# Mapping the (in)visibility of community activism in planning in London

Using an array of mapping and visualisation techniques, this paper seeks to contribute to the understanding of the paradoxical situation of planning governance in London. While progress towards a more open, participative planning framework is undeniable there seems to be little in the way of the transformation of the metropolis into a real estate developer view of heaven, geared towards extracting rent. Using Jacques Bouveresse's concept of "territory of cynicism" the discussion considers how the emergence of "coalitions of expertise" have resulted in banning competing views of urban regeneration from the planning debates.

Key Words: Community participation, London, media analysis, planning, regeneration

**Martine Drozdz**
*Université Paris Sorbonne*
*https://sites.google.com/site/mdrozdzcv/*

So spoke of the existence of things,
An unmanageable pantheon
Absolute, but they say
Arid.
A city of the corporations
Glassed
In dreams
And images –
And the pure joy
Of the mineral fact
Tho it is impenetrable
As the world, if it is matter;
Is impenetrable.

"Of being numerous", G. Oppen, 1968

### Introduction

In this section of the poem "Of being numerous", George Oppen depicts a classic feature of the modern city, corporate steel and glass skyscrapers, which he compares to Gods in a new Pantheon. This Pantheon is reigning on a territory based on logic and reason which remains nonetheless incomprehensible, its core has the undisputable arbitrariness and force of a "mineral fact".

Oppen thus captures a strong paradox of current democracies in which access to information has never been faster and easier, in which transparency is heralded as one of the most important public and personal virtue, but where the actions of corporations in public and city life remain difficult to scrutinise, and actual actions of opposition, protest or simple civic engagement are often impeached or denied.

Planning and governance in today's post-modern city of London unexpectedly echoes that of the modern Manhattan of Oppen, displaying various levels of transparency while remaining unchallenged in its assumptions, particularly with regards to regeneration. I see the role of this paper as to bring some light on the ways of this "unmanageable Pantheon" and some understanding of its "mineral facts".

Planning in London today is characterised by an institutional and legislative framework which seems to encourage consensus and organise participation in a number of public debates and consultations about the built environment. In a comparative perspective, France has much less advanced procedure of participative democracy when it comes to planning decisions in Paris and the greater metropolis.

And yet numerous voices are denouncing the exclusivity of the capital that affects a growing proportion of working and middle classes Londoners. A cursory look at the evolution of the urban landscape in central London and the former inner city boroughs for the last ten years, suggests the amount of pressure felt by this population and the speed at which the London of the elite has grown out of its historical boundaries.

Using an array of mapping and visualisation techniques, this paper seeks to contribute to the understanding of this situation, without simplifying or caricaturing the two initially competing claims of its paradox. How come planning participative procedures do not slow down or limit the rate at which the metropolis is "upgraded" into a real estate developer view of heaven, geared towards extracting rent?

The main outcomes of this paper are (1) a media analysis of London civil society mobilisation in planning conflicts for the last 15 years; (2) geographical and statistical evidence supporting the main line of criticism of regeneration policies in London, i.e. that they are a form of state supported gentrification; and (3) the exposition of a method to analyse a planning permission corpus of documents showing how they institute a "territory of cynicism" and skew the participative procedures.

The first section of this paper present a summary of the recent evolutions in the legislation and governance in London, it describe the mechanisms in place to ensure a participative planning process. A media analysis is then used to discuss whether these changing conditions have encouraged a debate about regeneration policies within London's civil society. In a third section I provide statistical and geographical evidence to the claim, made by several academics and activists, that regeneration is a form of state led gentrification. The fourth section sets out French philosopher Jacques Bouveresse's concept of a "territory of cynicism" and its relevance to understand the shortcomings of London's participative planning process. It draws on about 30 interviews with planners and civil servants in London Boroughs and the GLA, as well as active participation in campaigns with local residents.

## 1.A More Open Planning Framework to Discuss Urban Regeneration in London

### 1.1 The London Plan Examination in Public
London's governance has undergone deep transformations in the last 15 years to become more open to public scrutiny. This change is part of a broader trend towards a more participatory, more transparent planning framework in Britain, under the New Labour era (1997-2010) (Carpenter et al, 2008). New Labour aimed to encourage a more participatory planning framework under the influence of the Aarhus Convention (1997 ratified in 2005 by the UK) and the Freedom of Information Act (2000). The Aarhus Convention encourages its signatories to make available all information related to environmental issues and by extension, planning. It means that since 2005, most of the documents regarding planning, such as planning permissions have been widely available online. The Freedom of Information Act (2000) is a piece of legislation which makes documents produced by the public sector available to citizens at their request.

The results of these changes in London led to the organising of a more open participatory process for planning discussions, especially through the procedures of Examination in Public (Rydin, 2010). A textbook example of "deliberative democracy" in which contradictions and oppositions should be overcome by rational discussions informed by evidence, this procedure is largely inspired by Habermas and Apel's philosophical reflexion on liberal democracy (Cometti,1997).

In 2000, a new Metropolitan government was established in London, the Greater London Authority comprising a Mayor, and an assembly, both directly elected every four years. The mayor is in charge of preparing the London Plan, the spatial development strategy which in turn influences local borough policies. One of the distinctive features of this planning document is that it must be exposed to public scrutiny through an Examination in Public (EIP). Other strategies published by the GLA are only presented to the London Assembly and are not examined in public. This way, the London Plan has undergone several sets of alterations since it was first published in 2004 and each time an EIP took place. In preparation for the 2015 EIP, the GLA has published an entire website dedicated to the documentation which frames the discussion.

