Suburban Verticalisation in London:
Regeneration, Intra-urban Inequality, and Social Harm

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Abstract

With the rapid and large-scale expansion of new developments of high-rise flats, London's outer boroughs are seeing a suburban growth not seen since the 1930s. The objectives of this mass verticalisation are similar to the suburbanisation that occurred in the interwar period in aiming to provide housing to a growing urban population. However, beyond the demographic imperative, other economic, sociocultural, and political processes come into play as they did in the past. Considering spatial, social, and material transformations, the paper is concerned with a combination of factors, actors, structures, and processes in this initial analysis of the new vertical suburbs of London. With this combined perspective, the analysis contributes to critical debates in criminology that are expanding to issues of social harm and social exclusion in the capitalist city. In this paper, I interrogate the fact that an increase of the housing stock only partially addresses the housing crisis in London as the problem of the provision of social housing is becoming increasingly limited under tight budget constraints and a financial structure that relies on and facilitates the involvement of the private sector in the delivery and management of housing. I also question the promises of regeneration solutions through new-build gentrification, which have proved ineffective in other urban contexts and should be examined further in the context of London suburbs, where the scale of construction is unprecedented and exacerbates inequalities that have long been overlooked when the focus has been on inner boroughs and their gentrification.

Introduction

Following the Conservative party general election victory in 2019, Boris Johnson, as newly elected Prime Minister, announced that the main economic objective of the government under his leadership would be towards "levelling up" policies. Boris Johnson is very adept at delivering catchphrases and this one is meant to capture and target the national disparity in the UK economy between different regions, particularly characterised by a North-South divide. Whether or not the government's plans will ever be able to level up the geographical inequalities that have been growing over the years is debatable. The rich and powerful London and its neighbouring regions appear to be consistently widening the gap with the rest of the country (The Economist, 2020). The capital is, however, not a homogeneous powerhouse and the intention to level up should also consider intra-urban inequalities. The Grenfell Tower tragedy has exemplified the contrasts present within the same neighbourhood in "a city for capital, not people" (Atkinson, 2017). Three years later, the tower is still wrapped in a building cover – its spectral presence in distinct contrast with the shiny new high-rises that are being built at great pace in its vicinity on both sides of the Westway (or A40 – the main artery connecting the London Inner Ring Road to the West London suburbs). London has always been marked by disparities but the shapes they take are defined by their epoch, and it is now imperative to turn to the suburbs as some of the outer boroughs are increasingly and consistently performing poorly in regard to different socio-economic factors highlighting their growing pauperisation. Meanwhile, they are seeing exponential growth of their housing stock.

Suburbs in the UK have long been overlooked in urban studies and more research is required on spatial shifts of poverty and the suburbanisation of poverty. The image of leafy suburbs of middle-class aspiration has remained a dominant representation despite pockets of poverty always existing alongside the wealthier neighbourhoods of Victorian villas and 1930s semi-detached and detached housing. Randolph rightfully pointed out that "the disadvantaged in the suburbs are a long way from the city leaders and elites – out of political sight, out of political mind" (Randolph, 2017, p. 173), and that:

> It was not just spacious houses for the middle classes that were being built, but also very large estates of council housing, which had a particular demographic profile and posed distinct challenges for urban regeneration today (Jones & Evans, 2013, p. 189).

If the suburbs have never solely been the realm of petit-bourgeois expressions of social mobility and in many ways also served to alleviate demographic pressure in the insalubrious inner cities, they have recently experienced growing pauperisation. Bailey and Minton (2017) have confirmed the suburbanisation of poverty in the UK's 25 largest cities, notably as a result of a redistribution of urban poverty. Randolph argued that in the neoliberal city the "changing spatial location of urban disadvantage" needs to be analysed in relation to the "market-driven processes logically result[ing] in a reformation of the patterns of urban segregation, reflecting changes in the distribution of income and wealth" (Randolph, 2017, p. 159). Market-driven changes in the housing system, coupled with changes to social and housing policies and generally an increasing withdrawal of the welfare state, have incurred a displacement of urban poverty. In London in particular, populations on lower incomes have been dispersed as a result of the gentrification of inner boroughs and the consequent rising costs of real estate and of living in neighbourhoods attracting increasingly wealthier residents. This is what was termed by the *Economist* as the "great inversion" (The Economist, 2013).

