

Social Exclusion and the Future of Cities

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Editorial Note and Acknowledgements

These two papers were presented at the CASE/LSE Housing Seminar on “Social Exclusion and the Future of Cities”, kindly sponsored by the Broomleigh Housing Association, on 8th July 1999. Anne Power is Deputy Director of CASE and Professor of Social Policy at the London School of Economics. This revised version of her lecture is reproduced with permission from the RSA Journal. This lecture was delivered to the RSA Midlands on 7th December 1999. William Julius Wilson is the Malcolm Wiener Professor of Social Policy and Director of the Joblessness and Urban Poverty Research Program at the Malcolm Wiener Centre for Social Policy, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. He was a visitor to CASE in June and July 1999.

Abstract

In both Britain and the United States, people have been moving away from the inner cities to suburban developments, often leaving behind concentrations of poverty and decaying neighbourhoods. Anne Power’s paper focuses on the British situation. As Britain comes to terms with the implications of urban renaissance, a new way must be found of looking at regeneration based on rebuilding urban neighbourhoods. The key points for the future are: limiting suburban land supply and creating higher density in depleted urban neighbourhoods; equalising the incentives to recycle old buildings and used land rather than greenfield sites; improving public transport; managing neighbourhoods to encourage a social mix; and protecting green spaces. William Julius Wilson, looking at the American situation, addresses the rediscovery of “metropolitan solutions” as answers to the common problems of America’s cities and suburbs. This rediscovery reflects the recognition that metropolitan areas constitute the real competitive units in the new economy and that competitiveness requires a healthy urban core; the growing awareness that complex issues such as pollution and traffic congestion cross boundaries and are immune to localised fixes; and the co-existence of persistent joblessness in the central cities and labour shortages in the suburbs.

Poor Areas and Social Exclusion

Anne Power

Social exclusion is about the inability of our society to keep all groups and individuals within reach of what we expect as a society. It is about the tendency to push vulnerable and difficult individuals into the least popular places, furthest away from our common aspirations. It means that some people feel excluded from the mainstream, as though they do not belong. For a long time this has meant that inner city areas, and some large outlying council estates, increasingly vacated by people who can find an alternative, became a receptacle for problems.

Social exclusion is almost entirely an urban problem. The 100 most deprived local authority areas in the country are all urban and the 20 most deprived are all in major industrial conurbations and inner London. We have to start from where we are – cities concentrate and intensify social problems. The social exclusion agenda is an urban agenda.

Cities are made up of neighbourhoods and their fortunes are locked together. The success of cities depends on successful neighbourhoods, and therefore the urban agenda – an attempt to reverse the urban exodus and overcome social exclusion – focuses on neighbourhoods as well as cities and regions. They are intrinsically interconnected.

Neighbourhoods are physical areas within which people organise their lives, base a significant portion of their social time and therefore connect with the world outside the home. Urban neighbourhoods usually cover around 2000 homes, 5000 people, a typical primary school catchment. Neighbourhoods often have sharp boundaries, either physical or atmospheric, but the layers of neighbourhood life are like an onion with a tight core and a loose outer skin.

Neighbourhoods have three interlocking aspects: the home and immediate surroundings – the elements people pay as much as they can to secure; services such as shops and schools which reflect the social composition of the neighbourhood; and the neighbourhood environment, giving an intangible but powerful signal of who we are and how we should behave. Neighbourhoods offer a sense of familiarity and security to the people who live there, which counters fear of the unknown, even where the neighbourhood is poor, run-down or unpopular.

Neighbourhoods can break down if the three elements – home, services, environment – are disrupted to a point where security disintegrates. If decline is very rapid, then even the sense of familiarity can go. It is the issue of neighbourhood breakdown and rescue that concerns government because school failure and crime – their top social preoccupations – are neighbourhood problems. Poor education and crime fuel the movement outwards, creating large rifts in society and leaving much poorer neighbourhoods behind. It is this cleavage that drives the high political support for the Social Exclusion Unit's daring attempt to "bring Britain together" (SEU, 1998). So complex is the task that the government had to set up eighteen policy action teams drawn from the very top of Whitehall and from residents in some of the poorest estates to dissect the multiple problem and draw them together. But "joining up" multiple, long running problems can compound difficulties. And linking very poor areas to the mainstream has failed in the past precisely because it is so difficult.

Area problems – people or place?

Will we succeed where the Americans have failed so disastrously?

In America individual success is more important than area conditions, with the consequent acceptance of appalling inner city ghettos, high levels of violence and many human casualties. A strong racial divide is tolerated in the belief that individuals can progress out of ghettos.

In Europe, including Britain, success is more commonly measured by area improvement alongside individual progress. This seems a more logical approach since there is little doubt that areas affect people as well as people affecting areas. The strongest and simplest proof of the interaction of people and areas lies in the very different cash values that attach to near-identical properties in different types of area.

Property values are dictated by neighbours and neighbourhoods – in other words the character of an area influences our choice, as much as who we are influences where we can choose to live. Some places are inherently difficult and unattractive to live in; this impacts strongly on people, determining who moves in, who stays and who moves out, creating people-based characteristics, alongside physical conditions. Chart 1 show this interaction of inherent and acquired area characteristics, making people and place equally important in the creation of and struggle against social exclusion. Areas often have a mix of these characteristics, occasionally all the characteristics are clustered together.

Chart 1: Intrinsic and acquired characteristics of poor areas

Intrinsic Area Characteristics	Condition	Outcomes
Location and transport links	Poor access	Low status
Physical style and ownership	Segregated community	Low value
Environment	Unattractive, poor quality	Low desirability
Economy	Low investment	Low mix

Acquired Area Characteristics	Condition	Outcomes
Population mix	Low status deters more ambitious	Concentrated poverty
Reputation and history	Image activates fear	Rejection and isolation
Standards and services	Performance is poor	Deteriorating conditions
Poor supervision	Low morale reduces incentives	Negative behaviour
Weak informal controls	Intimidation prevents action	Withdrawal

Areas that were once valuable – our industrial inner cities – can become redundant, semi-abandoned, ransacked, a true nightmare for the people stranded within seriously depleted communities. But these same areas can also regain value, without losing their “character”, if we can change some of the intrinsic or acquired features. For we do build and sustain, or run down and destroy, our urban neighbourhoods ourselves – we are responsible for social exclusion and its reversal.

Some neighbourhood characteristics are easier to change than others. Change in one element can have a knock on effect on others. For example, the environment and economy of Islington, one of the poorest inner London boroughs, gradually changed over the 1970s after the lifting of slum clearance orders, and the cancellation of road widening blight. Islington council in the 1970s became a pioneer in the renovation of Georgian and Victorian street property. Whole blighted, tumble-down streets were revived, giving birth to that controversial idea – gentrification – now strongly supported as “mixed communities”. The

loss of light engineering was replaced by a booming service economy. Islington is still the 10th most deprived local authority in the country but it no longer has the intense concentrations of the poorest neighbourhoods that it had because area conditions have changed.

I use Islington as an example to underline that areas can improve, alongside significant individual poverty. Islington still has extremely serious problems, some of the worst performing schools in the country, a level of violence in some areas that has tyrannised whole communities, a tension between the extremes of wealth and poverty that may prove hard to hold together. None the less few would argue that Islington would have been better for the poor, more inclusive, if it had been bulldozed and rebuilt as large council estates, the Labour government's plan for it after the war. Chart 2 shows how Islington fits within the most deprived boroughs in the country – all urban with many inner London or other big city councils (source: DETR, 1998).