Prior to the London Plan EIP it is possible for community groups, institutions, public and private bodies, to submit comments and remarks on the Plan. They are duly recorded in order to be discussed during the EIP proper. The whole process has been documented online by some of its participants (Lipietz, Lee and Haywarth, 2014 ; Brown, Edwards and Lee, 2014). On the academic side, Yvonne Rydin has examined the 2008 London Plan discussions, specifically around the issue of urban sustainability (Rydin, 2010). Michael Edwards, who took an active part in the EIP wrote an account of the underlying assumptions at work in the debate especially those regarding regeneration (Edwards, 2010). Community groups have pointed to several issues regarding the policy framework for regeneration developed in the Plan. This policy, along with that of the Opportunity Areas discussed in the last part of this paper, has attracted more than 200 comments during the 2010 EIP. It is the most controversial policy and has received the most comments, ahead of another highly contested policy for tall buildings (160 comments). The amount of comment was such that it necessitated extra EIP sessions in September and October. Claiming that the London Plan is insufficiently transparent as to its objectives in terms of social regeneration and impact on existing communities, some participants demanded social and economic impact assessments to be performed for each major regeneration projects and advocated for a closer monitoring of their outcomes.

### 1.2 Recognition and regeneration: the role of the Equality Act.

The debate around regeneration in public arenas has also benefited from the consolidation of the Equality Act in 2010. During the Conservative era in the 1980s and 1990s, the role of planning was seen as being disconnected from broader social issues. Under New Labour, there were several attempts to challenge planning decisions on cultural and recognition grounds. In 2010, the consolidation of equality legislation culminated in the publication of the 2010 Equality Act, acting as a catalyst for a number of mobilisations organised around identity-based claims. In a comparative perspective one can see that these are important advances of the rational, participative democratic agenda. France for example is very far from having this type of legislative framework and planning practices.

The Equality Act triggered a series of Judicial Reviews, a process which allows members of the public to challenge a local authority's decision (for a detailed analysis of the impact of this legislation on planning see Bindmans, 2011). The following table lists different neighbourhoods affected by large-scale regeneration schemes, where this legislation has been essential to discuss the consequences of regeneration on various communities, and challenge in court the granting of planning permission.

| Date | Borough | Neighbourhood | Reason for Judicial Review |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2007 | Newham et Hackney | Olympic Park | Access to affordable space for travelers |
| 2007 | Harrow | Harrow | Spatial justice and access to services for elderly |
| 2007 | Harrow | Harrow | Spatial justice and access to services for disabled |
| 2009 | Newham | Queen's market | Recognition of the adverse effects of a regeneration project on ethnic minorities |
| 2010 | Haringey | Seven Sisters | Recognition of the adverse effects of a regeneration project on ethnic minorities |
| 2012 | Ealing | Southall | Spatial justice and access to services for women |
| 2012 | Kensington | West Kensington / Earl's court | Adverse effects of a regeneration project on social tenants |

*Table 1*
*Judicial Review of Planning Decisions and the 2010 Equality Act*

## 2. Media representation and the regeneration debate

In the light of this institutional progress how were regeneration policies debated in other public arenas? Building on the comparison of several local and national press sources, I tried to explore the characteristics of the media space in which debates about urban regeneration have unfold in London. The method of media analysis proved very useful to give an account of the ways planning issues are presented and represented to the public.

Media information is a classic source to assess the extent of civil society mobilisation in planning conflicts, particularly when there is no other record of this type of events (Koopmans and Rucht, 2002; Grey, 2010). However, using press sources does not allow an exhaustive listing of protest events because of the irregular frequency at which these episodes are reported in the columns of newspapers as well as because of a number of reporting biases (Fillieule and Jimenez, 2003). But these biases do not only determine the rate at which events are reported, they shape the framing modes and the stories available to represent conflicting interests at play in urban regeneration.

Using media information to examine the extent to which regeneration policies have been publicly dis cussed and challenged highlights the fact that it forges the legitimacy of certain questions and certain groups to participate in planning debates. In doing so the information deemed newsworthy directly affects the processes and outcomes of participative planning. Media, therefore are a crucial paths for competing views of urban development to emerge.

Starting from 1998, I built an inventory of references to planning conflicts in The Evening Standard, London's daily newspaper. This publication was chosen because its complete digital archive is available from that date contrary to other local newspapers such as London borough Gazettes and Recorders. It helped me to build a coherent picture of the reporting of protest cycles in Greater London from the onset of New Labour policies to the advent of the current austerity politics. This general chronology was consolidated by specific

studies of planning conflicts recorded in academic journals, and other local newspapers and trade journals, especially planning, real estate and legal publications. To complete this study I compared the occurrences of planning conflicts reported in the London's local press with the conflicts I found reported in other newspapers such as The Guardian and The Independent (both national and local editions) during the same period and to planning conflicts mentioned in interviews with community leaders involved in such struggles in London.

