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**Resisting gentrification on its final frontiers: learning from the Heygate Estate in London (1974-2013)**

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**Introduction**
In 1959, Ruth Glass, the British sociologist who coined the term 'gentrification', was studying the decanting[1] that was happening as part of the post-war slum clearances in North Kensington in inner London; rumour has it that she actually used the term 'gentrification' for the first time then and not in 1964 (Lees, Slater and Wyly, 2008:4). It is interesting then that over fifty years later, as we write this paper, slum clearances and gentrification are being linked again in inner London, but this time it is the state-led gentrification of council estates that are 'constructed' as 'slums' by local councils and the media in order to impose new programmes of urban renewal, that is gentrification, on them (see Lees, 2014a). Ruth Glass (1964) said nothing about resisting gentrification, but she did say that she wanted neighbourhoods to remain as they were. In fact there has been very little written about resistance to gentrification in London, and only a little in other cities; compare this to the detailed literature out there on pioneer gentrifiers resisting the bulldozers of post-war urban renewal, especially the fight between Jane Jacobs and Robert Moses in New York City (see Jacobs, 1961; Flint, 2009; Zipp, 2010). The latter resistance to urban renewal forms a floating comparator for the issues to be discussed in this paper, for the C21st state-led (or state-facilitated) gentrification of public housing (known as council housing in the UK), the bulldozing of council housing estates and their rebuilding as new-build, mixed income communities (see Bridge, Butler and Lees, 2011), has very aptly been labelled the 'new' urban renewal (see Hyra, 2008; cr. Lees, 2014a). Indeed, as Hackworth and Smith (2001) state: 'systematic gentrification in the US context dates back to the 1950s and was to some extent part of post-war renewal…'.

The state-led gentrification and social cleansing of the final gentrification frontiers in inner London – both council estates and low income tenants - has been on-going since the late 1990s and is escalating today (Lees, 2014b). Fenton, Lupton, Arrundale and Tunstall (2013) argue that in London we see the 'circular nature of commodification and its effects on claims of rights: first the provision of housing to low-income households is opened up to private profit; this in turn legitimates the application of market logic to the rules by which that provision is organized, and the setting of those rules such that poor households are displaced from the city' (p. 378). As recently as 2008 Ley and Dobson identified publicly subsidized housing as a 'barrier to gentrification'. Writing about gentrification in London Butler with Robson (2003: 21) observed that the social housing 'dappling the map of inner London' breaks up gentrification. A decade later and council housing, which constitutes a large portion of social housing in the capital, is under direct threat of gentrification because the

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[1] In British housing policy, the term 'decant' designates the 'process of moving residents from their homes while improvements are carried out'. See: Glossary, *Inside Housing*, http://www.insidehousing.co.uk/social-housing-glossary/6504654.article

contrast between disinvested local authority stock in London and the highly valuable land it sits on has created a 'state-induced rent gap' (Watt, 2009a: 235) with massive capital accumulation potential.

**Figure 1:** (attached in separate file) **Map locating the Heygate Estate in London**

In this paper we focus on one example of state-led gentrification of council housing in London: the case of the Heygate Estate, a medium-sized purpose-built council estate in the London Borough of Southwark, just south-east of Elephant and Castle (see Figure 1). The estate was built on 'slum' cleared land and completed in 1974. Only 30 years later, in the 2004 masterplan for regenerating the area (Southwark Council, 2004a), it was slated as a 'slum' for demolition. The site of the estate is located in an area immediately adjacent to the much prized 'zone 1' of London, as understood by the underground map as well as by real estate investors. In 2007 Lend Lease, an Australian property development company involved in large-scale projects, such as the much criticized redevelopment of Melbourne's Docklands (Shaw, 2013), with a global portfolio (including the London 2012 Olympic Athletes' Village – now East Village) and a controversial track record (Rashbaum, 2012), were chosen as the developers for the new-build, 'mixed income community' set to replace the Heygate Estate.