Chart 2: The top 20 local authorities on the government's new index of deprivation in rank order

1.	Liverpool	11.	Greenwich
2.	Newham	12.	Lambeth
3.	Manchester	13.	Haringey
4.	Hackney	14.	Lewisham
5.	Birmingham	15.	Barking and Dagenham
6.	Tower Hamlets	16.	Nottingham
7.	Sandwell	17.	Camden
8.	Southwark	18.	Hammersmith and Fulham
9.	Knowsley	19.	Newcastle upon Tyne
10.	Islington	20.	Brent

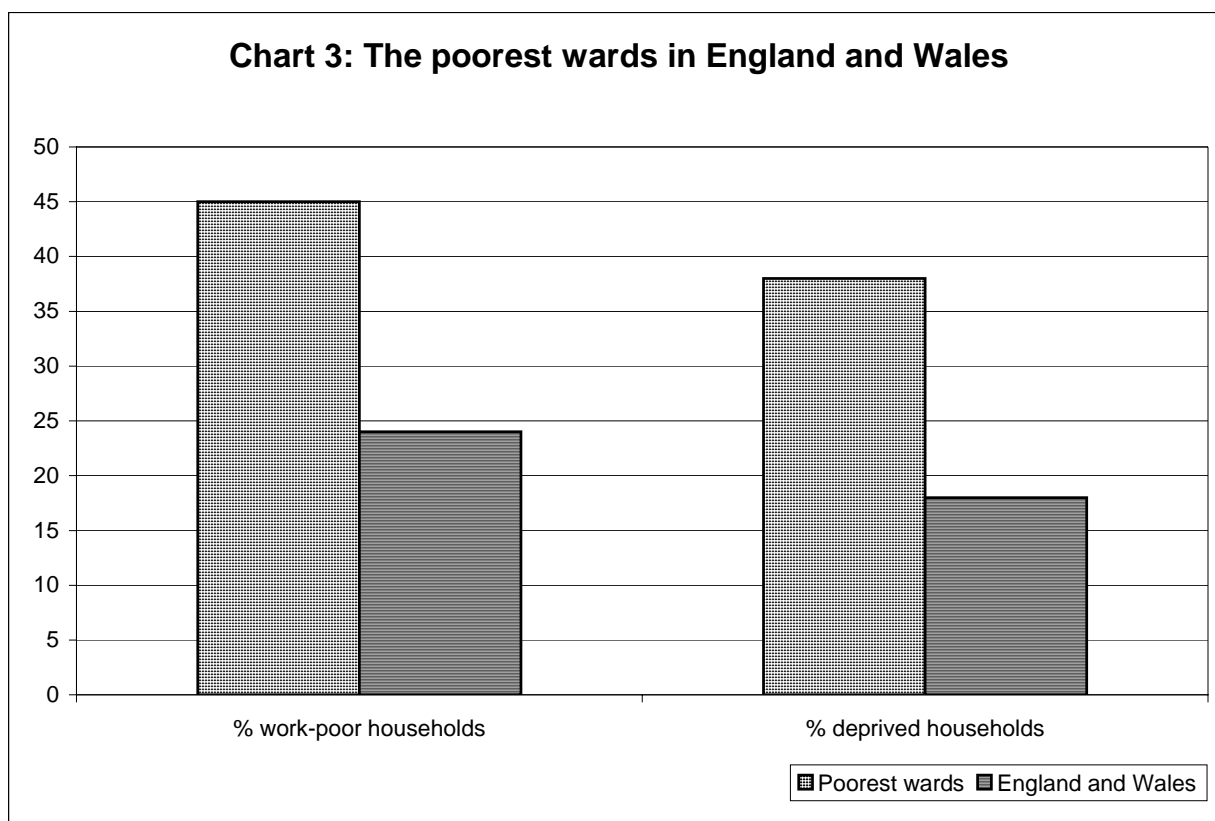
Source: DETR (1998).

Poverty concentrations

We have argued that areas are intrinsically unequal and therefore attract very different people. This inequality of areas shows up in distance from work, contrasting tenures, unequal schools and environment. It is inevitable that more vulnerable people with less economic clout will be concentrated in areas of greater difficulty, with lower opportunities. In other words poor conditions and poor people group together. Far more seriously poorer neighbourhoods also tend to group together, forming large poverty clusters within cities. Thus we have, not just isolated poor

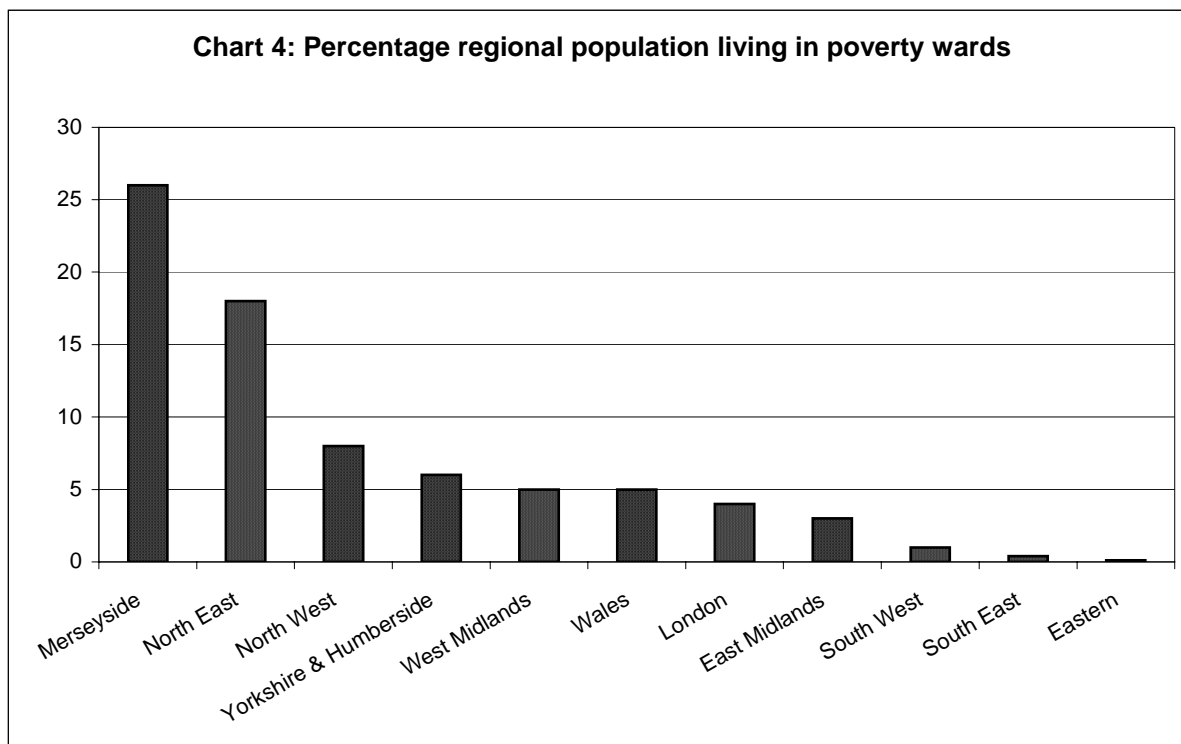
neighbourhoods, but whole swathes of cities dominated by exclusionary problems.

We have identified the 5% of wards with the highest levels of workless households and the highest concentrated deprivation, based on what the population as a whole believes is the minimum necessary to escape deprivation (Glennerster *et al*, 1999). The concentration of poverty and worklessness within the poorest areas is double the national average. Chart 3 shows this (Source: Glennerster *et al.*, 1999). This pattern is constantly substantiated in government research (DETR, 1998). Poor areas are much more deprived on all measures of deprivation than other more popular areas.



There are strong regional differences in the concentrations of poverty. Extremely high concentrations in Merseyside and low concentrations in East Anglia indicate strong economic forces – an intrinsic characteristic – driving the concentrations within certain regions. The position of London is extremely important. In spite of having 12 of the 20 most deprived boroughs in the country, its core and outer areas are so much more affluent than the country as a whole that London overall does as well as Wales. One important factor is that in spite of big poverty concentrations in some parts of inner London, rich and poor seem willing to live in close proximity if conditions are right.