An initial set of queries from 1998 to 2013 found 920 articles in which I identified 113 occurrences of conflicts around regeneration. The requests I built used keywords from four different domains: the domain of mobilisation and conflicts; the environment, planning, heritage and public services; certain types of actions (occupations, evictions, refusal of planning permission, consultations); and key actors from the civil society (Friends of the Earth, Planning Aid, Shelter, London Civic Forum, Just Space, London Forum of Amenity and Civic Societies).
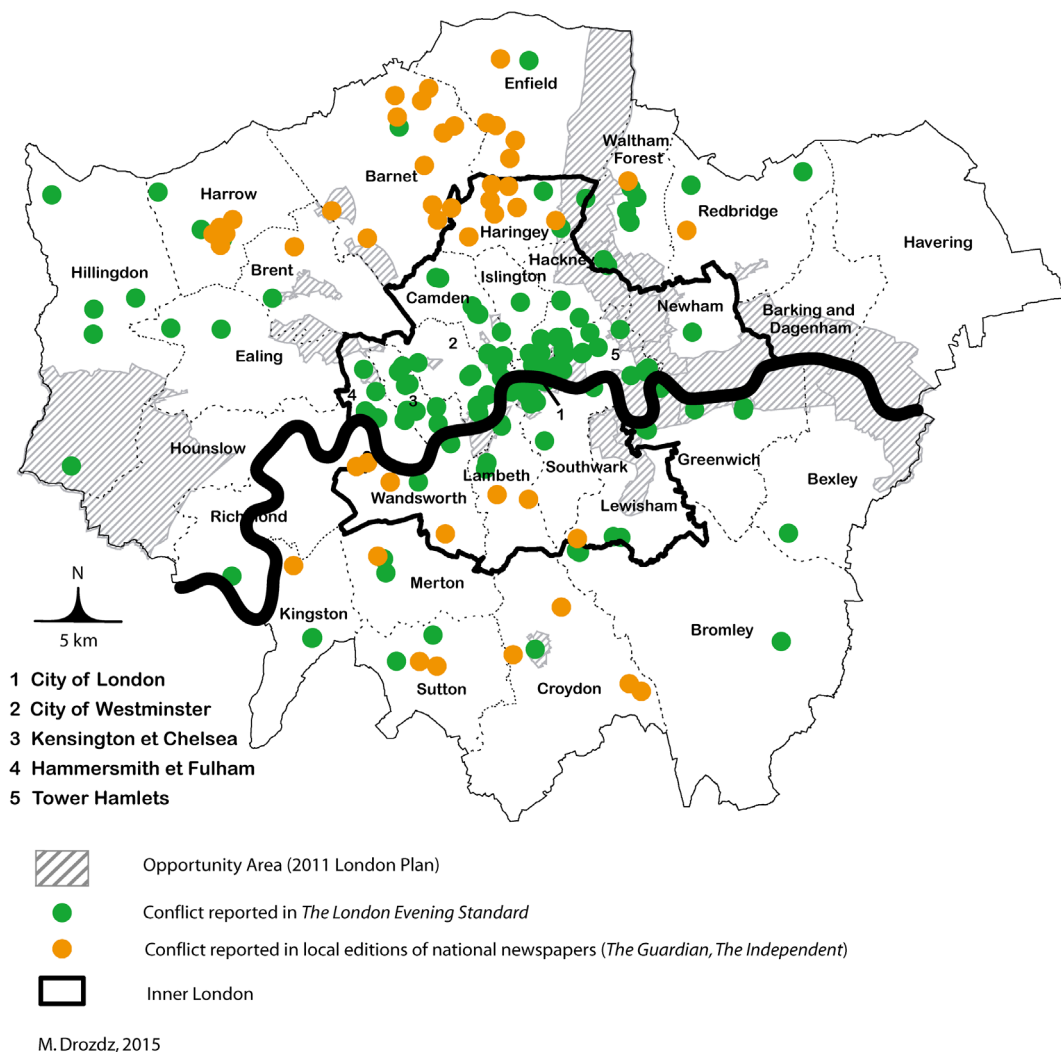
*Figure 1*

Central areas are more represented in the pages of The London Evening Standard, where the debates around London's skyline and major development schemes are taking most of the focus. The fight against regeneration as seen by the London Evening Standard is mainly a conflict between elites of heritage conservation and real estate developers in order to control the landscape of the banks of the Thames. This spatial and thematic selectivity can be explained by the editorial organisation of the London Evening Standard. Planning conflicts are mainly covered by a team of specialist correspondents in the real estate markets, architecture and heritage. The absence of "local life" sections in the paper explains the absence of many conflicts coverage when they do not involve either a major player in the real estate sector or a listed building. Most of the conflicts mentioned in interviews with community leaders and conflicts which helped stir the debate around equality and regeneration were mostly absent from the newspaper's coverage of regeneration struggles. The discussions which occurred in the public arenas aforementioned, either during examination in public or in court, deemed too technical for a general audience, never managed to be part of the media coverage of regeneration.

The conflicts reported in local editions of the Guardian and the Independent cover the residential areas of Outer London, areas which are largely absent from the columns of The London Evening Standard. Rarely involving major national developers, these oppositions are mostly directed against local policies, such as the closure of municipal services or sale of collective use buildings (local libraries, cultural centres). In local editions of the Guardian and the Independent, opposition to the closure of local services due to cuts after the general elections in 2010 is more visible, due to the political orientation of the paper. Conflicts of use, particularly in areas adjacent to the Green Belt are also more visible. Moreover, unlike the London Evening Standard, local editions provide a visibility window to groups that welcome new infrastructure or densification in their neighbourhood, because of the extra services that this can bring. These are the only media spaces where we read a review of this types of group, also called "YIMBYs" (Yes in my backyard). However a more general discourse in favour of sustainable forms of regeneration so far fails to make its way in the columns of these papers, although it is a cause defended by several local elected representatives and community groups I interviewed.

