtaposition between urban and rural is not only visible through the landscape, but through people's interactions with the town, with interviewees talking about how St Leonards reflects urban/rural lifestyles:

> "I mean if you have lived in a little village in a countryside maybe it won't appeal to you. But if you have lived in towns and cities, and also you need the sea as well. People say it's like London on sea and they say that about Brighton as well ... As we came here more and more we liked St Leonards more. And it's very unusual. It's a fantastic coastline and stunning architecture. It looks slightly out of place and its very very unusual but with a community feel. And so it ticks quite a lot of boxes from that point of view. Because when you leave big cities, you come and don't worry about no community or being lonely- it's a very strange set up and how that's come about I don't know" (Business Owner 1, St Leonards).

This quote shows how readily St Leonards can be compared to rural and urban locations - busier than a rural village which gives it an urban feel, and yet at the same time providing the village-based community feeling that large cities often do not provide (Landry and Bianchini, 1995). Clearly, different coastal towns will have different attributes that make them more urban or rural (Walton, 2010). This further reaffirms that there is no one-size-fits-all model for coastal regeneration. Nevertheless, it does suggest St Leonards has a unique offer to prospective in-migrants.

6.2.2   History and heritage of St Leonards

The history and heritage of St Leonards has been discussed in detail in Chapter 5, but in the context of current discussions, one of the biggest selling points of St Leonards is that it has managed to hold on to its various architectural styles without wholesale rebuilding and restructuring over the years. As the chair of the BSL Society suggests:

> "I have always felt that the one advantage that Hastings had of being so depressed shall we say was the fact that it wasn't changed wholesale back in the 1960's or 1970's when other towns had major town centre renewal. A lot of towns really changed and the whole character and appearance of the town and buildings isn't what it used to be. That hasn't happened in Hastings. We've still got squares. It's not a big town. I am not sure what the percentage is, but a high percentage of Victorian buildings in the town is higher than in a lot of other towns. It is still there surprisingly, really untouched" (Chair, BSL Society).

This suggests that the lack of investment previously in St Leonards was in hindsight viewed by many investors as a good thing for regeneration, meaning that the built environment within the town was not cleared and re-built in the 1960's and 1970's. In the 1960's there were plans to clear the area referred to as Mercatoria for development. However, a developer was not found to take on the project and the area subsequently became a conservation area in 1969. It should also be noted though that St Leonards did not escape processes of redevelopment. Evidence for this can be seen in Warrior Square where some of the grand houses did get replaced by 'modern' blocks of flats (see Plate 6.1). These buildings provide a reminder of what could have possibly unfolded had much of St Leonards experienced wholesale redevelopment during the 1960's and 1970's.

Plate 6.1: Changing architectural styles in Warrior Square

However, it is important to remember that in the 1930's Burtons West Colonnade was removed to allow for the building of Marina Pavilion, which is seen to be an:

"...important landmark. It is an important reminder and it's also an attractor because people come in and look at it and say its unique. You see that silhouette, the ocean linear building as you drive along the seafront and it's unmistakable. It's important. They are really important parts of the identity of the area but it has to be a living identity not a museum piece and so people want it to be lived in" (Business Coach, 1066 Enterprise).

So throughout history, areas of St Leonards have clearly undergone change with some buildings being replaced by new-build. The area is considered distinctive for entertaining these different architectural styles which help to create such an interesting heritage. The grandeur of the buildings serve as a memory of the previous elegance of St Leonard, as well as the potential to be so again. The role of the architectural heritage and the nostalgia associated with childhood seaside holidays should not be overlooked as an important selling point for St Leonards, as the quote below suggests:

"I think it's actually attracting people who want to move here probably because of the nature of the feel of the place. It's so important but people underestimate it – the type of the architecture, the layout that sort of thing" (Business Owner 1, St Leonards).

This unique landscape has evolved to cater for different types of accommodation and tastes. These different architectural styles and areas of St Leonards cater for different markets as noted by a number of interviewees:

"Because Warrior Square is such a big square, it attracts both kinds of people, almost all kinds. I think some of these baby boomer types would love Warrior Square as well, we are seeing that as well" (Estate Agent 5).

"The garden, wide roads, all higgledy-piggledy bits like Mercatoria, water, the sea, lots of trees, warmth. There is a lot that's attractive" (Artist 4, St Leonards).

These two quotes illuminate different areas within St Leonards, suggesting that even within a small town micro-geographies are important. Simply put, different areas are attractive to different (groups of) people. Furthermore, the residential heritage of St Leonards helps to create an identity for the town that is consumed by in-migrants. Whilst barn conversions and farming memorabilia is consumed by rural gentrifiers (M.Phillips, 2002, 2005; Darling, 2005) within St Leonards, the architectural heritage is of equal significance to gentrifiers of this coastal town. Nevertheless, it should be noted that this history is not just associated with the

types of buildings in the town, but also with the nostalgia of the seaside holiday experience of the town.

6.2.3   Arts and culture

The focus on arts and creative industries in St Leonards produces a distinctive cultural experience. The presence of recent in-migrants identifies with a strong arts and culture experience which has important historical connections, as illustrated by the following quote from one of the artists:

> "Historically there has always been a lot of artists here. You go back to the Victorian times and the pre-Raphaelite circle of artists lived and worked in the old town. And I think it's just this connection with the sea. People often talk about the light at the seaside and for painters that probably is an important factor" (Artist 2, St Leonards).

Although the quote is not just specific to St Leonards, it does identify with the arts heritage of Hastings and St Leonards overall. In St Leonards, interviewees suggested that artists and creative practitioners were propagators of the cultural experience of the town:

> "There's a lot that goes on down here. My friend who is moving down here can't believe the opportunities. There are things to do here. Where I was before there wasn't a lot to do. There was a lot of money but culturally there wasn't more to do. Here culturally I have more to do. It's amazing. You wouldn't think so, and that's again because of the type of people moving here - the academics, the artists, the people who care about the community. They are interested in doing other things rather than just earning money" (Business Owner 1, St Leonards).

According to some interviewees, the creative community in St Leonards are actively involved in creating a cultural experience for themselves. One business owner, who discussed her cultural experience at length in interview, previously resided in a rural village having left London in order to escape from hectic urban lifestyles. Yet in her previous residential location she did not encounter enough cultural activities to sustain her appetite for the type of cultural activities she had grown accustomed to having in London. According to some of the interviewees this is pertinent for many individuals relocating down the urban hierarchy. Here coastal towns like St Leonards (which have similarities to rural villages in terms of access to nature and 'escape') appear to offer a middle-ground – balancing the provision of sufficient opportunities for a cultural experience akin to a cosmopolitan urban lifestyle, but crucially,

within an environment that enables pioneer gentrifiers to exist comfortably. One of the key factors in this has been the role of Hastings Art Forum [HAF]:

> "Since the forum started here in 2006 it has pulled a lot of other people into the area. I am not saying just because of the forum, but the forum helped to get that little motivational thing going. Now we have along here 5 galleries, a craft shop, a pottery shop, ceramics etc. It seems to have pulled a lot of the artistic community into one area, which then sends out these little satellites to all these different people which then pull them into the area. So it's good at spreading the word about this particular part of town. Because it's a visual thing you have to come and see it here" (Chair, HAF).

The arts scene in Hastings and St Leonards has traditionally had its focus in Old Town, Hastings. However, with the creation of an arts hub in St Leonards, this part of town now has a more visible arts focus to rival the Old Town. As the Tourism Manager suggests, St Leonards has got a "developing arts and community scene. It's where Old Town was twenty or thirty years ago actually". This growing arts and creative scene provides the opportunities for arts-based businesses to locate in St Leonards and this encourages other businesses (such as coffee shops, tea rooms and gift shops) to locate in the vicinity of this new and thriving arts cluster. As a direct consequence of gentrification, St Leonards is transforming into a destination for arts in a similar fashion to the Old Town.

Apart from a concentration of art galleries, the cultural experiences also include some large-scale projects such as the St Leonards festival and various markets throughout the year. All of these factors add to the opportunities for the area, a point picked up by the chair of the BSL Society:

> "The festivals have been really good for St Leonards. It's given the place a bit of pride back. The businesses here see that it's a good place to live and work and businesses are staying. There are businesses here now. A few years ago they used to come and go and shops closed but now there is more stability. And the festivals and markets and the stuff in the gardens have all raised the profile of the area so it's only going to get better" (Chair, BSL Society).

Projects like the St Leonards Festival and the Christmas market are prime examples of the business and residential communities working together to provide a cultural experience that showcases the qualities of St Leonards. These projects also become opportunities to attract in-migrants to the area – individuals who discover the residential offer of St Leonards.

6.2.4   Economies of coastal living

Chapter 5 demonstrated how property prices in St Leonards remain relatively affordable, as the town has a relatively depressed property market. Interviewees also commented on the opportunities and benefits this depressed housing market creates for potential in-migrants, with cheaper property prices allowing people to get onto the property ladder, when compared to more economically buoyant places like Brighton.

The more affordable housing market of St Leonards provides an opportunity for migrants to release equity by either down-sizing or purchasing a similar property for less money, when compared to their previous residential location, resulting in greater disposable income as portrayed in the following quotes:

> "If you are in London and you are feeling the pinch and you need to sell your house, you know you will sell it for twice, three times what would be the same price here. So there for if you come down here you've got some spare dosh. So that shouldn't make it too difficult" (Chair, HAF).

> "There are a lot of people who downsize. They don't just downsize in terms of their house but financially as well. They have now released a lot of capital from their homes and they don't have a mortgage and so they are not relying on credit cards" (Business Owner 1, St Leonards).

As the above quotes suggest, despite property prices in St Leonards rising, they still remain significantly cheaper when compared to property prices in places like Brighton and London, thus allowing individuals to not only purchase larger properties for their money, but also gives them a greater disposable income. Dutton (2005) and Lees (2006) argue that the role of institutional actors such as corporate developers is more significant than the individual pioneer within provincial gentrification. However, the cheaper property prices, coupled with the fractured ownership patterns, contradict those findings because these factors enable individuals to invest in the local housing stock. Having a greater disposable income allows migrants to get involved in the community and set-up their own businesses through the equity released from their homes:

> "We sold our house, put some money in the bank, which enabled me to start the business and I have no mortgage. And you talk to a lot of people and they are doing the same thing" (Business Owner 2, St Leonards).

> "Once we were here, that's when the whole notion of opening a shop and actually really really getting involved with the local community started to take root. It was

out of that that we saw the opportunity for developing something on Norman Road. Kind of building on what's there already" (Business Owner 1, St Leonards).

For some in-migrants, St Leonards presents an ideal opportunity not only as a residential location, but also in terms of business opportunities. There are a number of businesses in St Leonards that have been opened by in-migrants moving from London and Brighton. For many, these opportunities have been possible because they have been able to release equity through cheaper residential properties.

Throughout Section 6.2 various themes have been explored to identify the social, cultural, physical and economic factors that inter-mingle to attract in-migrants to the area. These factors are inter-connected to create an affordable and culturally-diverse town at the centre of which lie strong community networks. Furthermore, all this unfolds in a backdrop of the countryside and seaside. In many ways, St Leonards provides a blurring of distinctive urban and rural lifestyles as the town allows for the existence of an urban lifestyle, but at a pace and community setting and physical landscape associated with a rural setting. Indeed, it can be argued that in-migration to coastal towns like St Leonards identify with a new type of counterurbanisation where individuals are looking for a balance between the attractions of urban and rural living (Bell, 2006).

6.3   Conclusion: 'coastification' – rhetoric or reality?

This chapter has reported the findings from 37 semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders involved in the regeneration of St Leonards. Findings from these exploratory interviews suggest that St Leonards is undergoing processes of change which are akin to pioneer gentrification. A number of key themes can be identified from the interviews that warrant further analysis; which form the basis of the household survey (see Chapter 7).

The exploratory interviews suggest that a particular social group of individuals are moving to St Leonards. It appears that these individuals are from the creative classes, and parallels can be drawn to representations of pioneer gentrifiers, as noted by Ley (1996, 2003) and Markusen (2006). These are individuals with high levels of social and cultural capital and low economic capital. A key point that stands out is that the agency of the pioneer gentrifier is extremely significant and as such they are an important stakeholder in the processes of

change, and not just a consumer of regeneration. The interviewees suggest that this is as a result of the opportunities that these individuals create for the community, for example opening-up new local businesses and being active within local community groups.

In order for in-migration to occur, push and pull factors encourage individuals to relocate to towns like St Leonards. The interviews suggest that individuals are moving to St Leonards in search of a particular lifestyle that may be specific to selective coastal towns. Important here is the opportunity for quasi-urban/quasi-rural lifestyles that such coastal towns offer. Whilst coastal towns provide an escape from the hectic urban lifestyles associated with cosmopolitan city living through easy access to nature, they still allow the in-migrant to experience a heightened cultural diversity that is less common in rural villages. Although a coastal town setting makes the place feel 'urban', it also mirrors more rural towns through the presence of small, independent shops. Moreover, there is a perception that these migrants are seeking the 'coastal idyll'. This is the social, cultural, economic and physical factors that make coastal living attractive for these in-migrants and will be explored in greater detail in Chapters 7 and 8. Finally, another important pull factor is associated to rent-gap debates. Declining coastal towns such as St Leonards provide opportunities to purchase relatively cheap Regency and Victorian properties when compared to other locations such as London and Brighton.

A consideration of these different themes are suggestive of a distinctive form of gentrification unfolding – one that is particular to coastal towns like St Leonards which have previously witnessed decline and are therefore ripe for regeneration. Clearly, of particular important here is the role of the coast and thus there may be merit in utilising the term coastification to differentiate the process of gentrification in coastal towns from urban and rural gentrification. However, to fully understand and appreciate if St Leonards is undergoing coastification or gentrification (or just regeneration?) it was deemed necessary to gather the opinions of residents within St Leonards - the findings of which, make the basis of the following chapter.

Chapter 7:   A survey of residential decision-making processes and perceptions of change within St Leonards

7.0   Introduction

This chapter presents findings from 173 door-to-door household surveys of local residents in four areas within St Leonards (Burton-St-Leonards, Mercatoria, Warrior Square and Garden Suburb). As noted in Chapter 4, these areas have been defined based on the type of properties and architectural styles of each neighbourhood.   Identifying the demographic, socio-economic, and cultural characteristics of the respondents, the chapter reveals differential social geographies within St Leonards which are integral to understanding the processes of gentrification and the impact this has on the regeneration of the town.   The discussion explores the key factors underpinning the diverse socio-economic and cultural tenants of the areas, and how this influences perceptions of change in St Leonards.

The chapter is divided into 5 sections. Section 7.1 describes the ages, household types, family structures, household income, and employment characteristics of the respondents. Section 7.2 explores the quality-of-life conditions of St Leonards which specifically attract in-migrants to the locality. Section 7.3 and 7.4 focus on the decision-making processes, and the residential and locational preferences of in-migrants in St Leonards. This is both in comparison to other areas that the respondents considered (both in and out of the Hastings area), and their previous place of residence. Details on the type of property, reasons for leaving and price of property are examined. The section aims to understand the origins of respondents and the decision-making processes of moving from previous places of residence and lifestyles.   Finally, Section 7.5 identifies some key contributions that connect the findings to wider debates of contemporary gentrification and regeneration.

7.1   Respondent demographics

This section describes the population demographics of the respondents, based on individual-level data.

7.1.1 Household size and type: 'something here for everyone'

Although much of the housing stock in St Leonards was initially constructed as large family homes, during the last three decades much of the housing stock has been converted into flats. Not surprisingly, the survey findings show a concentration of one- and two-person households (32% for the former and 41% for the latter), as identified in Table 7.1. However, fewer respondents are residing in households which contain three or more people. Yet there are notable differences between the four areas. In Burton-St-Leonards, there is a propensity towards one- (40%) and two- (38%) person households. Similar trends can be witnessed in Warrior Square with 39% of respondents forming a one-person household, and 44% forming two-person households. In Mercatoria, there is a concentration of two-person households (44%), yet a comparative decrease in one-person households (27%), and an increase in three- and four-people households; perhaps indicating more nuclear family households. Within Garden Suburbs, whilst there is a concentration of two-person households (40%), there is a rise in four-person households (21%) and the occurrence of larger households. Garden Suburbs is the only area where respondents indicate that six or more people reside in the household.

	Burton-St-Leonards	Garden Suburbs	Mercatoria	Warrior Square	Total
	n= 48	n= 43	n= 41	n= 41	n= 173
1	40% (19)	21% (9)	27% (11)	39% (16)	32% (55)
2	38% (18)	40% (17)	44% (18)	44% (18)	41% (71)
3	6% (3)	10% (4)	12% (5)	7% (3)	9% (15)
4	8% (4)	21% (9)	17% (7)	7% (3)	13% (23)
5	8% (4)	4% (2)	0% (0)	3% (1)	4% (7)
6	0% (0)	4% (2)	0% (0)	0% (0)	1% (2)

Table 7.1: Number of people living in the household

Van Weesep (1994: 76) suggests that gentrification is also related to demographic developments, which is expressed through the "rapid rise in the number of small households as well as increased differentiation of household types". As evident in the findings from the survey, St Leonards depicts such a concentration of households. The 2001 GB Census identifies that the three wards within which the study area is located has 51% of all households being a one-person household. In comparison, this figure drops to 29% average for the whole of the South East of England. Therefore, suggesting that coastal towns are the new hot bed of gentrification.

Similarly, Table 7.2 shows a concentration of one-person households (31%) which is comprised of pensioners (8%) and single people (23%). In addition, there is a high proportion of families in the area, both cohabiting couples with children and married couples with children (25%), as well as couple households with cohabiting couple households making 12% of the total, married couples 12% and OAP couples 3%. However, there are striking micro-geographic differentials between the four areas. Warrior Square area has the highest proportion of single person (not OAP) households (32%), and the other three areas also have significant proportions of single person households. The Garden Suburbs has a high concentration of family households, with 26% cohabiting couples with children, 16% married couples with children accounting, and 12% single parent families. The other three areas in comparison have 5% or below number of cohabiting couple households. In Burton-St-Leonards, there is also a concentration of nuclear family households. However, the majority family-type in this area are married couples with children (25%), and only 4% of households are cohabiting couple with children. This suggests that Burton-St-Leonards is more typical of a traditional family setting of married couples with children. There are also more pensioner households with 4% of the respondents being a couple household, and 19% a single OAP household. Mercatoria has more of a spread of different types of households. Whilst 22% of households are single person households (not OAP), 32% are family households. However, there is a higher occurrence of single parent households (15%).

	Burton-St-Leonards	Garden Suburbs	Mercatoria	Warrior Square	Total
	n= 48	n= 43	n= 41	n= 41	n= 173
Single	19% (9)	19% (8)	22% (9)	32% (13)	23% (39)
Cohabiting couple with children	4% (2)	26% (11)	2% (1)	5% (2)	9% (16)
Cohabiting couple without children	8% (4)	2% (1)	17% (7)	20% (8)	12% (20)
Married couple with children	25% (12)	16% (7)	15% (6)	7% (3)	16% (28)
Married couple without children	8% (4)	12% (5)	15% (6)	12% (5)	12% (20)
Single parent with children	8% (4)	12% (5)	15% (6)	7% (3)	10% (18)
OAP couple	4% (2)	2% (1)	2% (1)	2% (1)	3% (5)
OAP single	19% (9)	2% (1)	2% (1)	7% (3)	8% (14)
Other	4% (2)	9% (4)	9% (4)	7% (3)	6% (12)

Table 7.2: Household composition

7.1.2   Employment type and status: 'a gathering of small-scale entrepreneurs'

As identified in Chapter 5, there are relatively high levels of unemployment in Hastings, and the relevant organisations and stakeholders have sought to address this problematic condition through promoting business opportunities in the area. Table 7.3 identifies the employment status of the respondents, and some findings are noteworthy: 27% of the respondents are in full-time paid employment, with a further 23% who are full-time self-employed. 6% of the respondents are in part-time employment, with a further 3% who are part-time self-employed. 10% of the respondents are unemployed, with 1% economically-inactive and another 1% long- term sick. 19% of the respondents are retired. Again, investigating the micro-geographies of these statistics reveals a number of differences. In Warrior Square, 43% of the respondents are in full-time employment with a further 25% full-time self-employed and 15% retired. Unemployment levels are at 7%. This higher employment figures differ significantly from that in the 2001 GB Census dataset, and the CSLRS (2004) suggests that Warrior Square has a large population of benefit claimants. In Mercatoria 30% of the respondents are in full-time employment, with a further 25% full-time self-employed. However, the unemployment rate here rises to 15%. From all four areas, Garden Suburbs has the highest proportion of unemployed respondents (16%). 19% are in full-time employment, with a further 19% full-time self-employed. A total of 12% are in part-time employment and a further 5% in part-time self-employment. 16% of the respondents are retired. In contrast, Burton-St-Leonards

has the highest proportion of retired respondents (34%), and unemployment rate of 2%. Again there are a large number of respondents in employment with 19% in full-time employment, 21% full-time self-employed, 6% part-time employment and 4% part-time self-employed. These differences between employment status suggest that different 'types' of people reside within the four areas, and these characteristics are now explored through income, job location, type of employment and place of work.

	Burton-St-Leonards	Garden Suburbs	Mercatoria	Warrior Square	Total
	n= 48	n= 43	n= 41	n= 41	n= 173
Full time	19% (9)	19% (8)	30% (12)	43% (18)	27% (47)
Part time	6% (3)	10% (4)	5% (2)	5% (2)	6% (11)
FT self employed	21% (10)	19% (8)	25% (10)	25% (10)	23% (40)
PT self employed	4% (2)	5% (2)	2% (1)	0% (0)	3% (5)
PT employed student	0% (0)	2% (1)	2% (1)	0% (0)	1% (2)
Unemployed	2% (1)	16% (7)	15% (6)	7% (3)	10% (17)
Economically inactive	2% (1)	2% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	1% (2)
Retired	34% (16)	16% (7)	10% (4)	15% (6)	19% (33)
Semi Retired	4% (2)	5% (2)	5% (2)	0% (0)	3% (6)
Student	4% (2)	5% (2)	0% (0)	5% (2)	3% (6)
Long Term Sick	2% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	1% (1)
Other	2% (1)	2% (1)	2% (1)	0% (0)	2% (3)

Table 7.3: Employment status

7.1.3   Annual income: 'you don't need a lot of money to live in St Leonards'

Table 7.4 portrays the income levels of the respondents/head of household. It is important to note that: a) not everyone was prepared to answer this question, and b) this figure would rise in dual-income households. The annual income includes any benefits received and pension. As evident from the Table 7.4, there is no specific income category that stands out. However, 64% of respondents earn below £30,000. Of these 21% earn below £10,000. By contrast, 22% of respondents earn over £30,000 with 7% of respondents earning over £50,000. There are however significant differences in earnings between the areas. In Burton-St-Leonards 35% of respondents earn above £30,000 with 12% of respondents earning above £50,000. Also 21% of respondents earn below £10,000, which might be attributed to the 34% retired population identified in Table 7.3. This retired population would receive less than £10,000 per year on a state pension. In Garden Suburbs, the most common earning group is the

£20,000-£30,000 group that accounts for 33% of all respondents. The figures for Mercatoria are more similar to the overall average with 73% of all respondents earning £30,000 or less. Furthermore, 24% of respondents earn below £10,000 and 27% of respondents between £10,000-£20,000. It is important to note that in Mercatoria there is a high prevalence of single person households (24%) and couples with no children (33%). Similar trends can be identified in Warrior Square, with 71% of respondents earning below £30,000, with 24% of respondents earning less than £10,000 and 29% of respondents earning between £10,000-£20,000. Again 39% of households are single person households and 34% couples with no children. In both Mercatoria and Warrior Square, these household demographics suggest that even with combined wages, a significant population do not have high annual incomes. However, both areas fall within the boundaries of the ward of Central-St-Leonards that is noted to have a high index of multiple-deprivation. Despite this, 17% of respondents in Mercatoria, and 15% of respondents in Warrior Square have an income in excess of £30,000. This suggests that the socio-demographic make-up of the population is changing as people with higher income levels are moving into the area. This is suggestive of gentrification unfolding in the town, as the process is defined as the replacement of one socio-economic group with that of a higher socio-economic group (Clark, 2005).