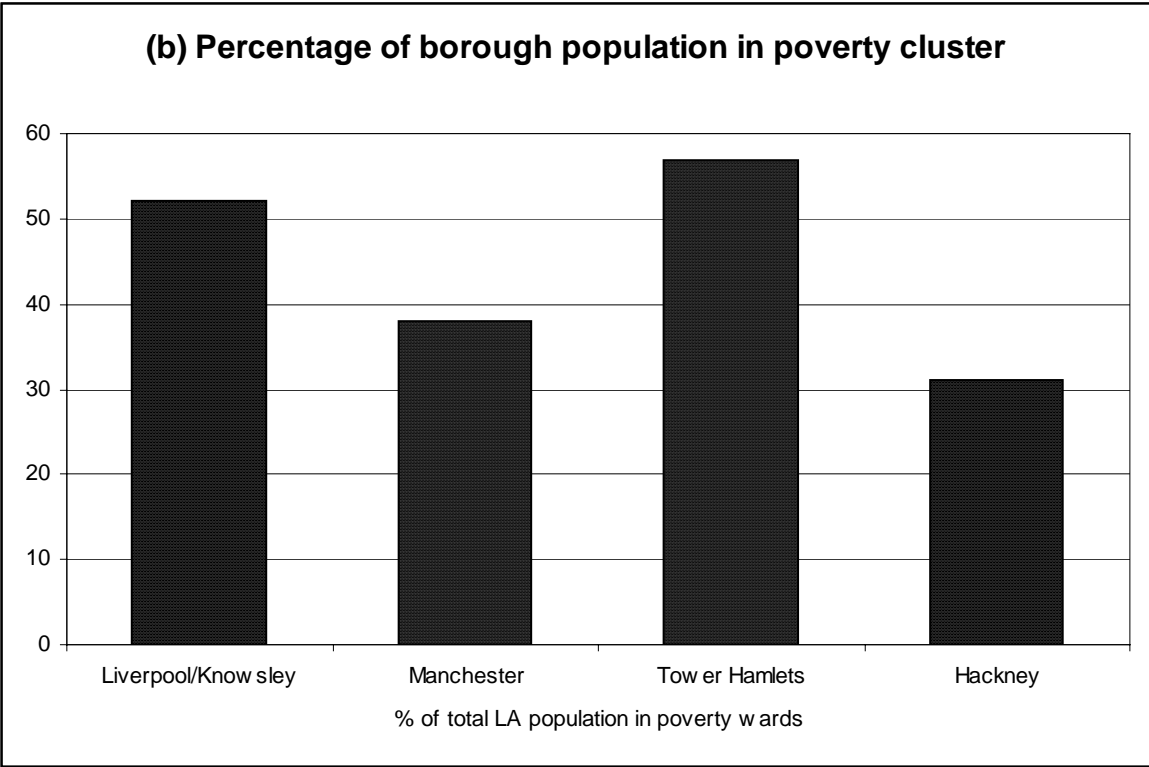
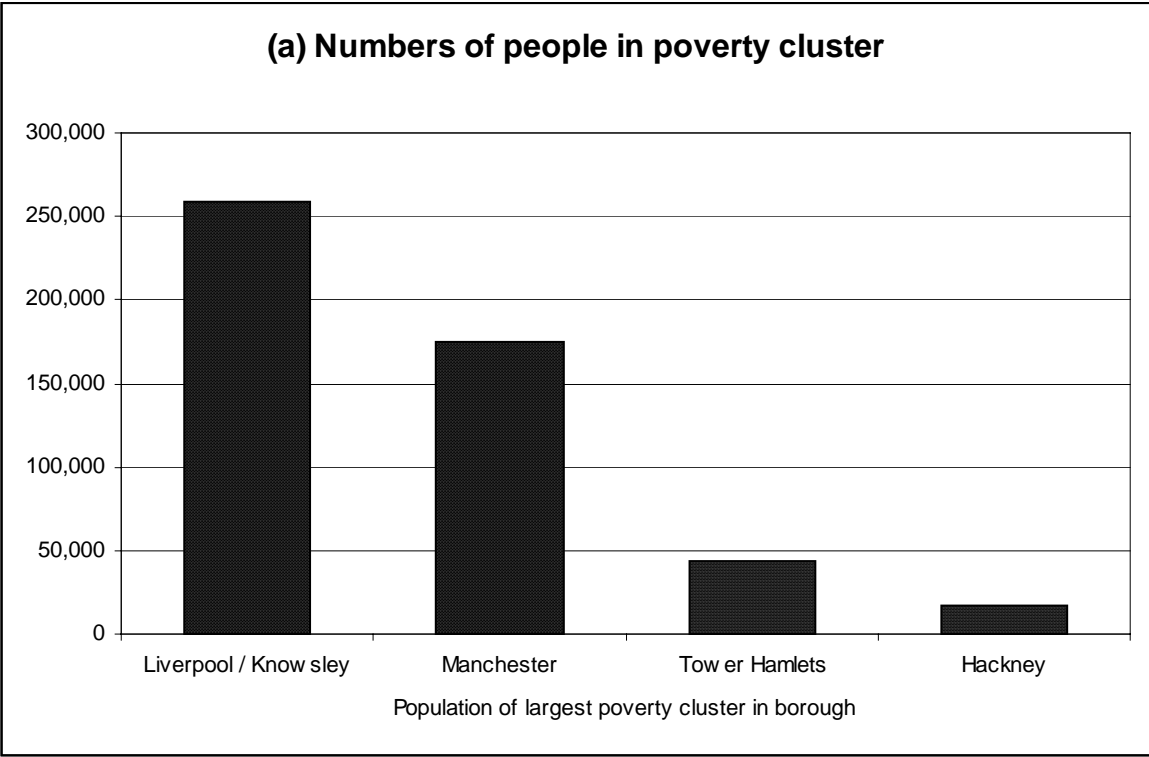
This is important. Chart 4 shows the regional concentrations of poverty (source: CASE, 1998).



The clustering of poverty areas is so strong in some cities that large continuous tracts of concentrated poverty develop. Only 40 of the 284 highest poverty wards in the country are ‘lone’ wards within a local authority. The rest are grouped in 51 “poverty clusters” within cities. Most areas of the country do not have any high poverty wards, though most have *smaller* poorer neighbourhoods.

Clustering is by definition an urban problem. Our work shows that 91% of the people living in poverty wards are concentrated in inner cities, industrial and ex-industrial areas, inner London and ex-coal mining areas. Chart 5a underlines the large numbers of people grouped within poverty clusters, over quarter of a million in Liverpool. Chart 5b shows the proportion of some borough populations concentrated in poverty clusters. In Tower Hamlets it reaches 57% (source: CASE, 1998).

Chart 5: Examples of large clusters of poverty wards in continuous tracts



The impact of poverty clusters in cities

Clusters of poverty matter because all the disadvantages associated with poverty are more concentrated and more extensive, therefore escape becomes more difficult. Large poverty clusters within cities often have a long history and attract powerful stigma, making them hard to change.

They work to limit people's chances in many ways:

- there are less obvious routes out, so more people feel trapped;
- depression and low morale are more common, resulting in lower levels of organisation and initiative and higher levels of frustration, aggression and other negative behaviour;
- parenting is more difficult because of this;
- children's social learning is heavily influenced by surroundings and negative examples;
- schools suffer from low expectations resulting in lower performance and lower employment prospects; they also suffer more disruptive behaviour and higher pupil turnover;
- the high concentration of low-skilled people leads to intense competition for a shrinking pool of low-skill jobs, resulting in lower wages and often complete withdrawal from the labour market;
- the difficulties in accessing jobs help create high levels of early retirement, disability and economic inactivity;
- lower cash incomes affect shops and other services as well as home conditions and ability to support extra activities.

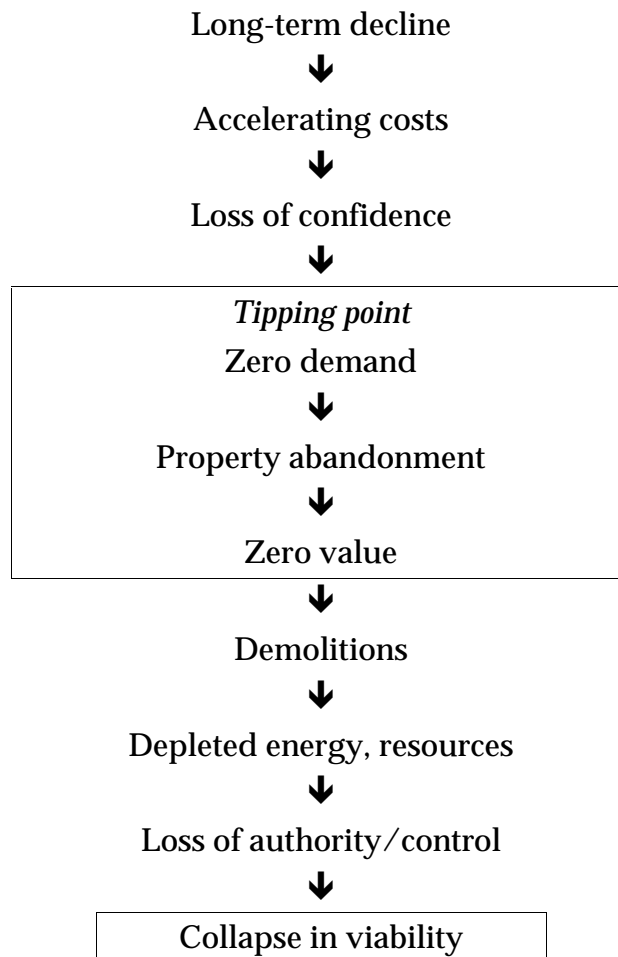
The larger and longer running the area problems, the stronger the cumulative impact becomes, leading to the flight of those more able to go and gradual loss of control resulting from chronic instability. Tipping into chaotic decline becomes more likely as the backbone of a neighbourhood weakens. This makes some areas subject to eventual abandonment (CASE, 1998).

These 'clustering' impacts on people's life chances and on neighbourhood conditions have wider consequences. Being poor in an area with many poor people and poor conditions generates a gradual loss of confidence in 'the system'. In the largest poverty cluster in Newcastle for example, only one in ten people vote. In Hackney and Liverpool the performance of local government has been a source of scandal over several decades. Area depletion leads to inadequate political representation and reduced competition for the role of Councillor. This is now a serious problem in the poorest inner city authorities including inner London. Many conventional forms of involvement do not operate. A sense of failure, rejection and shame over

where people live and belong grows. This undermines hope of change and prevents neighbourhoods from offering that sense of security and commitment that ensure vitality. If not reversed, it leads to a collapse in the housing market at the bottom.