Interestingly, the outer boroughs of Brent and Harrow very quickly saw the highest numbers of COVID-19 cases, raising a number of questions regarding poverty, poor housing, and health conditions in these suburban areas. Set up two months before the outbreak, The Brent Poverty Commission has highlighted growing poverty exaggerated by a severe shortage of social housing forcing people into overpriced, overcrowded, and poorly regulated private property (The Brent Poverty Commission, 2020). Brent ended up recording the worst death rate of any local authority in England and Wales, with the BAME population, representing a high proportion of the borough, being the worst hit (Butler, 2020). Further studies are required to make sense of this relationship in the particular context of the outer boroughs, the quality of their habitats, and their densification, but COVID-19 has already been a major revealer of suburban deprivation and it is also predicted to have lasting economic impacts on

some of these areas. The West London Alliance was established, for instance, to tackle the economic recovery of West London, which has been hit the hardest by COVID-19 and has already seen a dent in its GVA (gross value added), which used to be bigger than "Birmingham, Leeds, and Glasgow combined" (see West London Alliance, 2020).

Despite growing difficulties experienced at the level of intra-urban and even intra-suburban inequality exacerbated by a consistent lack of investment in the outer boroughs (Huq, 2020), many suburban areas in London are seeing a fast-paced and large-scale expansion of their housing stock that is aimed to meet the demand of the 2018 Housing Strategy organised around the regeneration of council estates and brownfield sites through new-build gentrification in a private-public partnership. In this paper, I question this agenda and the fact that an increase of the housing stock only partially addresses the housing crisis in London when the problem of the provision of social and truly affordable housing is becoming increasingly limited under tight budget constraints and a financial structure that relies on and facilitates the involvement of the private sector in the delivery and management of housing. This agenda also promises regeneration solutions through new-build gentrification of securitised and privatised high-rise blocks of flats: a global type of regeneration or revitalisation which has already proved problematic in other municipalities in different national contexts (Davidson & Lees, 2005; Kern, 2007; Smith, 2002). Analysing in Toronto the "ways in which the neoliberal political-economic rationality underlying condominium development translates into changes in the ways that (…) – women condominium owners – conceptualise their relationship to their homes, their neighbourhoods, and the city at large", Kern argues that "it is important to pay attention to [new-built gentrification of high-rise flats] as a potentially more insidious and far-reaching form of revanchist urbanism" (Kern, 2007, p. 658). The problem has evidently been posed in other urban contexts but also needs to be addressed in the particular context of suburbs where increasing levels of poverty and crime have not been sufficiently identified. In these circumstances, different groups are aiming to get their voices heard, to contribute to, and ultimately benefit from, the changes. However, there are growing inequalities amongst low-income populations in their access to political and economic resources. I will notably point out the case of temporary tenants who are particularly vulnerable to a system reliant on the private sector and left in limbo between one temporary accommodation and the next. I explore these aspects through case studies of suburban developments in the boroughs of Barnet, Brent, and Harrow, where I have been conducting research since 2012. London is constituted by different types of suburbs and I concentrate on suburbs situated to the North (Colindale) and North-West (Harrow and Wembley) of the city (see map). The north-western suburbs in particular were referred to as "Metroland". Initially built in Victorian times, they were developed further in the interwar period with the expansion of public railway transport.
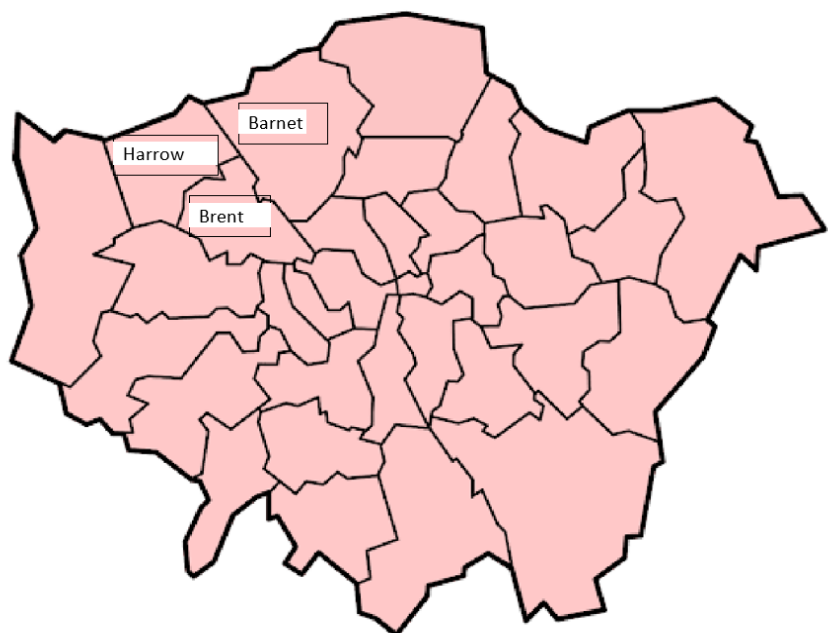