	Burton-St-Leonards	Garden Suburbs	Mercatoria	Warrior Square	Total
	n= 48	n= 43	n= 41	n= 41	n= 173
< £10,000	21% (10)	14% (6)	24% (10)	24% (10)	21% (36)
£10K to £20K	15% (7)	19% (8)	27% (11)	29% (12)	22% (38)
£20K to £30K	17% (8)	33% (14)	22% (9)	15% (6)	21% (37)
£30K to £50K	23% (11)	16% (7)	10% (4)	10% (4)	15% (26)
> £50K	12% (6)	2% (1)	7% (3)	5% (2)	7% (12)
Didn't Answer	12% (6)	16% (7)	10% (4)	17% (7)	14% (24)

Table 7.4: Annual income of respondent

Another interesting finding is the perception of lifestyle and income within the area, as identified by the following quotes:

"There is a sense of pride in not having money and making a virtue out of poverty" (157/BSL).

"You don't need a lot of money to live here. I don't have to work full time and my partner gets projects occasionally. But we still have a lifestyle here" (158/WSq).

"It has affordable housing, I have downsized and have a disposable income" (173/M).

As these quotes suggest, there is a perception that some respondents do not need a lot of money to live in St Leonards. Clearly, a lot of this is dependent on individual lifestyles and incomes. Affordable housing coupled with the lifestyle and cultural offering (explored further in Section 7.3) provides the ideal residential setting for the above respondents. These quotes also provide a common representation and understanding of pioneer gentrifiers as noted by Giersig and Aalbers (2004) and N.Smith (2002). These are gentrifiers whom have high social and cultural capital and a low economic capital.

Table 7.5 demonstrates that jobs within the creative industries feature prominently within the occupations of employed household members. 25% of the jobs are within the creative industries sectors of: Artistic and Literary Occupations, Marketing and Advertising, Design, Media, and, Information and Communication Technology. A further 10% are business owners and entrepreneurs. These high concentrations of employment within the creative industries identify a population with a higher social offering. Indeed, Savage *et al.*'s (2005) research on gentrification identifies that areas that have a higher concentration of people from a service class background are likely to be experiencing forms of gentrification. There are also a high number of individuals (15%) in other professional (not creative industries based) roles including: Architects, Town Planners and Surveyors, Engineering, Business and Finance, Science, Legal Services and Public Services. Interestingly, another 7% also defined themselves as homemakers and viewed this as a full-time job. There also appears to be some connections between the area's people have selected for residence and their type of occupation. 34% of respondents in Burton-St-Leonards are employed in creative industry occupations. This figure drops to 12% in Garden Suburbs, 10% in Mercatoria, and 11% in Warrior Square. The majority of those employed in the planning-related fields (architect, town planners, surveyors) are resident in Mercatoria (19%). Warrior Square has the highest concentration of individuals working in other trades such as building, construction trade (14%), creative industry sector (13%), and teaching (7%). However, only 2% of respondents in Warrior Square are business owners/entrepreneurs compared to 9% in Burton-St-Leonards, 13% in Garden Suburbs and 15% in Mercatoria.

	Burton-St-Leonards	Garden Suburbs	Mercatoria	Warrior Square	Total
	n= 65	n= 60	n=52	n= 64	n= 241
Creative Industries	22 (34%)	13 (22%)	13 (25%)	12 (19%)	60 (25%)
Professional Services	9 (14%)	7 (12%)	10 (19%)	8 (13%)	35 (15%)
Business/ Entrepreneurial	6 (9%)	8 (13%)	8 (15%)	1 (2%)	23 (10%)
Welfare and Education	5 (8%)	6 (10%)	7 (13%)	12 (19%)	30 (12%)
Other	15 (23%)	19 (32%)	8 (15%)	18 (28%)	60 (25%)
Home Maker	3 (5%)	4 (7%)	3 (6%)	7 (11%)	17 (7%)

Table 7.5: Occupation(s) of household members who are in employment. (Does not include occupations of retired persons).

From Table 7.3 we already know that 26% of respondents are self-employed and it can be expected that their base is within St Leonards or Hastings. Table 7.6 provides details of areas where people work. Respondents were also asked to comment if their office was out of the area and they worked primarily from home. A total of 65% conducted their work from within St Leonards and Hastings, with 39% employed/have a business in St Leonards, and 5% who work freelance from their homes in St Leonards. Therefore, it could be suggested that due to the types of occupation of residents of St Leonards, there is the possibility for a significant number of people to work from St Leonards. In general, the work locations of respondents are in the South East (and London), with 11% working in London, and a total of 7% working in nearby towns of Bexhill, Eastbourne, Battle, Rye, Pett and Robertsbridge. In Garden Suburbs, 60% of the sample population worked in St Leonards. This proportion drops to 39% in Warrior Square, 31% in Mercatoria, and 28% in Burton-St-Leonards. In Mercatoria 17% of the respondents are employed in London, with another 12% in Burton-St-Leonards, 9% in Warrior Square and 7% in Garden Suburbs. Both Mercatoria and Warrior Square areas are relatively close to the Warrior Square train station, and are thus suitable locations within St Leonards for commuters working in the aforementioned locations.

	Burton-St-Leonards	Garden Suburbs	Mercatoria	Warrior Square	Total
	n= 65	n= 60	n=52	n= 64	n= 241
St Leonards	18 (28%)	36 (60%)	16 (31%)	25 (39%)	95 (39%)
Office outside St Leonards (work mainly from home)	6 (9%)	1 (2%)	2 (4%)	2 (3%)	11 (5%)
Freelance (from home)	1 (2%)	3 (5%)	3 (6%)	5 (8%)	12 (5%)
Hastings	12 (18%)	3 (5%)	9 (17%)	15 (23%)	39 (16%)
Hastings/St Leonards/ London	6 (9%)	2 (3%)	4 (8%)	0 (0%)	12 (5%)
Hastings/Eastbourne/ Brighton	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (3%)	2 (1%)
South East (other locations not mentioned)	2 (3%)	1 (2%)	3 (6%)	4 (6%)	10 (4%)
Bexhill	1 (2%)	3 (5%)	3 (6%)	2 (3%)	9 (4%)
London	8 (12%)	4 (7%)	9 (17%)	6 (9%)	27 (11%)
Brighton	0 (0%)	2 (3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (1%)
Lewes	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (2%)	1 (0.5%)
Eastbourne	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.5%)
Battle	1 (2%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (1%)
Rye/Pett/ Robertsbridge	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	1 (2%)	2 (3%)	4 (2%)
Tunbridge Wells	2 (3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (1%)
Kent	1 (2%)	3 (5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (2%)
Oxford	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.5%)
UK wide	0 (0%)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	2 (1%)
America	2 (3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (1%)
International	2 (3%)	0 (0%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	3 (1%)

Table 7.6: Location of work place

Further analysis was also undertaken on those individuals who are freelance or have offices outside St Leonards but worked mainly from home. Those who worked freelance are doing so in the following sectors:

- Artistic and Literary Occupations   5
- Business Owner   2
- Therapist   1
- Information & Communication Technology   1
- Design   1
- Engineering   1

Those whom had an office outside of St Leonards but worked mainly from home were employed in the following sectors:

- Artistic and Literary Occupations   3
- Business and Finance   1
- Marketing and Advertising   2
- Design   2
- Legal Services   1
- Engineering   1
- Architects / Town Planners / Surveyors   1

Due to the sample size it is not possible to portray these numbers as percentages; however the industries of employment are all in sectors that can accommodate remote working practices, making it easier for employees to reside further away from their work place. The advances in technology through the growth of Internet and mobile communication technology allows people to work from home and such changes traditional models of needing to reside closer to work places. As such, locations like St Leonards which relatively physically distant from the global city of London, are able to become alternative residential locations and still maintain links with the global city.

As Table 7.7 expresses, the three main methods of travel to work are: car (33%), walking (44%) and working from home (38%). A further 12% take the train to work. Within Burton-St-Leonards, the most frequently used mode of transport is car (34%). In both Garden Suburbs and Mercatoria, car use is lower with 28% and 25% respectively, but higher in Warrior Square with 42%. Warrior Square also has 19% of the sample working from home. This figure drops to 18% in Garden Suburbs, 13% in Mercatoria, and 12% in Burton-St-Leonards. 22% of the sample in Burton-St-Leonards and Garden Suburbs walk to work, with 15% in Mercatoria and 14% in Warrior Square. The relatively higher use of car (and train) for the journey to work from Warrior Square can be attributed to the large proportion of respondents who are in full-time work. As Table 7.6 demonstrates, some of this is linked to long-distance commuting. Similarly, 17% of respondents in Mercatoria work in London, and this reflects the higher levels of trains as a method of transport by the sample. The opportunities and availability of such transport methods allow gentrification to become more

prevalent in locations further down the urban-rural hierarchy, as they expand the residential catchment of global cities such as London.

	Burton-St-Leonards	Garden Suburbs	Mercatoria	Warrior Square	Total
	n= 65	n= 60	n=52	n= 64	n= 241
Walk	14 (22%)	13 (22%)	8 (15%)	9 (14%)	44 (18%)
Cycle	0 (0%)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)	3 (1%)
Car	22 (34%)	17 (28%)	13 (25%)	27 (42%)	79 (33%)
Train	5 (8%)	6 (10%)	13 (25%)	5 (8%)	29 (12%)
Scooter	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.5%)
Lift	2 (3%)	3 (5%)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)	7 (3%)
From Home	8 (12%)	11 (18%)	7 (13%)	12 (19%)	38 (16%)
Project Dependant	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.5%)
Walk/Bus	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (4%)	0 (0%)	2 (1%)
Walk/Cycle	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.5%)
Walk/Car	1 (2%)	2 (3%)	3 (6%)	3 (5%)	9 (4%)
Walk/Train	2 (3%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (1%)
Cycle/Car	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.5%)
Cycle/Train	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.5%)
Car/Bus	0 (0%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.5%)
Car/Train	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (2%)	3 (5%)	4 (2%)
Did not answer	5 (8%)	4 (7%)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)	11 (5%)

Table 7.7: Method of travel to work

The demographics of the respondents show that there is a prevalence of one and two people households in the research area (Table 7.1). The proportion of single person households is 31% and couples with no children is 27%. When compared to the annual incomes levels of respondents, there is evidence to suggest a high number of DINKS (Double Income No Kids) in the area who are more likely to have a disposable income. However, there are also a relatively high number of families (single or couple households with children) in the area (38%). St Leonards also has very high self-employment rates (Table 7.3), which reflects in the prevalence of occupations within the creative industries, especially artists and literary occupation. This reflects HBC's vision of a high-quality and exciting coastal town where people choose to live and work; as it recognises that one of the successes of Hastings and St Leonards is the fact that businesses and employment opportunities in the area have a strong cultural focus with "a fledgling media sector, a longstanding artistic community and some successful technology-based manufacturing companies" (HRP, 2002: 12).

7.2   Quality-of-life and the attractions of St Leonards

As Halfacree (2008) notes, quality-of-life factors are an important motivator which underpin an individual's decision to change their residential location.   As such, and through the survey, the respondents' reasons for choosing St Leonards as a place of residence were explored. This section takes into account the lifestyle-related decision-making processes, and considers a series of cultural, social, economic and physical factors, as well as the physical setting of the town.

7.2.1   Defining St Leonards: coastal/urban/rural?

Seaside resort towns are difficult to categorise due to their changing location on the urban/rural hierarchy (M.Smith, 2004), so it was important to understand how the respondents perceived the physical setting of the town and the reasons behind this social construction. Respondents were asked to comment on whether they thought St Leonards was coastal, urban, rural, or a combination of these. Table 7.8 demonstrates that 88% of respondents identify St Leonards as coastal, 62% as urban and 24% as rural. Of these, 34% thought it as solely coastal, with a further 33% as an urban and coastal landscape, and 19% as an urban, coastal and rural landscape. Surprisingly, 10% of respondents did not think that St Leonards was coastal at all. One reason for this could be because the town has evolved and in the process lost its traditional resort function. The residential location within St Leonards also impacted on respondent's perceptions. 52% of respondents from Burtons St Leonards saw the area as solely coastal. The figures in Garden Suburbs and Mercatoria were closer to the average with 30% and 32%, respectively, and 20% in Warrior Square. However, in Garden Suburbs, Mercatoria and Warrior Square there was a higher occurrence of respondents seeing the place as urban and coastal with 26%, 46% and 39%, respectively. This could be attributed to the layout of the town, as well as the resources and amenities available to respondents from these locations.   A significant proportion also identified St Leonards as all three – coastal, urban and rural, with the highest proportion in Warrior Square (24%), 20% in Mercatoria, 19% in Garden Suburbs and 15% in Burton-St-Leonards.

	Burton-St-Leonards	Garden Suburbs	Mercatoria	Warrior Square	Total
	n= 48	n= 43	n= 41	n= 41	n= 173
Coastal	52% (25)	30% (13)	32% (13)	20% (8)	34% (59)
Rural/Coastal	0% (0)	2% (1)	0% (0)	5% (2)	2% (3)
Urban	6% (3)	14% (6)	0% (0)	7% (3)	7% (12)
Urban/Coastal	23% (11)	26% (11)	46% (19)	39% (16)	33% (57)
Urban/Rural/Coastal	15% (7)	19% (8)	20% (8)	24% (10)	19% (33)
Urban Rural	4% (2)	2% (1)	0% (0)	5% (2)	3% (5)

Table 7.8: Physical setting of the town

These varying representations can be further understood through the respondents' descriptions of the place. Unlike many coastal towns that turn their back to the sea (Hayman, 2009), for the survey respondents the sea and the coastline were a very important part of St Leonards. Whilst people found overlaps between their perceptions of urban, rural and coastal, there was something about the coastline that played its part in defining St Leonards, as suggested by the quotes below:

> "It's by the sea, the freedom, the spiritual and visual freedom. It's like watching a different painting every day, a spiritual aesthetic of being free" (22/M).

> "Well a small town with the sea on one side and the countryside on the other. The human landscape challenges the nature and natural order of land and sea" (95/M).

These quotes identify an aesthetic relationship with the coastline and the sea. The interaction with the natural landscape allows people to experience more than the townscape, and draws an emotional response. In doing so, the coastal setting provides an escape from everyday urban life. Furthermore, it is not just the town itself that defines St Leonards, but the wider setting of being able to 'look out' as evident in Plate 7.1.
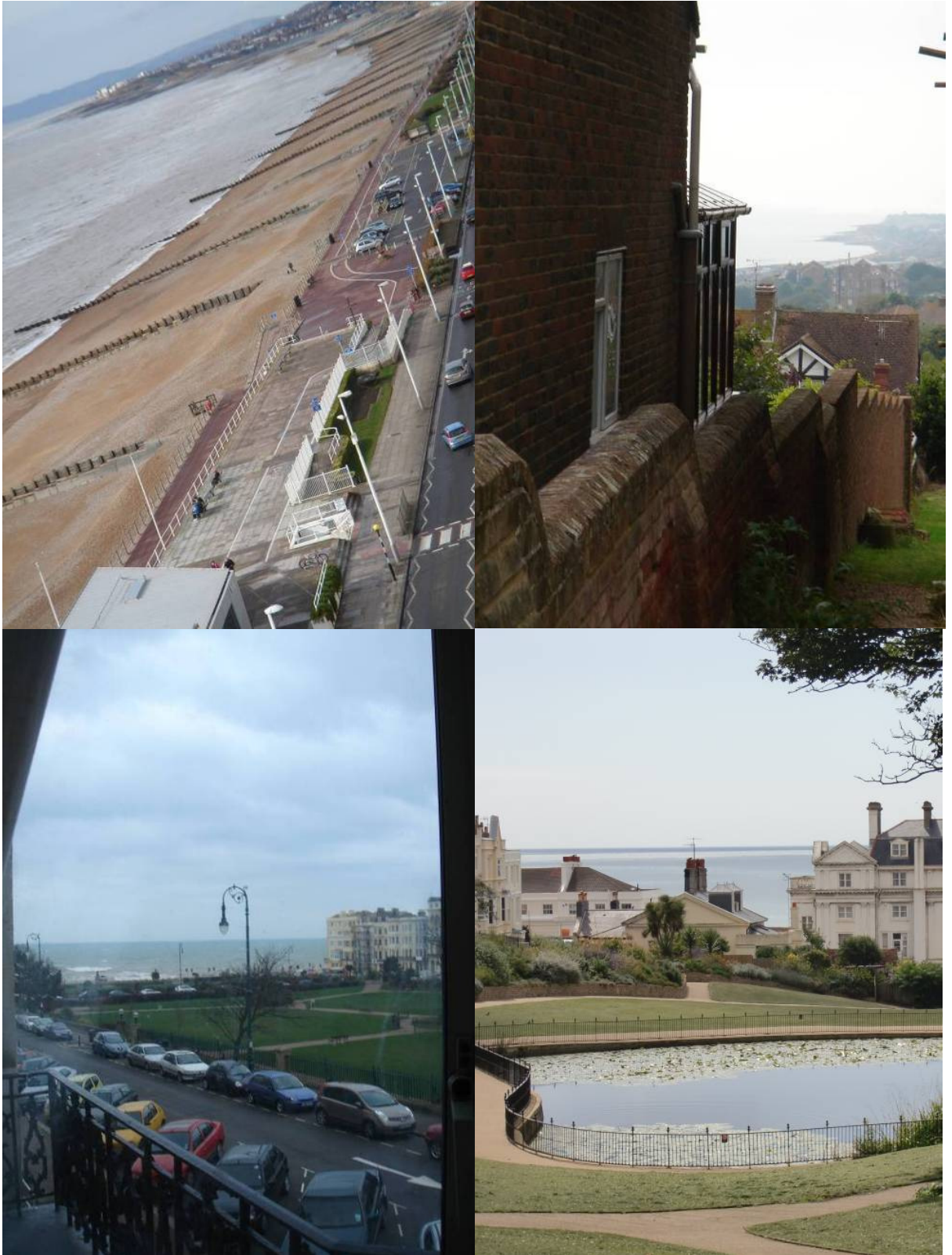
Plate 7.1: Sea views from varying locations in St Leonards (clockwise from top left – Marine Court, Albany Road, Warrior Square, St Leonards Gardens).

Furthermore, these nature representations are not just tied to the coastal landscape, but also the countryside:

"Not completely country or urban. It's more of a town but got lots of countryside roads, wide lanes, feeling of space" (170/GS).

These quotes reinforce the idea of an urban landscape surrounded by nature and, in particular, reference to St Leonards having a countryside feel. However, as the last quote suggests it is not just the surrounding landscape, but the physical layout of St Leonards that evokes a sense of space and nature associated with rural living. James Burton's incorporation of subscription gardens and former archery gardens provide this idea of space. Granville (1971: 595) describes the area surrounding Quarry Hill and Maze Hill a "romantic, wooded and undulating landscape". This landscape still remains attractive to residents in the area.

These connotations of rural, natural living are also tied to daily interactions between respondents and the community of St Leonards. There is a sense of belonging attached to the place, as exemplified by the following quotes:

"Small town atmosphere, I already know the local shop owners" (147/WSq).

"Right by the sea – a small town and here, i.e. Norman Road it's a community. Hence a rural feel of people working and living together" (87/M).

"A village community feel but people make it feel like London because of outlook in life" (64/M).

On the whole, residents of St Leonards tend to view themselves as a community. Much of this is connected to a number of independent shops on their doorstep, which are owned primarily by local residents. Respondents consistently stated that individuals know each other on first name basis, and this sense of community (which will be explored further in Section 7.6) arguably gives the impression of a rural village, where all the locals know each other. The reference to London in the last quote is also important. The sense of community also provides a positive urban lifestyle experience, as identified in the quotes below:

"Reminds me of parts of London in the 80's but by the sea. Camden in the late 80's" (29/M).

"A big town – small city feel full of ex-Londoners and its countryside and seaside so a mix of everything" (35/M).

These quotes portray an image of 'like-minded people' living together, and this concurs with Savage's (2006) thesis of elective-belonging, whereby people actively choose to reside with

other similar like-minded people (Butler, 2007); albeit associated with wealth and status, or similarities in previous residential choices.

Evidence of the urban is also found in the respondent's understanding of the landscape:

> "Because it's by the sea and it's a built up area with no farmland or natural wild areas contained within its boundaries" (172/M).

> "Victorian, urban, coastal. It's quite built up – close to public amenities and not a seaside surrounded by farmland" (60/Wsq).

> "Tightly-knit urban townscape. Visually it's very coastal" (91/M).

The actual town itself is seen as an urban landscape, due to its built up nature and the availability of amenities. The tightly-knit urban landscape is evident in the area named Mercatoria and also around Kings Road as evident in Plates 7.2 and 7.3.

Plate 7.2: Independent shops with flats above in Kings Road

Plate 7.3: Independent shops and homes on Norman Road

All the above quotes identify to various degrees St Leonards is perceived as urban, coastal and rural. Yet it is difficult to label St Leonards as one or the other. As the following quotes suggest, St Leonards is a combined landscape and is therefore difficult to define:

> "Physically coastal, but also rural because lots of green space. Urban as it's a regeneration area" (45/GS).

> "St Leonards is not rural but the surrounds are. Quite a built up area. It's fabulous and just on top of the sea" (83/M).

> "It's all of those, but hasn't decided what it is. Ambition is a coastal town, but has city problems" (105/BSL).

> "In the middle of it all, sea on doorstep, different town areas and all that countryside" (163/M).

This is important for our understandings of the British seaside, as the case-study of St Leonards shows the varying characteristics and landscapes associated with urban and rural areas, but in a coastal setting. Different coastal resort towns will be at different scales along the urban–rural hierarchy. As such, it is important not to categorise and treat all coastal towns

in the same way (Walton and Browne, 2010). However as the *Coastal Towns Report* (2007) notes, there are a number of contrasting rural and urban issues (both positive and negative) that play out in coastal towns, with the one of the commonalities being the coastline itself.

7.2.2 The lure of St Leonards

Migration patterns into St Leonards do concur with trends in counterurbanisation and rural migration theories (for example see Bowler, 2001 and Champion, 1990). Counterurbanisation as a migration process can be defined as "the relocation of urban residents from large (often metropolitan) to small (often non-metropolitan) spaces" (Mitchell, 2004: 17). The importance lies in the spatial extent of the migration movement, involving one of three processes below:

1. Relocation to areas adjacent to the urban core.
2. Relocation to peripheral localities.
3. intra-regional migration down the settlement hierarchy (a clean break from past migration trends).

Evidence of counterurbanisation can be seen in St Leonards, with respondents giving particular examples such as "experiences of violence", wanting to have a community and to "be away from the hustle and bustle of London" as their reasons for choosing to escape larger metropolitan areas such as London in favour of coastal living. The respondents suggested that they were searching for somewhere different in order to experience a different lifestyle. However, at the same time, for other respondents who also wanted to get away from London (and other towns/cities including Brighton), it was still important to be able to maintain a link with London:

> "Escape London, but able to go back when we want. Haven't really left London because I commute but it is slower here" (97/BSL).

> "Wanted to live by the sea as a Londoner. Its different to where we used to live. I find St Leonards as a London borough. It's linked in terms of employment and so we are a satellite. With lower cost of living here people will always move here" (102/BSL).

> "To live by the sea. It's the nearest to London that we could afford" (167/WSq).

These quotes also portray the residential decisions of moving away from London, but note the importance of being able to access London regularly. These links with London are important for work and other opportunities as portrayed in Section 7.1.3 which discusses employment

locations. Another factor that emerges out of these quotes is affordability. It seems for some of the respondents identified above, St Leonards portrays a more affordable place to live in.

7.2.2.1 The economies of coastal living

Almost all respondents commented that one of the main economic attractions of St Leonards was the fact that properties remain affordable:

> "It's cheap here – in terms of the size of place I can buy. A big house on the seafront" (18/BSL).
>
> "Price of housing. Could afford to get on property ladder here compared to Brighton" (3/BSL).
>
> "Can afford a bigger place with a garden for our daughter. Being able to afford bigger here compared to Brighton and London" (21/M).

These quotes suggest the ability for people to up-size a significant amount and buy more for their money and provides the opportunity to invest. Often there were references to better accommodation prospects compared to Brighton and London. It can be noted already that some respondents could not afford to get on the property ladder in Brighton, but the following quotes are telling of exactly the type of difference in both the owner-occupier and rental markets:

> "Affordable housing. We sold a 2 bed cottage in London, and bought a 6 bed house here" (171/M).
>
> "In 1982 was cheaper to start here than in London. Psychologically, living in a basement flat in London to moving here to have an elevated view of the sea is good for the spirit" (102/BSL).
>
> "Cheaper to live here, I have my own flat. In London I paid more rent for a bed-sit with shared facilities then I put on my rent here" (48/GS).

As these quotes suggest, the differences in the cost of living between London and St Leonards are significant and thus clearly the lower cost of living is a clear attraction, particularly for those people who do not necessarily have a high income, or prefer a lifestyle where high mortgage and rent payments would make being able to afford a particular lifestyle difficult. The monetary figures involved have already been portrayed in the average property price graph (Figure 5.6) in Chapter 5, and discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6. However, affordability of property is not just for those wishing to settle in St Leonards, but also an

attraction for second home owners who want a seaside home for temporary and regular escape:

> "When I bought here, it was very affordable at the time to have an apartment in London and have a place here" (19/M).