Chart 6 shows how this cumulative process can lead to a collapse in viability if nothing is done to prevent the spiral or reverse the process.

Chart 6: Tipping point in neighbourhood decline



Neighbourhood collapse

A new phenomenon, the complete disintegration of inner city neighbourhoods within some of the biggest poverty clusters is gathering pace across our major cities. It is driven by five interlocking factors:

- The long run movement away from conurbations, although slowing in the 80s and 90s, is still continuing. It creates serious *pressures on green fields* all over the country. Inner cities lose more people than the wider conurbations, particularly in the poorest

neighbourhoods. Whole streets and estates in towns of the North West, North East, West Midlands, South Wales, Yorkshire, Humberside and Clydeside are emptying. But the migration outwards is selective.

- Cities have *double the proportion of council housing* and half the proportion of owner occupation compared with the national average. In the poorest neighbourhoods three-quarters or more of homes are for rent, compared with a third elsewhere. This helps explain many of the large poverty clusters. Demolition of large, unpopular, under-occupied council estates has accelerated in the 90s, including in London. Large estates of social housing are difficult to manage and often difficult to live in, particularly for families with children. Council estates have become increasingly unpopular and stigmatised as they became tied to slum rehousing, then became housing of last resort for people who might otherwise become homeless. By the 1980s, a vast stock of about 10,000 large council estates – nearly 4 million homes – was seen as a fail-safe to house the poor in an increasingly unequal society. The low level of management and repair both reflect and help cause this negative image.
- Many people are *unwilling to risk ownership* in the most acutely declining areas, even when good quality houses with gardens carry massive discounts under the Right to Buy for council tenants. The concentrated poverty prevents many from considering it since the resale value is often zero. Therefore few risk buying. In the areas where owner occupation is most needed to hold onto aspiring households, there is too little real opportunity to buy.
- The collapse of major industries and the outward flow of new investment to the greener and more spacious city hinterland has *devastated city job markets*. In cities like Manchester, Glasgow and Newcastle, up to three-quarters of manual jobs have gone. Hackney has one of the highest unemployment rates in the country. A large population of low-skilled unemployed males is trapped, while women take up many of the new, often part-time, service jobs. Better off people leapfrog the city and commute in, rather than live within declining neighbourhoods. Neighbourhood polarisation then becomes extreme.
- The loss of traditional patterns of work, family and neighbourhood has *fuelled the breakdown of social infrastructure*. Educational performance is only one fifth the national average, while crime, and particularly violence can be four times higher (Power and Tunstall, 1995). Truancy, disorder and youth disaffection

undermine efforts at improvement in schools (Power and Tunstall, 1997). Security is minimal and most forms of guarding such as caretaking have been cut or withdrawn.

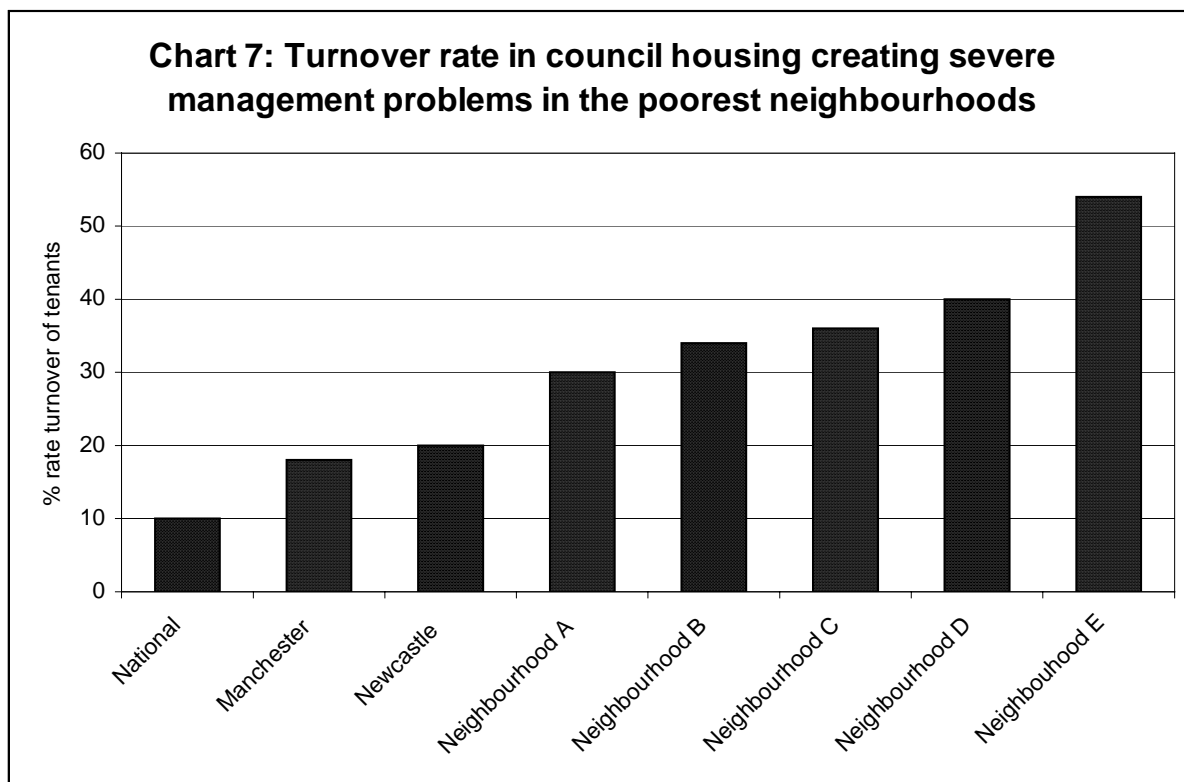
The live political debate on social exclusion constantly returns to conditions within these poorest areas, because multiple problems are so highly concentrated within them. The much higher incidence of neighbourhood conflicts, anti-social behaviour, youth crime, street disorder, disrupted classrooms, shuttered shop-fronts and abandoned property in poorer neighbourhoods is reflected in much higher levels of neighbourhood dissatisfaction (Urban Task Force, 1999). It follows the collapse in confidence and informal controls.

An area can slide from marginal viability towards cumulative collapse. It can happen in deprived areas of prospering cities such as London as well as in declining industrial areas, such as Manchester or Newcastle. It is a problem across cities world-wide as their fortunes rise and fall but it is most acute in older industrial cities, such as in Britain. The Crime and Disorder Act of 1998 proposed significant new powers to restrain anti-social behaviour and serious child offending, precisely because social conditions have disintegrated in some of the highest poverty areas (Power and Mumford, 1999).

David Blunkett and Jack Straw have provoked considerable political controversy around the new powers to evict families for anti-social behaviour. The truth is that social controls have broken down to such a point that only strong security and enforcement measures can contain the fall-out. On their own, these powers are of course insufficient. But they do give a powerful signal to an intimidated community that the wider society cares. The Act also uses the law more even-handedly than in the past to protect vulnerable groups within vulnerable areas from gross abuse, usually by criminals. It is an important beginning to the process of inclusion and greater equality.

Abandonment

Within declining inner neighbourhoods we now experience accelerating turnover of occupants and growing empty property; private withdrawal and growing empty spaces; trouble in the vacuum of collapsing demand. Council tenants generally move less often than other people, but in cities they move more frequently and in the poorest neighbourhoods, most frequently of all. The instability can become unmanageable as chart 7 suggests (source: Power and Mumford, 1999).



In practice many estates are already so unpopular as to be non-viable. Only the very poor, the most vulnerable, move in to replace the more ambitious, more stable residents who feel forced to move in search of greater security. Once abandonment gathers pace it affects all tenures. Some new housing association property has already been demolished in cities in the North through a collapse in demand. Owner occupied streets are also being demolished and some abandoned properties are taken over by private landlords, then let on 100% government subsidy through housing benefit. Chart 8a shows the accelerating pace of abandonment over two years in 4 council estates in Newcastle and Manchester. Chart 8b shows the extraordinary high levels of abandonment among private landlords and housing associations in the same neighbourhoods (Source: Power and Mumford, 1999).