Overall the cause of the people affected by the "ordinary" regeneration, outside the most spectacular projects of the central area, has low coverage. They have a narrow window in the media although projects affecting them include the majority of new residential construction built in London today. As a result, contrary to the London EIP we examined in the first part, opposition to regeneration policies ultimately appears relatively invisible in regional and local mainstream media. For example, the conscientious work done by the London Association's advocacy for tenants of public housing (London Tenants Federation - LTF), instrumental to informing the evidence during public debates around regeneration, is rarely taken up by the local press. The LTF follows the development of regeneration projects and measures the number of affordable and social housing units lost or gained for these sites. In doing so, it provides a much more precise view of the regeneration than the GLA, who provide figures aggregated at the level of boroughs.

The London mediascape of regeneration is slowly changing as the housing supply crisis has started to attract more attention in daily newspapers. In anticipation to the 2016 municipal elections several articles in titles across the political spectrum have highlighted the role of urban policies in this crisis. The specific issue of the funding of regeneration schemes in London has started to be debated more widely. In particular the very possibility of delivering affordable housing within the financial constraints imposed by the profitability targets of developers has been questioned. Guironnet and Halbert have coined the expression "yield urbanism" to describe the growing role of contemporary financial reasoning at every stages of the urban production, from strategic planning to delivery and maintenance (Guironnet and Halbert, 2015). In the absence of a strong political push in favour of affordable housing combined with the means to regulate ground rent, there seems to be very little prospects of its realisation.

### 3. The territorial extension of a city of rents

Prior to this new cycle of media attention, there had already been a significant amount of criticism in academic literature that condemned regeneration as being state-led gentrification. Starting in the mid 2000s, several studies have highlighted the ambiguities of the social diversity discourse accompanying regeneration projects (Colomb, 2007; Edwards, 2010). In numerous cases, the argument was used to justify the replacement of social housing by an offer aimed at the middle classes, leading to a decrease in the available stock for the poorest households. These studies have shown that regeneration policies did very little, and in some cases worsened, the socio-economic conditions of affected populations; because of the drastic reduction of social housing stock and social services, and other core features of the policies like the competition between territories for funding (Lees, 2014)

On the community side, different groups (see Campkin, Roberts and Ross, 2013 for detailed examples) followed the trajectory of several neighbourhoods undergoing regeneration schemes and observed the many injustices and procedure failures suffered by the inhabitants of these projects. They denounced in particular the stigmatization of people living in social housing by the local authorities, visible in the reports accompanying the planning documents, as well as the reduced number of social housing in these areas and the inability of people to choose the site of their relocation.

Since 2012, there have been a growing number of requests using the Freedom of Information Act to make public the financial conditions of each regeneration project receiving public funding, in order to discuss them in broader arenas than the planning services of each borough. Refusal to disclose such information kept under the seal of commercial secrecy prevents the opening of a public debate on the proven benefits of regeneration. The impossibility to discuss economic arguments supporting regeneration programs and justifying the destruction of the social housing stock adds to these observations of a failing set of policies. F. Moulaert, A. Rodriguez, E. Swyngedouw (2002) have compared regeneration schemes across Europe and noted the impossibility to avoid references to the "regeneration consensus": the idea that it has to be led by private investors enabled by local and national authorities on the grounds that only the private sector can deliver urban regeneration.

To assess the effect of regeneration policies on the social and economic fabric of Inner London, I mapped the result of a cluster analysis performed on data from the 2001 and 2011. It is a statistical method commonly used in order to describe socio-historical structures and explore social changes in cities (Robson and Sanders, 2009). In this case, it relied on a combination of different socio-economic variables regarding types of tenure, socio-economic groups and ethnic diversity to compare the socio-economic and cultural evolutions of London neighbourhoods. This method allows me here to distinguish "clusters" (or groups, types) of neighbourhoods which share (and do not share) similar traits with regards to a chosen set of variables from the census. By repeating the procedure on both the 2001 and 2011 census, one is able to establish a first picture the trajectory of those neighbourhoods.
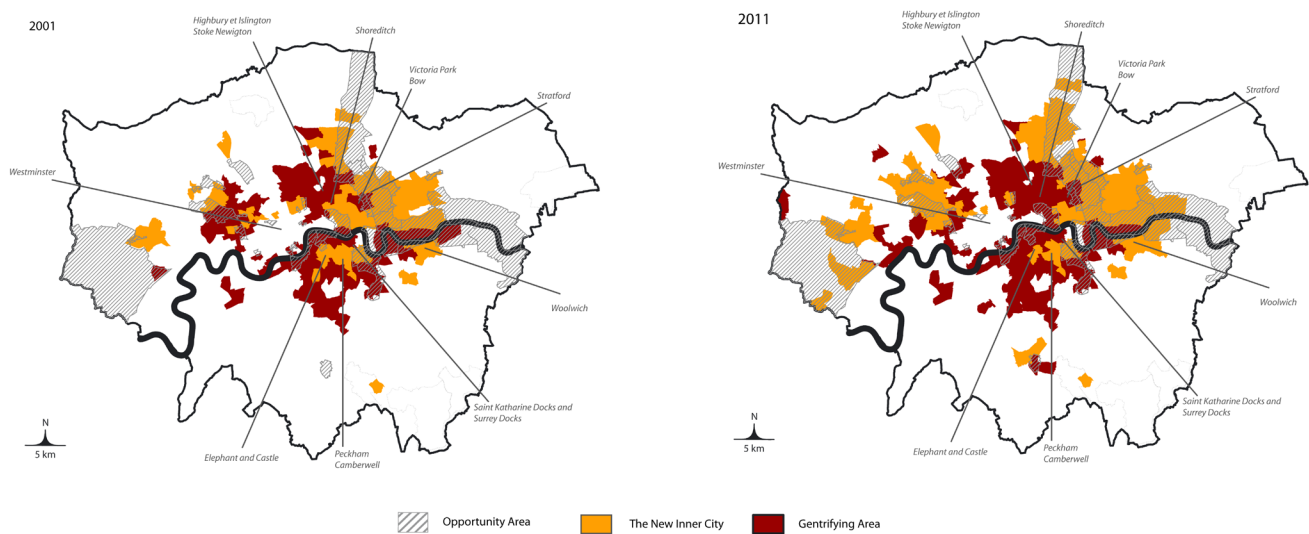
Results of a cluster analysis performed on London wards using a combination of 20 socio-demographic variables from the 2001 and 2011 census        Source : GLA, ONS    M.Drozdz (2015)