> "By the sea, and close to London. A weekend flat was our goal, to get more then countryside on our doorstep. Wanted seaside town with mix of places and ungentrified. An affordable house as a second home. An investment opportunity as saw that the place had potential as it needed regeneration" (91/M).

As the above quotes suggest, the affordability of St Leonards means it was possible for some individuals to have two bases, one in London and one in St Leonards. The concentration of relatively cheaper properties also makes St Leonards an ideal setting for investment opportunities:

> "It's an investment opportunity area and so very affordable. I bought in St Leonards for investment. I like to buy when it's just about to bloom" (8/BSL).

> "Cheaper properties mean opportunity for business development. Buy, improve and rent out properties of a higher calibre for more wealthier people" (157/BSL).

> "If you want to make money on property with a sea view, here is the best place to buy" (158/WSq).

Residential property in St Leonards is ideal for both small and large investment opportunities. These individuals have identified that the cheap property prices provide opportunities to make money on the back of regeneration. This follows contemporary trends in the UK through media representation via programmes such as *Property Ladder* and *Location, Location, Location*, and even *Escape to the Country* (although coastal locations would of course be of a rural element). Programmes such as these identify ideal residential locations where individuals can access the right property to meet particular lifestyles and budgets. In both Hastings and St Leonards, the peak of the investment was in 2003 when plans for University Centre Hastings were first being proposed (HSLO, 22/03/02: 2). In St Leonards, it is not just the private individual investor but also a series of property developers investing in the area including Roost Regeneration, Park Lane Group and We Love Property. The developer interest, both individual and larger companies, aids in the physical regeneration of an area and fundamentally results in the narrowing of the rent-gap. Of course, it should be noted that this activity will not be beneficial to everyone as higher property prices would make the area less affordable for some.

7.2.2.2 The social and cultural aesthetics of coastal living

Whilst affordability is an important factor in residential decision-making processes, also important are the social, cultural, physical, and historical factors that influence opportunities for any location. Across the South East coastline, there are numerous coastal towns of similar access distance from London. Of course, the most prominent location is Brighton which started out as London-by-the-Sea (Farrant, 1987) and has also witnessed the unfolding of gentrification processes in and around the city (D.Smith, 2007). However, as some of the above sets of quotes have suggested, Brighton (and other locations that can arguably be said to have undergone gentrification) are no longer affordable, and for some of the respondents they have lost some of their appeal as identified by the quotes below:

> "I saw the huge bohemian artsy and rawness that Brighton used to have … cheap, small, undeveloped version of Brighton but without all the shininess that Brighton now has" (153/M).

> "The architecture is amazing and we could not afford to buy Regency in London or Brighton" (114/WSq).

> "A bit off the beaten track. Didn't want a busy place like Brighton, its artsy, and quirky. I like the look of it" (116/M).

For many of the recent in-migrants, the fact that St Leonards has not fully undergone regeneration is a huge appeal compared to other nearby coastal towns like Eastbourne and Brighton. St Leonards is not viewed by most of the respondents as being 'shinny' or 'polished', and portrays a more 'bohemian and artsy' atmosphere; which is an attraction in itself as noted in Chapters 5 and 6. As with other coastal towns that have witnessed disinvestment (e.g. Folkestone), it is not surprising that parts of St Leonards appear run-down, or as better put by some of the respondents "it has a faded grandeur". This faded grandeur is through the appeal of the architecture of St Leonards. The history of Burton's St Leonards as a planned regency town has resulted in a series of distinctive architecture styles. As the HCTD report notes:

> "Burton's St Leonards is a rare, if not unique, example of a planned Regency seaside town built on a virgin site. The overarching controls exercised by James Burton, and subsequently by his children (through the offices of the Commissioners), ensured a degree of architectural cohesion. Cohesion but not

uniformity; there was plenty of variety in terms of style, materials and building type" (2006: 26)

Indeed, much of these properties are currently Grade II listed, and this preserved architectural character is an appeal for the respondents as identified by the quotes below:

"It is a conservation area with beautiful architecture and listed buildings" (10/BSL).

"The architecture – it is absolutely unbelievably beautiful. It's a marvel. I cannot imagine another changing coastal place that has the best architecture but it's a shame it's been destroyed" (19/M).

"Shabby genteel character of buildings, the age of the town, strange sense of history of living here" (152/M).

"I had always wanted to live in a house that James Burton built. I was lucky that when this one came up I could afford it. I have had great pleasure in restoring the original features that have over time been hidden by previous owners" (58/BSL).

The fact that much of Burton's St Leonards remains unchanged (apart from the erection of Marine Court on the Western Colonnade) means that the area is steeped in history and heritage. However, it should also be noted that the 1930's ocean liner building of Marine Court also is a part of St Leonards' iconic heritage (Plate 5.4). Furthermore, the past associations of a resort aimed at health pursuits still provide an attraction for some respondents. As the following interviewees note, it was health reasons that brought them to St Leonards:

"Son has cystic fibrosis and used to bring him to Eastbourne as a child for sea air which helped him. Went out for a drive, got lost and came across this house which was for sale and fell in love with it" (27/BSL).

"Pregnancy, and health benefits of sea" (153/M).

"Fell ill with pneumonia and the doctor said to move south so I did. Grandmother's family is from this area and so I looked here" (72/GS).

"Asthmatic daughter and doctor suggested that we moved into fresher air and so we looked into the seaside" (77/ GS).

Like all coastal towns and spa resorts, St Leonards in Victorian times also boasted the health benefits of living in the area. Whilst these health benefits are no longer associated with drinking sea water, some respondents suggested that being by the seaside provides benefits to their health (Kaplan, 1995) and thus resulted in the initial decision to move to the coast.

Furthermore, some respondents also recognise St Leonards as an ideal place setting for families. Much of this is tied to the quality-of-life opportunities for young families as identified in the following quotes:

> "So children could have a better upbringing. I was visiting here with friends, and it made me realise more to offer here for families" (69/M).

> "Wanted to stop living out of a suitcase and wanted to settle and have family" (86/M).

> "Opportunities for kids and me. Lots to do in different places. Kids can play on the beach all summer long. Didn't want my kids growing up in London but instead have nature" (163/M).

> "The sea, having space. Children to have somewhere to cycle. You don't have space like that in London" (171/M).

> "Facilities for children after living in the country" (67/GS).

For the above respondents, St Leonards allows them to have a better quality-of-life for themselves and their family. A lot of this is attributed to the family-friendly amenities and lifestyle offering not just in St Leonards, but clearly across Hastings as well. Family-based quality-of-life decisions are closely bound to our understandings of rural gentrification. When gentrification is looked at on a life-course model, urban gentrification is normally tied to single households and couples living without children, whilst rural gentrification is depicted as about couples at a family-forming stage of their life cycle (M.Phillips, 1993). Again, families moving into an area result in more stable communities as plans are normally made for long-term residency in the area at least, if not the same property. This has implications on dominant representation of St Leonards previously being a place with high population transience and turnover.

Another important factor noted by respondents is the physical size of the town and what this means for their lifestyle. This was demonstrated on two levels: i) availability of amenities and, ii) the ability to be both an individual but also blend in the community, as portrayed in the following responses:

> "Like it being busy, lots going on but it is not so noisy that you feel drowned or that an individual gets lost. Don't want to live in the centre of a big city. There is a

cosiness about it. But I wouldn't want a rural village or in the back and beyond of the town. Here it's the best of everything" (152/M).

"It's got the benefits of a village in terms of community. But big enough to still have enough culture. So cafes, bars etc that you don't get in a village. Brighton too big and you were lost. In a year you can know everyone here" (153/M).

"The sea, like living in a small place so get chance to know people, but not everyone knows your business. Like being able to walk to town and nice social life" (54/GS).

"I have everything I need on my doorstep here. Everything in a 2 minute distance. Butchers, bakers, grocer. This is strange after Derby" (107/M).

These quotes suggest how all the necessary amenities are available within walking distance from their homes in St Leonards. Both Norman Road and Kings Road form the local town centre of the area, and provide an eclectic mix of retail and service industries. Furthermore, respondents also commented on how the town felt like it was the right size, and thus allowing them to feel like they were a part of the community, but also gave them opportunity to blend in and become anonymous when necessary. This further reinforces the idea of coastal towns being both urban and rural in their setting and function.

The experience of community in St Leonards is a result of a growing like-minded community of individuals. This people-like-us notion is very much integrated with the arts and creative community in St Leonards. Respondents commented frequently on this community feeling as evident in the quotes below:

"There are people in my age circle who have done interesting things in life. A bohemian arty crowd" (11/M).

"Network of creative practitioners" (118/ WSq).

"We liked what was going on with the place - was slowly becoming a place of people like us" (94/BSL).

"Friends from London have moved down. There is a community here" (109/WSq).

This can also be witnessed in the retail and service offering, which is geared towards the artistic and creative industries. In the Five Point Plan (2001), Norman Road was expected to become the arts-quarter of the town. The local government led proposals have yet to be

realised. Never-the-less, grass roots intervention has resulted in a focus on arts and creative industries in the area. For example, *The Observer* portrays the retail offer in St Leonards as:

"Hastings has long had a shabby-chic reputation, but St Leonards, its nearest neighbour, has never really managed to shake off its lace-curtains-and-crimplene image. One street is starting to change all that - Norman Road (thenormanroad.co.uk), which bills itself as the South East's answer to fashionable Portobello in London, is lined with boutiques, shops, and stores selling retro bits and bobs and vintage frocks" (*The Observer*, 19/04/09: 8).

And this is also echoed by the respondents:

"It's unique, it hasn't become full of boring chain shops and cafes. But has independent shops and cafes" (29/M).

"I love the fact that all these great independents and traditional real businesses like greengrocer is nearby. Everything is walk-able. Everything both off radar and obvious" (112/BSL).

Respondents also commented on the diverse and multicultural feeling of St Leonards:

"Interesting place, interesting people, fairly diverse for a seaside town, mosque, black people, so not normal seaside [i.e. white population, or concentration of the elderly], diverse, seems like London" (167/WSq).

"Mix of people, cultural diversity. People from overseas, DFLs (down from London), all over UK, as well as born and bred returned to St Leonards. Met more DFLs here. Adds an extra vitality, business "savvy" and a broader range of values and belief systems" (157/BSL).

"A great mix of people, both the incomers from London and also the significant ethnic mix" (110/WSq).

In essence, the community of St Leonards portrays an element of diversity. The concentration of ethnic minority communities coupled with businesses orientated towards their own communities provides an ethnically diverse feel that many respondents claimed is not normally associated with coastal towns, but rather parts of inner London. As one respondent noted:

"I wanted to know if I could buy my Haloumi cheese locally, and I can because there are so many ethnic shops here and so diversity of shopping is improving" (36/M).

For this ex-Londoner, it was useful to be able to go to a local shop and pick up groceries as she would have done in London, but would not have expected from a lot of coastal towns.

Furthermore, the town provides a cosmopolitan feel with a more cafe-culture atmosphere appearing. The Kings Road blog notes:

> "Plans to bring 'cafe-culture' to Kings Road are about to become a reality Commencing on March 30th, the road will be getting a complete makeover with (wider) yorkstone pavements and landscaping at both ends. This should attract more quality shops and the wider pavements will allow people to dine al fresco".

This very 'positive' view of Kings Road identifies the potential that HBC and other stakeholders hope that the transformation of the public realm will bring to the area. However, only time will tell if King's Road manages to successfully attract the types of shops and businesses needed to create this 'cafe-culture'.

In addition, St Leonards boasts a bohemian image, which is linked to the arts and creative offering that is promoted not only by the local residential community but also by the variety of independent shops in the area. This cultural offering creates a lifestyle offering as suggested in the responses below:

> "Cafés, bars and cultural offering … It's the galleries on the seafront, modern cafes - more upmarket" (23/BSL).

> "It's buzzing - signs of regeneration - optimism. We love classical and modern, café culture developing" (103/BSL).

These establishments are targeted both to tourists and also residents with a higher disposable income, and is created by, and caters for the arts and creative community resident in St Leonards:

> "Visited here - an artsy place that was up and coming and had the potential to develop and grow. I liked the people here. It's an interesting edgy mix here" (95/M).

> "The concentration of music and arts scene of St Leonards and Hastings is superb. Better than anywhere else in the South East" (172/M).

> "Huge volunteer sector. Creative community, arts community. Generally a lot of DIY creation, in terms of entertainment for the towns needs" (130/ M).

> "Bohemian spirit to St Leonards with artists and musicians" (121/BSL).

For the size of the town, there is a significant concentration of art galleries in a relatively small space. Much of this is concentrated in Marine Court, with several art galleries

including the base of Hastings Arts Forum (see Plate 7.4). Norman Road also has several galleries including gift shops and cafes doubling up as gallery spaces (see Plate 7.5). The Mercatoria Business Centre on Norman Road also hosts a number of Artist Studios and the 2009 Coastal Currents festival encouraged the use of empty shops in Kings Road as short term gallery spaces for local artists. But it is not just 'artists' that create the arts scene in St Leonards. It is also the other creative industries of photographers, design and marketing consultants, film makers, actors, musicians and novelists who come together to form a community of creative individuals working together. A number of gentrification studies note the presence of the artistic community as one of the early propellers of gentrification and their involvement in closing the rent-gap in other previously gentrified areas. Examples of these locations include: Chelsea, New York (N.Smith, 1996); Gateshead (Cameron and Coaffee, 2005); and, Toronto (Ley, 2003).

Plate 7.4: Galleries in Marine Court (clockwise from top left – Aardvark tea rooms & gallery, Hastings Arts Forum, Vanessa Fowler Works, Burton Gallery)

Plate 7.5: Galleries on Norman Road (All shops apart from Lucy Bell in the top-right are unnamed).

Whilst the businesses in St Leonards are operated generally by local residents, many of these have been in-migrants themselves since the wider area has begun to undergo regeneration in 2001.

Throughout the section so far, evidence for this has been portrayed through representations of the social, cultural and economic factors that have attracted respondents to settle in the area. Of course, the physical factors in terms of nature, the coastal landscape, and the countryside that have also influenced the decision-making process are also important considerations for many respondents. Many of the social, cultural and economic factors that have so far been discussed could be applied to numerous locals across Britain, and are not specific to the coast. However, seaside living creates a distinct place setting that cannot be found in other inland areas (except for to some extent river and lakefronts). As such attention now turns to the lure of the sea for the respondents.

7.2.2.3 Environmental attractions of the coastal landscape, creating the coastal idyll

 "It goes without saying that the most obvious attraction of coastal towns is the sea itself, with its invigorating climate and breezes, coastline vistas and its sharp contrast to inland urban life" (Walvin, 1978: 13).

Clearly with St Leonards being a coastal town, it is to be expected that the sea would be an attraction to the respondents (Shields, 2009). However, it is important to note that the interaction with the sea depended on the respondent and their experiences with the coastline. Five key themes can be drawn from the responses and each shall be discussed in turn. One of the main interactions was the ability to look out to sea, with respondents commenting on "panoramic views" from their homes and being able to "see the horizon". As one respondent notes:

"From not being anywhere near water previously you don't understand what it is like to have half your vision as water as a focal point. It's constantly different" (107/M).

For some of the respondents being able to enjoy the sea views was a chance to relax and enjoy the beauty of nature, because 'as far as their eyes could see' there was nothing more out there. For other respondents, the seascape drew a stronger emotional response that has a spiritual effect on them. One of the ways in which this was evident was through the power of the sea. As one respondent stated: "The sea provokes wonder, it's different every day, continually changing with sea and sky, it's great vistas and it's novel and amazes me" (121/BSL). Related to this, respondents commented on the physical interaction they had with the sea:

"It's just being by the sea. The wilderness and freeness of being able to throw pebbles in and get rid of anger - its raw nature and not controllable" (120/BSL).

"The sea - surf, kayak. Love being so close to the sea, a big spiritual thing. Makes me quite calm. Its different every day. I use it all year round. Attracts you. It makes you more relaxed and changes the perception" (137/WSq).

It could be said that experiences of a relaxing environment are not normally associated with the urban landscape for some people. As such, respondents also commented that the seaside was in juxtaposition with urban living because St Leonards is "urban, but can escape so quickly - as you can just turn your back to the

world" (161/WSq).   Attached to this is the perception of 'space' that the seaside provided as evident in the following quotes:

> "Enjoy the solace of the sea - it's refreshing to have space" (66/GS).

> "Seaside - it inspires me, I can't explain it. Some like forest, cars, whatever. Sea inspires me. Gives you feeling that you are on land and sea is gateway to another land. It's a feeling of the space we live in" (136/WSq).

> "The sea lifts your spirits and it puts you in your place in the universe. You are tiny and the nature is so much bigger then you. It's just wonderful" (71/GS).

The emotional response portrayed in this set of quotes is the appreciation of nature which has a calming effect. This is due to the seaside (as discussed in Chapter 3) providing an escape from everyday life.   In many ways the sea cannot be conquered by the human landscape (with the exception of the creation of artificial islands such as The Palm in Dubai) and thus the untouchable nature provides a feeling of vastness, allowing time for the individual to reflect. The seaside through the type of interactions described in the above quotes becomes a therapeutic and reflective landscape. As Corbin (1994: 164) notes "the sea-shore offers a 'stage' where the confrontation of nature's elements of air, water and land can be witnessed". As such, this confrontation of nature does not only provide pleasant scenery but is also capable of drawing a powerful emotional response to the seaside experience.

The interaction with the natural landscape was also discussed in relation to weather and the impact of the weather on the seascape. Respondents commented about the extreme weather at times as noted in the following quotes:

> "Weather can be extreme - even horrible and that makes it exciting. Seeing sunsets and sunrises with the sea" (87/M).

> "The light on water… and on a wild day it's stimulating and exciting" (152/M).

> "I like living by the sea - its good fun in the windy weather, the spray comes over and it looks like snow. It's great fun walking against the wind, I get blown around and it makes me laugh" (7/BSL).

The weather patterns in coastal areas are very different to inland areas, providing a different climate and a changing coastal landscape that is appealing for some of the survey respondents.

Some respondents also commented on the opportunities for artists, and for the following respondents the sea / beach allowed then to engage further with their art:

> "I am an artist and my studio is the beach" (4/BSL).

> "The sea. As an artist the landscape and fresh air. The air is so different here compared to London" (20/BSL).

> "The sea, it's exciting and has a mystery which is so important to my art work. Being at one with Gaia and exploring and challenging the sea. I love the sea" (95/M).

Much of the south coast is known to have a particular quality of light that draws artists to the area (Feigel and Harris, 2009). It is not surprising that a strong arts culture is developing in a number of coastal towns including Margate and Folkestone in the South East and St Ives in the South West of England. For the above artists, the seascape allowed them to engage further with their art as noted in the above quotes.

The final set of attractions linked the seaside were associated with the nostalgia of childhood holidays:

> "Seaside town, I like looking at the sea, the light, listening to the sound of the waves. It's my childhood holidays at sea playing on beaches" (159/GS).

> "By the sea, beautiful views from many aspects. Very many different angles of looking at the sea. It's a spiritual experience. Sea covers 2/3 of the planet and, it's the nostalgia of childhood holidays" (126/GS).

> "By the sea, childhood holidays by the sea" (141/ WSq).

In recent years, there has been a revival for holidaying at home and experiencing once again the British seaside (*The Observer*, 21/10/07; *Independent*, 13/05/07; *Guardian*, 23/05/05). There has always been a trend of retiring at the seaside because of the fond memories individuals had of seaside holidays (Walton, 2000).

These various representations of the coastal landscape that have been portrayed identify a series of motivations for residing at the coast. The following quote not only sums up the whole experience of the natural elements of coastal living, but also accounts for the social, cultural and economic factors that have been portrayed:

Being so close to beach, shops and trains are so close. Everything we want in 1000m and can walk or cycle to anything. Well connected by train - Ashford, Gatwick, Charing Cross. Shops are independents so bakers and grocers. Good arts scene with galleries, cafes and a mix of interesting independent shops and cafes. It's great to be able to cycle / walk on the seafront on a summer's evening. To have the sea, that huge expanse, it's like our own bit of wilderness. We both like the urban landscape and wanted to live in an urban area but it's nice to be able to turn your back on all that and look at the vast expanse that is the sea. Although it's a town beach, when the tide is out there is a lot of variation on the landscape, you can walk right out, and lots of rocks everywhere so you get rock pools. Also, on a stormy day, it's like there is a monster out there and it is such a realisation of the elements. In London you don't think about it, but you appreciate the weather here - both the good and bad weather as its much more alive here" (91/M).

This quote sums up the lure of the seaside as it provides a representation that reflects the abstract and aesthetic qualities associated with the coast and sea and forms the coastal idyll. Attached to these are the cultural meanings of the seashore as a place of escape, pleasure, peace and refuge. As such, coastal locations like St Leonards provide an escape from the so-called rat-race and city-living. Nevertheless, St Leonards does have problems as a result of the long term decline. It is to this that the chapter now turns.

7.2.3   The 'darker-side' of St Leonards

The history of urban decline has been charted in greater detail in Chapter 5. Regeneration documents have noted the need for regeneration to address the decline. Through the survey, opinions were also gathered with regards to the problems that respondents thought were a barrier to successful regeneration. One of the key responses was related to the poverty in the area. This was linked generally to the lower social classes in the area and people experiencing problems. Many of the respondents were shocked by the amount of poverty they witnessed in the area as suggested in the quotes below:

"Town of two half's - underbelly of poverty, a group of people struggling" (11/M).

"Crumbling buildings, broken windows syndrome. Elements of down and out. Studio / bed-sit, bad 'down and out' culture. Sense of not living in a good place" (103/BSL). (See Plate 7.6).

"Coming face to face with people who have not been dealt best hand in social conditions and so second and third generation poverty, and substance abuse. Lack of education levels is too high" (143/WSq).

"A lot of people with a lot of problems found themselves here. Social housing here, so mental health and drugs problem and that's awful" (105/BSL).

Plate 7.6: Examples of buildings in a state of disrepair (Left: Norman Road, Right: Seafront)

These quotes suggest that the respondents find the poverty very real in St Leonards. Further evidence of this can be found with comments on unemployment levels in the area:

"Too many people on the dole - a disproportionate bad mix of people, the down and outs" (22/M).

"Because unemployment is generational you have so many people who have no respect for themselves so go around causing problems and being destructive" (19/M).

"Awareness of generations of unemployment - no work so why bother. Very few aspirations" (154/WSq).

St Leonards suffers from high unemployment rates. 2001 census data identifies that in the three wards that the study area is a part of, 4% of people aged 16 to 74 have never worked, with a further 2% being long-term unemployed. The CSLRS in 2004 found the Central-St-Leonards ward to have unemployment levels of 13% and benefit dependency rates at 18% of the population. Low employment rates mean lower household incomes, and this results in a downward spiral of poverty as people begin to lose confidence (CSLRS, 2004). Low employment levels are also linked to low education levels. Instances of second and third generation benefit dependency mean that there is no ambition for getting an education, and as a result the education in St Leonards has also suffered:

"Children's education - high schools a worry. Academically Hastings and St Leonards not that great" (69/M).

"Very worried about education options for daughter" (21/M).

Whilst the above quotes are from recent migrants, the low educational standards are a cause of concern and would be likely to impact on people's decision of staying in St Leonards. Without an improved education system in place, which would be attractive for the immigrants, there is cause for concern that families with young and teenage children may eventually move away from the area and consequently cause further decline rather than the positive impacts that come with families putting down roots in an area.

It is not just unemployment and education, but also other factors such as drugs and alcohol abuse which are not only a consequence of poverty, but add to the decline. Again, respondents noted the high prevalence of alcohol and drug abuse in the area:

> "Real obvious problems with drugs and alcohol. Died down but come back up. Here it's severe - it's the worst of it. Here is the fall out. Worrying that it's accessible to get cannabis cake in St Leonards. Generations of people who have taken hard drugs and encourage children to use soft rather than hard drugs" (21/M).

> "It has problems in terms of drunks - a general feel of a moody atmosphere. Problems with drug users and seems to be a certain amount of conflict with these people. Very much focused in Central-St-Leonards" (48/GS).

Furthermore, some of the respondents found the intensity of drug and alcohol problems a serious issue as they felt these higher instances resulted in more crime and anti-social behaviour in the area:

> "A lot of crime. High concentration in small area. It's a result of lots of alcoholics, drug addicts" (61/GS).

> "High number of drug addicts, perception of crime, cheap flats in Kenilworth area, perception of it being rough and dangerous" (121/BSL).