In contrast to public housing in, for example, the US, the population of council estates in the UK is often made up of a combination of council tenants on secure or insecure tenancies; alongside leaseholders and at times even freeholders, who own their own homes. The position of owner-occupier leaseholders, many of whom were formerly secure tenants who exercised the Right-to-Buy (Jones and Murie, 2006), is particularly complex since legally they are simultaneously property owners and local authority tenants (Cole and Robinson, 2000).[2] The position of different tenures and the differential treatments they are subjected to in the processes of displacement and rehousing is a relatively understudied issue in relation to resistance to public housing redevelopment (for an exception, see Watt, 2013). Right to Buy has substantially altered the social composition of council housing estates in London by creating a new axis of fragmentation and division along tenure lines, and it could be argued that the tenure-based differential treatment experienced by residents is seeing the displacement of this divisive scheme itself too, with significant implications for organised resistance.

In many cases, and the Heygate Estate can be seen as a paradigmatic example here, the impact of tenurial differentiation in the displacement caused by council housing demolition is not only a question of different legal rights to rehousing and compensation, it also has a temporal dimension, as property owners often remain as the last residents living in nearly vacant estates. It is therefore understandable that towards the end of the displacements of both secure and insecure tenants from the Heygate Estate, from 2010, resistance in and around the estate mainly focused on

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[2] The presence of owner-occupiers within British council estates has been the result of the much-discussed incentives towards home-ownership through the right for secure tenants to purchase their homes at a discount, particularly since 1980 when the so-called 'Right to Buy' (1980 Housing Act) became a national policy of the then Conservative government. According to some estimates, as many as 2.75m properties were sold through the 'Right to Buy' between 1980 and 2009 across Britain (Hodkinson and Lawrence, 2011) (on right to buy and council housing in London, see Watt, 2009b).

helping property owners (leaseholders) to gain fair compensation,   while also raising awareness of the process of displacement and trying to influence future plans for the area. It is this period of resistance, which was very active, that we focus on in this paper. After a brief overview of the literature on resistance to gentrification and of the Heygate Estate's regeneration history, we consider three different forms of organised resistance that emerged in and around the estate during its last three years of existence: civil society organising to influence planning, direct action to keep the estate accessible, and legal challenges to the 'public interest' of the demolition; and what we can learn from these.

**Resistance to gentrification**

> '…we were surprised by how few academic studies there were on resistance to gentrification. The process may have produced one of the largest literatures in urban studies, but it did seem that focused analyses of anti-gentrification protests, struggles and activism had been sidelined by all the attention to (and debate over) cause and effect' (Lees, Slater and Wyly, 2010:525).

Academic discussions of resistance to gentrification have been few and far between to date, but they are growing internationally. A decade or so after Jane Jacobs (1961) fought the federal bulldozer in NYC (furthering the gentrification of Greenwich Village) American urban scholars and activists were fighting gentrification. In the 1970s and 1980s there were, according to Hackworth and Smith (2001) 'intense political struggles' (p.467) over the displacements caused by gentrification. The 1970s were a period of fiscal crisis in the US and this resulted in intense citizen mobilization towards tenant and neighbourhood protection. This was symbolized nowhere better than by Chester Hartman's scholar-activism in San Francisco. Hartman's (1974) *Yerba Buena: Land Grab and Community Resistance in San Francisco* focused on the resistance of a low-income community to the post-war urban renewal that was destroying inner city communities across the US. This book deserves renewed attention in light of state-led gentrification, and especially the state-led gentrification of public housing. Justin Herman, San Francisco's Robert Moses, sought to slum clear and redevelop the South of Market area renaming it Yerba Buena (an early example of renaming neighbourhoods to market their gentrification). The San Francisco Redevelopment Agency (SFRA) promised the public housing residents in South of Market priority right of return, attempting to put them at odds with those resisting the renewal. Hartman talks about the strategies that SFRA used to get their way, for example, providing selective information that favoured their cause, and over-whelming HUD officials with surveys, reports, and paperwork. Hartman (1974) shows that at the time SFRA were able to circumvent public participation/consultation: 'the redevelopment agency and the City sought to avoid having to secure direct public approval of the project by opting for a financing mechanism that allegedly allows circumventing the voters' (p.183). Hartman provides detail on how the community organized itself through the courts to resist, led by an organization called 'Tenants and Owners in Opposition to Redevelopment' (TOOR). He showed how they were aided by liberal lawyers and academics from the nearby University of California, Berkeley, and other non-profit organizations, whilst recognising that this reliance on others had drawbacks: 'Dependence on the attorneys meant deference to outsiders who likely would be acting out of a different set of