Chart 8a: Rapidly accelerating abandonment in 4 small areas of council property in Newcastle and Manchester

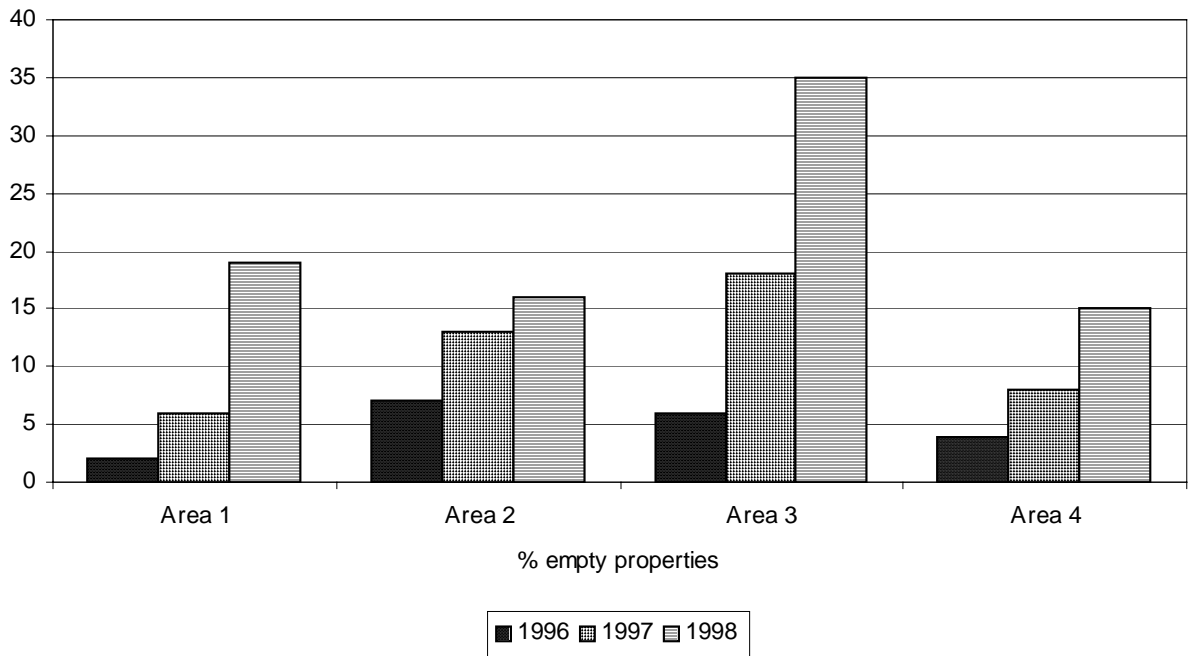
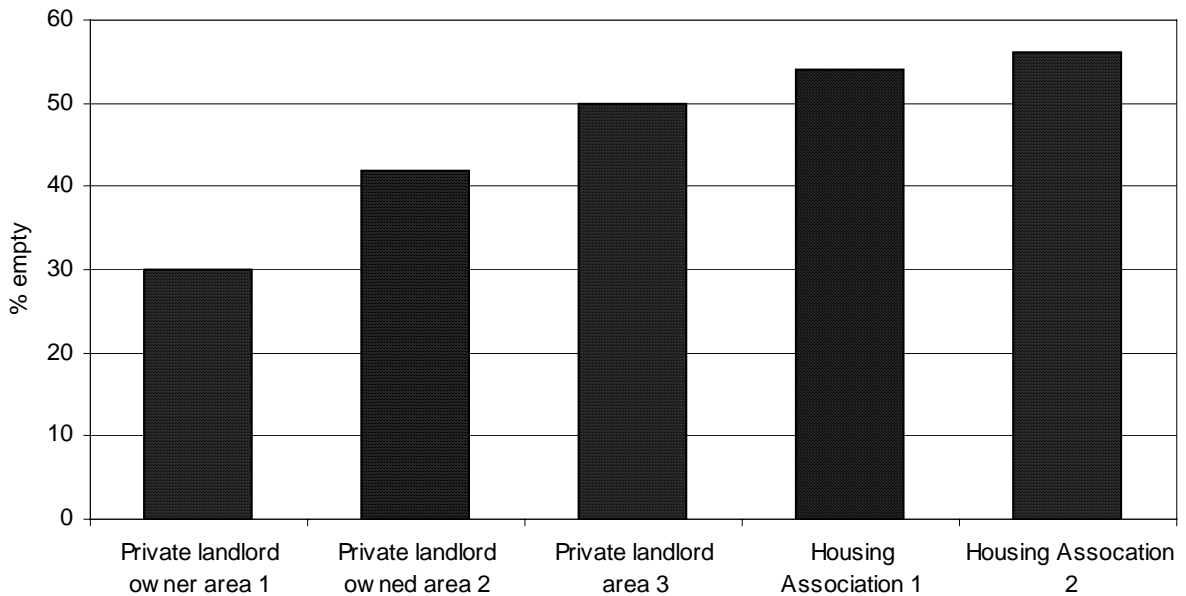


Chart 8b: Empty housing association and privately owned properties in Newcastle and Manchester



The land problem

The breakdown of inner city neighbourhoods is creating demand for a different type of housing in different types of neighbourhood, fuelling planning pressures, building pressures and market supply. As a result land is now being released ahead of demand, anticipating and helping accelerate the urban exodus while creating the ugly problem of sprawl.

There is an unsustainable triple process that results from acute area decline:

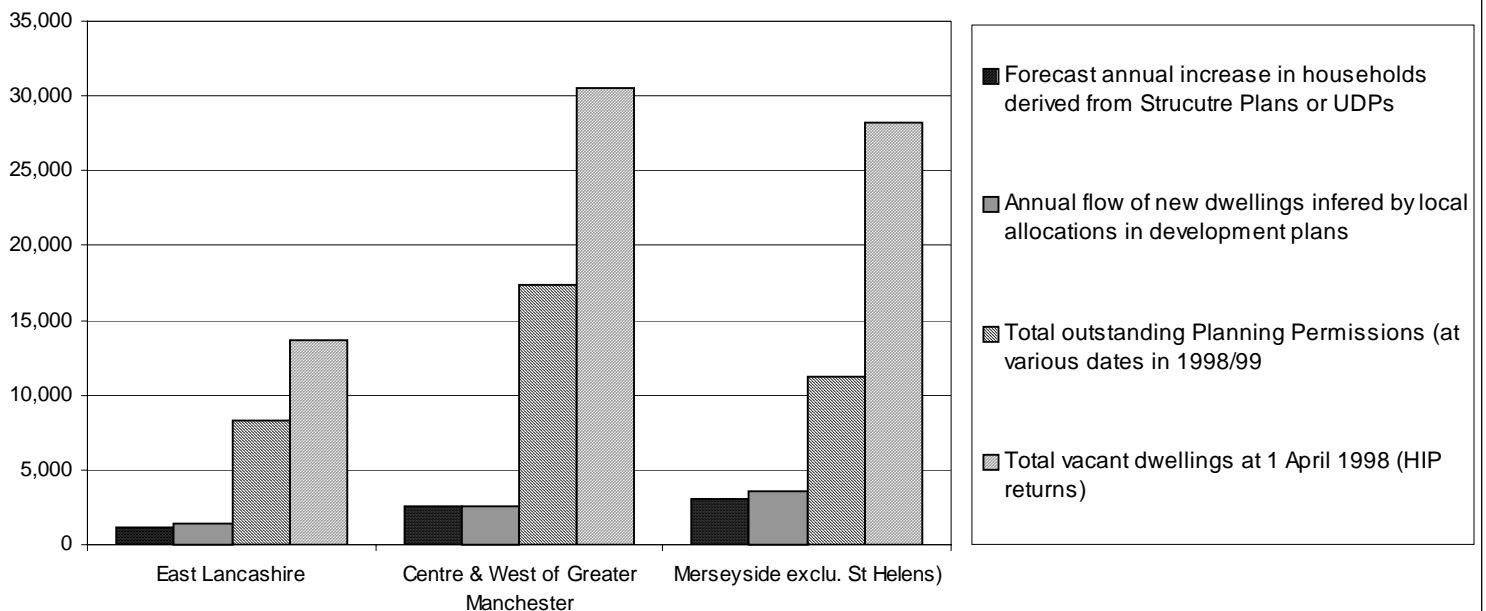
- thinning out the poorest inner city neighbourhoods which have lost their original purpose;
- depleting older cities more generally;
- building outwards on green land at even higher environmental cost to all.

Hence the government's focus on brown-field reuse, recycling empty property and planning for real households rather than projections (SEU/DETR, 1999a).

Britain is extensively built up around all the major conurbations. The higher the land value, the more carefully we use it. Thus London produces 85% of new units on brown-field sites because there is little alternative given the distances and the green belt. This explains both the high levels of concentrated deprivation and the higher than average level of social mixing in most parts of the capital. London is rapidly expanding its use of recycled sites and increasing its generally low density to more sustainable levels. In contrast, Manchester, Birmingham, Newcastle, Glasgow and Liverpool have very large expanses of low value brownfield sites but spread their new buildings into the suburban and semi-rural hinterland, thus creating intense problems of sprawl, and depopulation.

The extremes of low demand in cities are coupled with the over-release of green field land for building. If *current* planning permissions and land releases are kept in place, the large double conurbation of Greater Manchester and Merseyside, is building houses faster than the disputed household projections would require. It has a land supply in the pipeline around ten times the level of projected demand. Yet little account is taken of the large stock of empty but sound property and the disproportionate supply of inner city brownfield land. Chart 9 illustrates the scale of the oversupply of land matched by the extraordinary levels of empty property (source: SEU/DETR, 1999a).