> "Alcoholism, drug abuse. I question my decision of staying here. 1 to 2 times a week walking past people who are drugged up covered in blood" (168/M).

Clearly, the high prevalence of crime and anti-social behaviour is a deterrent to many people from staying in an area. As evident in Section 7.2.2, respondents actively chose to leave London and other locations due to the instances of crime and violence. This of course has some contradictions in itself as some respondents are moving to St Leonards as they feel it is

safer than their previous location of residence, yet others still find that levels of crime are problematic.

As we have seen, some of the quotes also allude to how the poverty is visible in the landscape through generally dilapidated housing. But another visible impact is the high occurrence of dog mess and litter (see Plate 7.7) in the area:

> "Constantly negotiate poo. "will you be my poo guide" says daughter. Dogs are not controlled here they are untrained. In Gensing park the roundabout and swings have been chewed by dogs and are unsuitable for children" (21/M).

> "Can be quite dirty with rubbish on streets. A poor area with dog mess on road" (57/GS).

Plate 7.7: Rubbish left open on the road

The respondents gave an impression that the extent of dog mess and little in the area gave an image that some residents really did not care about the area. Regardless of all the other regeneration related activities that have been occurring in the area such as the work carried

out by the Grotbusters (as discussed in Chapter 5) on the dilapidated property fronts, the unkempt environment still provided an image of a rundown location.

The comments the respondents made were not just related to issues of poverty, but also on the remoteness of the area in terms of transport links to and from the town:

> "Trains to London and road to London, the A21 are still poor. Need to invest in the area" (6/BSL).

> "It is so close to London, but its quicker from Brighton and it's ridiculous. It really annoys me that we don't improve links. We are forgotten here. It's reasonably cheap but it takes so long. You need one train that didn't stop everywhere on route to London" (107/M).

> "Atrocious journey into London. if it had fast trains like Brighton, I wonder what the place would be like? The slight cut-off-ness of Hastings makes it the place it is, otherwise it would be more like Brighton. So a pro and con" (91/M).

Respondents were dissatisfied with the journey times, both for road and rail, into London and felt that not enough was done to make these journeys easier. At the same time, it is important to remember that some respondents commented (see Section 7.2.2) that one of the reasons they selected St Leonards was because it was not far from London. Furthermore, as the last quote suggests, St Leonards is not overdeveloped or expensive due to its distance from London. Both interviewees and survey respondents noted that as a result of improved transport links to London from the area, the regeneration and development of St Leonards and Hastings would speed-up as the area becomes more accessible as a commuter settlement.

This section has identified a number of problems with St Leonards, all of which are comparable to the findings of a declining St Leonards portrayed in Chapter 5. As such, these quotes portray a sense of the need for regeneration to improve the area, especially in relation to dealing with poverty and its related issues. Some of the respondents have also commented that the problems need to be dealt with rather than moved on. A number of respondents also commented on how and why they felt that St Leonards was suffering from these problems. A lot of these factors were attributed to the lack of investment, bad investment and respondents' impressions about the work undertaken by HBC. These themes are evident in the following quotes:

"Until very recent years, we felt that this end of town was left ignored and didn't matter. Nobody worth bothering about lived this end of town. Problems of low level crime and graffiti. Now at least more houses are lived in" (13/BSL).

"Think that St Leonards gets missed out - focus on Hastings by HBC which is disappointing. Social problems - a very deprived area" (86/M).

"Could speed up regeneration, and in St Leonards people running businesses find it difficult. So encourage to make area more profitable. People struggle" (97/BSL).

"Still a little bit run down in parts and a shame that HBC had lots of money to rejuvenate. Not sure if done this in right way" (116/M).

These quotes question the lack of investment in the area by HBC and also the quality of the regeneration that has occurred. This is a stark contrast to positive comments of regeneration that were noted by respondents earlier in the chapter. It also contrasts with the findings of the interviews, where the stakeholders involved in the regeneration generally suggest that the regeneration of the town has been positive and that it is working. However, it is evident that the regeneration has been sporadic and hence the benefits have been felt in some areas, and not yet in other areas.

However, regeneration has also caused some degree of apprehension, as it has not met the needs and expectations of some respondents, who noted that the town did not provide the same level of entertainment and shopping services that they were used to in other cosmopolitan cities, such as Brighton and London, for example:

"After Brighton - lack of variety of shops. Limited entertainment" (3/BSL).

"No decent clothes shops compared to my income and lifestyle. The shopping facilities are dire" (9/BSL).

"Need more good restaurants, more places to go and relax and unwind in other than pubs" (77/GS).

Again it should be noted, that it is a small minority who felt that the area did not provide enough facilities, compared to the large number of respondents that were attracted to the emerging lifestyle offering of St Leonards. For other respondents the type of regeneration occurring and the people involved caused concern as it raised questions about for whose benefit the regeneration was occurring for:

"Used to be very quiet - empty properties. Came for a quieter life. In the last few years the whole road is now busier. Turning into busy like east London. 60% busier then we first moved in so more parking problems now" (35/M).

"A lot of people coming to capitalise on regeneration. Would prefer to see more grass roots involvement" (79/GS).

"Every so often we get an influx of people who see it as a new Notting hill, and then a few years later get bored and fed up and move on" (88/M)/

"Cliquey nature. You either belong or you don't" (161/WSq).

These quotes problematise the benefits of the regeneration that is occurring in the area. In line with discourses on gentrification which suggest that the occurrence of gentrification results in the provision of services and facilities for the recent migrants at the expense of long term residents (Freeman, 2006), the above quotes also identify a changing St Leonards that does not necessarily meet the needs of the current communities that are already settled in the area.

The discourses presented throughout Section 7.2 provide contrasting views of respondents' experiences of St Leonards. The factors that attracted the respondents to the area are also what they find to be the best things about living in St Leonards. However, it is necessary to acknowledge the problems that still persist as highlighted by the respondents. Much of these are in line with the portrayals of St Leonards from the 2001 GB Census and media representations, as identified in Chapter 5. However, the respondents identify that change is occurring in the area and at the same time this raises questions with regards to whom the change is occurring for. If, as the quotes imply, that the residential population of St Leonards is changing, it is necessary to understand the reasons why St Leonards is changing. As such, attention now turns to the residential decision-making processes of the respondents.

7.3   Residing within St Leonards

This section provides an analysis of the residential decision-making processes of the survey respondents. The discussion illuminates the residential histories of the respondents, as well as length of residence within St Leonards and Hastings, and their housing needs.

7.3.1   Residing within multiple homes

2001 GB census data reveals that there is a higher than average proportion of second (vacation) home owners in St Leonards (2%), when compared to the South East average of 1% (see Table 5.6). However, it is notable that the respondents of the survey reveal differing patterns as portrayed in Table 7.9. Only 94% of respondents view St Leonards as their main place of residence, with 3% identifying their property in St Leonards as a weekend/second home, and 2% as other. These figures again vary by location within the study area. The respondents from both Garden Suburbs and Mercatoria cited St Leonards as their main place of residence. However, in Burton-St-Leonards this figure was 94%, dropping further in Warrior Square (85%). 12% of respondents in Warrior Square noted St Leonards as a weekend/second home, and a further 2% as other. The responses both in the 'other' and second home categories provide more detail on residing in St Leonards, as illustrated by the below quotes:

> "The family are here full time, and I spend half my week in London for work" (98/BSL).

> "I spend on average 6 months in St Leonards and 6 months in LA. Both places are home" (27/BSL).

As these two quotes exemplify, St Leonards accommodates a variety of lifestyles, and in both cases work-related reasons require the respondent to be away from the family household. There is also an element of changing patterns over time:

> "For 5 years this was purely a weekend home and has become a permanent home for the last 3 years. When I first came here I was using the place as a weekend home it was simply to get some rest by the sea" (19/M).

> "For the first 4 years this was a holiday home, and I've been here 2 years full time" (97/BSL).

> "For the first 9 months I was here on weekends only" (173/GS).

As the quotes suggest, St Leonards initially was a holiday home for these respondents, subsequently becoming the main place of residence. The reasons for this have been explored in Section 7.2.4.

	Burton-St-Leonards	Garden Suburbs	Mercatoria	Warrior Square	Total
	n= 48	n= 43	n= 41	n= 41	n= 173
Main Place	(94%) 45	(100%) 43	(100%) 41	(85%) 35	(94%) 163
Weekend/ Second Home	(2%) 1	(0%) 0	(0%) 0	(12%) 5	(3%) 6
Other	(4%) 2	(0%) 0	(0%) 0	(2%) 1	(2%) 4

Table 7.9: Residential status

There are also differences in the length of time on average people spend in St Leonards during a normal week. As Table 7.10 shows only 95% of respondents stay there 7 days per week, with 2%, 2% and 1% residing in St Leonards one to two, three to four, and five to six days per week, respectively. Both Burton-St-Leonards and Warrior Square have respondents who do not reside 7 days per week (8% and 10%, respectively) in St Leonards. In Warrior Square 7% of respondents reside in St Leonards one to two days per week, while this figure drops to 2% in Burton-St-Leonards. However, in Burton-St-Leonards 4% reside in St Leonards three to four days per week, and a further 2% of respondents five to six days per week. Importantly, this suggests that the properties in Warrior Square have a propensity to be weekend homes, yet in Burton-St-Leonards respondents are there for longer periods of time.

	Burton-St-Leonards	Garden Suburbs	Mercatoria	Warrior Square	Total
	n= 48	n= 43	n= 41	n= 41	n= 173
1 to 2 days a week	(2%) 1	(0%) 0	(0%) 0	(7%) 3	(2%) 4
3 to 4 days a week	(4%) 2	(0%) 0	(0%) 0	(2%) 1	(2%) 3
5 to 6 days a week	(2%) 1	(0%) 0	(0%) 0	(0%) 0	(1%) 1
7 days a week	(92%) 44	(100%) 43	(100%) 41	(90%) 37	(95%) 165

Table 7.10: Residential duration

These findings resonate with Section 7.1.3 which suggests that working patterns allow people to co-reside in two separate locations while working away from St Leonards. This will be discussed further in Section 7.3.4.

7.3.2 Residential decision-making processes

7.3.2.1 Moving to St Leonards

Discourses of gentrification note that gentrification occurs when there is a collective change in the type of occupier moving into an area and, consequently, change the population dynamics of the area (Ley, 1996). As such, it is useful to understand the patterns of movement into the study area. As Table 7.11 demonstrates, 66% of all respondents moved to the area between 1998 and 2008, with a further 15% having been there for more than 20 years (pre 1988), and 5% having resided in the area since they were born. The numbers of residents moving into the four areas also varies dependent on the time period. Both Burton-St-Leonards and Mercatoria have witnessed the highest number of in-migrants from the respondent population in the six to ten year time frame (1998–2002) with 27% and 24%, respectively. In the same time period, Garden Suburbs and Warrior Square have witnessed a 9% and 10% population turnover, respectively. The period of length of residence of 3 to 5 years (2003–2005) has witnessed the most significant change in Garden Suburbs with 30% of all respondents moving in during this time period. Mercatoria also continues to be an attractor in that time period with 20% of respondents moving into the area, and Warrior Square also peaks with 29% of respondents moving in. In the one to two year time period (2006–2007) Warrior Square continues to attract a high proportion of in-migrants (22%), and this trend continues in 2008 with 27% of respondents having moved in during the last year. These patterns of staggered movement into the four areas suggest that over time there have been different areas of St Leonards that have made attractive residential neighbourhoods.

	Burton-St-Leonards	Garden Suburbs	Mercatoria	Warrior Square	Total
	n= 48	n= 43	n= 41	n= 41	n= 173
<1 Year	(10%) 5	(12%) 5	(15%) 6	(27%) 11	(16%) 27
1 to 2 Years	(10%) 6	(7%) 3	(7%) 3	(22%) 9	(12%) 20
3 to 5 Years	(8%) 4	(30%) 13	(20%) 8	(29%) 12	(21%) 37
6 to 10 Years	(27%) 13	(9%) 4	(24%) 10	(10%) 4	(18%)31
11 to 15 Years	(15%) 7	(7%) 3	(10%) 4	(0%) 0	(8%)14
16 to 20 Years	(6%) 3	(5%) 2	(7%) 3	(2%) 1	(5%) 9
> 20 Years	(15%) 7	(26%) 11	(15%) 6	(5%) 2	(15%) 26
All my life	(8%) 4	(2%) 1	(2%) 1	(5%) 2	(5%)8
Other	(0%) 0	(2%) 2	(0%) 0	(0%) 0	(1%) 1

Table 7.11: Length of residence in St Leonards (note: survey conducted in 2008)

As noted in Section 5.2.2, St Leonards was initially planned and designed to have discrete middle class and working-class zones that were mediated through the design, size and style of housing. As such the larger villas that are in the area of Burton-St-Leonards continue to attract middle class families and are generally viewed as the most attractive, and sought after, residential neighbourhoods. This could be one of the reasons why when St Leonards was described as a 'poor' area in the media (See Chapter 5), the Burton-St-Leonards area still attracted in-migrants.

As people's residential choices have changed and the area has begun to undergo regeneration, other areas of St Leonards have also become attractive residential neighbourhoods for different types of migrants. The rest of this section will portray the differences and similarities in accommodation within the four areas and the decision-making process in the selection of accommodation. Attention first turns to the use of estate and letting agents.

Table 7.12 shows that of the 173 respondents, 112 individuals utilised the services of a letting agent or an estate agent to find their current property in St Leonards. In addition 18% of respondents did not remember the name of the letting/estate agent that they had used. 20% of the respondents used Rush Witt and Wilson (RWW) making them one of the key estate agents in the area. Other smaller, but still important, estate agents included Andrews (8%), John Bray and Sons (7%), Fox and Sons (6%) and Wyatt Hughes (6%). In Burton-St-Leonards, John Bray and Sons were used by 17% of respondents, with a further 13% using Rush Witt and Wilson; who was also the main estate agent in the other three areas with 26% of respondents using them in Garden Suburbs, 21% in Mercatoria and 20% in Warrior Square.

	Burton-St-Leonards	Garden Suburbs	Mercatoria	Warrior Square	Total
	n= 30	n= 23	n= 29	n= 30	n= 112
Andrews	(10%) 3	(9%) 2	(14%) 4	(0%) 0	(8%) 9
Bairstowe Eves	(7%) 2	(0%) 0	(0%) 0	(3%) 1	(3%) 3
Fox and sons	(3%) 1	(4%) 1	(10%) 3	(7%) 2	(6%) 7
John Bray and Sons	(17%) 5	(4%) 1	(7%) 2	(0%) 0	(7%) 8
Just Property	(7%) 2	(4%) 1	(0%) 0	(3%) 1	(4%) 4
Marlons	(0%) 0	(0%) 0	(14%) 4	(0%) 0	(4%) 4
Roost	(0%) 0	(0%) 0	(3%) 1	(7%) 2	(3%) 3
RWW	(13%) 4	(26%) 6	(21%) 6	(20%) 6	(20%) 22
Wyatt Hughes	(3%) 1	(4%) 1	(7%) 2	(10%) 3	(6%) 7
Your Move	(0%) 0	(4%) 1	(3%) 1	(3%) 1	(3%) 3
Other	(13%) 4	(22%) 5	(10%) 3	(30%) 9	(19%) 21
Do not remember	(27%) 8	(22%) 5	(10%) 3	(13%) 4	(18%) 20

Table 7.12: Use of estate/letting agent

In general respondents were looking to purchase in particular areas of St Leonards, which accounts for 61% of all respondents. Garden Suburbs was the only area where almost half (49%) of the respondents' search for housing was not focussed on a particular area of St Leonards. Respondents were asked to specify areas within St Leonards and Hastings where they had previously searched for residential property. This map (Figure 7.1) distinguished between 8 areas (A-H) based on the 2001 census ward boundaries (A, F and G are amalgamations of more than one census ward).

The map was split to represent different wards in South St Leonards and groupings of other wards across Hastings. Table 7.13 shows that 39% of all respondents considered purchasing properties in area E: Central-St-Leonards which consists of both the Mercatoria and Warrior Square research areas. A further 17% considered area C: Maze Hill Ward which consists of Burton-St-Leonards and part of Garden Suburbs, and 15% considered area D: Gensing Ward which also consists of part of Garden Suburbs. There was some interest in properties in area F: Central Hastings (13%), and a further 11% interested specifically in area H: Old Town. From those respondents who were resident in Burtons St Leonards, 58% considered moving into area E: Central-St-Leonards, 27% considered area C: Maze Hill Ward and 23% considered area H: Old Town. 47% of residents in Garden Suburbs considered properties in area D: Gensing Ward, with a further 30% considering area C: Maze Hill Ward, both of which consist the Garden Suburbs area. 68% of respondents from Mercatoria considered

properties in area E: Central-St-Leonards, with a further 24% considering area C: Maze Hill, 20% area F: Central Hastings and 17% area H: Old Town. 61% of respondents from the Warrior Square area also considered properties in area E: Central-St-Leonards, with a further 12% considering area F: Central Hastings, and 15% area H: Old Town. These results suggest that the survey respondents residing in St Leonards actively selected the area, specifically the wards of Central-St-Leonards and Maze Hill, which equate to: the location of St Leonards as built by James and Decimus Burton, the working class extension of Mercatoria and Lavatoria into Norman Road, and Troupe's development of Warrior Square. However, there was also considerable interest in Old Town, which has its own specific history and heritage and has undergone gentrification (Truder, 2009).
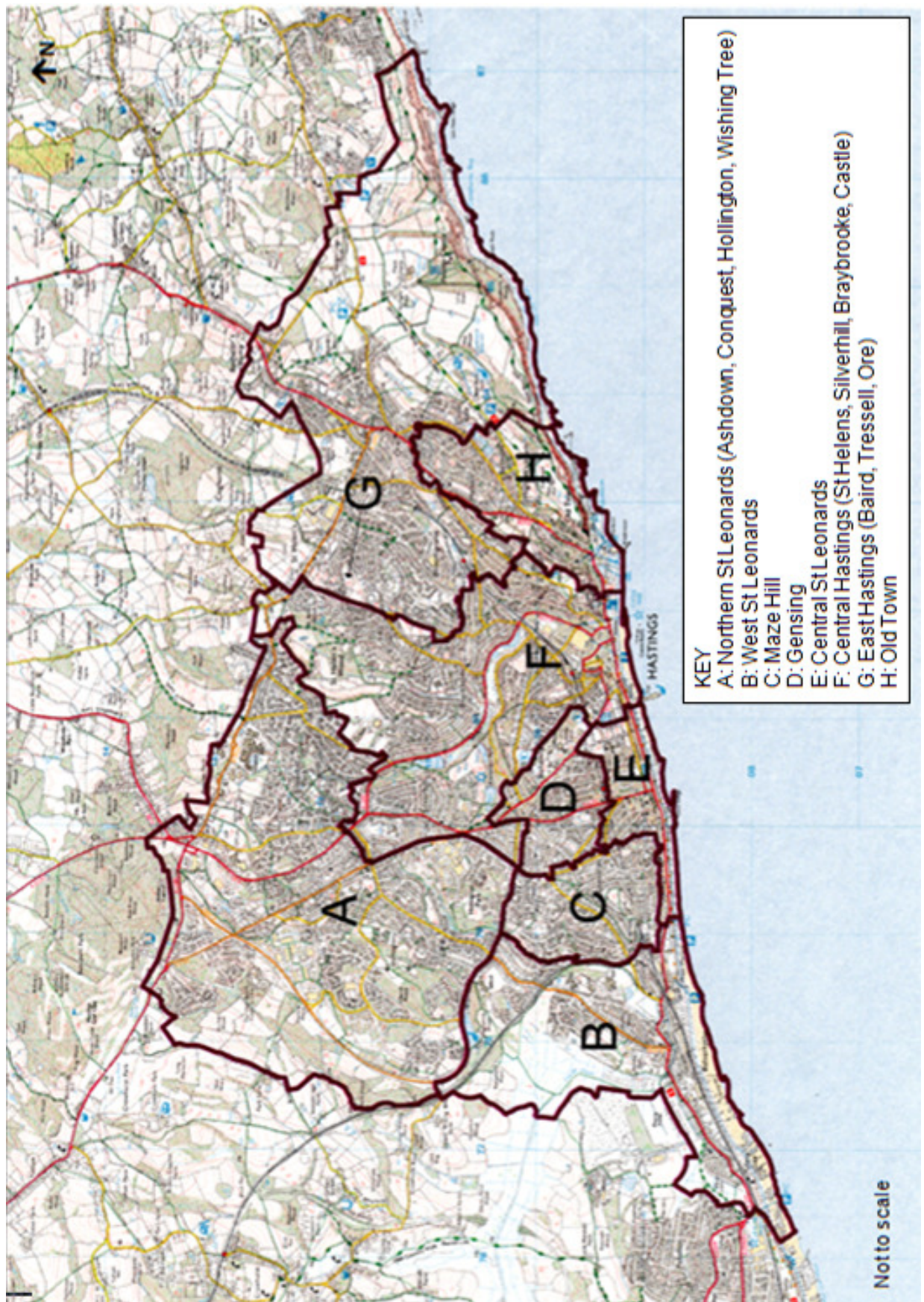
Figure 7.1: Area boundary map constructed for the household questionnaire survey.

KEY
A: Northern St Leonards (Ashdown, Conquest, Hollington, Wishing Tree)
B: West St Leonards
C: Maze Hill
D: Gensing
E: Central St Leonards
F: Central Hastings (St Helens, Silverhill, Braybrooke, Castle)
G: East Hastings (Baird, Tressell, Ore)
H: Old Town

Not to scale

	Burton-St-Leonards	Garden Suburbs	Mercatoria	Warrior Square	Total
	n= 48	n= 43	n= 41	n= 41	n= 173
A: North St Leonards	(0%) 0	(7%) 3	(2%) 1	(0%) 0	(2%) 4
B: West St Leonards	(2%) 1	(0%) 0	(2%) 1	(0%) 0	(1%) 2
C: Maze Hill	(27%) 13	(30%) 13	(24%) 10	(2%) 1	(17%) 37
D: Gensing	(10%) 5	(47%) 20	(15%) 6	(5%) 2	(15%) 33
E: Central-St-Leonards	(58%) 28	(12%) 5	(68%) 28	(61%) 25	(39%) 86
F: Central Hastings	(17%) 8	(19%) 8	(20%) 8	(12%) 5	(13%) 29
G: East Hastings (inc. Ore)	(2%) 1	(5%) 2	(5%) 2	(2%) 1	(3%) 6
H: Old Town	(23%) 11	(2%) 1	(17%) 7	(15%) 6	(11%) 25

Table 7.13: Area of property search

Section 7.5.1 provides further details of why people decided to move to St Leonards, compared to other locations they had considered (both within and outside of Hastings). As such, it will be possible to understand why people chose to consider Old Town, and yet decided to settle in St Leonards.

7.3.2.2: The 'right house' within St Leonards

As expected, respondents did have specific types of housing they were interested in purchasing/renting in the research area, which accounted for 88% of the survey respondents. Table 7.14 portrays the different types of properties that respondents were willing to consider. 49% of respondents viewed flats, 35% sought semi-detached properties, and 30% of respondents sought to acquire terraced properties. As part of the 'other' category, 12% also remarked that they were seeking an 'old/period property'. The types of properties also varied by area as a result of the availability of housing stock. In Burton-St-Leonards 42% of respondents viewed semi-detached and detached properties, with a further 52% viewing flats, and 13% stating that they particularly wanted an 'old property'. In Garden Suburbs, 43% viewed flats, 37% viewed semi-detached properties, and 31% viewed detached properties. However in Mercatoria, only 18% viewed flats, with 67% looking at terraced properties, and 52% viewing semi-detached properties. Again the differences in Warrior Square in comparison are stark. 83% of respondents looked at flats (the dominant type of accommodation within Warrior Square), and only 11% sought terraced and semi-detached properties. These differences suggest that the type of housing that respondents seek is partly

influenced to some extent by the areas they selected for residence based on the availability of the type of property they would like to purchase.