priorities from those of residents' (p. 140). TOOR won some impressive gains under the slogan 'We won't move', including replacing low rent public housing. Significantly, Hartman called for legal controls over urban renewal policy (see Robinson, 1995, on the legacy of this anti-gentrification resistance). Compared to San Francisco and other US cities, such as New York City, there has been little to nothing written on resistance to gentrification in 1970s London, even if some wrote about the injustices of the 'winkling' of tenants by property companies (see Lees, Slater and Wyly, 2008: 14-15).

Hartman's subsequent writings (Hartman, Keating and LeGates, 1982; and Hartman, 1984) came out of the San Francisco-based 'Anti-Displacement Project', a national campaign to protect affordable housing occupants from the displacement pressures of gentrification during the 1970s. The Project grew out of the resistance to the Yerba Buena land grab. Hartman argued that different types of gentrification required different responses. In the 1980s Peter Marcuse (1985) wrote about the merits of anti-displacement zoning for private rentals (encouragement and discouragement zones) and this has been enacted with some success, for example, Lees, Slater and Wyly, (2008: 250-255) discuss the 'Displacement Free Zone' that the Fifth Avenue Committee (FAC) in Park Slope, New York City, set up in the 1990s to protect the local community against gentrification. When told about rent increases in the DFZ, tactics included the FAC working with religious leaders to appeal to landlords' consciences, and if that failed they would go to court for the tenant with the help of local legal services. In London during the 1980s there was growing resistance to early examples of state-led gentrification, for example, the extensive community organising in Newham around the People's Plan for the Royal Docks (Brownill, 1988) and in North Southwark (Colenutt, 2011)[3]. However, in gentrification studies the 1988 anti-gentrification riots in Tompkins Square Park in New York City (see Smith, 1996) became the most well-known example of resistance to gentrification at that time.

Despite the activities of the FAC and others, during the 1990s there was a dearth of academic writing on resistance to gentrification (for an exception and critique see Lees, 1999). Indeed Hackworth and Smith (2001) asserted that there was 'a palpable decline of community opposition' (p.475) to the post-recession resurgence of gentrification (in the UK and North America). They argued: 'effective resistance to gentrification has declined as the working class is continually displaced from the inner city, and as the most militant anti-gentrification groups of the 1980s morph into housing service providers' (p. 468). It is questionable, however, whether there was a real lack of resistance or more a lack of academic writing about resistance.

Smith (2002) argued that anti-gentrification movements were being targeted by city politicians and police forces, by an emergent 'revanchist city' – a brutal, authoritarianism that squashed opposition and sought to cleanse the streets making them open for gentrification (see Wacquant, 2009; Mitchell and Heynen, 2009). Roschelle and Wright (2003) discussed the criminalization of the homeless as related to gentrification in San Francisco and the activism against it that took place in the 1990s. They outlined in some detail the strategies, tactics and effective organizing of advocates and activists and the issues they faced, especially their internal and external

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[3] See also: Campaigning Against the LDDC / Corbetts Wharf Occupation / Hays Wharf Opposition early 1980's; and the opposition to Cherry Gardens in the mid- 1980s
(*https://southwarknotes.wordpress.com/archive-resources/southwark-1970-2012/)*

fragmentáns in struggles with each other for scarce resources. In the 2000s, Newman and Wyly (2006) argued that public housing and rent regulations, that once allowed low income groups to remain in the city, were being challenged by advocates of gentrification and dismantled by policy-makers, generating consensus by appealing to ideas of 'mixed communities' in deprived urban areas (cr. Bridge, Butler and Lees, 2011).