*Figure 2*

These two maps highlight the progress of gentrification in London between 2001 and 2011. In red we can see the extension of already gentrified neighbourhoods in 2001. These areas are highly multicultural. There we find a high proportion of owner-occupiers and a high proportion of professional and managerial groups. In 2001 in these areas there is also an important amount of social housing populated by a very diverse population and a significant proportion of people who rely on socio-economic redistributive mechanisms, such as access to subsidised housing and benefits to secure their social reproduction.

In the areas in yellow, we have neighbourhoods which are either prone to gentrification or where social groups affected by gentrification have moved to. These areas have the highest level of inward migrations both internal and international and the highest demographic growth between 2001 and 2011. In these neighbourhoods we find a higher proportion of lower middle class groups with lower managerial duties, a higher proportion of social tenants and a highly multi-ethnic population.

Between 2001 and 2011, the areas in yellow have progressed further east under the pressure of regeneration. These neighbourhoods have become more multicultural and remain occupied by working to lower middle class households. In the meantime the areas in red have consolidated and expanded further around the centre. This series of maps shows the nature of the changes in the social fabric of areas affected by regeneration poli-cies, but to what the extent were these changes related to the policies?

To answer this question I took a closer look at all the areas designated in the London Plan under the term Opportunity Areas, which appeared in grey on the maps. Initially this policy can be seen as an attempt to tie social development of the inner city to the booming property market. The 2004 London Plan laid out the three following objectives for the projects undertaken in Opportunity Areas: exceed the minimum guidelines for housing and achieve on objective of 50% affordable housing on development sites, maximise access by public transport and promote social inclusion. The social inclusion aspect of the policy was reduced in the 2011 and subsequent versions of the London Plan to be replaced with a focus on the enhancement of environmental quality. Targets for affordable housing on development sites have since then been relaxed and replaced by over-all targets set by each London borough.
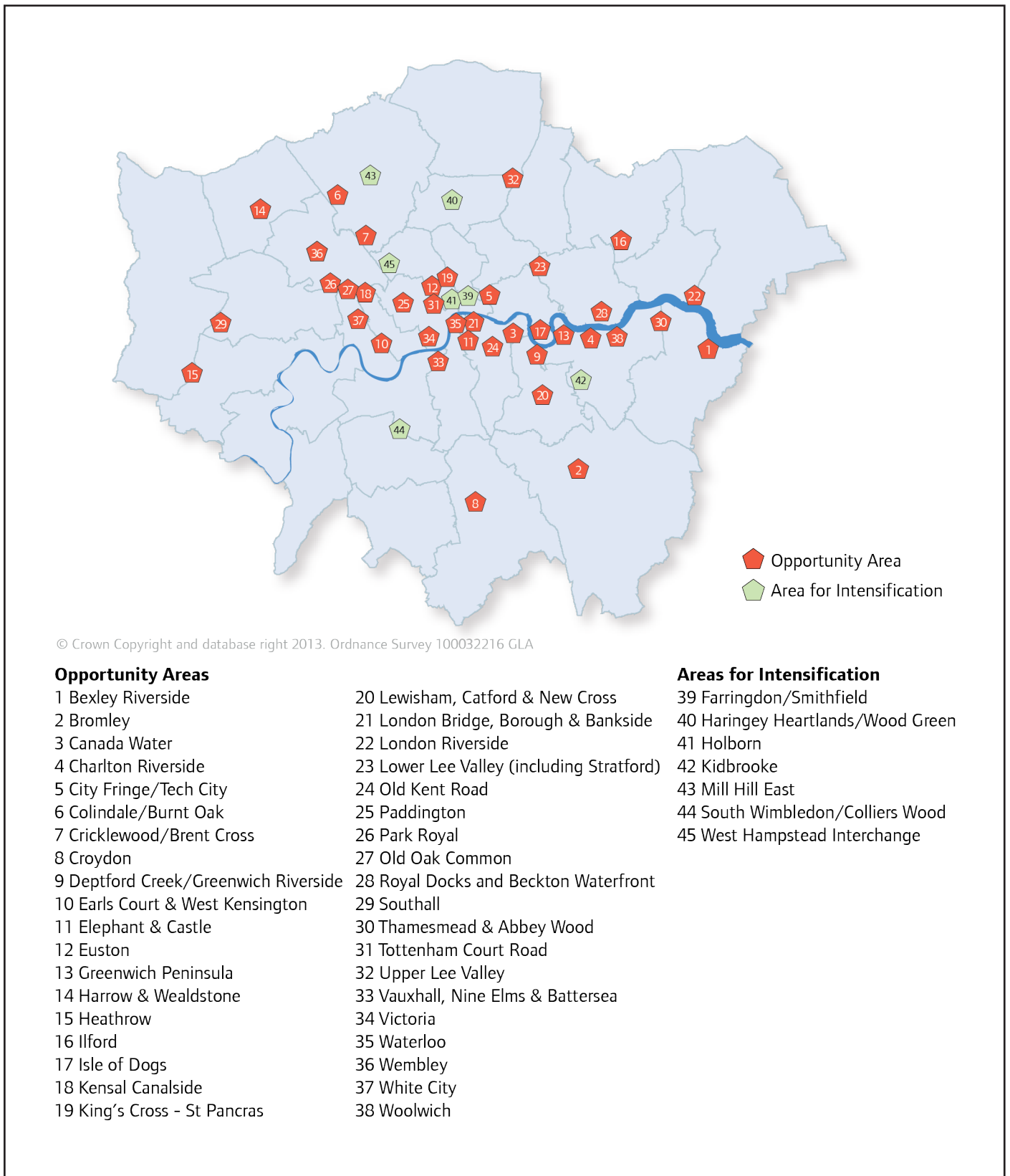
*Figure 2*
*The Opportunity Areas and Areas for Intensification in the London Plan, Source: GLA (2015)*