Chart 9: Figures for housing provision based on household projections, actual building, current planning permissions and empty dwellings



Urban sprawl is gobbling up land far faster than we want, yet our planning system is wedded to mechanistic household projections, low density and the over-release of land, trapped between the powerful lobbying forces of builders, aspiring families, housing providers, rural protectionists and urbanites. In our crowded country we continue to spill out of cities, while our depleted inner areas spiral. Therefore urban problems lock into the land problem. As long as people with choice can move out relatively cheaply to safe havens of low density houses, we are unlikely to seek the avant-garde solutions we need to our urban problems or to attract sufficient urban pioneers back into the collapsing inner neighbourhoods.

It is an irony of wealthy societies that spreading out from cities destroys the two objectives that lower density aims to achieve – more manageable cities through lower crowding; and easier access to the green lungs of the city, the countryside. In practice it results in impoverished city neighbourhoods and low-density housing developments in green fields. The Urban Task Force argued in its report to the government this summer that we have no choice but to tackle the land problem and increase density as it affects city neighbourhoods and country villages alike.

City neighbourhoods can be too dense, particularly if they are poor. But our poor neighbourhoods are now too empty, leaving them prey to insecurity, illegal activity and acute depletion of basic services. If we raise our density to a moderate 50 houses per hectare, from our

current average of less than 25, we will halve at a stroke our use of green field land, and begin to recreate a critical mass of people in urban areas that will reinvigorate public transport, education and other services. Islington has around 100-200 homes per hectare and is lastingly popular as its property values show.

Higher densities work with sensitive, skilled, creative urban design. Lower densities often fail through lack of connection. The government chose Richard Rogers, the international architect, to head up the Urban Task Force, precisely because it recognises that the physical and the social dynamics of areas go hand in hand.

Solutions

To reverse exclusion by area which fuels green sprawl, we have to make inner neighbourhoods attractive to far more people. Given that households are much smaller than a generation ago, we have to fit in *many more* households, simply to keep enough *people* for neighbourhoods to work – its shops, buses, doctors, schools, police depend on a critical mass of people and do *not* survive sprawl. So what might work? There are several ways forward that could be implemented by changes in *how* we do things. They require energy and commitment rather than vast cash

- Many cities are now planning large-scale demolition. Demolition of structurally sound and often physically attractive, renovated property appears inevitable in the face of zero demand and zero market value, however outrageous it seems. But planning permission to build ever more outside cities may be driving the problem of abandonment and demolition within. We should *halt land releases* in areas of housing surplus and abandonment, and should create stronger incentives to renovate cities.
- Cleaner, brighter, safer, livelier streets, restored Victorian monuments, canals and warehouses, glamorous new buildings, are luring people back into city centres. Private loft apartments and quayside flats are selling vigorously for high prices within a mile of the emptying city neighbourhoods I have described. If there is *demand for high quality, carefully secured homes in city centres*, then surely we can apply this approach to inner neighbourhoods, attracting urban pioneers who currently chose commuting.
- Since 1930 council housing has gone to those in greatest need. This has created intense polarisation, made much worse by the loss of traditional jobs, the break-up of traditional family patterns, the

rapid expansion of owner occupation and the increase in inequality in the 1980s. Is there a way of preventing ghettoisation? Maximising choice and freedom in council housing, attracting broader income groups, encouraging family and social ties, increasing security and maintenance, breaking up one-class estates into more mixed areas, preventing racial concentrations in the worst estates, are all possible if we *change the way council housing is owned, managed and let* (Power, 1999).

- Many inner city neighbourhoods have high concentrations of ethnic minorities. These areas are crowded and under pressure; but they tend to be more entrepreneurial than many mainly white inner neighbourhoods. The future of cities depends on *supporting and integrating minority communities* within more vibrant, more popular neighbourhoods, alongside the often collapsing white areas (Power and Mumford, 1999).
- Residents within acutely declining areas face an increasingly precarious future. Some argue for new clearances and a clean-sweep approach to regeneration. Many defend their neighbourhoods and hang on for a better future. *Clean sweep solutions are immensely damaging to community ties*, costly and therefore impossible to implement in the several thousand acutely declining neighbourhoods. Holding onto people, developing micro-initiatives within neighbourhoods, *restoring, beautifying and upgrading cities* is surely a more realistic vision than the large-scale disruption of past and often current urban regeneration programmes (Trafford Hall, 1999).
- New Deal for Communities, the government's neighbourhood flagship, will help about 50 neighbourhoods – renewal programmes only ever target a tiny number at a time. We need practicable fundable schemes across every town and city in Britain. The Social Exclusion Unit's "strategy for neighbourhood renewal" should include *neighbourhood "supremos" to trouble-shoot and sort problems out from a local base*. They need to be backed by *neighbourhood wardens and supercaretakers* to secure and sustain improved conditions (SEU/DETR, 1999b; SEU/DETR, 2000).

The government set up the Urban Task Force and the Social Exclusion Unit at different stages in its thinking to propose solutions to the acute problems of city and neighbourhood decline. As I argued at the beginning, the future of cities and the future of neighbourhoods are tied together. We cannot win one battle without the other. The Social Exclusion Unit is working on bold solutions that would fit broadly with the proposals I have outlined. They interlock strongly with the central measures advocated by the Urban Task Force.

Chart 10 summarises some of the main themes and measures presented by the Urban Task Force to the government. Will the government be brave enough to adopt and implement them?

Chart 10: Will the government deliver an urban renaissance? – five key themes and measures from the Urban Task Force

<p>PROTECTING LAND</p> <p>Government will miss its 60% brownfield building target unless we change how we design and recycle buildings, neighbourhoods and open spaces.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit green field land releases – stop green field development in low demand regions and cities • Increase density to retain population with smaller households • Co-ordinate land releases within regions to prevent over supply and city depopulation
<p>CYCLING LAND AND BUILDINGS</p> <p>Derelict, underused, contaminated land and empty, under-occupied buildings create hollow cities. Insecure, neglected environments fuel the urban exodus. Higher density around existing open spaces makes urban areas more lively, attractive, secure and affordable.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design at moderate density to recycle more land and buildings and attract more people to cities – 50 units per hectare • Increase incentives for recycling – equalise VAT on new build & renovation • Clean up all contaminated land by 2030 • Expand urban design skills
<p>PUBLIC AND PEDESTRIAN TRANSPORT</p> <p>Cities are difficult to move around and live in. A huge increase in cars and plummeting journeys on foot, by cycle or bus have made urban neighbourhoods less safe for families, young and elderly households. Commuting may create gridlock.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target 65% of transport spending on public, pedestrian and cycle journeys • Introduce 20 m.p.h. speed limits in residential neighbourhoods • Create Home Zones to give pedestrians full right of way and make streets safer for children • Integrate environmental and transport plans with development plans
<p>SOCIAL PROBLEMS AND URBAN MANAGEMENT</p> <p>Our cities are insecure, dirty, poor. Bad schools and inadequate policing drive people out. The bureaucratic and fragmented role of local authorities weakens urban management and regeneration. It makes joined up action to improve towns and cities difficult. Council estates dominate the poorer urban areas and need special measures.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen the strategic and enforcement roles of local authorities • Open up council housing to a broader band of the population • Encourage mixed income, mixed use, integrated areas – attract private alongside public investment • Create neighbourhood management for inner areas, backed by wardens and supercaretakers • Invent new approaches to school, police & other social problems
<p>ENVIRONMENT</p> <p>Land is scarce in our crowded island. Many find cities and towns decayed, unattractive, congested. Special protections are vital. People want green and safe environments.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect green and open spaces with special measures • Introduce environmental impact fees to minimise damage • Mandate energy and environmental ratings for all homes • Change the real cost of new development

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The State of American Cities

William Julius Wilson

I am very pleased to have the opportunity to address a topic that I am sure will receive increasing attention in the next century – the state of American cities. And one of the issues that will be repeatedly emphasised is city-suburban co-operation. Why? Because “metropolitan solutions have been rediscovered as an answer to the common problems of America’s cities and suburbs” (Katz, 1999: 1). There are three main reasons for this rediscovery:

- (1) the recognition that metropolitan areas constitute the real competitive units in the new economy;
- (2) the growing awareness that complex issues such as air quality and traffic congestion cross political boundaries and are immune to localised fixes; and
- (3) the co-existence of persistent joblessness in the central cities and labour shortages in the suburbs (Katz, 1999).