	Burton-St-Leonards	Garden Suburbs	Mercatoria	Warrior Square	Total
	n= 31	n= 35	n= 33	n= 35	n= 142
Flat	(52%) 16	(43%) 15	(18%) 6	(83%) 29	(49%) 66
Maisonette	(10%) 3	(17%) 6	(6%) 2	(9%) 3	(10%) 14
Terraced	(19%) 6	(23%) 8	(67%) 22	(11%) 4	(30%) 40
Semi Detached	(42%) 13	(37%) 13	(52%) 17	(11%) 4	(35%) 47
Detached	(42%) 13	(31%) 11	(12%) 4	(6%) 2	(22%) 30
Bungalow	(3%) 1	(0%) 0	(3%) 1	(0%) 0	(1%) 2
Old Property	(13%) 4	(11%) 4	(18%) 6	(6%) 2	(12%) 16

Table 7.14: Types of properties

7.3.2.3 Purchasing properties in St Leonards

Clearly, the type of housing that respondents viewed is also to some extent dependent on their levels of economic capital, and access to mortgage finance.   As Table 7.15 demonstrates, in the research area 69% of respondents own their own homes (either outright, with a mortgage, or via a housing co-operative).   A further 30% are residing within private rented accommodation, and 2% reside within public/housing association rented accommodation. In comparison to the 2001 census data, the findings from the survey suggest that there has been an increase in ownership levels in the area. The 2001 census data reveal the study area to have 'own outright' levels of 27%, and 'own with a mortgage' levels of 27%. In comparison the surveys show these figures at 31% and 37%, respectively. This suggests that more people are buying homes (with or without mortgages) in the research area, and thus possibly creating a more settled community as owner-occupiers are less likely to move around compared to those in the rental market. There is also a higher degree of variation between the four areas. Whilst the private rented sector accounts for 30% of the housing overall, this figure rises to a staggering 61% in Warrior Square, followed by 26% in Garden Suburbs, 19% in Burton-St-Leonards, and 12% in Mercatoria. Levels of owner-occupation (own-outright) are higher than the area average with 40% in Burton-St-Leonards and Garden Suburbs, followed by 22% in Mercatoria and 20% in Warrior Square.   However, the pattern for those who own their properties with a mortgage differs. This accounts for 61% of all properties in Mercatoria,

followed by 40% in Burton-St-Leonards, 30% in Garden Suburbs, and 20% in Warrior Square.

	Burton-St-Leonards	Garden Suburbs	Mercatoria	Warrior Square	Total
	n= 48	n= 43	n= 41	n= 41	n= 173
Owner –occupied outright	(40%) 19	(40%) 17	(22%) 9	(20%) 8	(31%) 53
Owner-occupied (with mortgage)	(40%) 19	(30%) 13	(61%) 25	(20%) 8	(37%) 64
Private rented	(19%) 9	(26%) 11	(12%) 5	(61%) 25	(30%) 51
Public/HA rented	(0%) 0	(5%) 2	(2%) 1	(0%) 0	(2%) 3
Housing Co-op	(0%) 0	(0%) 0	(2%) 1	(0%) 0	(1%) 1

Table 7.15: Housing tenure

These differences can be partly accounted for based on the timescales in which people moved into the area (Table 7.11). The majority of respondents (27%) moved into Burton-St-Leonards during the last six to ten years, with a further 36% having been in the area prior to that period. Meanwhile, in Mercatoria, 66% of respondents have been resident within the last ten years. Furthermore, these patterns are not dissimilar to the year of purchase, as evident in Table 7.16 that shows the year of purchase for those respondents whom own their own home (either outright or with a mortgage). Overall, 27% of all purchases have occurred in the years of 2006 and 2007. In Burton-St-Leonards, the two time periods that are the most prominent are 2006–2007 (26%) and 1997-2002 (24%). The periods differ again for the other three areas. Garden Suburbs has witnessed higher levels of owner occupation in 2003–2005 with 23% of respondents in the area purchasing homes, and a further 20% in 2006-2007. In Mercatoria, the highest amount falls in 2006–2007 with 26% of properties bought in that time frame, and a further 18% in each of the 2003-2005, and 1997-2002 time periods. In Warrior Square, there are significantly lower levels of owner-occupation, but the majority of purchases have occurred in 2006–2007 (38%) with a further 19% in 2003-2005.

The changing pattern of year of purchase is also telling of the availability of properties in the different areas. If there is a lack of properties available for sale within a neighbourhood, migrants will look for accommodation in surrounding areas and as such, increasing the scope of the neighbourhood undergoing change.

	Burton-St-Leonards	Garden Suburbs	Mercatoria	Warrior Square	Total
	n= 38	n= 30	n= 34	n= 16	n= 118
2008 -2009	(8%) 3	(7%) 2	(6%) 2	(13%) 2	(8%) 9
2006 - 2007	(26%) 10	(20%) 6	(26%) 9	(38%) 6	(26%) 31
2003 - 2005	(11%) 4	(23%) 7	(18%) 6	(19%) 3	(17%) 20
1997 - 2002	(24%) 9	(7%) 2	(18%) 6	(13%) 2	(16%) 19
1992 - 1996	(11%) 4	(13%) 4	(15%) 5	(6%) 1	(12%) 14
1987 - 1991	(3%) 1	(7%) 2	(9%) 3	(0%) 0	(5%) 6
Before 1987	(18%) 7	(23%) 7	(9%) 3	(6%) 1	(15%) 18

Table 7.16: Year of purchase

Table 7.17 shows that majority of the properties purchased in the area have been in the region of £75,000 to £150,000 (33%). However, there have been a significant number of properties (32%) that have been purchased for £75,000 or less, with a further 10% being purchased for more than £250,000. From the properties bought for less than £50,000, 24% make up the total for Burton-St-Leonards, 10% for Garden Suburbs, 29% for Mercatoria, and 19% in Warrior Square. It is expected that the majority of these properties would have been bought pre 1992 when the house prices were still comparatively very cheap. Furthermore, the price of properties in each area also reflects the types of properties available for purchase in that area. Properties that have been bought for £250,000 or more are more prevalent in the Burton-St-Leonards and Garden Suburbs accounting for 13% and 17% of properties in the respective areas. The equivalent figures in Mercatoria are 3%, and 6% in Warrior Square. Both Burton-St-Leonards and Garden Suburbs have a high number of large detached and semi-detached properties and this is reflected in the property prices. Meanwhile, Mercatoria has large numbers of smaller terraced houses and this too is reflected in the prices with 38% of properties being bought for between £75,000 and £150,000. The flats in Warrior Square are also at similar prices to properties in Mercatoria, with 38% purchased between £75,000 and £150,000, and a further 19% purchased between £150,000 and £200,000.

	Burton-St-Leonards	Garden Suburbs	Mercatoria	Warrior Square	Total
	n= 38	n= 30	n= 34	n= 16	n= 118
< £50K	(24%) 9	(10%) 3	(29%) 10	(19%) 3	(21%) 25
£50K - £75K	(16%) 6	(10%) 3	(9%) 3	(6%) 1	(11%) 13
£75K - £150K	(29%) 11	(30%) 9	(38%) 13	(38%) 6	(33%) 39
£150K - £200K	(5%) 2	(10%) 3	(15%) 5	(19%) 13	(11%) 13
£200K - £250K	(8%) 3	(7%) 2	(6%) 2	(0%) 0	(6%) 7
£250K +	(13%) 5	(17%) 5	(3%) 1	(6%) 1	(10%) 12
Did Not Answer	(5%) 2	(17%) 5	(0%) 0	(13%) 2	(8%) 9

Table 7.17: Purchase prices

Respondents were also asked to comment on the importance of the increase in the value of the property (Table 7.18). 59% of the respondents did not think it mattered whether the property gained value or not over time. Only 13% noted that this was very important, and the remaining 29% felt it was quite important - but not the biggest consideration for them. For those respondents for whom the increase in value was not a significant factor, it can be assumed that priority was given to finding 'the right home in the right location', rather than the future for-sale value. 73% of owner-occupiers in Garden Suburbs were in this category, with 65% in Mercatoria, 50% in Burton-St-Leonards, and 38% in Warrior Square. In contrast, for those people who commented that the potential sale value was very important as part of their decision to buy, the areas differ with 25% of owner-occupiers in Warrior Square being in the category, compared to 16% in Burton-St-Leonards, 13% in Mercatoria, and 3% in Garden Suburbs.

	Burton-St-Leonards	Garden Suburbs	Mercatoria	Warrior Square	Total
	n= 38	n= 30	n= 34	n= 16	n= 118
Very important	(16%) 6	(3%) 1	(12%) 4	(25%) 4	(13%) 15
Quite important	(34%) 13	(23%) 7	(24%) 8	(38%) 6	(29%) 34
Not important	(50%) 19	(73%) 22	(65%) 22	(38%) 6	(59%) 70

Table 7.18: Increase in property value

7.3.3 Revamping the housing stock and making the ideal home

Many houses in St Leonards are viewed as being of a poor quality (HBC 2004a), and, as noted in Chapter 5, it is estimated that £50 million worth of repairs are needed to renovate unfit housing which are concentrated in the central areas of Hastings and St Leonards (HSLO, 29/1/93: 5). As such, it was assumed that there would be housing stock purchased of a poor

standard that would require work to bring it up to a liveable standard. Owner-occupier respondents were asked to comment on whether their properties had undergone any major improvements since they had purchased their properties. As Table 7.19 shows, 85% of respondents said that they had made major improvements in their homes. The majority of these respondents are located in Garden Suburbs and Mercatoria (77% and 76%, respectively). This figure was 66% in Burton-St-Leonards, and 69% in Warrior Square.

	Burton-St-Leonards	Garden Suburbs	Mercatoria	Warrior Square	Total
	n= 38	n= 30	n= 34	n= 16	n= 118
Yes	(66%) 25	(77%) 23	(76%) 26	(69%) 11	(72%) 85
No	(34%) 13	(23%) 7	(24%) 8	(31%) 5	(28%) 33

Table 7.19: Major improvements made to properties

A total of 85 owner-occupied properties had major improvement works undertaken. This is a significant number as it amounts for 72% of all owner occupied properties within the sample. Respondents also provided details on the types of improvements that were undertaken (Table 7.20):

Types of Improvements	Examples
Changing internal layout	Conversion from single occupancy to flats; £90,000 spent on creating open plan space; Reconfigure function of different rooms.
Modernisation	Installation of electricity; Installation of running water; Installation of central heating; From outdoor toilet to indoor toilet.
Structural maintenance	New roofs; Rendering on walls; New windows; Reinforcing roof terrace.
Refurbishments/upgrading	"Make property more upmarket"; Refurbish house from a derelict state. New kitchen/bathroom; Re-plastering/ redecorating.
General maintenance	Damp; General repairs. "Improvement orders: £200,000k on repairs".
Restoration of original features	Gutted to restore original features; Expose original floors.

Table 7.20: Types of improvements

Whilst the properties in the areas are of architectural merit the above examples suggest that respondents wanted to create more twenty-first century living spaces inside the properties by creating open plan areas and restructuring the locations of rooms within the property. Clearly, such improvements and changes to property layout are large-scale projects which do require a large budget.

Although the above types of improvements are not exhaustive, the examples portrayed in Table 7.20 do provide some details of the type of major improvements that have been undertaken. In summary, whilst some of the improvements clearly hinge on restoring the original features of the properties, other improvements are underpinned by a desire to re-design the layout of the property for more cosmopolitan living. Furthermore, there are also a number of improvements associated with the general structure and maintenance of the properties, thereby suggesting that properties in the area had fallen into disrepair and were dilapidated. Also, some of the properties had required thorough modernisation, including installing running water and electricity, as well as central heating.

A total of 85 owner occupied properties had major improvement works undertaken. This accounts for 72% of all owner-occupied properties within the sample. Consequently, the nature of the work undertaken does demonstrate that overall properties in the area have needed significant amounts of renovation to bring the properties up to a habitable standard. Furthermore, as some of the quotes suggest there has been an increasing trend of providing living spaces of a much higher standard for a more upmarket population.

Although much of the improvements listed in Table 7.20 would have required qualified individuals in the respective trades, 22% of respondents did all of the work themselves (see Table 7.21). By contrast, 46% of respondents employed services to complete the work, and 26% of the respondents used external people for some elements of the improvements and undertook the rest of work themselves. Both Garden Suburbs and Burton-St-Leonards have higher levels of employed people undertaking the improvements with 61% and 52%, respectively. However, both Mercatoria and Warrior Square have higher levels of both (doing some work themselves and employing people for other bits) with 38% and 45%, respectively.

	Burton-St-Leonards	Garden Suburbs	Mercatoria	Warrior Square	Total
	n= 25	n= 23	n= 26	n= 11	n= 85
We/I did	(28%) 7	(22%) 5	(19%) 5	(18%) 2	(22%) 19
Employed someone	(52%) 13	(61%) 14	(35%) 9	(27%) 3	(46%) 39
Both	(20%) 5	(9%) 2	(38%) 10	(45%) 5	(26%) 22
Don't know	(0%) 0	(9%) 2	(0%) 0	(9%) 1	(9%) 8

Table 7.21: Who made these improvements?

Overall, 58% of the respondents stated that the improvements made a significant impact on the value of the property (see Table 7.22). A further 20% of respondents commented that this added a nominal value to their property, and 12% did not view that the improvements made any increase to the value of their property. 68% of the sample in Burton-St-Leonards noted that there was a significant increase in the property value, and this was also mirrored across the other areas with 52% in Garden Suburbs, 54% in Mercatoria, and 55% in Warrior Square. There were no respondents in Warrior Square that felt that the improvements had not increased the value of their property, compared to the 22% of the sample in Garden Suburbs.

	Burton-St-Leonards	Garden Suburbs	Mercatoria	Warrior Square	Total
	n= 25	n= 23	n= 26	n= 11	n= 85
Yes, lot more	(68%) 17	(52%) 12	(54%) 14	(55%) 6	(58%) 49
Yes, little more	(20%) 5	(17%) 4	(23%) 6	(18%) 2	(20%) 17
No	(12%)3	(22%) 5	(8%) 2	(0%) 0	(12%) 10
Don't Know	(0%) 0	(9%) 2	(15%) 4	(27%) 3	(11%) 9

Table 7.22: Value of property as a result of the improvements?

From the 85 respondents that undertook improvements, 19% had grants available to do the work, with another 58% not having any grants available. Also 24% of the respondents did not know whether any grants had been available. The types of grants that the respondents commented that were used included:

"English Heritage money for a grade 2 listed building for balcony. Also some money from HBC" (11/M).

"HBC Renovation Grant" (26/BSL).

"THI for roof, windows, doors and guttering" (36/M).

"Small amount for architectural detail on house from HBC" (59/GS).

"Grant for loft insulation" (66/GS).

"Regeneration grant from HBC - committed to property for 10 years. Got grant in 2007 as house deemed unfit for habitation" (83/M).

"Repair grant from council for HMO of £30,000" (98/BSL).

"Council grant for half the roof works" (119/BSL).

From the list it can be seen that majority of the grants were obtained from HBC, and these covered for half the cost of renovation. However, seven respondents also noted that whilst grants were available they chose not to use them. This was due to factors such as complicated application procedures, difficulty in obtaining grant, timescale involved in waiting for the funding, and restrictions on how grant monies could be used. This suggests that although grants for renovation are available, not all proprietors use the grants due to the prescriptive process and stipulations involved in obtaining the grant.

This section has provided a discussion of the residential decision-making processes of the respondents in the area. There is evidence to suggest that there is some second-home occupation in the area (Table 7.8). However, it should be noted that majority of the surveys were undertaken during the week and as such those individuals that do use the properties as a second-home may be under represented within the sample.

There is also a pattern of movement into the area with different areas being more popular during different time periods as evident in Table 7.11. This is to some degree also dictated by the types of properties the individuals chose for residence, and the availability of such properties within the four areas. There is also a growth in the levels of owner-occupiers (both, those who own outright and those with a mortgage) (Table 7.15) compared to the 2001 census data. This suggests that there is a downward trend in transient populations in the area as more and more individuals/couples/families settle and seek to put down roots in the area. Furthermore, a significant proportion (72%) of owner-occupiers undertook major improvements on their properties. Some of these respondents commented that the improvements added significant value to their property. Some owners also took advantage of the grants available from HBC for improvements to their homes. Many of these grants are

tied to the owner keeping the house for at least 10 years and thus cannot be utilised by developers who want to buy a property, refurbish and then sell on at a higher price.

7.3.4   Moving homes within Hastings and St Leonards

As discussed in Chapter 5, there is evidence to suggest that there is a large transient population in the research area. As such, respondents were asked to comment on their residential histories in St Leonards and Hastings, focusing on both, the number of properties lived in and also movement between St Leonards and Hastings. Within the survey sample, there are a proportion that have resided in more than one property as evident in Tables 7.23 and 7.24. As Table 7.23 shows, 44% of respondents have resided in more than one property, with 11% having resided in 4 or more properties. Differences between the four areas are also evident. Whilst 55% of respondents have only resided in one property overall, this figure increases to 68% in Warrior Square and 60% in Burton-St-Leonards. However it drops to 51% in Mercatoria and 42% in Garden Suburbs. This suggests that a higher proportion of the respondents whom now reside in Mercatoria and Garden Suburbs have resided in more than one property. When comparing those respondents that have resided in two properties, the highest proportion fall in Mercatoria (34%), dropping to 12% in Warrior Square. This low proportion of movement between residential properties by those individuals currently residing in Warrior Square can be attributed to the length of residence (as discussed in Table 7.11) which portrays that 78% of all respondents residing in Warrior Square have done so for five years or less. For those respondents that have resided in 3 properties in St Leonards, the highest respondent rate is in Mercatoria (12%) and this figure drops to 4% in Burton-St-Leonards. Whilst 11% of all respondents have resided in four or more properties across the four areas, the differences between each area are very apparent. 23% of respondents in Garden Suburbs have resided in four or more properties. This figure drops to 10% in Burton-St-Leonards, 7% in Warrior Square, and 2% in Mercatoria.   Again, the intensity of movement can be attributed to the types of properties respondents have occupied and the number of years they have been resident in the area. The reasons the respondents provided for moving properties are discussed below.

	Burton-St-Leonards	Garden Suburbs	Mercatoria	Warrior Square	Total
	n= 48	n= 43	n= 41	n= 41	n= 173
1	(60%) 29	(42%) 18	(51%) 21	(68%) 28	(55%) 96
2	(25%) 12	(26%) 11	(34%) 14	(12%) 5	(24%) 42
3	(4%) 2	(9%) 4	(12%) 5	(10%) 4	(9%) 15
4 or more	(10%) 5	(23%) 10	(2%) 1	(7%) 3	(11%) 19

Table 7.23: Number of properties resided in, in St Leonards

In contrast to the patterns of residence in St Leonards, relatively fewer respondents (24%) have also resided in other parts of Hastings as demonstrated in Table 7.24. From the total number of respondents, 12% have lived in one other property in Hastings, 5% in two other properties, 3% in three other properties and 5% in four or more other properties. The large proportion who have lived in one other property in Hastings suggests that people have been drawn more to properties in St Leonards.

	Burton-St-Leonards	Garden Suburbs	Mercatoria	Warrior Square	Total
	n= 48	n= 43	n= 41	n= 41	n= 173
1	(17%) 8	(9%) 4	(10%) 4	(12%) 5	(12%) 21
2	(0%) 0	(12%) 5	(2%) 1	(5%) 2	(5%) 8
3	(0%) 0	(7%) 3	(2%) 1	(2%) 1	(3%) 5
4 or more	(6%) 3	(9%) 4	(2%) 1	(0%) 0	(5%) 8

Table 7.24: Number of properties resided in, in Hastings

This can be understood further through the reasons respondents gave for moving homes in both Hastings and St Leonards. These reasons have been summarised in the Table 7.25 below.

	Burton-St-Leonards	Garden Suburbs	Mercatoria	Warrior Square	Total
	n= 21	n= 26	n= 17	n= 18	n= 82
Upsize	(19%) 4	(42%) 11	(41%) 7	(17%) 3	(32%) 26
From rent to owner-occupied	(19%) 4	(4%) 1	(29%) 5	(6%) 1	(13%) 11
Regeneration	(14%) 3	(0%) 0	(12%) 2	(17%) 3	(10%) 8
Family reasons	(0%) 0	(23%) 6	(0%) 0	(6%) 1	(9%) 7
Problem neighbours	(14%) 3	(4%) 1	(0%) 0	(11%) 2	(7%) 6
Investment opportunity	(5%) 1	(0%) 0	(6%) 1	(17%) 3	(6%) 5
To be independent	(0%) 0	(4%) 1	(6%) 1	(17%) 3	(6%) 5
Improvements	(5%) 1	(4%) 1	(0%) 0	(6%) 1	(4%) 3
Divorce	(5%) 1	(4%) 1	(0%) 0	(6%) 1	(4%) 3
Downsize	(5%) 1	(4%) 1	(0%) 0	(0%) 0	(2%) 2
Other	(14%) 3	(12%) 3	(6%) 1	(0%) 0	(9%) 7

Table 7.25: Reasons for moving properties to their current one

One of the key reasons given by the respondents was the desire for a larger property. Whilst 32% of respondents overall identified this as their main reason, there are huge differences between the areas with 42% of respondents in Garden Suburbs stating this as their main motivation, and 41% in Mercatoria, compared to 19% in Burton-St-Leonards and 17% in Warrior Square. The following quotes provide more information on their decision to move:

"A top floor flat on a busy road. This wasn't suitable so wanted a family home" (63/M).

"Landlord sold building, wanted more space for family. Have a house now and before it was a top floor flat" (68/M).

"Property is larger than the previous one" (172/GS).

Furthermore, 13% of respondents also said their decision to move was influenced by moving from rented accommodation to moving into their own place. 29% of respondents in Mercatoria and 19% of the respondents in Burton-St-Leonards stated this as their motivation for moving homes compared to 4% in Garden Suburbs and 6% in Warrior Square. 9% of respondents also stated reasons associated with the planned regeneration of the town for moving homes and choosing to reside in St Leonards. These respondents were based in Warrior Square (17%), Burton-St-Leonards (14%) and Mercatoria (12%):

"St Leonards much busier. There is an ethnically diverse mix here" (16/WSq).

"Desirable flat, wanted to move out of HMO conversion and moved to St L for potential" (135/WSq).

"Crossed our mind that a regeneration area where it's up and coming. This gave us a bigger home. Close to all we need and being affordable. Living by sea in terms of lifestyle and place for daughter" (168/WSq).

And these regeneration based responses were also linked to investment opportunities, as noted by 6% of respondents and portrayed in the following quotes:

"Prices of properties were then increasing" (97/ BSL).

"We own 3 properties, it was easier to rent the other one in Warrior Square then this one and so we live here" (157/WSq).

"To make money" (160/BSL).

As the quotes suggest, coupled with the understanding of regeneration occurring in the area, respondents also saw this as an opportunity for investing in the area and eventually making a profit from this investment.

Those respondents whose previous place of residence was in Hastings were also asked to give their reasons for moving from Hastings to St Leonards. Again a variety of reasons were given, yet these clearly echo findings portrayed throughout Section 7.2 with reference to quality of life and attractions of St Leonards. One of the key responses given was related to the property they were moving into as noted in the following quotes:

"The house itself was the biggest factor. We are looking onto the seafront" (2/BSL).

"preferred St Leonards due to the grandeur of Burton-St-Leonards" (52/GS).

"You get bigger property in St Leonards than in Old Town, it's too small there" (128/BSL).

Respondents also noted the regeneration aspects of St Leonards and the provision of amenities as a motivator for moving into the area, as demonstrated by the following set of quotes:

"Less trouble here compared to Ore [ward in Hastings]. Better opportunities for children, chance to meet nicer children" (65/GS).

"For education purposes for son. Gave up car so wanted to be pedestrian" (101/BSL).

"Got married and properties in St Leonards suit both of us in terms of size, rent and convenience" (131/ WSq).

These above quotes illustrate some of the motivations for residing in St Leonards, as discussed in depth in Section 7.2.

Section 7.3 has provided a detailed analysis of the residential decision-making processes of the respondents. Through the analysis of the survey results presented, it is suggested that different research areas have proved to be attractive settlement areas during different timescales. This can be attributed to gentrification theories of the spread of middle class settlements into surrounding less affluent areas, as saturation occurs in an area (Slater, 2004). The section has also portrayed how different housing needs have been provided by the different areas and what this means for those wishing to purchase their own properties as well as for the rental market. For some respondents, there has also been the need of 'sweat equity' to improve their properties (see N.Smith, 1992). This is in line with gentrification discourses as presented on the stages of gentrification (e.g. Ley, 1996). Finally, this section has provided an analysis of residential movement within St Leonards, and between Hastings and St Leonards. The findings demonstrate that for many respondents St Leonards provides an ideal residential setting that is linked to the regeneration of the area.

7.4   Preferring St Leonards

As noted in Section 7.3.4, there seems to be a preference for residing in St Leonards. As such this section examines in greater detail why people have chosen to reside in St Leonards. It considers both, why respondents chose St Leonards over other areas of Hastings, and also compares St Leonards to the respondents' previous place of residence.