© Crown Copyright and database right 2013. Ordnance Survey 100032216 GLA

**Opportunity Areas**
1 Bexley Riverside
2 Bromley
3 Canada Water
4 Charlton Riverside
5 City Fringe/Tech City
6 Colindale/Burnt Oak
7 Cricklewood/Brent Cross
8 Croydon
9 Deptford Creek/Greenwich Riverside
10 Earls Court & West Kensington
11 Elephant & Castle
12 Euston
13 Greenwich Peninsula
14 Harrow & Wealdstone
15 Heathrow
16 Ilford
17 Isle of Dogs
18 Kensal Canalside
19 King's Cross - St Pancras

20 Lewisham, Catford & New Cross
21 London Bridge, Borough & Bankside
22 London Riverside
23 Lower Lee Valley (including Stratford)
24 Old Kent Road
25 Paddington
26 Park Royal
27 Old Oak Common
28 Royal Docks and Beckton Waterfront
29 Southall
30 Thamesmead & Abbey Wood
31 Tottenham Court Road
32 Upper Lee Valley
33 Vauxhall, Nine Elms & Battersea
34 Victoria
35 Waterloo
36 Wembley
37 White City
38 Woolwich

**Areas for Intensification**
39 Farringdon/Smithfield
40 Haringey Heartlands/Wood Green
41 Holborn
42 Kidbrooke
43 Mill Hill East
44 South Wimbledon/Colliers Wood
45 West Hampstead Interchange

I used a simple statistical procedure (one factor ANOVA) which tests two samples of neighbourhoods to determine whether being within or close to an OA has an impact on their socio-economic trajectory. The pace at which the amount of social housing decreased in OA has been quicker than in neighbourhoods left untouched by this policy. In areas where the stock of social housing was still significant (30% on average) this policy has accelerated the transfer of ownership to private organisations such as housing associations. Another interesting result is that the rate of owner-occupiers has also decreased significantly in all these areas to be replaced either by shared ownership, housing association and a higher proportion of private renters. It does not mean that there are less owner-occupiers in absolute terms in regenerated areas but that the share of renters has increased, at a significantly more rapid pace than in other parts of London. In other words it means that most of what has been produced within these opportunity areas has helped to extract a greater amount of private rent from the redevelopment of devalued sites (Glucksberg, 2014).

### 4. Territory of cynicism

During the last ten years, profound changes in planning governance and the introduction of a more participatory framework in London have not stopped or even slowed down the detrimental effect of urban policies for most of the population living in areas targeted for regeneration. Although London's population is invited to participate more, and justice sometimes recognises the fragile situation of some worst off groups as in cases mentioned earlier, it appears that they tend to have less and less space in the metropolis.

Why is opposition to regeneration so weak and easily dismissed? What are the shortcomings of the planning framework which allow them to be silenced while presenting a simulacrum of participation? As noted by many commentators of the communicative or deliberative turn in planning, the possibility to theoretically take part to the discussion does not overcome the existing power relations and differentiated legitimacy to actually take part in the discussion. In the field of regeneration, a profound asymmetrical relationship between regeneration professionals and the affected public remains. In the initial organization of the London Plan EIP, representatives of the Just Space network, a London based coalition of community groups highly involved in discussions around regeneration, were excluded from discussions on Opportunity Areas policies but were included in those on regeneration and had to formally ask to be also included in both debates. This reflects an important division of legitimacy between developers and civil society: developers were invited to sessions on Opportunity Areas because they are considered the only actors able to deliver regeneration understood as an increase in housing numbers; associations from civil society, seen as indispensable actors in social development, especially in social housing areas, were invited in sessions on regeneration, understood this time as social policy.