The major factor unifying the new push for metropolitan solutions is the relentless decentralisation of economic and residential life in the United States. At the metropolitan fringe, shopping malls, housing subdivisions, industrial clusters, and corporate offices grow at an incredible rate. Accordingly, in the new economy, rapidly developing suburbs have become the locus of population growth, employment growth, and wealth creation (Katz, 1999). The older areas – central cities and inner-ring suburbs – are left behind with growing concentrations of poverty, particularly minority poverty, and “without the fiscal capacity to grapple with the consequences: joblessness, family fragmentation, and failing schools” (Katz, 1999: 1).

Since 1960, the proportion of whites inside central cities has decreased steadily, while the proportion of minorities has grown. In 1960, the U.S. population was evenly divided among cities, suburbs, and rural areas. By 1990, the proportion of residents living in both cities and rural areas had declined significantly so much so that the suburbs contained nearly half of the nation's population. Urban residents dipped to only 31 percent of the U.S. population by 1990. Urban areas experienced their greatest population losses in the decade of the 1970s, when central city populations nation-wide barely grew and many large

cities suffered substantial declines in population (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1999).

But, things are beginning to change. Although 14 of the nation's 30 largest cities continued to lose residents during the 1990s, the rate of decline has been slower than in previous decades. For example, Detroit lost more than one-third of its residents during the 1970s and 1980s, but less than 3 percent from 1990 to 1996. Cleveland too lost more than one-third of its residents between 1970 and 1990 but experienced very slight population declines since then. Chicago lost 18 percent of its population from 1970 to 1990, but only 2.3 percent between 1990 and 1996. Moreover, six major central cities that experienced losses in the 1970s gained residents in the 1990s, including cities like New York, San Francisco and Seattle whose populations have been replenished by significant immigration in the 1980s and 1990s (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1999).

Between 1981 and 1996, more than 13 million immigrants came to the United States – the most since the last great immigration waves at the turn of the 20th century (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1999: 19).

Moreover, the relative rate of suburbanisation has slowed. From 1970 to 1980, more than 95 percent of the total metropolitan growth nation-wide was in the suburbs. The suburban share of metropolitan growth remains large, but by 1996 it had dipped to 77 percent (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1999).

Nonetheless, despite the decline in population lost in the major U.S. central cities and despite the slowing of suburbanisation, many small and mid-sized cities in the United States continue to be plagued with serious population loss, even though the overall U.S. population grew rapidly from 1980 to 1996. In the United States as a whole, about one in five central cities continues to suffer serious population loss and a substantial majority of these are small or mid-sized cities, such as East St. Louis, Illinois, Gary, Indiana, Johnstown, Pennsylvania, Youngstown, Ohio, Wheeling, West Virginia, and St. Louis Missouri, cities which recorded population losses ranging from 22 to 30 percent from 1980 to 1996.

Shrinking cities tend to have higher rates of poverty and unemployment than central cities with a growing or stable population base (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1999: 24).

The overall relative decline in the proportion of Americans living in cities is related to changes in the employment base. Beginning in the mid-1970s the employment balance between central cities and suburbs shifted markedly to the suburbs. Manufacturing is now over 70 percent suburban; wholesale and retail trade is just under 70 percent. Since 1980, over two-thirds of employment growth has occurred outside the central city.

As jobs disappear, so does the city's tax base, which, in large part, consists of commercial property – factories, office buildings, shopping malls, and other businesses. The movement of jobs to the suburbs goes hand in hand with the shift of the commercial tax. In the last several years, most central cities faced decreasing means to pay for the costs of schools, welfare, police, and social services. The loss of fiscal capacity and wealth takes its toll over time. For example, six central cities in the state of Ohio saw their share of the region's taxable valuation fall from 53 percent in 1948 to 22 percent in 1996, while the outer suburbs' share exploded from 32 percent to 61 percent during this period (Katz, 1999: 4).

If declining opportunities for employment in the central cities have been notable, the growth of concentrated poverty has been even more dramatic. High-poverty neighbourhoods, in which at least 40 percent of the residents live in poverty, have grown at an alarming rate. Between 1970 and 1990, the population in the high poverty metropolitan neighbourhoods – be they black ghettos, Latino barrios, or even white slums – grew by 92 percent. Eight million people now live in these high-poverty metropolitan areas, and nearly all the growth in poverty-impaired areas has occurred in central cities and inner-ring suburbs, which suffer from middle-class flight and commercial decay (Jargowsky, 1997).

It is important to note that the increase in the number of residents in high-poverty neighbourhoods – and especially in black ghettos, which account for roughly half of all high-poverty areas – is strongly related to the geographical spread of these neighbourhoods. In other words, the number of persons living in ghettos grew not because more people moved into them, “but because the poverty spread to more and more neighbourhoods” (Jargowsky, 1997: 35).

The exodus of the non-poor from mixed income areas was a major factor in the spread of ghettos during the 1970s.

The geographic spread of poverty neighbourhoods also has a powerful impact on the way others perceive the magnitude of the problems of urban privation and decay. As middle-and working-class

citizens classify more and more city neighbourhoods as “dangerous”, the ghetto tracts fall into a seemingly irreversible isolation. How far out of the way will citizens drive to avoid these areas (Jargowsky, 1994)?

Finally, the increased concentrations of poverty have resulted in higher taxes for the people and businesses that remain in cities. Rising taxes increase the incentives of well-paid individuals and businesses to leave the city. As Bruce Katz of the Brookings Institution puts it:

the growing spatial isolation of the urban poor and the continued exodus of middle class families and low-skilled jobs to the outer fringes of metropolitan areas fuel a powerful dynamic of urban decline that is hard to break (Katz, 1999: 7).

The demographic changes in American cities are related to the cities declining influence in the determination of domestic policy, and these changes contributed to the rise of the New Federalism. Beginning in 1980, the federal government drastically decreased its support for basic urban programs. The Reagan and Bush administrations – proponents of the New Federalism, which insisted on localised responses to social problems – sharply cut federal spending on direct aid to cities, including general revenue sharing, urban mass transit, public service jobs and job training, compensatory education, social service block grants, local public works, economic development assistance, and urban development action grants (Caraley, 1992). In 1980 the federal contribution to city budgets was 18 percent; by 1990 it had dropped to 6.4 percent.

In general, state governments have not compensated cities for these cuts in direct federal aid. City governments have therefore had to rely increasingly on local taxes. But as economic activity and wealth shifted increasingly to the suburbs, incomes in cities declined. Note that in 1973 average per capita income between cities and suburbs was nearly equal; by 1989 the average city income had dipped 16 percent below that of the suburbs (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1997). With a declining tax base and loss of federal funds, many city governments experienced difficulty in raising sufficient revenue to pay the cost for basic services. Cities often avoided bankruptcy court by cutting services. For example, many public schools were unable to upgrade their facilities, attract talented administrators and teachers, or even purchase new textbooks throughout the 1980s (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1997).

As the social and political forces turned against the cities, businesses became more reluctant to invest in urban areas. All of these social and economic changes have resulted in a decline in the quality of urban life. Pollution has spread and services have fallen away. And although violent crime and drug use and abuse have decline in the last few years, the city is still perceived by many as a dangerous place to live (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1997). For all these reasons many urban residents, especially those in the nation's largest cities, moved, if they had the choice, to outlying sections of metropolitan areas.

From 1989 to 1996, more than twice as many upper- and middle-income households (7.4 million) left cities for suburbs, as did those that moved from suburbs to cities (3.5 million). The central cities in the United States have become the home of a growing proportion of those who make use of welfare, subsidised medical assistance, and other social services. The proportion of central city population who are poor increased from 14.2 percent in 1970 to 19.6 percent in 1996 (Katz, 1999). Minorities are disproportionately represented among those with incomes below the officially designated poverty line

The political fragmentation of many metropolitan areas in the United States has contributed to the problems of joblessness and related social dislocations of the inner-city poor. As David Rusk (1993), the former mayor of Albuquerque has pointed out, because the older cities of the East and the Midwest were unable to expand territorially through city-county consolidation or annexation, they failed to reap such benefits of suburban growth as the rise of shopping malls, offices, and industrial parks in new residential subdivisions. As areas in which poor minorities live in higher and higher concentration, these cities face an inevitable downward spiral because they are not benefiting from suburban growth. Rusk argues, therefore, that neighbourhood revitalisation programs, such as community development banks, non-profit inner-city housing developments, and enterprise zones, will not be able

to reverse the downward slide of inner cities” if they are not carried out within “a framework of actions to bring down the walls between city and suburb (Rusk, 1993: 121).

Efforts to promote city and suburban co-operation will not benefit cities alone. There is growing evidence that cities and suburbs are economically interdependent. For example, recent research indicates that the higher the ratio of city to suburb per capita income, the higher the percent of metropolitan employment growth and income growth,

and the greater the increase in housing values. Moreover, research reveals that improvements in central city capital stock also increases suburban housing values suggesting, as one author put it, “that suburban residents may have an incentive to increase contributions toward city infrastructure” (Gottlieb, 1998). Furthermore, research indicates that the reduction of central city poverty is associated with increases in metropolitan income growth, and that central city job growth increases the value of suburban properties (Gottlieb, 1998).