Figure 1
Map of London's Boroughs Highlighting the Three Where my Research Takes Place

Methodology

The argument developed in this paper stems from an ongoing multi-sited ethnography (Marcus, 1995) conducted in different locations in suburbs of North and North-West London and using a range of methods. For Marcus, a multi-sited ethnography is particularly apt for addressing the complexity of researching issues in a "capitalist political economy" (Marcus, 1995, p. 96) and can be defined as "strategies of quite literally following connections, associations, and putative relationships (…)" (Marcus, 1995, p. 97). Since 2012, my fieldwork has taken me to different suburban locations in London and the use of a combination of qualitative methods. I have also recently been working on the development of a large-scale questionnaire, which has been commissioned by the Colindale Communities Trust (a one-stop shop based on the Grahame Park Estate in Barnet) and has been collaboratively designed with residents, who are receiving community research training. The Grahame Park Estate is awaiting regeneration and is in a dire state of neglect and deprivation. I am also involved in research on the Grange Farm Estate in Harrow, where the regeneration has begun. I concentrate on the activities and histories of the Grange Farm Steering Group. The residents of this group have been involved in the regeneration process from the beginning and are committed to remaining so throughout the four different phases of reconstruction and beyond. In parallel, I have been looking at the new-build redevelopment of brownfield sites in Barnet, Brent, and Harrow. Over the years, I have regularly used photography to explore and document changes in the landscape and I have collected secondary data such as official documents and brochures as well as working with archives at the Museum of Domestic Architecture (MoDA).

My fieldwork has been a mixture of professional and personal involvement as a researcher as well as a resident of the suburbs. Indeed, I regularly attend public consultations and residents' action group meetings, and I have been an active member of the Harrow Residents Regeneration Panel since 2018. The panel plays a consultative role with the intention of bringing in a critical voice to the projects proposed by the Council. The residents bring in a range of expertise to these panels. In the past eight years, I have also lectured at two universities located in suburban areas in London (Middlesex University in Hendon and Brunel University in Uxbridge) and I have incorporated this environment in my teaching and in the assessment of students (Peyrefitte, 2018; Peyrefitte & Lazar, 2018).

This multi-sited ethnography works hand in hand with a theoretical framework that aims to "adopt a more integrated and comprehensive understanding of how cities operate and also the deeper interests and generative inequalities produced in and through their everyday life" (Atkinson & Millington, 2019, p. 7). Urban criminology draws on the interdisciplinarity of urban studies and the potential to envisage, as Atkinson and Millington (2019) further argue, that:

> [t]hese entanglements of social and material forces and symbolic constructs suggest a need to be interested in the layout, planning, and physical variability of cities, and the ways that these may in turn be generative of, or protective against, harms. (Ibid.)