This situation of an untold differentiated legitimacy to actually participate leads to the expansion of what French philosopher Jacques Bouveresse has called a "territory of cynicism" (1984). When commenting on post-modern political theory such as Sloterdijk's Critique of Cynical Reason, he explains that one of the controversial points of deliberative and communicative democracy theory revolves around the question of how to treat cynicism. In such a position one pretends to participate in a democratic deliberative arena for the sole purpose of advancing his own interest, and in doing so corrupts the whole process (Coicaud and Curtis, 2002).

This is a known issue of participative and deliberative democracy, with different practical ways to address this problem, and one of them has been to enforce the symmetrical nature of relationships built through deliberative arenas (Callon, Lascoumes and Barthe, 2001). Arenas are symmetrical when the knowledge of a public issue can be informed by all participants and when each of them is able to demonstrate how their participation to the deliberations has changed their initial position.

In the case of London, it would not be reasonable to argue that planners and developers are plainly lying about their intentions or motives, what is important here is that they are able to present their point of view

and interests as the only legitimate course of action for the public good. The current iteration of the participative process does not offer enough room for the public to challenge a cynical position and the deliberative process does not actually take place.

   In a number of different contested regeneration projects, the level of expertise required is so high that it prevents community groups to even participate in deliberations. Whether they tried to contradict figures given as evidence in favour of a scheme, or show that alternatives are possible, residents needed to spend years of man-hours to build their case against regeneration professionals; knowing that when planning permissions are proposed for deliberation they are often the results of months of preparation and negotiations between local authorities and developers.

   One area where regeneration projects escapes from deliberations is that of finance. How is regeneration funded? What are the expected outcomes? How much profits are planned? What does the "viability" of a scheme mean exactly and how is it assessed? These seem to be fundamental questions to define the fairness of the schemes and of the policies supporting them; however, access to this information is still highly difficult because most of it qualifies as "commercial" and remains therefore undisclosed during public discussions. Finance is not the only area which suffers from a lack of counter-expertise and contradictory debate in regeneration discussions. The following table lists all the studies produced in the case of a planning permission application to regenerate a market and its adjacent area at Seven Sisters in the borough of Haringey in June 2012. The graph allows us to visualize this list according to the main topic of the different documents and methods of evaluation. Each report is assigned a node or two depending on whether or not it was subject to a second independent expert opinion. The author of the second expertise determines the colour of the nodes of each report according to their status: public, private or mixed.

| Topic | Type of document | Document author(s) | Author(s) of independent review of evidence | Status |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Architecture | Design statement | Architects appointed by the developer | Planning officers | Public |
| Heritage | Heritage report | D. Lewis, consultant, appointed by the | Planning officers | Public |
| Economic aguments | Toolkit viability apraisal | Grainger, developer | Valuation Office Agency | Public |
| Economic aguments | Financial apraisal (necessary to justify the asence of social housing in the project) | Developer | Valuation Office Agency | Public |
| Architecture and Urbanism | Wards Comer Development Brief | Atis Real and Weatherhall, real estate consultants appointed by the borough | Planning officers and special council sub-committee in charge of planning | public and private |
| Developer contribution | Section 106 agreement | borough and developer | Negociation between the developer(s) and the Council | public and private |
| Regeneration and Economic Development | Impact assesment on commecial properties | Cushman and Wakefield for the NDC | None | Private |
| Regeneration and Economic Development | Impact assesment on social and economic local well being | Shared Intelligence, for NDC | None | Private |
| Social Sustianability | Equality Impact Assessment | URS, consultants | None | Private |
| Pollution and Air quality | Air quality assessment report | not mentioned | None | Private |
| Consultation | Consultation Statement | GL Hearn, consultants | Consultation Institute (prrivate consultants) | Private |
| Environnement | Daylight and sunlight report | Building Research Establishment, consultants | None | Private |
| Regeneration and Economic Development | Survey on the economic impact of the project | ComRes, consultants | None | Private |
| Economic aguments | Economic benefits analysis | GL Hearn, consultants | None | Private |
| Economic aguments | Financial apraisal | Jonas Deloitte | None | Private |

*Table 2*

# The Coalition of Expertise in Sustainable Planning



Source: Wards Corner Coalition Planning Permission, LB Haringey, 2012

M. Drozdz (2012)

standard. The developer argued that he could not propose a viable scheme with more affordable homes, in line with the terms offered by the National planning policy framework published in 2012, so the local authorities had to ask the National Valuation Office to audit the viability numbers provided by the developer. Most of the evidence supporting this planning application has been produced for or by the private sector to be then examined by the public authorities, with very limited room for a second independent validation of this information. As a result, the balance of power in the debate largely benefits the interest of the private sector. This includes, of course, the interest of the developers, but further than that the interest of a network of experts specialised in producing the information used by public representatives to take informed, "evidence based" planning decision.