Respondents were asked to comment on whether they intended to remain in the area. As demonstrated in Table 7.26, 72% of respondents saw themselves still residing in St Leonards in five years time, compared to 11% who saw themselves leaving, and 13% who were not sure. Those respondents residing in Garden Suburbs and Mercatoria were more likely to still be in the area in five years (81% and 78%), respectively. However only 67% of respondents in Burton-St-Leonards and 63% in Warrior Square said they were likely to still be in the area

in five years time. Across the four areas this is still a very high proportion of respondents wanting to stay in St Leonards (when compared to HBC's view of an area suffering from the effects of a transient population), and as such raises important questions about the future of the area. This is particularly important in terms of the regeneration of St Leonards because it suggests that the area is changing from being one with a high level of transient population to a more settled community.

	Burton-St-Leonards	Garden Suburbs	Mercatoria	Warrior Square	Total
	n= 48	n= 43	n= 41	n= 41	n= 173
Yes	(67%) 32	(81%) 35	(78%) 32	(63%) 26	(72%) 125
No	(13%) 6	(12%) 5	(5%) 2	(15%) 6	(11%) 19
Do not know	(15%) 7	(5%) 2	(17%) 7	(17%) 7	(13%) 23
Other	(6%) 3	(2%) 1	(0%) 0	(5%) 2	(3%) 6

Table 7.26: Residing in St Leonards for the next 5 years

Some respondents noted that they were not sure if they would still be in the area in five years time, but were likely to remain in the area for at least another two to three years. Those respondents who stated that they would not be likely to stay in the area, were asked where they were likely to move to instead, as well as their reasons for not wanting to stay in St Leonards. Of these, about half (ten respondents) were still hoping to remain in the South East, choosing locations such as Tunbridge Wells, Brighton, Lewes, Haywards Heath, Bexhill, Rye and Winchelsea. Another seven respondents saw themselves leaving the UK altogether and moving to other locations including France, Australia and South Africa. Four respondents noted that they would probably move to London or closer to London.

Furthermore, 17 respondents provided reasons for not wanting to stay in St Leonards. Although there were a variety of reasons provided, evidence was given for dissatisfaction with the regeneration in the area, as provided in the quotes below:

> "I don't have faith in regeneration and therefore I don't think there will be much change in environmental conditions" (23/BSL).

> "Hate to think what it will be like in 5 years with more drunks and all that. I remember it being a nice place to live" (84/M).

> "The people - low education and/or motivation to better their situation. Benefit mentality" (96/WSq).

"Employment, for my vocation there is no staying power. I am in fashion" (104/BSL).

These quotes suggest that some of the respondents were concerned that the institutionalised visions for regeneration ambitions would not be met. Other reasons provided included those of current jobs being too far, and wanting to reside in a more rural area.

7.4.1 Preferring St Leonards compared to other locations

Whilst the above section does provide some reasons for respondents not wanting to remain in St Leonards, 72% of respondents were expecting to continue to reside in the area. As such, this section moves the discussion on to why respondents chose to move to St Leonards, when compared to other locations. As noted in Table 7.27, 50% of all respondents considered moving to another location. Although there is not much difference between the areas, more respondents in Mercatoria and Warrior Square (54% and 59%, respectively) did consider other locations.

	Burton-St-Leonards	Garden Suburbs	Mercatoria	Warrior Square	Total
	n= 48	n= 43	n= 41	n= 41	n= 173
Yes	(48%) 23	(40%) 17	(54%) 22	(59%) 24	(50%) 86
No	(31%) 15	(35%) 15	(32%) 13	(24%) 10	(31%) 53
Do not know	(21%) 10	(25%) 11	(14%) 6	(14%) 6	(19%) 33

Table 7.27: Respondents who considered moving to other locations apart from St Leonards

Again, there was some degree of variety in the locations that respondents cited, although these were again concentrated in the South East. 35 respondents (20%) considered other parts of Hastings, 22 respondents (13%) considered Brighton, 9 respondents (5%) considered Eastbourne, 8 respondents (5%) considered other locations close to Hastings, 7 respondents (4%) considered moving overseas and 5 respondents (3%) considered moving to Cornwall. 14% of respondents gave various other locations. Considering that the majority of respondents chose locations in the South East and along the rest of the south coast, this does raise questions about London as a global city and how other towns and cities in the South East relate to London. As one respondent noted, they considered "All cheap places close to London that had large properties" (3/BSL).

Another interesting finding is the number of respondents that considered other locations within (or around) Hastings. Although data is not available for those respondents that moved to these locales after considering St Leonards, the responses do suggest that there was a preference for St Leonards, as discussed previously in Section 7.2.2.1. This is also further reinforced in the reasons respondents gave for selecting St Leonards over the other locations. Many of the reasons that respondents gave included specific characteristics related to property and the feel of St Leonards as identified in the quotes below:

> "In St Leonards there is a variation of what you can get for your money. St Leonards has more potential. Didn't want to be right in the thick of town" (49/GS).

> "Fell in love with St Leonards/ Came across The Mount and fell in love with the countryside feel of it" (120/BSL).

> "Found St Leonards first with lots of property on internet. Lots of parks, size of town, architecture, we liked St Leonards. Other towns seemed too white middle class. Here multicultural which is interesting community. A realistic idea of what it is like to live in Britain" (143/WSq).

Respondents also commented on their preference for properties in St Leonards, in comparison to other areas of Hastings:

> "Properties there [Old Town] were more expensive, older and parking was impossible. Older as in derelict and uncared for" (20/BSL).

> "Hastings is very touristy and St Leonards is not" (37/M).

> "In Hastings everybody too close together. Much more space in St Leonards and could get nearer to the seafront" (71/GS).

> "Being a Londoner, Old Town was too twee and middle class. Gentry and arrogance that goes with that. St Leonards is pioneer funky gentry" (154/WSq).

Another set of responses were linked to the price of properties in St Leonards compared to other areas including Old Town, Eastbourne, Whitstable and particularly Brighton:

> "Rye was isolated, Brighton was first choice but too expensive. St Leonards most competitively priced as decayed and affordable" (83/M).

> "Cheaper than elsewhere in the South East and pot of regeneration money so investment in property" (91/M).

> "Brighton, saturated and overpriced. Too big a city. Whitstable, too gentrified. Folkestone had less potential for us. Old Town, smaller properties, couldn't get on

seafront. St Leonards, large property, seafront, and studio for my photography" (94/BSL).

"Brighton was first choice because commute is shorter but we are priced out. Plus Hastings and St Leonards is more quirky and unique" (114/WSq).

"Peak of Brighton property madness. I could buy two great flats in St Leonards for the one crap flat in Brighton" (139/BSL).

"Like Warrior Square area. Cheaper and more to do. More potential compared to Eastbourne. Old town was too expensive. Hastings not as nice as St Leonards" (164/WSq).

"Didn't like Brighton, too expensive. Too gentrified too much like Islington. Not very seaside, not very individual" (167/WSq).

As the quotes suggest, the cost of properties in St Leonards was a significant factor in choosing the area. However, this was also linked to value for money and extended to the social and cultural offering of the town, as well as the quality and nature of the housing. As noted earlier, the responses suggest a higher propensity for living in the South East and both the above sets of quotes identify reasons that put St Leonards in a preferential position to other coastal (and inland) towns and cities in the region. These reasons are also re-affirm the reasons why respondents were attracted to the area as discussed in Section 7.2.2.

7.4.2   Preferring St Leonards over previous place of residence

Important also are the comparisons between residential decision-making in St Leonards and previous place of residence. Respondents were asked to provide characteristics of their previous place of residence and these are discussed below.

As noted in Table 7.28, 43% of respondents were resident in London prior to moving to St Leonards, with a further 17% from the South East. Of these, 6% were from Brighton and a further 6% from locations within Kent. 18% of respondents in-migrated from other parts of the United Kingdom, and the respondents also provided an international dimension with 4% coming across from Europe and 5% accounting for the rest of the world. Interesting here is the large population sample that came from London and is reflected across all four study areas. This demonstrates a clear trend for counterurbanisation to the coast with respondents moving down the urban-rural hierarchy and also re-affirms earlier findings of St Leonards

becoming a hub of like-minded people coming from similar areas and in a sense the DFL's create a community that provides a suburban extension to London itself (Truder, 2010).

	Burton-St-Leonards	Garden Suburbs	Mercatoria	Warrior Square	Total
	n= 48	n= 43	n= 41	n= 41	n= 173
London	(42%) 20	(46%) 15	(46%) 19	(49%) 20	(43%) 74
Robertsbridge/Battle /Bexhill	(4%) 2	(5%) 2	(2%)1	(5%) 2	(4%) 7
Eastbourne	(0%) 0	(0%) 0	(7%) 3	(5%) 2	(3%) 5
Brighton	(6%) 3	(5%) 2	(10%) 4	(5%) 2	(6%) 11
East Sussex	(0%) 0	(5%) 2	(0%) 0	(0%) 0	(1%) 2
West Sussex	(2%) 1	(0%) 0	(2%)1	(0%) 0	(1%) 2
Tunbridge Wells	(4%) 2	(2%) 1	(2%)1	(0%) 0	(2%) 4
Kent	(8%) 4	(7%) 3	(2%)1	(7%) 3	(6%) 11
East of England	(2%) 1	(2%) 1	(0%) 0	(2%) 1	(2%) 3
South West	(6%) 3	(7%) 3	(2%)1	(2%) 1	(5%) 8
Wales	(0%) 0	(2%) 1	(0%) 0	(0%) 0	(1%) 1
East Midlands	(2%) 1	(5%) 2	(10%) 4	(2%) 1	(5%) 8
North West/North East /Yorkshire and Humber	(6%) 3	(2%) 1	(7%) 3	(2%) 1	(5%) 8
Europe	(8%) 4	(2%) 1	(0%) 0	(5%) 2	(4%) 7
Rest of the World	(4%) 2	(7%) 3	(2%)1	(7%) 3	(5%) 9

Table 7.28: Main place of residence prior to moving to St Leonards

Respondents were also asked to describe the physical setting of their previous place of residence. Almost half (49%) identified their previous location as solely urban and another 17% as solely rural. In comparison there were significantly lower response rates of coastal settings with 3% identifying as solely coastal, 3% as rural and coastal, 7% as urban and coastal and 1% as urban, rural and coastal. The contrast between the four areas is also of interest especially in relation to those respondents who identified their previous place of residence as urban. 68% of respondents in Mercatoria came from an urban background compared to 52% in Burton-St-Leonards, 46% in Warrior Square and 33% in Garden Suburbs. Linking back to the idea of counterurbanisation, a comparison of Table 7.29 and Table 7.8 shows that there has been a significant trend to move down the urban-rural hierarchy from town to country, with St Leonards being identified still as an urban setting, but with a focus on the coastal element of the town (34% identify St Leonards as solely coastal, 33% as urban and coastal and 19% as urban, coastal and rural).

	Burton-St-Leonards	Garden Suburbs	Mercatoria	Warrior Square	Total
	n= 48	n= 43	n= 41	n= 41	n= 173
Coastal	(0%) 0	(5%) 2	(2%) 1	(7%) 3	(3%) 6
Rural	(25%) 12	(19%) 8	(7%) 3	(17%) 7	(17%) 30
Rural/Coastal	(8%) 4	(5%) 2	(0%) 0	(0%) 0	(3%) 6
Urban	(52%) 25	(33%) 14	(68%) 28	(46%) 19	(49%) 86
Urban/Coastal	(6%) 3	(2%) 1	(15%) 6	(5%) 2	(7%) 12
Urban/Coastal/Rural	(0%)0	(2%) 1	(0%) 0	(2%) 1	(1%) 2
Urban/Rural	(0%) 0	(5%) 2	(2%) 1	(2%) 1	(2%) 4
Other	(4%) 2	(12%) 5	(0%) 0	(5%) 2	(5%) 9

Table 7.29: Physical setting of previous location of residence

7.4.2.1 Upsizing, downsizing, better value for money?

The opportunities available for respondents to purchase properties in St Leonards can be identified through a comparison of the housing tenure in St Leonards and their previous place of residence. As evident in Table 7.30, owner-occupier levels are 44% in previous place of residence compared to 68% in St Leonards (see Table 7.15). Private rented sector levels remain similar with 32% in previous place of residence and 30% in St Leonards. Furthermore, 6% of respondents identified that they lived in a parental home prior to moving to the area. Whilst only 12% of respondents owned their own property outright in their previous location, this figure rises to 31% in St Leonards. The differences between the four areas are also significant. Although there has been a 19% increase in owned outright properties, respondents in Garden Suburbs and Mercatoria have witnessed the greatest opportunities for owning their own homes. Although 22% of respondents in Mercatoria own their homes outright, this figure drops to 2% in the previous location of residence. For Mercatoria, these figures are 40% and 7%, respectively.

Differences within the four areas in the private rented sector also suggest different patterns of tenure as portrayed in Table 7.30. This difference is very apparent in the Warrior Square area where 61% of respondents are within the private rented sector compared to only 37% in the previous place of residence. On the other hand, whilst only 12% of respondents in Mercatoria are in the private rented sector, this level was 41% in the previous place of residence. These differences both at an owner-occupier level and through the changing patterns in the rented sector do suggest that it is comparatively easier to get on the property ladder in St Leonards.

This echoes findings of the cheap property prices that attracted respondents to the area. However, the difference in Warrior Square does show a different trend that is due to the lack of available properties for sale as a high number of properties in this area are within the private rented sector. It can be suggested that the social, cultural and physical appeals of Warrior Square area such that people are willing to rent in the area instead of purchasing their own properties. Furthermore, these comparatively high levels of owner occupation (between previous and current location of residence) do suggest that it is relatively easier to get on the property ladder in St Leonards.

	Burton-St-Leonards	Garden Suburbs	Mercatoria	Warrior Square	Total
	n= 48	n= 43	n= 41	n= 41	n= 173
Owner –occupied outright	(23%) 11	(7%) 3	(2%) 1	(15%) 6	(12%) 21
Owner-occupied (with mortgage)	(40%) 19	(19%) 8	(39%) 16	(32%) 13	(32%) 56
Private rented	(25%) 12	(35%) 15	(41%) 17	(27%) 11	(32%) 55
Public/HA rented	(0%)0	(5%) 2	(2%) 1	(2%) 1	(2%) 4
Parental home	(6%) 3	(5%) 2	(10%) 4	(2%) 1	(6%) 10
Other	(0%)0	(16%) 7	(2%) 1	(10%) 4	(7%) 12

Table 7.30: Housing tenure at previous location of residence

The discourse presented in Section 7.4 shows that overall respondents are actively choosing to live in St Leonards and prefer the area compared to other parts of Hastings and their previous place of resident. For many, St Leonards has provided the opportunity to get on the property ladder and also for some provided the opportunity to purchase a larger home due to cheaper property prices compared to other locations like London and Brighton.

7.5   Conclusion

This chapter has provided a discussion of the findings of the household survey and identified the demographic, socio-economic and cultural characteristics of the respondents in the four study areas. A number of key themes can be identified from the findings of the household survey. These themes will be highlighted in the conclusion and discussed in greater detail in Chapter 8.

One of the key points that stand out from this chapter is that there are clear social-spatial differences at a micro-geographic level. Whilst in the UK there seems to be a regeneration blueprint creating identikit towns, the survey responses show that the four areas are significantly different in terms of the type of individuals and households that are attracted and, as such, warrant to be recognised as individual neighbourhoods with different needs. This provides a critique of traditional definitions of gentrification which look at the unfolding of the process on a larger scale. The evidence gathered in St Leonards suggests that gentrification can happen street-by-street, and not just neighbourhood-by-neighbourhood, as suggested by many previous studies of gentrification. This is not to suggest that gentrification does not occur at a neighbourhood level; but that it is important to recognise the implications of urban renaissance policies that apply the gentrification blueprint for urban renewal. The majority of coastal towns often developed in a rapid way with different landowners and investors building different types of housing in close proximity. With different types of residents wishing to reside in different types of properties the outcome of the neighbourhood ends up being very diverse and mixed. As such, this aids to recognize that coastal towns should be seen as distinct locations to their urban and rural counterparts. Furthermore, an appreciation of these micro-geographies has a profound impact on coastal policy-making decision and re-affirms that there is no one-size-fits-all policy for coastal regeneration. Such policies need to recognize and allow for the important contrast (even at ward level) if regeneration is to be successful. This is particularly relevant to experiences of deprivation with the survey data identifying that both 'gentrified' and 'deprived' communities co-exist side-by-side yet statistical outputs, such as the GB Census datasets may not pick up on the differences.

Evidence has been presented that suggests that gentrification is occurring in the four areas, although this is at varying scales and at different times. Key here is understanding the quality-of-life related decisions for coastal living and the attractions of St Leonards itself and how these work together to form the coastal idyll. The building blocks of the coastal idyll can be understood through physical, social, cultural and economic factors. One of the main attractions of coastal towns as a place of residence is the coastline itself and the respondents have painted a colourful picture on the attractions of the coastline not only through visual scenery, but also through emotional relationships of refuge, escape, and peace. The physical setting is also important in terms of the sized of a coastal town and the impact this has on

accessing urban, rural and coastal landscapes. This is certainly an advantage for counterurbanisers when compared to rural towns and villages.

Social change can be seen through the role that in-migrants have had to play in closing the coastal rent-gap. This is attributed to service class individuals moving into the area, setting down roots in neighbourhoods that have previously had a high transient population turnover. This changing population profile means that the services available to residents are also changing as evident through discourses presented on new businesses opening up in the area which cater for a clientele that has a disposable income, and as such, St Leonards now has an improved cultural and retail offer.

Furthermore, it is not just professional and service class migrants that are changing the area, but also the high concentration of ethnic minority communities that has been fuelled through the housing of asylum seekers and refugees in the area. These communities have set up businesses to meet the needs of their communities but have also appealed to other migrants and as such they are adding to the dynamic mix of St Leonards. These new communities suggest that coastal towns are no longer the 'traditional white' communities they used to be, and can be compared to diverse communities found in inner-city areas such as Brixton, Borough Market and Notting Hill (prior to these areas having undergone gentrification).

The change in populations also raises question over how gentrification unfolds in an area. Stage models of gentrification suggest that gentrification goes on until it displaces the existing population including pioneer gentrifiers. However, the survey findings call this into question as we can see from the four areas that there seems to be a continual element of pioneer gentrification being played out in each area despite of the varying time scales at which gentrification has flourished. This raises important questions about the type of gentrifier taking into account the life-course of a gentrifier in terms of their residential history and life-course. In St Leonards, important are the life stories of the 'older' artistic community, many of whom were the instigators of pioneer gentrification in districts within London and have been subsequently priced out by successive waves of gentrification. This raises a question about: 'what happens when these artists start to age and need a long term residential location which is still relatively cheap yet provides social and cultural stimuli of like minded people'? Locations like St Leonards which have a relatively depreciated property value are in once sense 'affordable', yet for some artists whom are in rented accommodation, they are a source

of anxiety because based on previous experiences if gentrification occurs they too will be priced out of the area and forced to move out. There is a need for gentrification academics to consider what happens to the displaced pioneer gentrifiers and at what point in their life-course displacement becomes a threat rather than an opportunity to instigate gentrification in another location.

Chapter 6 has provided detail on the economic changes that have occurred as a result of state-led regeneration projects. However, the survey responses also suggest an increase in disposable income of respondents as well as the importance of private investment into the local business community by the respondents and migrants. The business gentrification of the area has been fuelled not only by migrants having a disposable income to spend in the area, but also through individuals opening businesses in the area. This has been possible through cheaper property prices in the town which means that migrants selling up in places like London are able to buy a property in St Leonards as well as have surplus capital to invest in a business in the area. Important also is the role of heritage. Regency coastal towns like St Leonards which once used to be frequented as coastal watering places have a rich and opulent architecture. Many of the properties are seen as architectural gems and the fact that such properties can be purchased for a fraction of the cost of similar properties (in London and Brighton for example) is appealing to migrants wishing to purchase in the area.

A combination of the physical, social, cultural, and economic attributes of St Leonards provides an ideal location for escaping the so-called rat-race of urban living whilst maintaining a lifestyle that merges the convenience of urban living with the idyllic representations of rural living. These overall ideas will be further explored in Chapter 8, in relation to the themes identified in Chapters 2 and 3.

Chapter 8:   Discussion and conclusion

8.0   Introduction

Since Glass originally coined the concept gentrification in 1964 to refer social changes in working-class areas of London, academic debates about gentrification have proliferated. Arguably, Hamnett's (1991) contention of gentrification as a leading-edge theoretical battleground of the social sciences has been pertinent to the last two decades. Gentrification has evolved to such a degree that there are now a multitude of diverse representations and conceptual nuances associated with the term. On the whole, these discussions have tended to focus on urban- or rural-related expressions of gentrification, with the UK being no exception. However, examples of new forms of gentrification have emerged of late including: financification, super gentrification, Londonisation, and studentification. Similar trends are evident in the rural context, albeit to a lesser extent, with terms such as greentrification and gentrifying nature. Taking these developments as its starting point, this thesis has problematised mainstream dominant representations of gentrification processes by examining the unfolding of gentrification within coastal towns. Through extensive primary and secondary data collection conducted on St Leonards, evidence suggests that it is beneficial to make the distinction between coastal gentrification, and urban/rural gentrification. To emphasise this point, it is argued that there is merit in utilising the term *coastification*.

In offering some final thoughts, this concluding chapter is divided into 6 sections. Section 8.1 provides a definition of coastal gentrification and considers the conceptual overlaps between coastification, and urban/rural gentrification. Having defined coastification, Section 8.2 unravels the key theoretical and conceptual contributions of the thesis. Section 8.3 considers some of the implications of coastification for public policy. The main aims and research questions are, revisited in Section 8.4, prior to a discussion on the key concepts in Section 8.5. Finally, Section 8.6 provides some concluding remarks on the main findings of the thesis.

8.1 Defining coastal gentrification – 'coastification'

There has been a growing revival of Britain's coastal resorts as a residential location, with many coastal resorts providing opportunities for purchasing historical properties at relatively lower costs when compared to London and other coastal towns such as, Brighton and Eastbourne. The empirical findings suggest that in St Leonards processes akin to gentrification are unfolding. Media representations of coastal living suggest that these processes are not specific to St Leonards, but are also evident in other coastal towns such as Margate, Folkestone, Blackpool, and Scarborough. For example, in the spring of 2008 a weekly supplement of coastal residential hotspots was circulated (*The Times*, 2008), and in June 2009, *The Halifax Seaside Town Review* noted that the average property price in its study of 96 coastal towns was at least 20 percent higher than the country average, while:

> "Nearly nine-tenths of the seaside towns surveyed have seen average house prices grow by over 100% in the past eight years. The average house price in all seaside towns has increased by 115% since 2001. This is higher than the 96% rise in house prices across England and Wales as a whole, highlighting the popularity of seaside towns amongst homebuyers" (Halifax, 2009: 1).

In the context of gentrification, such figures suggest that some coastal towns are experiencing a revival, yet there have been limited academic studies of coastal gentrification. Studies of gentrification within coastal villages, towns and cities are predominantly subsumed within wider studies of urban and rural gentrification. This thesis has therefore brought coastal gentrification forward as important in its own right.

8.1.1 The parallels between coastification and gentrification

In order to conceptualise the term 'coastification', it is necessary to begin with theoretical understandings of gentrification. As portrayed in Chapter 2, Warde (1991) suggests that gentrification can be understood as a set of particular social, cultural, economic and physical factors. Similarly, coastification involves a distinct set of social, cultural, economic and physical factors that affect the transformation of coastal towns, and lead individuals to decide

to move to the area. These representations are reflected in the following conceptualisation of coastification[10]:

Economic: Coastification involves the revalorisation and inflation of property prices, which is linked to the revalorisation of the British coastal towns as a residential location for pioneer gentrifiers (and as gentrification moves on from one stage to another, more affluent households). Deflated house prices in many coastal towns suggest that coastal towns provide a final frontier for opportunities to close a relatively large rent-gap.

Social: Sufficient change in the population of land-users where the new users are of a higher socio-economic status that the previous users. The new population are often pioneer gentrifiers with a background in arts, and form the colonising arm of the cultural middle class/creative class. Here are in the majority individuals from an arts and creative background, who have a low level of economic capital and high levels of social and cultural capital.

Cultural: The gathering together of persons with a shared culture and lifestyle, with a common factor being their high socio-cultural capital (and in some cases low economic capital). Consumption practise overlaps class boundaries, with individuals having a key interest in artistic and creative pursuits.

Physical: Redefinition of the history and heritage of the coastal town through architectural styles of buildings, and recommodification of the coastal landscape as a site of refuge, escape and diversity. This is associated with the celebration of the coast and the marketing of the coastal idyll.