Critical urbanism, in particular, offers a trope on which urban criminology can ground itself as it considers the complexity with which we ought to analyse cities in light of, amongst other things, urban political economy, capital accumulation, and social inequalities and forms of social exclusion. Complementary praxis such as assemblage thinking also offers an interesting perspective in reinforcing critical urbanism (McFarlane, 2011) that forces us to envisage the way "urban actors, forms, or processes are defined less by pre-given property and more by the assemblages they enter and reconstitute" (McFarlane, 2011, p. 208). Whether through assemblage or not, urban criminology, as a developing field, must in all cases adopt a combined vision of the way different spatial, social, and material factors, actors, structures, and processes are interrelated in order to uncover the social harms incurred by urban transformations under different (capitalist) forces. A critical urban criminology problematises the relationship between housing systems, material inequalities, and the orderly or disorderly city, as Atkinson and Millington (2019) put it. In analysing the new forms and geographies of power that are being erected through mass verticalisation in London's outer boroughs, I pay particular attention to the imbrication of housing policies, the political economy of housing (its financialisation and privatisation), the order of space and its design (individualisation, privatisation, and securitisation

of residential spaces) reinforced by state policing strategies. All these aspects are intertwined in the constitution of space that can be generative of social harm and social exclusion. It must nonetheless be stressed that urban communities do not passively accept transformations and changes, even if they have varying degrees of political and economic resources in resisting and making their voices heard and their interests considered.

Housing Shortage and Suburban Mass Verticalisation

In 2018, claiming that "[e]veryone should have a place to call home", the Mayor of London set out the London Housing Strategy to respond to a major housing shortage in the capital. The Implementation Plan of this Strategy requires the boroughs to deliver 649,350 net housing completions over ten years (Greater London Authority, May 2018). The plan places a particular emphasis on the outer boroughs as they provide a spatial opportunity to respond to the demographic pressure of the "housing crisis" (Booth, 2017). As such, London is experiencing a suburban growth not seen since the mass suburban-isation of the 1930s. This time the growth is mostly vertical and can be described as "flatted suburbs" (Mace, 2013). The regeneration of Wembley and Colindale, as two of the largest projects in the coun-try, are striking examples of the mass verticalisation taking place in London at the moment. Wembley will accommodate approximately 11,500 new homes once completed (Brent Council, 2020). Similarly, the regeneration of Colindale will account for 10,170 new homes (Barnet Council, 2020).

Vertical densification in London, especially in the outer boroughs, cannot simply be envisaged as a solution to the housing shortage that the capital is suffering from, while respecting the boundaries of its green belt, which prevents further suburban sprawl. In an age of capitalist urbanisation, the marketisation and financialisation of the new developments question the limits to which they are serving the purpose of fulfilling housing needs and certainly of those who are most in need of it. It is another case of new-build gentrification aiming to meet regeneration needs but running the risk of being exclusionary. In the outer boroughs, the focus has been on the regeneration of brownfield sites as well as on the para-public regeneration of council estates. In recent years, austerity measures have put some councils under major financial strain. As a result, they have operated a mixed housing pol-icy of redevelopment in partnership with the private sector as a way to subsidise the regeneration of what is left of their social housing stock. At times they even find themselves in a vicious cycle of selling their housing stock on the one hand, while on the other hand having to purchase properties at full market value (in some cases outside the boundaries of the borough, resulting in further displacement of social housing tenants). Caught in this financial vicious cycle, some boroughs are having to make a drastic financial effort, even though it only represents a "small recalibration" (Boughton, 2019), in order to provide new social housing for which they are struggling to meet the demand.

Overall, councils are meeting the demand for housing (social or not) by calling on the private sec-tor through competitive bidding to deliver and later manage the projects. In Colindale, for instance, the three principal developments (Beaufort Park, Colindale Gardens, and Fairview) are being devel-oped by companies listed on the Stock Exchange as FTSE 250 companies. The interests of private developers whose game is in some cases played on the stock market appear to be in conflict with the public good, which should determine the provision of housing in a housing crisis. Often advertised as "villages" and with other pastoral connotations, the promotion materials of these new develop-ments, including highlighting their properties as investment opportunities, barely hide the mecha-nisms of the marketisation and the financialisation of housing through verticalisation. Nethercote (2018) theorises "high-rise development within the circuitry of capitalist accumulation" (2018, p. 657). In "developing an explanatory conceptual schema", she identifies three interrelated functions as "[l]abour- and capital-intensive commodities; as investments on real estate markets; and as cultural artefacts of distinction both in intercity competition and geopolitics, and in class relations" (2018, p. 657). In London, as in other global cities, vertical expansion, as being capital driven, is not just a fix to a housing crisis, but a spatial fix for the absorption of surplus capital and must indeed be read within the workings of political economy. In central London, the new high-rises are clearly aimed at a global elite of rich and super-rich. The picture is not so clear-cut in suburban new-build gentrification, and