This exploration has also yielded an unexpected result with regards to information and expertise. When disassembling the planning permission one can notice that the progress towards a more environmentally sensitive planning has had a price. This price is the necessity to base decisions on highly technical expertise, and in a context of tight public finance, this new expertise is actually produced by the private sector. Since the 1970's several landmark empirical studies have described the role of "growth coalitions" in modern, capitalist urban development (Mossberger and Stoker, 2001). At the head of governance networks they led the way regeneration is delivered. In this case we could speak of the advent of an "expert coalition", networks of private and public experts lobbying for participative planning or evidence based policy making, while actively taking part in the market opened by the necessity to provide this expertise in a society where information technology has become an integral part of all social relations and where governmental processes are increasingly bound up with technology and its governance (Rydin 2010).

**Conclusion**

Planning in London has been transformed recently with mixed results. One can easily acknowledge that some legislative changes have been a step towards more democratic procedures where different views of urban development can be discussed and challenged. However, looking at how procedures have been implemented, one can't ignore how asymmetrical power relations have been, leading to some communities being banned from planning debates.

It shows that the politics of consensus can only be achieved where the production of knowledge of a public issue is symmetrical. The deliberative arena based on the Habermasian's belief in virtuous communication ought to be closely scrutinised and this symmetry should always be demonstrated and celebrated rather than merely assumed.

In this context, it should be noted how much civic engagement and protests, whilst they can only be seen as a desirable outcome of unfair civil life, necessitates a growing amount of resources. To be challenged, regeneration needs to be documented and I hope I have shown examples of how critical mapping can be useful to investigate the modes of operation and the consequences of regeneration, in order to open alternative imaginaries.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bindmans LLP, Equality considerations unlawfully ignored in approval of multi million pound development. Available at: http://www.bindmans.com/news-and-events/news-article/equality-considerations-unlawfully-ignored-in-approval-of-multi-million-pound-development [Accessed September 3, 2014].
Bouveresse, J., 1984. Rationalité et cynisme, Paris: Editions de minuit.

Brown, R., Edwards, M. & Lee, R., 2014. Just Space: towards a just sustainable London. In R. Imrie & Loretta Lees, eds. Sustainable London? The future of a global city. Bristol: Policy Press, pp. 43–67.

Callon, M., Lascoumes, P. & Barthe, Y., 2001. Agir dans un monde incertain: essai sur la démocratie tech nique, Paris: Seuil.

Campkin, B., Roberts, D. & Ross, R., 2013. Urban Pamphleteer #2. Regeneration Realities,

Carpenter, J. & Brownill, S., 2008. Approaches to democratic involvement: widening community engagement in the English planning system. Planning Theory & Practice, 9(2), pp.227–248.

Coicaud, J.-M. & Curtis, D.A., 2002. Legitimacy and Politics: A Contribution to the Study of Political Right and Political Responsibility, Cambridge University Press.

Colomb, C., 2007. Unpacking new labour's 'Urban Renaissance' agenda: Towards a socially sustainable reur banization of British cities? Planning Practice and Research, 22(1), pp.1–24.

Cometti, J.-P., 1997. Le Philosophe et la poule de Kircher: quelques contemporains, Paris: L'Eclat.

Edwards, M., 2010a. Do Londoners make their own plans? In K. Scanlon & B. Kochan, eds. London: coping with austerity : a review of housing, planning and public policy issues in 2010. Londres: LSE, pp. 57–72.

Edwards, M., 2010b. King's Cross: renaissance for whom ? In J. Punter, ed. Urban designand the British urban renaissance. London; New York: Routledge, pp. 189–206.

Fillieule, O. & Jimenez, M., 2003. Media Bias and Environmental Protest Event Analysis. In C. Rootes, ed. Environmental Mobilization in Comparative Perspectives. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 258–279.

Glucksberg, L., 2014. We Was Regenerated Out": Regeneration, Recycling and Devaluing Communities. Val uation Studies, 2(2), pp.97–118.

Grey, S.J., 2010. When No 'Official Record' Exists? Politics & Gender, 6(04), pp.622–629.

Guironnet, A. & Halbert, L., 2014. The Financialization of Urban Development Projects: Concepts, Process es, and Implications. Available at: https://hal-enpc.archives-ouvertes.fr/hal-01097192/document [Ac cessed August 25, 2015].

Healey, P., 1999. Deconstructing Communicative Planning Theory: A Reply to Tewdwr-Jones and All mendinger. Environment and Planning A, 31(6), pp.1129–1135.

Koopmans, R. & Rucht, D., 2002. Protest event analysis. In Methods of social movement research. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 231–260.

Lees, L., 2014. The Urban Injustices of New Labour's 'New Urban Renewal': The Case of the Aylesbury Estate in London. Antipode, 46(4), pp.921–947.

Lipietz, B., Lee, R. & Hayward, S., 2014. Just Space: Building a community-based voice for London planning. City, 18(2), pp.214–225.

Mossberger, K. & Stoker, G., 2001. The Evolution of Urban Regime Theory. Urban Affairs Review, 36(6), pp.810 –835.

Rydin, Y., 2010. Planning and the Technological Society: Discussing the London Plan. International Journal of Urban and Regional Research, 34(2), pp.243–259.

Swyngedouw, E., Moulaert, F. & Rodriguez, A., 2002. Neoliberal Urbanization in Europe: Large–Scale Urban Development Projects and the New Urban Policy. Antipode, 34(3), pp.542–577.