Mayer (2009) has discussed the institutional pressures on resistance movements, arguing that neoliberalization has caused social movements to reinvent themselves and limit themselves to what seems feasible under (neoliberal) circumstances. Some authors have discussed this more widely under the guise of the post-political (eg. Swyngedouw, 2007, 2011; see the critiques by MacLeod, 2011 and Lees, 2014a). In the context of the UK, Smith (2011) said that radical urban critiques had themselves been regenerated out of existence, '"curdled into an alibi" for gentrification'. He saw that the political defeats in the UK after the mid-1980s had left many with little energy to fight, and that exhausted 'by the defensive and broadly failed struggles against Thatcher and desperately keen to see a Blairite alternative' 'ex-radicals became frontline regeneration managers for local councils, others even became developers'[4] . As a result most of the writings on resistance to gentrification in the early 2000s have been reflections on why resistance to gentrification has seemingly died down, as opposed to detailed writing on practices of resistance (like Hartman, 1974).

More recently, however, there has been a growing literature on resistance to gentrification in the Global South. In reference to slum gentrification Cabannes et al. (2010) and Lees (2014c) discussed the Abahlali movement in South Africa, and Velaquez-Atehortua (2013) the resistance of barrio women in Caracas, Venezuela. Indeed, Betancur (2014) talks about residents in Lima fighting gentrification under the banner of 'Urban Renewal without Evictions', but perhaps most relevant to this paper, Morales-Cruz (2012) discussed resistance to the gentrification of a public housing estate – Las Gladiolas, in Puerto Rico, which was to be demolished and rebuilt in the vein of HUD's HOPE VI programme[5]. A key tactic of resistance was through legal struggle. In 2006 the community development section of the University of Puerto Rico School of Law's Legal Aid Clinic filed a class action suit on behalf of the residents of Las Gladiolas in the United States District Court for Puerto Rico; they cited the lack of participation of residents in the development of the application for demolition. Like in the UK, US federal law requires that an application for the demolition of a public housing project must be developed in consultation with residents. It also requires that buildings be maintained properly as long as people are residing in them. In addition to the violation of federal law Las Gladiolas residents alleged that the government and the private maintenance companies had stopped providing adequate maintenance services leading to the deterioration of the project. Morales-Cruz (2012) states that the litigation was about trying to raise public awareness about gentrification and the dangers of demolishing public housing units in Puerto Rico. Residents took up the opportunities that the court case offered for mobilization, where they attended and held press conferences outside of the federal court building. Despite the mobilisation, the district court ruled in favour of the

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[4] http://www.metamute.org/editorial/articles/regeneration-railway-journey
[5] See also Fernández Arrigoitia (2010).

government and granted the demolition in 2008, and an appeal to the United States Court of Appeals was ruled against in 2010, confirming the observation by Hackworth (2005) that although litigation has been the most common form of protest against HOPE VI, it has been mostly unsuccessful.

Nevertheless it is our contention that 'it is analytically erroneous and politically irresponsible to suggest that anti-gentrification movements are on the way out. Some types of militant movements have declined in number. Many others have changed strategy. And in nearly every community experiencing gentrification, there is an enormous but latent reservoir of hidden resistance' (Lees, Slater and Wyly, 2010: 526). We also argue that committed urban scholarship must actively engage with changing strategies of contestation, both in order to critically assess new challenges to organising against residential gentrification but also to identify and disseminate lessons from on-going resistance. At times, these lessons come from new alliances and moments of mobilizations of different groups within an urban community. Curran and Hamilton (2012), for example, discuss the Newtown Creek Alliance, a group of citizen activists in Greenpoint, Brooklyn, NYC, who fought for environmental projects that created a greener neighbourhood but preserved the character of the community[6]. Roschelle and Wright (2003:165) discuss how despite the difficulties that anti-homeless activists experienced organizing against gentrification in San Francisco, 'The good news is that local political and economic policies are not uncontested. While the homeless activist community has been brought to a defensive standstill in the Bay Area, other segments of the community are mobilizing'. .