capital investors are tapping into other growing property markets as well as the fact that boroughs have to quantitatively meet the demands of the Mayor's Housing Strategy. The new blocks of flats are aiming to be attractive to a range of customers, appealing to investors and future homeowners as well as more temporary residents such as students and a mobile cosmopolitan class of young professionals. In Wembley, the new development not only includes traditional flats, but also purpose-built student accommodation (see Hubbard, 2009 on purpose-built student accommodation and gentrification) as well as a new model of rental accommodation delivered by "Quintain Living" formerly known as "TIPI". The Quintain Living apartments are entirely furnished and decorated in partnership with brands like John Lewis and Samsung. They do not require a deposit but the monthly rent, starting at £1,600 and going up to £4,500, is expensive, albeit inclusive of all utilities. Rentability and profit on these properties are guaranteed by a turnover of desirable temporary residents paying high rents for flexible, high-specification accommodation.

The new accommodation in the outer boroughs is also generally more affordable than the luxury developments being built in the central parts of the city. These developments are therefore seen to efficiently respond to the Mayor's housing strategy with the opportunity to provide more affordable housing in very close proximity to the transport system which is under growing pressure. Stress is also observed in other public infrastructure and services such as schools and health providers as the construction of new housing does not always equate to additional public infrastructure. Some of the suburban developments are in some cases advertised as 100% affordable and more generally offer accommodation through the government-created Help to Buy schemes such as Shared Ownership, allowing people to purchase as little as of 25% of their home and pay the rest in rent. Some offer affordable rent and in some cases even retain some social rent units. Affordability is, however, relative as it is based on average London prices and too often remains inaccessible, notably to key workers.

Overall, the way these new-build developments are responding to the housing crisis is questionable as they often correspond to the production of new spaces for capital accumulation and investment as well as privatisation of the housing stock with an increasing withdrawal of local authorities from the provision of social housing. The notion of affordability is also too relative for these new developments to be truly and widely accessible. In the next section, I look at the resulting drastic social and material changes taking place in the suburbs transforming their landscape and their modes of living as a promise of regeneration.

Social and Material Changes in the Suburbs: Privatisation, Individualisation, and Securitisation

The aesthetic and the architecture of these new developments often correspond to the new London housing vernacular of bricks and simple modern lines (Urban Design London, 2012). Unchallenging in its plainness, this architecture has the potential to have a wide appeal. Some of the tallest projects are more than 20 storeys high, with thousands of accommodation units plonked into neighbourhoods with little consideration for the particularities of their socio-economic geographies and instead being seen as an opportunity to address the much-needed revitalisation of the suburbs (Jones & Evans, 2013, p. 188). However, they remain "*partitioned* by physical marks of control" (Watt & Smets, 2014 p. 15; original italics), especially from the social housing suburb (Gwilliam, Bourne, Swain, & Prat, 1999). Indeed, they are often built as enclaves that can be envisaged as "capsular urbanism", where elective or selective belonging draws social and symbolic as well as spatial boundaries (Watt & Smets, 2014, pp. 12–16). Davidson, analysing new-build gentrification along the River Thames in London, considered this "global habitat of gentrification' to be very little connected to its immediate surrounding as corporate property developers prefer to advertise the proximity of the global city to attract gentrifiers who have "few associations and/or social interactions with 'others' in their neighbourhood (…)" (2007, p. 504). This was observed in a number of promotional brochures for suburban developments always highlighting proximity to central London and what it has to offer with no or little mention of the locality. In Wembley however, this is combined with a reinvention of the area as a cultural quarter.