At an economic level, it can therefore be argued that coastal locations provide a new 'frontier' for capital investment, making them ripe for gentrification to occur (Griffith, 2000; D.Smith and Holt, 2007). One way this can be witnessed is through the relative affordability of properties in St Leonards. Yet evidence that the rent-gap exists in other coastal towns can be

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[10] Clearly, this definition of coastification is based on findings from one case-study location, and as such it should be acknowledged that it may unfold differently in different places, in line with longstanding gentrification debates (Beauregard, 1990; Van Weesep, 1994).

understood through Halifax's review noted earlier in this chapter in places such as Margate and Folkestone. At a conceptual level, the economic opportunities for gentrification to occur exist, thus suggesting that coastification can be seen as another form of gentrification. With reference to St Leonards, the rent-gap allowed individuals to get on the property ladder; buy a bigger property for the same money they would have spent in the previous place of residence; or, downsize and release substantial equity from their properties. This perception of a 'cheaper' lifestyle makes it possible for some in-migrants to have more disposable income to spend in the local economy, and support many of the more expensive niche businesses that have opened up in the area.

The economic drivers of coastification in St Leonards have also been tied to the overall regeneration of the area with approximately £23 million spent on social and physical regeneration in the area. Of particular importance is the role of heritage regeneration, especially the historical perceptions of St Leonards as a coastal resort built by James Burton for the gentry. The architecture and heritage of these properties is appealing to in-migrants, particularly because it parallels the Regency terraces found in parts of London and Brighton. At the same time, other neighbourhoods within St Leonards such as Mercatoria provide smaller terraced cottages for individuals seeking a more village-feel within the town. Discourses of heritage within gentrification are more frequently associated with rural gentrification and the rural idyll. However, in an urban-coastal location like St Leonards the heritage and legacy which is Burtons-St-Leonards is celebrated and used as a tool to sell St Leonards by estate agents to in-migrants.

The social aspects of coastification make the process stand out distinctly from urban and rural gentrification. Important here is the ways in which in-migration waves are being replaced. Chapters 3 and 5 have demonstrated that the recent in-migration histories of coastal towns like St Leonards have focused on transient populations who are generally out of work and/or vulnerable and those dependent on housing benefit (Beatty and Fothergill, 2003; Walton and Browne, 2010). This suggests that coastal towns have a large population turnover, and therefore stories of displacement tied to gentrification do not unfold in the same way. Whilst long-term residential communities are not being displaced (in the same way as displacement has affected fishing families in Old Town, Hastings (Truder, 2010)), displacement is visible with reduced opportunities for low income/housing benefit dependent transient populations to continue to relocate in coastal towns as more properties are being consumed by in-migrant

creative and service classes. St Leonards thus witnesses a change in the tenure profile as ownership patterns change from private rented to owner-occupied. In addition, there is greater demand for higher quality private-rented accommodation. Attention needs to be paid to in-migrant social groups as well. Here the majority are pioneer gentrifiers with high socio-cultural capital and relatively low financial capital. This social group has been influential in the success of St Leonards as they have worked to improve the town and create opportunities within the town.

Similarities and differences can also be understood at a cultural level between gentrification and coastification. Whilst the former often involves the gathering of professionals seeking to live alongside 'like-minded-people' displaying a middle class habitus (Butler, 2007); the social groups involved in the latter, are more on par with those of earlier waves of pioneer gentrifiers, as described by N.Smith and Hackworth (2001); whereby the agency ('sweat equity') of the pioneer gentrifier is still significant. In the context of St Leonards, these pioneer gentrifiers form the colonising arm of the cultural and creative class. As the process of coastification unfolds, the town witnesses the invasion of pioneer gentrifiers and also more affluent individuals with a background in arts and creative industries. This is because the town is on the border of one stage of gentrification and the next.

Cultural reasons for in-migration are not just to do with the desire to be among particular types of people, but also with the retail and cultural offer of the town. The key shopping areas of Norman Road, London Road, Kings Road, and, the seafront have undergone transformation as a result of independent shops opening in the area, coupled with the public realm works that have been undertaken in these areas. Apart from the shops that cater for the needs of the various BME communities there are also a host of other shopping experiences. The Norman Road website lists the shopping offer to include: antiques shops, art galleries, clothing, pretty gift shops, niche businesses such as a bakery serving dogs treats, eateries, a market, as well as key community businesses such as butchers, bakers and green grocers (The Norman Road, 2009). Culturally, the town also has more to offer through increased opportunities for hosting events such as the St Leonards Festival and the Christmas Market. The role of Hastings Arts Forum and the opening of a number of art galleries provides an arts focus away from Old Town Hastings which has been traditionally the arts centre of the town (Truder, 2009).

Finally, at a physical level, of vital importance is the location of coastal towns. Part of the appeal of this is the interaction with the coastline. As Beatty and Fothergill (2004: 477) suggest, the pattern of in-migration to the coast can be partly understood "as a reflection of their attractiveness as places to live – indeed as a reflection of the features that made them resorts in the first place". Important to the concept of the coastal idyll is that coastal locations are different to their urban and rural counter parts, and key to their attractiveness is the issue of liminality associated with the coast. Walton (2002: 118) suggests that the coast "had attractions of 'liminality', as gateway between land and sea where some of the inhibitions of everyday life could be cast aside, and where a carnivalesque spirit of reversing and upending the convention of 'civilization' could be conjured up". This suggests that the coastal landscape can provide an escape through a different type of nature experience as noted in the following quote by one of my survey respondents:

> "It's great to be able to cycle/walk on the seafront on a summer's evening. To have the sea, that huge expanse, it's like our own bit of wilderness. We both like the urban landscape and wanted to live in an urban area but it's nice to be able to turn your back on all that and look at the vast expanse that is the sea. Although it's a town beach, when the tide is out there is a lot of variation on the landscape, you can walk right out, and lots of rocks everywhere so you get rock pools. Also, on a stormy day, it's like there is a monster out there and it is such a realisation of the elements" (91/M).

This kind of representation reflects the abstract and aesthetic qualities associated with the coast and the sea. Important here is the idea of coastal towns being on the edge (end-of-the-line) and therefore such locations embody the cultural meanings of the seashore as a place of escape, pleasure, peace, and refuge.

These similarities and differences between accounts of gentrification and coastification at a social, cultural, economic and physical level suggest that conceptually, coastification is similar enough to gentrification to be understood within the wider conceptual frameworks of gentrification; yet is it also distinct enough to warrant its own terminology to describe the unfolding of processes of gentrification within coastal towns.

Furthermore, these accounts of economic, social, cultural and economic processes of change in St Leonards can also be understood as the appeals of St Leonards – a tentative form of coastal idyll perhaps? This has parallels to rural gentrification and the rural idyll through the perceptions of a healthy environment and a slower pace of life. At the same time, St Leonards

also draws on parallels with urban gentrification through modern, cosmopolitan living based on the social and cultural opportunities available in the town. This idea of a coastal idyll has emerged as a key finding of this research and it is to this the chapter now turns.

8.1.2 The coastal idyll: real or imagined?

The process of gentrification involves in-migration to the area by a higher social group then one that already exists in the location. For in-migration to occur there clearly needs to be a set of 'push' and 'pull' factors that lead individuals to relocate. Chapter 3 demonstrated that coastal resort towns historically attracted people for the interactions they could have with the sea and the beach, while registering how some of these mythologies have been (re)commodified to attract migrants as part of coastal gentrification. In accounts of rural gentrification, discourses of counterurbanisation have long suggested the role of the rural idyll as an attractor for in-migrants, such that 'the rural' becomes a cultural commodity placing importance on the aesthetic values of the landscape (M.Phillips, 2010). Coupled with this are the socio-cultural practises of in-migrants, with D.Smith and D.Phillips (2001: 458) arguing that:

> "The consumption of reinvented images of rurality can provide a source of identity, shared living experiences, membership of social space and group, and can be perceived as a medium of obtaining a sense of place in the world".

What we can take form this is that the attraction of the rural is a combination of social-cultural constructs, and the aesthetic values added to the rural landscape. In the context of this discussion, it can be argued that the coastal landscape can also be seen as a cultural commodity, with in-migrants moving to coastal towns and, in so doing, buying into notions of a coastal idyll. The idea of the coastal idyll has been explored throughout the thesis through a discourse on the social, cultural, economic and physical factors that make coastal living attractive, and can be summarised in Figure 8.1:
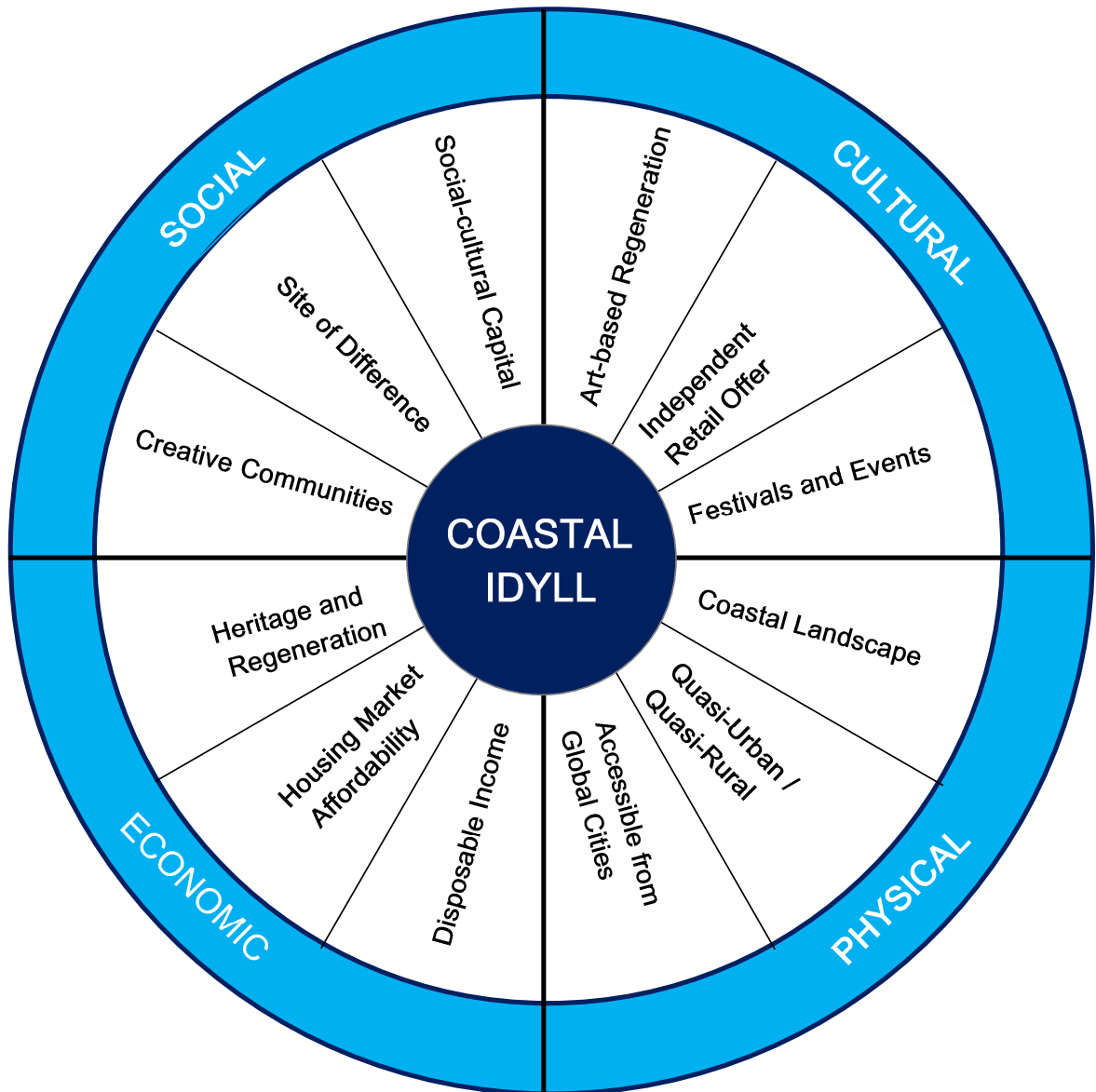
Figure 8.1: A representation of the coastal idyll.

The coastal idyll is made up of a series of social, cultural, economic and physical attractions. For the majority of the survey respondents, it was a number of these factors that led to their decision to settle in St Leonards. Clearly, different coastal towns may place importance in the different factors portrayed in Figure 8.1, and it is these variations that differentiates one coastal town to the next. Some of the factors were particularly important for the survey respondents. The most important factor noted was the availability of large Regency and Victorian properties in the areas of Warrior Square, Burton-St-Leonards and Garden Suburbs at a relatively cheaper price when compared to locations such as London, Brighton and Eastbourne. At the same time, the neighbourhood of Mercatoria appealed to individuals searching for a more village-like atmosphere. This varied urban fabric, along with the coastal

and countryside environs around St Leonards identify the opportunity for a quasi-urban/quasi-rural lifestyle.

The concept of the coastal idyll is significant to our understandings of the particularities that make coastification distinctive to processes of urban and rural gentrification. The coastal idyll also has bearing on strategies for coastal regeneration as it reinforces that coastal towns are distinct from their urban and rural counterparts through the similarities and differences it has to both. Important here is understanding that there are a number of different stakeholders involved in producing, selling and seeking these various appeals as noted in Chapter 5 and 6. An appreciation of how these networks come together can enrich the potential for coastal regeneration policies to deliver perhaps a more positive, and sustainable regeneration outcome.

8.1.3   The role of coastification in the post-resort era

Having defined coastification, there is merit in considering how coastification is unfolding. N.Smith and Hackworth (2001) identify that in the third wave of gentrification, the process has gained momentum in other spatial locations both globally and across the urban-rural hierarchy. In this wave, expressions of urban and rural gentrification are still unfolding, but at the same time, we are witnessing gentrification at the coast – particularly in previously declined coastal resort towns. This growth in expressions of gentrification at the coast suggests that coastal towns are a final frontier for gentrification. Clearly, one reason for this is the availability of cheaper accommodation. Yet, it goes beyond this because there are other locations in the UK with comparable housing markets such as former mining towns that also provide opportunities for purchasing cheaper properties (Beatty and Fothergill, 2004). Therefore, coastal towns become distinct locations for the unfolding of coastification due to the coastal idyll, and particularly the socio-cultural opportunities that coastal towns provide for a quasi urban/rural lifestyle.

At the same time it should be noted that not all coastal locations will experience coastification. It would be wrong to assume that this would be the case because clearly not all urban and rural locations undergo processes of gentrification. Useful here is to revisit the idea of the post-resort presented in Chapter 3 and depicted in Figure 8.2. The focus here is on

seaside resort towns that have experienced marked decline and have evolved in their functionality in the phase of the post-resort.

Figure 8.2: From a seaside resort to the post-resort

Originally these towns thrived as seaside resorts, with their function focused on the sea(side). However in the post-resort phase identified in Chapter 3, the attraction of towns such as St Leonards is not just about the seaside, but also encompass the rural environs as well as the heritage of the urban fabric. Therefore, whilst such towns have evolved from their original beginnings, they maintain their 'resort' appeal as these towns still provide an escape like seaside resorts traditionally did. The difference here being that individuals are no longer escaping for a holiday, but escaping to reside in these locations.

As such, the post-resort phase allows for the regeneration of declining coastal towns (Agarwal, 1994). In the UK context, this model identifies arts regeneration at the post-resort phase. Whilst this thesis has acknowledged the various attractions of coastal living through a portrayal of the coastal idyll and the decision making process of in-migrants, it is also worth considering the role of the state in the regeneration process. The British seaside has been strongly assoiciated with arts and artists. Whilst artists have continued to be attracted to coastal towns, state-led interventions have employed an arts-led regeneration programme. Indeed, it could be argued that an arts-led regeneration blueprint is being employed to regenerate some coastal towns in the-post resort phase. Evidence for this is witnessed in a number of UK coastal towns that have (are in the process of building) art galleries and art installations. Some example include: the Tate Gallery at St Ives, the Turner Gallery at Margate, the Jerwood Gallery at Hastings, the Tern project at Morecambe, the art installations on the south beach promenade in Blackpool, the clam shaped East Beach Café in Littlehampton, as well as the Stream and Winds of Change installations as part of the Wanderlight project in Hastings and St Leonards (Brodie *et al.*, 2007; Walton and Wood, 2008). In the case of St Leonards, the local authority scripting of arts-led regeneration has followed the in-migration of pioneer gentrifiers and the growing vibrant arts scene visible through Hastings Arts Forum and the numerous art galleries in the area.

8.2   Key theoretical, conceptual and empirical contributions of the thesis

This thesis has primarily focused on the impacts of gentrification through a case study on St Leonards.   Increasingly, nationally, processes of gentrification have been adopted as a regeneration tool, with the gentrification blueprint transferred across urban and rural locations (Davidson, 2008; Davidson and Lees, 2005; Lees and Ley, 2008).   In light of the revival of interest in coastal regeneration, this thesis has combined the gentrification literature and the coastal regeneration literature to understand the implications of a gentrification based regeneration policy in coastal towns.   By investigating unfolding expressions of gentrification in a social-spatial context which has not previously been investigated by scholars of gentrification, the thesis explicitly complicates dominant representations of gentrification. One way it does this is by suggesting that coastal towns experience a distinctive type of gentrification which the author has termed coastification, as outlined in Section 8.1.

8.2.1   Extending the spatial definition of gentrification

The examination of gentrification in a coastal location addresses D.Smith's (2002b) call to extend the temporal and spatial limits of gentrification to examine the 'other geographies of gentrification'.   The thesis reveals that coastal locations are associated by incomers with a quasi-urban and quasi-rural lifestyle.   In instances of coastification, such locations provide the very best of both locations.   Aspects of urban and rural living in St Leonards can be witnessed on a number of levels as portrayed in Chapter 7.   St Leonards (and Hastings) can be classified as a small town surrounded by countryside and the sea.   In this coastal countryside leisure activities, such as walking, are easily facilitated.   St Leonards provides a 'village-like' community feeling where people know each other (Hopkins, 1998), yet there is a juxtaposition of anonymity more akin to neighbourhoods in larger cities (Tonkiss, 2005). Coastal towns are generally at the 'end-of-the-line' and in the case of St Leonards this results in a 90 minute train journey into London which makes the town partially cut-off and difficult to sustain itself as a commuter settlement.   Combined with this is the issue of holiday-homes and second-homes that limits opportunities for indigenous populations to purchase affordable homes as noted with other accounts of rural gentrification (Darling, 2005; Paris, 2009).   These similarities and differences to discourses of urban and rural gentrification suggest that an understanding of the process of coastification can enrich debates on both urban and rural

gentrification, as coastal locations can bridge the gap in our understandings of commonalities and differences between residential decision-making processes for urban and rural gentrifiers.

In addition, an understanding of coastification as distinct from processes of urban and rural gentrification also bears an impact on regeneration policies. The case-study of St Leonards has identified that a form of gentrification is occurring in a town that has a very active set of regeneration policies as identified in Chapters 5. This link between regeneration and gentrification reaffirms the contention that gentrification is, indeed, an urban renaissance blueprint which is being deployed across the urban hierarchy (Davidson and Lees, 2005). Consequently, it is important for practitioners in coastal regeneration to both accept and be aware that gentrification is occurring in coastal towns. In doing so, opportunities arise to combat the negative impacts that are associated with the gentrification blueprint, creating, I would argue, a more sustainable coastal regeneration agenda.

8.2.2   The pioneer gentrifier – the colonising arm of the creative class

It can be argued that St Leonards is experiencing the pioneer phase of gentrification, and, thus, is witnessing a growing concentration of pioneer gentrifiers. Discourses of gentrification suggest that the role of the pioneer gentrifier has diminished as processes of gentrification have matured to become institutionalised (N.Smith and Hackworth, 2001). However, the findings of this thesis disrupt this general idea. Evidence from the household surveys and the exploratory interviews identify that pioneer gentrifiers are moving in, and that their agency in shaping St Leonards is also significant. In the case of St Leonards, it can be argued that the in-migrant is not looking to buy into a 'ready-made' lifestyle and is, instead, taking an active role to help create the vibrant community that they want to reside within. These individuals have moved to St Leonards with an appreciation that there are still 'problems' in the town, and they see the town as a 'real' place to reside in. They have actively chosen not to move into a sanitised gentrified town and thus are determined for the town not to follow the same path of other gentrified neighbourhoods - this is where neighbourhoods continue to evolve until the pioneer gentrifier is also displaced. However, these in-migrants have noted that they will move if the town becomes too gentrified. This stems from the fact that they were willing to take a risk in St Leonards and thus will be prepared to go and do the same in another declining location. Consequently, it would be valuable to consider the timescales at which different types of landscapes experience gentrification, as the impact of gentrification in larger

cities will be different from rural locations and coastal locations and will involve different stakeholders. This problematises the effectiveness of simply transferring the gentrification blueprint from urban towns to coastal towns. Notably, the formation of the networks of stakeholders involved in the process vary from one locale to another, and this will have a bearing on the outcomes of gentrification.

What these findings affirm is that the role of the gentrifier is still important and contradicts the findings of Hackworth (2002) and N.Smith and Hackworth (2001) to show that the pioneer gentrifiers still have an important part to play in the unfolding of gentrification in some locations.

8.2.3   Gentrification without direct displacement

A common outcome of gentrification is the displacement of long-term residents (Slater, 2009). But what happens when the local residents displaced are not long-term residents but other more recent in-migrants? In this way, the findings presented in this thesis also have some parallels to findings of new-build gentrification. Portrayals of new-build gentrification identify gentrification without direct displacement as new-build gentrification often occurs on brown-field sites, where there are no residents in situ to displace (Davidson and Lees, 2005). St Leonards has a large proportion of private-rented accommodation. Traditionally, much of this has been occupied by a transient population whom generally do not have any ties to the area or property and there are higher levels of population turnover. Increasingly, more professional individuals are renting these properties as noted by the estate and letting agents in Chapter 7. Although, the displacement is not direct, it can be argued that St Leonards is still experiencing pioneer waves of gentrification. These professional individuals are of a higher class when compared to the transient population, whom are generally dependant on housing benefits and are unemployed. Furthermore, through their purchase power and ability to pay higher rents for a better quality of accommodation, these properties are no longer available for the traditional transient in-migrant, as they are priced out from these localities. The resulting factor is a different type of displacement with a decrease in the ability of transient populations to be able to find affordable accommodation. The expectations are that the 2011 GB Census will reveal a profoundly different local community to that presented in the 2001 GB Census, as noted in Chapter 5. It is expected that there will be a sharper divide across Hastings and St Leonards between poorer and richer areas. If coastification continues

unabated, over time it would be expected that the 'Seven Streets Area' would also experience coastification as a result of fewer residential properties available within the research area.

8.2.4 Stages of gentrification - the trajectory of gentrification in St Leonards

The findings of this thesis also question understandings of the stage-models of gentrification, and the timescales involved for gentrification to occur. Stage-models of gentrification discuss how the process unfolds and there is general consensus that the process occurs somewhat rapidly (Ley, 1996). However, in St Leonards there is a perception that this process is taking much longer, as noted in the following interview quotes:

> "It's been kind of bubbling for a long time and it still only bubbling for whatever reasons. I don't know why it quite hasn't taken off like that and it's a good thing, you know it's a good thing because we would all go. It's still nice it's still not poncy, it's still a bit run down with potential and everyone is still hanging around... But I don't think that it will have gone trendy in five years time, I don't really see that that's going to happen. Because things are happening to slowly and there is still too much roughness around the edges and the road to get here is still too slow and things are still a bit hit and miss" (Business Owner 2, St Leonards).

> "If it was going to happen, it would have already happened. You know the boom in the housing market has already happened, and if it was out of reach for people in Old Town and people were shifting to the St Leonards end of town, if it was going to happen it should have happened already" (Regeneration Officer 1, HBC).

There are a number of reasons that can be drawn as to why this is occurring. First is the role of the current recession. Previous rounds of economic recessions have had an impact on previous waves of gentrification. N.Smith and Hackworth's (2001) model suggests that each wave of gentrification is interspersed with a recession. Based on previous studies of gentrification, it can be suggested that the current recession has curtailed the gentrification of St Leonards (Bourne, 1993). Related to this is the idea that the pioneer gentrifiers have resisted latter stages of gentrification from occurring and, consequently, have managed to halt gentrification at a pioneer phase. Whilst this could be a possibility, it is important to note that this research has considered a location in transition. This makes it difficult to comment if latter stages of gentrification will or will not occur in St Leonards. It is important to appreciate that places are not fixed in time and that they will always undergo some form of (re)generation. However, another possible argument could be that instances of provincial gentrification unfold at a slower pace compared to traditional, urban, large town or city-based gentrification:

> "I think that the chances are that the pace that happens down here, the prices that we pay down here are such that there is a lot of room for manoeuvre before that scenario is likely to arise" (MP for Hastings and Rye constituency).