Indeed, there has been renewed attention to a resurgent mobilization of grassroots and urban social movements around housing issues and the right to the city (Brenner, Marcuse and Mayer, 2011; Holm and Kuhn, 2011), and there is new work on resistance to gentrification. Maekelberg (2012) has looked at the mobilizing frames in East Harlem, New York City, which turned the demand for decent housing into a struggle against gentrification and for collective self-determination. Novy and Colomb (2013) argue that in cities around the globe there is mounting evidence of growing mobilization by members of the so-called 'creative class' in urban social movements, defending particular urban spaces and influencing urban development. They discuss the resistance made up of an alliance of activists called 'Right to the City' fighting the gentrification of the Gängeviertel area of Hamburg and their manifesto against the branding of the city titled 'Not in Our Name!'. Pearsall (2013) discusses how getting the Gowanus Canal in New York City onto the US National Priorities List of uncontrolled hazardous sites rendered the site less attractive to developers, and argues that the listing process became an effective tool in the struggle to resist gentrification in the Gowanus Canal neighbourhood. This paper is situated in this important and growing academic literature on resistance to the many different types of gentrification around the world. Significantly we bring our investigation and analysis to London, where resistance to gentrification has been relatively understudied to date, and where we discuss strategies on how to protect affordable social housing from the displacement pressures of C21st gentrification. In the face of escalating gentrification and attendant displacement pressures both in London, the UK, and around the world (on global gentrifications/planetary

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[6] Although we would argue that urban scholars need to be more critical of the notion of maintaining *the* historic identity of the neighbourhood.

gentrification see Lees, Shin and Lopez-Morales, 2015,2016), this work has both local, but also national and international value.

Our specific contribution draws on the data collected through a Scholar-Activist project that we were both involved in titled 'Challenging the "new urban renewal"'[7]. The project sought to produce embedded and engaged scholarship (see Chatterton, 2008; the Autonomous Geographies Collective, 2010) driven by the urban social injustice of low-income housing demolition through the development of a partnership between academic researchers and activist and community organisations. The project had 3 aims: i) gathering evidence on gentrification-induced displacement from council estates in London; ii) collecting and promoting community-led alternatives to gentrification by drawing on local and transnational knowledges; and, iii) collecting stories of successful local resistance to gentrification. Part of the data collected informed the production of a booklet titled: *Staying Put: An Anti-gentrification Handbook for Council Estates in London* (LTF, Lees, Just Space, SNAG, 2014), which is copy-left and freely available for download online and which has been distributed in hard copies to campaigning groups and council estates across London and indeed beyond.

Central to the handbook is information and knowledge produced and collected by the three partners: the London Tenants Federation (londontenants.org), Just Space, a 'membership based organisation bringing together communities to influence the strategic plan for London' since 2007 (justspace.org.uk), and Southwark Notes Archive Group (SNAG), a group of current and former local residents and activists documenting urban transformations in Southwark, of which one of the authors (Ferreri) was a member. SNAG's community archive on the 'regeneration' of Elephant and Castle, which is both on-line and available in hard copy at 56a Infoshop, a local social centre in Southwark, was invaluable to the project and to the analysis of gentrification dynamics in and around the Heygate Estate.[8] While the modes of resistance we discuss here are referred to in our booklet *Staying Put*, in this article we discuss them in much greater detail to draw out wider conclusions for urban scholarship and activism concerned with the changing dynamics of gentrification in relation to social housing.