Surveillance and securitisation are the building blocks of these high-rise gated communities, where

even parks are gated in a way that is reminiscent of Victorian urban architecture and in contrast to the development of public parks in the 1930s suburbs. In some cases, they are completely enclosed as they are built in the centre of the structure. This inward-looking architecture reflects a concern, actual or perceived, about urban disorder and insecurity. Generally, this new kind of flatted habitat is characteristic of a neoliberalisation of the home defined by commodification, privatization, and individualism (Kern, 2007). The home is seen as a site of defence from an uncertain world and undesirable "others" (Atkinson & Blandy, 2017). CCTV is de rigueur and some new developments like Beaufort Park in Colindale are organised around private streets controlled by a private security firm patrolling the area. Segregated playgrounds and "poor door policies", as brought to light by journalists from *The Guardian* (Grant, 2019), also demonstrate that even in the case of mixed-tenure housing, separation is maintained through architectural design.[1]

The securitisation of housing is coupled with zero-tolerance policing in the surrounding neighbourhoods. In Wealdstone (in the borough of Harrow and one of the London Mayor's targeted areas for regeneration), the police have, for instance, been demonstrating their contribution to the regeneration effort by highlighting the way they have addressed the most visible manifestations of street-level crime and antisocial behaviour. They have used the opportunity at public consultation meetings to enumerate the number of Criminal Behavioural Orders (CBOs), Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs), dispersal orders (with the implementation of two dispersal zones), and Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) that they have been issuing, as well as positively highlighting an increase in "stop and search". The whole endeavour is based on the principles of the broken windows theory, which is regularly mentioned during public meetings. Despite a lack of empirical evidence of its efficacy (Sampson & Raudenbush, 1999), as well as academic criticisms of policing strategies that aim to control and moderate behaviour by regulating space in the neoliberal city (Camp & Heatherton, 2016), it remains a popular approach to the policing and the ordering of space in some cities, especially in gentrifying neighbourhoods, or at least in this case in a neighbourhood where regeneration is organised through new-build gentrification.

A Regeneration Panacea, but for Whom?

It is evident, from my fieldwork in London's outer boroughs, that a number of challenges are emerging from these fast-paced and large-scale developments. They are often presented as the opportunity to regenerate brownfield sites especially in peripheral neighbourhoods, or more problematically council estates, through a public-private partnership, which Lees has described as the managed decline of estates through state-led gentrification (Lees, 2014). These sites are situated in the most deprived areas of the suburbs, which additionally have long been overlooked in urban policy (see Adaptable Suburbs Project, 2010–2014). The new-build developments and the arrival of new residents are thus used as a conducive vector for other revitalisation initiatives in the neighbouring areas with high levels of deprivation. With the rapid construction of new developments, Harrow Council, for instance, has been organising residents' action group meetings in its most deprived areas (Wealdstone and South Harrow) in order to consult with local residents and traders about the regeneration of the high street and, in doing so, work in partnership with the local police as mentioned above. As an initial step, the council can be commended for this community engagement, which seems to be welcome. The meetings are well attended and bring in a number of key stakeholders, including residents who should also be involved in processes of place making. People often see these as opportunities for their neighbourhood, where they have grown tired of crime and disorder and their voice cannot be denied by a pure critique of regeneration and gentrification.

The blueprint of gentrification (Lees, 2000) is now being adopted in the poor areas of London's suburbs, where local governments have limited resources in the provision of housing. If regeneration is

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1   Segregated playgrounds have now been banned in future developments.

to be meaningful, and not just another cover-up for revanchist urbanism, efforts will have to be made to address deeply rooted factors of social exclusion and inequalities rather than some of their manifestation, for instance street-level crime and physical neglect. Both the council and the police will have to work on longer-term strategies with different agencies and associations, some of them already involved in these public discussions and on the ground developing great initiatives. There needs to be an improved coordination of these clustered initiatives, often from the voluntary or charity sector, for a more sustainable transformation of the area, but this is dependent on greater financial investment as well as people power. This has been limited so far by austerity cuts, which have affected both councils and the police. Councils are also increasingly relying on their private strategic partner's commitment to social values to address socio-economic issues. It is not possible to go into these details of a regeneration based on a joint venture, but it is important to raise it as an aspect that will need to be critically analysed further.