In the global economy, metropolitan regions continue to compete for jobs. There is a growing awareness in the United States that in an era of low transportation and information costs, high mobility and intense global competition, a metropolitan region is at a severe competitive disadvantage if it lacks a healthy urban core.

In a global economy, firms choose among regions – and the health of the central city is a key factor in deciding which region is best. Even firms that choose to relocate to the suburbs will choose areas surrounding a vibrant central city (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1999: 19).

Metropolitan areas that will remain or become competitive are those with a well-trained workforce, good schools, a concentration of professional services, first-class hospitals, a major university and research centre, and an efficient transportation network to link executives with other parts of the United States and with countries around the world. However, many of these elements cannot come solely from suburbs. They require a viable central city (Bok, 1994). It is important for Americans to realise that city-suburban *integration* is the key to the health of metropolitan regions and to the nation as a whole.

Bruce Katz and Jennifer Bradley have remarked that “so much of the unhappiness of the cities is also the unhappiness of the suburbs” (Katz and Bradley, 1999). The image of the metropolitan area is changing in the United States. The familiar perception of a beleaguered urban core surrounded by prosperous suburbs is giving way to a new picture of the metropolitan area in which both urban and suburban communities suffer from rapid growth in places that are undeveloped and slower growth or even absolute decline in older areas. A growing number of observers now think about cities and suburbs as related, not antithetical, as comprising a single economic and social reality. This vision is called metropolitanism (Katz and Bradley, 1999).

The vision of metropolitanism recognises that the dichotomy between cities and suburbs is frequently drawn too sharply, often leading one to overlook the new reality: namely, that suburbs today are not an undifferentiated band of safe and prosperous white, communities. Indeed, there are two major kinds of suburbs. On the one hand, there are the older inner-suburbs frequently adjacent to the city. They feature crumbling tax bases, growing concentrations of poor children in the public schools, eroding job markets, population decline, crime, disinvestment and increasingly deserted commercial districts. On the other hand, there are the newer or outer suburbs. They are gaining economically, but they are “straining under sprawling growth, that creates traffic congestion, overcrowded schools, loss of open spaces, and other sprawl-related problems and a lack of affordable housing” (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1999: 31). As Katz and Bradley put it they are

choking on development, and in many cases the local governments cannot provide the services that residents need or demand (Katz and Bradley, 1999).

The vision of metropolitanism foresees a policy agenda that changes the rules of the development game, pools metropolitan resources, gives people access to all areas in the metropolis, and reforms governance (Katz and Bradley, 1999). Reforms put forward to achieve the objective of city-suburban co-operation range from proposals to create metropolitan governments to proposals for metropolitan tax base sharing, collaborative metropolitan planning, and the creation of regional authorities to develop solutions to common problems if communities fail to reach agreement.

Among the problems shared by many metropolises is a weak public transit system. A commitment to address this problem through a form of city-suburban collaboration would benefit residents of both the city and the suburbs. Theoretically, everyone would benefit from mobility within the metropolitan areas, and inner-city residents would have greater means to prevent high joblessness.

But, one factor that hinders mobility is urban sprawl. It is generally recognised that public investment in core infrastructure improvements in roads, transit, sewers, and utilities are important for private investment. Indeed private investment relies heavily on core infrastructure maintenance and improvement (Richmond, 1997). But, what is not generally recognised is that core infrastructure investments, in turn, are dependent on factors of density and distance for their initial

feasibility and efficient operation. However, urban sprawl has made public investment in core infrastructure more costly and difficult. From 1970 to 1990, the urbanised area of American metropolitan regions expanded from eight to fifteen times as fast as population growth (Richmond, 1997).

The strains that urban sprawl places on the core infrastructure are felt in many ways. As industrial and residential development sprawls across an ever-broadening geographical area, more transportation costs and inefficiency are imposed on business, more urban minorities are further removed from access to jobs, and more pollution and destruction of natural resources occur over a wider area (Richmond, 1997).

Traffic congestion is a worsening problem as sprawl raises the number and length of automobile trips. Even minor suburban roadways have become channels for thousands of commuters to and from new office complexes, factories and shopping malls. Urban road congestion increased by more than 22 percent between 1982 and 1994, and traffic congestion grew worse in forty-two major metropolitan areas between 1988 and 1994. In the fifty largest metropolitan areas travel delay and added fuel consumption imposed excess costs of \$51 billion in 1993, a increase of 6 percent from 1992 (Katz, 1999).

Persistent traffic jams used to be a problem in a handful of cities such as Los Angeles and New York. Now congested freeways are a national epidemic (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1999: 36).

Unfortunately, a severely inadequate public transit system in the United States not only increases reliance on automobiles, it also makes it difficult for those without cars, particularly inner-city residents, to get to suburban jobs. For example, after a one-hour transit commute, welfare recipients in Boston accessed only 14 percent of the entry-level jobs in the fast-growth areas in the metropolitan region. In the Atlanta metropolitan area less than one-half of the entry level jobs are located within a quarter mile of a public transit system (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1999).

Racial and ethnic segregation, which restricts minority access to suburban housing, exacerbated the situation. As a result, African Americans and Hispanics bear the brunt of employment losses due to discrepancies in rates of central city and suburban job growth. Moreover, the problems of job mismatch are compounded by shortages of affordable housing and high rentals in growing suburban areas with better job markers.

There are also significant fiscal costs associated with urban sprawl. Total spending on bridges, roads, sewers, and other public capital escalates because of the high cost of extending existing networks and constructing new systems. Road costs are 25 to 33 percent higher, utility costs 18 to 25 percent higher, and municipal and school district operate 3 to 11 percent higher in communities marked by sprawl than in those that are sprawl free (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1999: 35).

However, “the costs of sprawl extend beyond fiscal disparities and racial and social separation. All families living in a region are affected as traffic congestion worsens, open space and farmland vanish, and a sense of community disappears” (Katz, 1999: 1). Even suburbanites see the adverse effects of sprawl on their own lives. Indeed, studies reveal that an increasing number of both suburban and urban businesses and households recognise these costs and are interested in changing the policies that facilitate urban sprawl (Katz, 1999; U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. 1999 1999).

It seems to me that an on-going public discussion of the effects of urban sprawl on families, institutions, and neighbourhoods is an important issue that could bring together groups not only from different racial and ethnic backgrounds, but from different economic class backgrounds as well.

I have discussed a vision of metropolitanism, a vision in which the metropolitan region is seen as comprising a single economic and social reality. People who hold such a vision clearly see the advantages of overcoming the city/suburban dichotomy. This is perhaps the best time to promote such a vision in the United States. After years of steady urban decline, the prolonged economy recovery has recently improved situations in central cities making them more attractive as partners in urban/suburban collaborations. Central-city unemployment has declined dramatically from 8.6 percent in 1992 to 5.1 percent in 1998. And unemployment in the nation’s fifty largest cities fell from 8.6 percent in 1992 to 4.9 percent in 1998, a decline that exceeded the decreases in unemployment in the cities’ surrounding suburbs.

The positive effects of these changes are seen in even the most depressed parts of the city. A new study by the economists Richard Freeman and William M. Rogers of low-wage workers in 322 metropolitan areas, reveals that black men aged 16 to 24 with a high school education or less—including many with prison records – are employed in greater numbers, earning larger paycheques and committing fewer crimes than in the early 1990s. Although far too many

of these young men are still jobless or in prison, the rise in legitimate employment has accompanied a drop in criminal activity. Indeed, crime has fallen most rapidly in regions with the sharpest declines in joblessness. (Freeman and Rogers, 1999; Nasar and Mitchell, 1999).

Big cities are indeed becoming safer. The FBI crime index dropped 5.8 percent between 1994 and 1997 for the nation as a whole, but crime fell even more in cities with a population of over one million, and the steepest declines were the violent crimes of murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1999: 21-22.).

Another positive sign, as stated previously, is the narrowing gap in population growth between the cities and suburbs. Finally, in many cities fiscal conditions have improved significantly over the past six years due to the economic recovery. Wall Street rating bonds issued to finance infrastructure and other capital improvements in cities have been upgraded, a clear reflection of the cities' improved fiscal outlook. The better rating bonds mean that cities pay investors a lower interest rate for the bonds they sell. The millions of dollars in added revenue can be used for vital service and infrastructure improvements, investments in schools, and even tax cuts for businesses and residents (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1999).

Promoters of the vision of metropolitanism need to take advantage of the improving situation in cities. They can advance a more positive image of cities as they work to bring about the integration of cities and suburbs. The future of metropolitan regions in the U. S. as well as the social inclusion of its disadvantaged urban residents may very well depend upon the success of their efforts.

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