**The Heygate Estate's background regeneration story (1999-2010)**

Before discussing resistance during the last three years of the Heygate Estate it is necessary to provide a brief overview of the regeneration background leading up to 2010 (more detail is provided in Lees, 2014b). When the Heygate Estate was slated for 'regeneration' in the late 1990s, it was home to more than 3,000 people living in 1,212 residential units (1033 council-owned and 179 leasehold). Its demolition was proposed as part of a longer-term and wider plan to regenerate the area around the

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[7] PI: Lees,L. CoIs: London Tenants Federation, Richard Lee/Just Space and Mara Ferreri/Southwark Notes Archives Group*, Antipode Activist Scholar Award 2012* 'Challenging "the New Urban Renewal": gathering the tools necessary to halt the social cleansing of council estates and developing community-led alternatives for sustaining existing communities'. Please note that our deeper experiences of scholar-activism are beyond the scope of this paper.
[8] Most of the original documentation and interview material is now available online on the *Southwark Notes* and the *Heygate Was Home* websites.

Elephant and Castle shopping centre, of which the first failed attempt occurred in 1999 through the Elephant Links regeneration program (see DeFilippis and North, 2004; Campkin, 2013). From the early 2000s the Council deferred all but minimal maintenance of the estate and began preparations for the 'decant' of its residents, all of whom had been originally promised new accommodation on the redeveloped site. As the decanting of secure tenancies took place over time the council used part of the estate as short-term, insecure, emergency 'temporary accommodation', while other units were left empty and boarded up. Some tenants described this period as one in which the council 'just ran [the estate] down into disrepair' (in Reeve and Steel, 2013). From the early 2000s, the Heygate began to be depicted as a 'failed' estate (see Lees, 2014a on how council tenants countered this narrative on an adjacent estate; see also Pfeiffer, 2006, on Cabrini Green) and *became* notorious as a crime-ridden 'sink estate' for which demolition (according to the Council) was the only solution.

Contrary to the original plans, in 2004 the Council announced that replacement homes would be built on early housing sites locally (Southwark Council, 2004b and 2004c), but by 2007 none of these replacement sites had been built nor had planning applications for them been submitted. Nonetheless, as stated in our introduction, Southwark Council appointed a developer (Lend Lease) and approved the 'Heygate Action Plan' (Southwark Council, 2007a), which pushed secure tenants to seek alternative council housing through a form of borough-wide online bidding for existing properties (for detail see Lees, 2014b), while non-secure tenancies were terminated, with the option of rehousing dependent upon the assessment of individual circumstances (Southwark Council, 2013a). The 'decant' of secure and insecure tenants accelerated in late 2007 (Southwark Council, 2007b) and half of the units on the estate were made vacant. At this stage, the regeneration promise to be rehoused in new homes had been reduced to a so-called 'Right to Return'. Out of the original 1,000 secure tenants, only 250 signed up to the 'Right to Return' and by 2013 only 45 former Heygate council tenants had actually exercised that right and moved into new homes (Mr Abbot, LBS, CPO statement, 2013).

Of the original 179 leaseholders on the estate, by 2005 only 72 had agreed the surrender of their leases (Southwark Council, 2013b), but over 100 households were still living on the estate during the rapid 'decant' of 2007/8, and remained the main inhabitants of the estate after all the social tenants were moved out. Initially, leaseholders had been promised a 'retained equity' option to assist them in buying one of the new-build Heygate homes (Southwark Council, 2000; Southwark Council, 2004b), later one of those on the early housing sites; but the option was never included in the official agreements with the developers and the housing associations. Leaseholders were also initially offered a cost-free exchange for another council-owned flat elsewhere in the borough, but this was later withdrawn in favour of shared ownership[9]. The uncertainty regarding the rehousing process, combined with the withdrawal of promises made at the beginning of the 'decant' and the personal