Sendra and Fitzpatrick (2020) rightfully argue that:

> [e]ngaging communities in regeneration processes is vital both for avoiding a displacement of residents and for giving communities the opportunity to take the lead on their neighbourhood's future. (p. 1)

Community-led regeneration is, however, constrained by varying economic, social, political, and spatial resources. On the Grange Farm Estate in Harrow, the residents of the steering group have worked hard to ensure that the regeneration remains tenure blind and as such have fought for a design that will not show architectural differences between private and social housing tenants and are putting in place community initiatives that will sustain solidarity and care beyond the regeneration. On the same estate, 50% of the residents are however in temporary accommodation. Unlike the residents on the steering group, they do not qualify for social housing and therefore will not be rehoused in the renovated estate. Their voices do not have the same weight. The council has now begun to give them notice as the first phase of the development has started. The growth in temporary housing in these suburban developments is a worrying trend – even more so on suburban council estates that have received less attention than their urban counterparts, with the exception perhaps of West Hendon. In some cases, they have already been displaced from other estates in other boroughs that have already been regenerated. It is also estimated that 50% of the residents on the Grahame Park Estate in Barnet are temporary tenants. Focus E15 was a good example of a successful campaign led by temporary tenants (Sendra & Fitzpatrick, 2020), and more of these types of actions will be needed to raise the case of temporary tenants, who are even more at risk of social harm through displacement and social cleansing.

The regeneration of suburban areas around the mass verticalisation of a new form of habitat, after years of austerity, should be critically analysed as a regeneration panacea. The issues related to new-build gentrification and state-led gentrification are now well documented and have been analysed in many parts of the capital. And yet in the suburban areas that I have researched over the years, regeneration continues to follow the same problematic blueprint of gentrification (Lees, 2000), albeit on a larger scale, as they are under pressure to meet the targets of the 2018 Housing Strategy, especially since they have the availability of brownfield sites and overlooked council housing estates in need of regeneration. Ultimately we also need more data and overall empirical research on who is or will be living in these new developments, especially as they are not necessarily situated within the traditional corridors of gentrification and are trying to attract people who may not have considered the area before: the gentrifiers that have yet to explore these new frontiers (Smith, 1996) of suburban gentrification. How much involvement will they have with the surrounding neighbourhoods and communities? How long will they stay there? My initial observations and hypothesis are that the new inhabitants in the suburbs will have very diverse demographic profiles. It will be necessary to pose other questions about homemaking and everyday lived experiences and we will need to pay attention to the new sociologies and geographies of home in the suburbs as the political-economic imperatives of the construction of new-built high-rises at present prevail over habitation uses and their exchange value prevails over their use value.

Conclusion

Urban criminology as an emerging critical strand of criminology offers a useful trope through which we can question the way the ordering of space is organised and produced under growing forms of social inequalities and social exclusion. Its potential lies in its ability to draw on and link with urban studies in critically addressing questions of crime as well as social harm in the city and will continue to expand at the crossroads of different disciplines but with a radical undertone contesting the capitalist and neoliberal city and addressing the issues of the control and shaping of urban resources. Urban criminology allows us to explore intra-urban inequalities and the ordering of space in London, which are becoming starker around new high-rise developments. It offers the opportunity to question the conditions of poverty and social exclusion as an essential critical analysis of the neoliberal city as well as the social harm that can be incurred in local communities.

In this piece, I have examined these conditions around new-build developments which are springing up around the city but with a particular focus on the growth of "flatted suburbs" (Mace, 2013). As such, I argue that a critical criminology of gentrification also needs to consider the suburbs in all their socio-economic and spatial complexity, notably by considering existing pockets of poverty, as well as the suburbanisation of poverty, especially as this can be expected to be a growing trend. Suburbs, as sociocultural as well as geographical objects and sites of study, tend to be overlooked in the urban academic literature, as well as in urban policy. There is, however, evidence of important changes to their demographic, socio-economic, and physical landscapes, especially in London. Regeneration in these areas presents new problems in being organised around a blueprint of gentrification, which has already proven problematic but here happens on an unprecedented scale with little consideration for local specificities and needs. Looking at the political economy and a defensive architecture of securitisation, privatisation, and individualism, I also highlighted the fact that these new-build developments only risk exacerbating spatial separation (to some extent segregation) and ultimately displacement (Atkinson, 2000; Lees Bang Shin & López-Morales, 2016; see also Minton, 2017 about displacement following the demolition of council estates). This is particularly problematic in the case of temporary tenants who are excluded and at risk of further social cleansing. Furthermore, the sustainability of this regeneration must be questioned if only supported by short-term solutions, notably in relation to the type of policing of the surrounding areas and of the high street while recognising that both councils and police have been working with limited resources as a result of austerity measures.

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