So, in the case of St Leonards it could be argued that gentrification is still moving at the pioneer phase, and, as the above quote illustrates, this allows time for intervention to make the process more sustainable. Clearly, further research is needed to more fully understand and appreciate the timescales involved for coastification to unfold across different spatial settings, as well as other expressions of gentrification.

8.3   Coastal futures: implications for coastal regeneration policies

Academic debates on gentrification shed light on that the problems associated with gentrification, arguing that the disadvantages outweigh the benefits (Slater, 2009). However, at a practitioner level, gentrification is advocated as a regeneration policy. Some academic discourses herald gentrification as a positive tool for regeneration, as noted by Bryne (2003: 419) who suggests that opportunities are created for poorer people:

> "at the simplest level, existing residents should find expanding employment opportunities in providing locally the goods and services that more affluent residents can afford".

Having suggested earlier in this chapter that coastal locations experience a particular form of gentrification, termed coastification, it is necessary to consider the positives and negatives of coastification (gentrification) for St Leonards. What follows is a discussion of why coastification is positive or negative for coastal regeneration, and considers this from the viewpoint of the various stakeholders interviewed for this study.

8.3.1   'For' and 'against' gentrification in St Leonards?

In order to consider if gentrification has a positive or negative impact on coastal regeneration, it is necessary to take into account the perspective from which the process is being viewed. Whilst gentrification may create negative impacts for some through the reduction in availability of cheaper properties, on the other hand gentrification could potentially result in benefits for local businesses through a new customer base with increase spending power. From the interviewees, two key arguments as to why gentrification was occurring were

provided. In the first instance there was general acceptance that regeneration would inevitably lead to increased gentrification:

> "I think St Leonards as a town, if you regenerate, you are inviting gentrification in and I don't think you can stop it. You are saying, look at us, we are an up and coming town, I can't see how you can stop it. You are inviting gentrification in, the people you are appealing to are people who have more money" (Estate Agent 1).

Some of the interviewees suggested that the regeneration occurring in the town was appealing for people with a greater disposable income. In the case of St Leonards there is a perception that regeneration will lead to gentrification. It is important to consider the nuances between regeneration and gentrification. Is regeneration just a gentrification blueprint in disguise? Is gentrification a result of regeneration? If so, can there be regeneration in coastal towns without gentrification?

The second argument for gentrification was related to the need for regeneration in the first place. Interviewees noted that due to the deprivation in St Leonards, regenerating the town was a higher priority than concerns that regeneration may lead to gentrification in the future:

> "But the benefits we can achieve in this generation are worth it because there are people today who need the encouragement to, they need jobs they need opportunities which this sort of new investment will bring. ... So I don't worry about the theoretical worries of what may happen in the future. Rather I encourage something here and now" (MP for Hastings and Rye constituency).

> "I am not going to apologise for encouraging people from London coming into the area because I see that as an opportunity for people who are on benefits" (Councillor 6, ESCC).

The above quotes identify an important element to our understanding of gentrification. Whilst academic discussions examine the outcomes of gentrification and identify the problems it may cause, there is limited discourse on why regeneration policies based on gentrification are utilised in towns. This case-study on St Leonards demonstrates the importance of regeneration as it brings positive change (at least in the pioneer phase of coastification that St Leonards is in the moment) after a long history of despair and deprivation. This point has significant bearing on academic discourses of gentrification (and coastification). It is important to examine the occurrence of gentrification through a multi-faceted lens. This can be achieved by taking into account the discourses of all effected groups of the community, and the opportunities and problems created by the process of gentrification.

The problems associated with the coastification of St Leonards mirror many of the negative impacts identified with gentrification. Studies of gentrification have recognised that social polarisation and displacement of the working-class is a widespread effect of gentrification (Van Weesep, 1994). As noted earlier in this chapter, St Leonards has a high population turnover due to a large transient population. This transient population is going to feel the effects of the increased accommodation prices which is being fuelled by more expensive rentals for a wealthier clientele. If social polarisation and displacement occurs, these populations would not benefit from the regeneration polices that suggest gentrification is a positive tool for regeneration. A question that arises is then 'where do these people move to'? As noted in Chapter 3, coastal towns are labelled as places that are at the end-of-the-line (Walton and Browne, 2010), and have been portrayed as 'dumping grounds' for problem individuals from big cities.

Displacement does not only affect the transient populations and long-term housing benefit recipients. In St Leonards, there was significant concern that the propagators of gentrification – i.e. the pioneer gentrifiers would also end up becoming displaced:

> "I guess when it starts, it's that whole thing with the artists, I guess when it starts to exclude, it goes too far and it starts to make it difficult for the people who started all of that to survive then that is when the balance tips" (Business Owner 2, St Leonards).

> "I was lucky to have been here when everything was completely at the bottom and managed to have my own home. [Friend] is now in a situation with prices going up where it's more and more difficult for you to be able to do that. I mean I think that is very sad that yes it is looking rather rosy and nice in St Leonards but our mates can't really afford to live here or at least not in this little nice neighbourhood round here. You would have to go up into the outskirts of town somewhere to afford" (Artist 2, St Leonards).

This raises concerns over the sustainability of coastal regeneration. As noted in previous chapters, the pioneer gentrifiers have been an important stakeholder in regenerating the area. Would the area still regenerate successfully without the socio-cultural contribution of this social group? In order for coastal regeneration to be sustainable, it is important that the positive contributions of different stakeholder groups are safe-guarded.

This section has identified some of the reasons why gentrification is both positive and negative for the town. Much of this was rooted in the idea that the regeneration practice and policy of the town was such that it was attracting wealthier people and, consequently, this would result in gentrification. This supports the idea that there is a gentrification blueprint being used as a positive policy tool. At the same time, a gentrified town was welcomed compared to a deprived town. People with more money moving into the town would enrich the local economy of the town. The perception was that this would trickle-down and benefit the other social groupings in the town. This type of activity has been documented in other case-studies as "gentrification certainly brings individuals with more leverageable connections into spatial proximity with indigenous residents" (Freeman, 2006: 147). However, the negative impacts should not be ignored either. In St Leonards there is marked concern related to social polarisation and displacement. These issues have affected both existing residential communities and some pioneer in-migrants are now experiencing difficulties in being able to rent and purchase accommodation in the area.

The issues of displacement experienced in St Leonards are, however, a little different from more traditional accounts of gentrification. Important here is understanding the impact that gentrification has on the different in-migrant communities. Generally, the transient population is less affected by stories of displacement as this community has a high population turnover and fewer ties with the neighbourhood. However, displacement has significant bearing on the pioneer gentrifiers, as they are also susceptible to the impacts of displacement. This group of pioneer in-migrants play an active role in ensuring that St Leonards remains an attractive residential location. In order for St Leonards to continue its revival, it is necessary to safeguard the ability for these pioneer gentrifiers (as well as the large concentration of ethnic minority in-migrants) to be able to find affordable accommodation. Furthermore, due to the longer timescales it is taking for the stages of gentrification to unfold in St Leonards, there is room for intervention to ensure that gentrification can remain sustainable enough to:

- improve opportunities for working-class and housing benefit dependent social groups;
- provide accommodation and business opportunities for pioneer in-migrants, and;
- encourage individuals with a higher disposable income to move to the area.

To understand how things may evolve in St Leonards, attention now turns to coastal futures and the scope for sustainable coastification.

8.3.2   Coastification and coastal regeneration

A review of the literature presented on coastal towns in Chapter 3 suggests that a key element in the success of coastal towns and resorts is their regeneration.   However, as portrayed in the previous section there are some elements of coastification that can be seen as positive impact, whilst others are seen as a negative impact. A lot of the negative impacts are identified in the academic scholarship (Slater, 2009), and these issues are clearly evident in St Leonards in terms of unfolding social polarisation and displacement. At the same time, advocates of gentrification discuss the opportunities that gentrification can bring in terms of employment options and raising people's expectations through social mixing (Bryne, 2003). Lees *et al.* (2007: 226) suggest that such policy interventions do not play out in reality because "as cities aggressively compete to make themselves attractive places to live in and for investors, they are more willing to impose harsh penalties on those people seen as undesirable by wealthy visitors, tourist, shoppers, commuters and investors". Consequently, regeneration plans end up not being sustainable as working-class and housing benefit dependent individuals get replaced by wealthier individuals.   Based on all of this it can be argued that gentrification cannot be sustainable. However, due to the local specifics of the way in which gentrification is unfolding in St Leonards (with particular attention paid to the time span at which the process is unfolding), it can be argued that there is a need for gentrification to be sustainable in St Leonards. As such this section examines if sustainable gentrification can occur in St Leonards; the barriers to this; and, the role that the local state has to play (along with other key stakeholders) to ensure that the process is sustainable.

8.3.2.1 An opportunity for sustainable gentrification?

> "Displacement from home and neighbourhood can be a shattering experience. At worst it leads to homelessness, at best it impairs a sense of community. Public policy should, by general agreement, minimize displacement. Yet a variety of public policies, particularly those concerned with gentrification, seem to foster it" (Marcuse, 1985: 931).

HBC's regeneration policy identifies that it wants to make the town an exciting place to live, work and play, such that it encourages investment and also in-migration to the town. This is with the aim to create more settled communities so that in-migrants will set roots in the town. Key stakeholders involved in the regeneration of St Leonards have recognised the importance

of safe-guarding the communities involved in the regeneration. Some examples from officers within HBC are portrayed in the following quotes:

> "What I think is interesting, the artists are not rich people, but it's the art they produce that brings interest. We don't want to be pushing these communities away, it's part of the attraction of the area. There is some physical regeneration which is important for the artists here, and that is important for these artists – affordable housing, we have to keep what we've got here rather than force them out" (Housing Officer, HBC).

> "As long as you don't encourage gentrification to the cost of everything else you have to provide the equal playing field, by taking positive action and at the same time you don't discourage entrepreneurship and people improving their quality of life" (Regeneration Officer 2, HBC).

There are communities in St Leonards that are actively involved in the regeneration of the town and this is recognised by organisations such as HBC. Some of the 'organic' gentrification that has occurred in the town has been attributed to the presence of the BME and pioneer gentrifier communities. If through the process of gentrification these communities move out of the locality or get displaced, then they take with them some of the vibrancy they have helped to create in the town. At the same time, social regeneration goals for the area are not met and instead problems get displaced elsewhere. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge the role that these local communities have to play and consider sustainability in terms of the resident community instead of simply attracting wealth, and wealthy people to the town at the expense of these communities.

At the forefront of the regeneration agenda is HBC. It is useful to consider the role of the local state in helping gentrification be sustainable. This can be achieved by not only investing in physical regeneration but also social regeneration. Central to this is the local council's role in facilitating regeneration:

> "It could be an area with good opportunity... If the housing conditions improve, and people participate and there's opportunities for people from ethnic backgrounds. You can't shape all of these things, you can facilitate, but you can't control and shouldn't control. We can try and raise the bar for everybody even if that means to take positive actions to take people who don't have the same opportunities and give them the opportunities" (Regeneration Officer 2, HBC).

The council has already played an important role in facilitating the process through its partnership working, (Chapter 6). Furthermore, it is not just about partnership working

between different departments of the council, but also with other agencies and the community as well:

> "We are trying to invest in the area, so that we avoid the whole gentrification business. We are aware of this. Grassroots up, rather than top down. It's a subtle thing to do; you could tip the balance whereby it becomes a prime target for gentrification" (Arts Officer, HBC).

Helping local people to get out of deprivation and providing affordable housing for these people as well as for pioneer communities is key to ensuring that gentrification can be sustainable. A lot of this is down to the provision of affordable housing. Problems arise because much of the housing in St Leonards is in the hands of the private sector rather than the public sector. At the same time, HBC has been pro-active in getting empty homes back into use. However, policy changes like that proposed to curb councils' empty home seizure powers only manage to create more negative impacts as they exacerbate housing problems in the town (BBC, 7/01/11).

As it stands, it can be argued that gentrification cannot be sustainable because there are too many factors at play from policy interventions at a central and local government level; as well as the agenda's of different stakeholders and institutional actors. A lot of this boils down to money - the availability of it for funding regeneration projects, and the money made through taxes and lifestyles of wealthier residents whom have more disposable incomes. There needs to be a fine balance between making and spending money to help sustain vibrant communities. There are positive opportunities of gentrification cited (Bryne, 2003), but there are also criticisms that these positive opportunities (such as social mixing) are rarely realised. However, in coastal towns like St Leonards where the process seems to be unfolding more slowly, there is time to intervene and help with the formation of sustainable communities.

8.3.2.2 Barriers to sustainable gentrification and regeneration

Arguably, sustainable gentrification can bring many benefits to a coastal town like St Leonards. As regeneration tends to be a government-led approach, it can be argued that it is important that changes are made to the way in which regeneration policies are applied to coastal towns. Central to this is overcoming the different agendas of different political parties, as noted by the interview respondents:

"On the whole, the quality of people's lives is improving. But there's politics involved. There are different agendas, Labour targeting the socialist agenda and the Tories at another end, different challenges" (Regeneration Officer 2, HBC).

Changing government policies have a part to play in what is the next regeneration programme or where the next set of energies is focused. There is very little cohesive long-term project planning because plans are changed as part of new leadership at a local government level, as well as through the way funding is administered for different projects. An example is noted below:

"The money comes with strings attached, and every two years we go through the re-funding cycle and every two years from our point of view, we have had this very good business start up course that we have run for several years which the enterprise agency pulled because its run for 5 years it's like oh well we have done that now let's do something else. And that wasn't us saying because we are bored with it or it's not working, it's still working. It was funding coming through, ultimately through the government but from business link and other agencies saying okay we have done that for 5 years we need something new, we need new toys to play with ... There is plenty still to do without just every couple of years throwing everything out and starting all over again. Because you lose all of the learning, all of the experience, you lose all of the momentum and you wind the project down, stop, start another one, it takes 6-9 months to get to full effectiveness and you are half way through already. That's the problem" (Business Coach, 1066 Enterprise).

This quote is one example of limited long-term planning that effects St Leonards, as well as other towns and cities. This can be attributed to the top-down approach that is very common in leadership practices in the UK. However, there is failure to note that not all places are the same and, whilst a project works on one place, it may not be the right solution for another location. This top-down approach, which detracts from the local context and local needs is also another barrier to sustainable gentrification and regeneration.

The regeneration agenda in St Leonards has two areas of focus. One is physical regeneration, and the other is social regeneration. To date there has been a strong focus on the physical regeneration as discussed in Chapter 5. In many ways physical regeneration is easier to achieve as places can be upgraded. However, the same cannot be said for social regeneration because you cannot simply upgrade one population with another. Whilst there have been projects focusing on social regeneration, this still remains a key issue:

"One of the biggest things is the social issues in the town, there is a lot of history on that and that takes longer. You can do up buildings in a season should we say

and next year it looks lovely but you can't regenerate people who have been two generations unemployed. You can't do that just by pumping money as that takes longer. So the overall regeneration of the town will take a lot longer" (Chair, BSL Society).

For any town, social regeneration is arguably the hardest to deal with given social mobility and migration. Generally, problem communities get moved on to other locations through displacement when a neighbourhood beings to prosper. Unfortunately, Hastings and St Leonards has witnessed decades of problem and housing benefit dependent individuals relocating to the town. For regeneration to truly be sustainable, it is important that the problems faced by these communities are tackled, instead of displacing these communities such that they become a problem statistic for another neighbourhood. Gentrification and regeneration needs to promote social, not just environmental regeneration. Furthermore, responsibility for this should not just sit on the local government, but also central government.

Through the discussion presented in this section, a number of barriers to sustainable gentrification have been identified in the town. Some of these issues will be easier to resolve whilst others will take longer. It is also important to appreciate the impact regeneration projects have had based on the longer-term plans:

"It's a 20 year plan. I think in the next 5 years you will start to see some of the empty properties, you will see more shops opening in the area. You will see a percentage of people, maybe Tunbridge Wells. But I think it's not where we were 5 years ago or 8 years ago" (Councillor 6, ESCC).

The regeneration efforts in St Leonards have clearly had some impact. This has been both through a formal council-led approach and through the organic regeneration led by pioneer gentrifiers in the area. In these early phases of gentrification, there is a perception that the process is sustainable. This is because many of the negatives associated with displacement and social polarisation have not occurred at a concentration at which it is a problem. However, as portrayed in early sections of this chapter there are concerns that these negative impacts are also going to play out in St Leonards. This idea, coupled with the barriers portrayed in this section suggests that it is difficult to view gentrification as a sustainable process (Slater, 2010). However, there is a glimmer of hope. If institutional actors and stakeholders recognise that gentrification is unfolding in the town, they then are in an authoritative position to try and mitigate or curb the negative impacts. The time-span at which gentrification is unfolding in could allow for interventions to be made to make the process

more sustainable. Only time will tell if St Leonards has been successful in using gentrification as a positive regeneration tool, which is sustainable and promotes a positive type of regeneration for the whole community.

8.4 Revisiting the thesis aims and research questions

This section revisits the main aims and objectives of the thesis, and indicates how the findings have addressed these aims and objectives.

1. Investigate the inter-connections between processes of gentrification and the regeneration of coastal towns

Using the case-study of St Leonards, this thesis has identified that a mutated form of gentrification is occurring in the town. Regeneration policies have utilised the gentrification blueprint to up-grade the social, cultural, physical and economic characteristics of St Leonards. The policy agenda has focused on St Leonards, as there is recognition that the deprivation of St Leonards is holding the rest of Hastings back. Through the vision of making St Leonards a more exciting place to live, work and play, HBC have encouraged the transformation of the area to attract wealthier in-migrants to the town. Although a gentrification blueprint has been applied to the town, St Leonards has demonstrated that these blueprints do not work for all instances, and local contexts need to be considered. In this case, the need for coastal regeneration, and the attraction of coastal living has resulted in an 'other' form of gentrification being identified, which has been termed coastification.

This thesis concurs with the contention of D.Smith and Holt (2007) that coastal locations are a final frontier for gentrification. Indeed, coastification can be understood through rent-gap models of gentrification. However, instead of large-scale corporate developers, there are currently a large number of small-scale property developers seeking to maximise profit on the regeneration of the coastal town. This regeneration involves a number of stakeholders and entails social, cultural, economic and physical change. The combination of these factors has been effective in narrowing the rent-gap in St Leonards.

In addition, this thesis has identified the micro-geographies of coastal change in St Leonards. This supports Ley's (1986) contention that gentrification varies culturally, economically,

socially and physically across different socio-spatial contexts. It can be seen in St Leonards, through the different social settings of the four research areas, that gentrification is occurring street-by-street. This scale is pertinent to the way in which regeneration policies address coastal regeneration, as the thesis demonstrates that at a micro-geographic level there are clear differences between the needs of one neighbourhood to another.

2. Explore the role of actors and residents in the regeneration of coastal towns using a critical perspective of the concept of 'positive' gentrification.

A key finding has been that the role of the pioneer gentrifier is still pertinent in the unfolding of coastal gentrification. This contradicts theorisations of gentrification which suggest that the role of the pioneer gentrifier in is no longer pertinent (Hackworth, 2002; N.Smith and Hackworth, 2001). It can be argued that there is a network of stakeholders involved in the gentrification (and regeneration) of the town and that the success stories of the regeneration have been through models of partnership working between various departments of HBC, and with other organisations.

The thesis has also questioned if gentrification can indeed be a positive tool for regeneration. The findings from the case-study show that in the pioneer phases of gentrification which St Leonards is experiencing, the process can be seen as a positive tool for regeneration. However, the key for the process to continue to be positive is for gentrification to be sustainable. By this, it can be suggested that the stakeholders, and, particularly, policy-makers propel forward the successes of pioneer stages of gentrification.

In addition, the thesis raises awareness of the reasons why local councils may tailor their regeneration policies to incorporate gentrification. The case-study on St Leonards demonstrates that for the town, gentrification (which some see as regeneration) is clearly a better option than the town continuing to decline further. Whilst gentrification improves the perceived image of the town through for example reduced crime levels and more settled communities, gentrification still manages to exclude itself from meeting the social regeneration agenda. Considering the high levels of social decline in many coastal towns, the findings of the thesis suggest that gentrification would not be the right model for regeneration, as problem individuals would be moved on elsewhere, and therefore, the problems of social deprivation would not be resolved.

3. Examine the (re)commodification of idyllic coastal/water landscapes for the regeneration of coastal towns.

The findings from this thesis illustrate that the coastal landscape is being (re)commodified for regenerating coastal towns. Important here is the concept of the coastal idyll and the inter-connections between the different aspects of coastal living. The coastal idyll can be understood as a series of social, cultural, and economic values that have been applied to coastal towns and their surrounding land- (and sea-)scape. By considering coastification and coastal idyll side-by-side, this thesis has considered the ways in which the rent-gaps in coastal towns open and close.

4. Consider the social, economic, cultural and physical processes that underpin coastal gentrification.

The findings from the thesis identify that the gentrification of coastal towns should be understood as a parallel stream alongside understandings of urban and rural gentrification. To differentiate this process, the term coastification has been suggested to describe the distinct processes of gentrification that occur in coastal towns. As noted previously, Warde (1991) defines gentrification through a set of social, cultural, economic and physical factors. These concepts have been overlaid with the findings from this study to identify the similarities and differences between occurrences of coastification, urban gentrification and rural gentrification.

Coastal towns allow gentrification scholars to bridge the gap in understanding the commonalities and differences between the residential decision-making processes or urban and rural gentrifiers (as well as the particularities of coastal gentrifiers). They also support the need for central government to recognise that coastal communities have specific needs and thus require specific measures (Seaside Economy Report, 2003; Coastal Towns Report, 2007; Walton and Browne, 2011). Indeed, by introducing the occurrence of gentrification in coastal regeneration, this thesis intends to enhance the debates surrounding coastal regeneration across the UK.

8.5   Future research

Two themes for future research are evident from this thesis. First, studies of gentrification have not fully focused on the life-course and in-migration patterns of the gentrifiers. Within this thesis, a key group are pioneer gentrifiers who are at risk of displacement. Furthermore, some of the interview and survey respondents mentioned that they were resident in other locations that have undergone gentrification in the 1980's and 1990's and have moved on from these areas when they have become too gentrified.   However, have these pioneer gentrifiers been displaced or have they chosen to move? In addition, at what stage in their life does moving to another location stop being a suitable option? These questions suggest that the role of the pioneer is still important because they are still carving out early phases of gentrification, but also that these 'older' gentrifiers have an important role in protecting their communities and may in effect restrain gentrification to their pioneer phase.

A second theme that warrants further attention is the role of business in gentrification. A common sign of a town experiencing gentrification is when a retail chain store such as "Starbucks" opens up in the town (Laurier and Philo, 2004; Lees, 2003).   The thesis shows that St Leonards arguably boasts a vibrant shopping offer, which is epitomised by individual, boutique style shops rather than chain retail stores that are normally associated with gentrification.   Findings from '*Re-imagining the high street – escape from Clone Town Britain*' (New Economic Foundation, 2010) identified St Leonards as one of 14 towns that is not a clone town, as it has managed to retain its distinctive character with more than two thirds of their shops being independents. This case-study demonstrates the need to explore the role of businesses and town centres in gentrification and suggests that gentrification can occur without following an identikit retail model.

8.6   Final remarks

In conclusion, this thesis has advanced knowledge of the spatialities of gentrification by considering the ways in which the processes unfold within coastal towns. The findings from the thesis suggest that the gentrification of coastal towns warrants a specific conceptual term, due to the nuances that differentiate coastification from representations of urban and rural gentrification.

The thesis has disrupted some dominant ideas of contemporary gentrification, emphasising that the role of the pioneer gentrifier is still significant in a coastal town setting. This suggests that there needs to be more fluidity in our understandings of gentrification, and the way in which gentrification is applied as a regeneration blueprint. Transferring the ideas of urban gentrification to other locations along the urban-rural hierarchy is not a straightforward process, and the locational complexities need to be considered. Indeed, gentrification should not be simply transferred in taken-for-granted ways from one location to another as a positive tool for regeneration.

Finally, a representation of coastification has important bearings on coastal regeneration policies. The case-study of St Leonards serves to demonstrate that gentrification is unfolding in a coastal town that has an active set of regeneration policies. If key stakeholders and decision-makers, particularly within local, regional, and central government, recognise that coastal regeneration policies are translating as gentrification, there may be an opportunity to ensure that such processes of coastification can be relatively sustainable, and beneficial for all social groups.

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Appendix A: Household questionnaire survey

Appendix B: Information sheet for survey participants

Appendix C: Information sheet for interview participants