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[9] Shared ownership is a way of buying a stake in a property if you cannot afford to buy it outright. You have sole occupancy rights, you do not have to share your home with anyone else. Shared ownership properties are usually provided by housing associations (not-for-profit organisation). You buy a share of a property and pay rent to the housing association for the remainder. Your monthly outgoings will include repayments on any mortgage you have taken out, plus rent on the part of the property retained by the housing association. Later, if you can afford it, you may be able to increase your share until you own the whole property.

concern of many owner occupiers, particularly the elderly, about remaining on the nearly vacant estate, meant that most leaseholders were pushed to negotiate the acquisition of their homes by the Council on an individual basis. In the vast majority of cases, the compensation offered was below market price for similar existing properties, and even further from the expected prices of the new units to be built on the estate's site (symbolic of the 'state-induced rent gap' mentioned in our introduction). By being offered compensation far below market price for the same area, most leaseholders were forced to relocate outside the borough and even outside London (see the displacement maps in LTF, Lees, Just Space and SNAG, 2014: 8-9). On 15th February 2010, Southwark Council announced its intention to issue Compulsory Purchase Orders to all those Heygate leaseholders who remained on the estate. In November 2010, the estate was nearly vacant but for twelve units: 9 leaseholders and 3 tenants still negotiating rehousing and a fair valuation of their properties.

**Resisting gentrification in and around the Heygate Estate (2010-2013)**

In what follows we analyse three interconnected processes or modes of community resistance to the gentrification of the Heygate Estate from 2010 to 2013: these were attempts to influence planning, strategies to try and keep the estate open, and challenges made in the 'public interest'. The organising strategies all involved different degrees of active questioning of the dominant discourses of regeneration through critical and propositional action and concentrated moments of legal challenge to the developers and the local authority. We discuss three specific instances: local network organising to influence master planning; self-organised activities to keep the Heygate open; and a significant legal challenge to the 'public interest' of the demolition through a Public Inquiry into the Compulsory Purchase Order of the remaining leaseholders[10]. In what follows we consider what worked in these joint efforts across civil society organising, direct action movement, and legal challenges.

*Mode I: Local network organising to influence planning*

One prominent mode of local organising centred on on-going attempts to influence local processes and decision-making through community engagement in local planning processes. This form of action was mainly facilitated through the ***Elephant Amenity Network (EAN)***, a 'coalition of local groups and people that include council tenants, leaseholders, shopkeepers or market traders or amenity groups (who wish to preserve local open spaces and parks)' (EAN, 2010). In public statements, the group never declared itself against regeneration of the local area, but always stressed the need for a critical engagement with the plans because of concerns about the 'loss of local public housing, open spaces and small shops and also the lack of real information on the ground about the Council and the private developers' (Lend Lease) plans' (EAN, 2010). The Network was formed on the basis of support for the main point of the '*Elephant & Castle Regeneration Charter for Community Inclusion and a Better Quality of Life for All*' – 'Open Masterplanning', defined as 'to enter into a

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[10] A Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) is a legal function in the UK that allows bodies that need to obtain land or property to do so without the consent of the owner. It may be enforced if a proposed development is considered one for public betterment.

development process for the site that is democratic and actively involves the local community'; 'Benefits for All', 'to extend the benefits of the regeneration to the existing population'; and 'Housing that really is Affordable', based on the original regeneration tender according to which '50% of all Elephant & Castle housing developments must be social rented by unit, with half the remaining homes intermediate, half for sale. 75% of all Early Housing sites should be social rented by unit, with the remainder intermediate' (EAN, 2010) (see Figure 2).

**Figure 2: Elephant Amenity Network leaflet (2011)**

Once the Regeneration Agreement between Southwark Council and the developer Lend Lease was signed in May 2010, the network became a reference point for sharing information among concerned residents and traders through a close critical reading of incoming planning applications and through active participation in local and borough-wide planning. In the words of an EAN member and former Heygate resident:

> '[I]t was a mixture of people, some who had been around for some time, some from the Heygate, some were getting involved simply because it was beginning to affect them. That was partly the impetus, people outside the Heygate were beginning to get affected. Up to then it had really only been the Heygate' (conversation with one of the authors, cited in Davies, 2014).

In doing so, the main focus of its activities was to pressure the local authority and developers to fulfil the demands of open master planning and to use the information and knowledge of policy gained to generate proposals to influence the many planning consultation processes that informed the regeneration scheme, such as the 'Elephant & Castle Supplementary Planning Document/Opportunity Area Planning Framework' (Southwark Council, 2010). Besides a mailing list, an e-newsletter and regular monthly meetings, the network also organised a series of public events, such as the well-attended 'visioning workshop' open to the public and held on the premises of Crossways Church, on the Heygate Estate footprint, in June 2011. The event was intended as a way of 'stepping into the breach' of a five-year hiatus between the last regeneration master plan and the one that the appointed developer was about to submit to consultation, leading to the publication of the 'Imagining the Elephant' report (EAN, 2011). The report was referred to on several occasions in subsequent consultations on the Lend Lease's Heygate Masterplan, to which many members of EAN input and which the group influenced through the demand for regular liaison committees on specific issues, such as housing, alongside more public consultation events (Soundings, 2012).

Importantly, while the members of EAN had somewhat different backgrounds and presented a range of interests and investment in the regeneration dynamics and the future of the Heygate, a section of the group was composed of professionals who had recently moved into the area and who were
> 'a little bit more used to dealing with bureaucracy. They may be professionals themselves who aren't necessarily in awe of someone in a bloody suit waving around a ring binder and showing a power point presentation. Now that isn't to say people on the Heygate didn't have that experience, but the generality of people are less well equipped. They have less energy or less time, less money,

less resource to deal with that kind of situation [...] a large part of the energy for the Elephant Amenity Network came, if you like, from the ripple outwards rather than from what already had happened on the Heygate' (conversation with one of the authors, cited in Davies, 2014).

These residents not only had the energy, time, and resources to deal with planning and policy documents, but they could also mobilize support through their own networks, which included planners, researchers, journalists, architects and members of third sector urban advocacy organizations. At this stage, with less than ten units officially occupied and the built fabric of the estate rapidly deteriorating, demolition of the estate was accepted as inevitable. While spokespersons for the network actively engaged with the city and national media, such as the BBC, to discuss housing issues and publicise the recent history of the Heygate, it could be argued that in terms of housing most efforts focused on increasing levels of social housing in the proposed developments (post demolition) and on minimising their impact on remaining traders and residents around the estate. As stated by a member of the network 'as far as the Elephant Amenity Network goes, by the time that came into being, the Heygate had pretty much had it' (cited in Davies, 2014).

### *Mode II: Self-organised activities to keep the Heygate Estate open*

At the same time, a second mode of resistance was emerging through individual and organized efforts to keep the physical site of the Heygate Estate open and visible, against the local authority's attempts to portray the estate as already vacant, which included placing official signs at various entrances that declared 'No Through Access – Estate Closed Off'. In the period between 2010 and the eviction of the last resident in 2013, a range of self-organized social activities took place in the open areas within the estate, including reclaiming land for allotments (see Figure 3), setting up a temporary cinema to screen films about the estate or other examples of struggles around housing demolition, open air concerts, exhibitions, picnics, community barbeques, talks and neighbourhood walks. Most activities were self-organized among different groups that chose anonymity in order to avoid being charged with trespassing on public land, as threatened by the Council.[11]

Keeping the estate open and in use was understood by many as a gesture of solidarity with the remaining tenants and leaseholders and a very direct form of action to make the estate safer at a point when burglaries and personal attacks had occurred in the nearly vacant site. It was also strategically important to rally around the public features of the estate as a reminder and element of comparison with the proposed development plans, such as the generous size of existing flats and community facilities, and the presence of publicly-owned green, open spaces and over 400 mature trees within the low rise interior of the estate (EAN, 2011).

**Figure 3: The (alternative) Heygate Regeneration Scheme**

[11] One of the authors (Lees) undertook a walk-along interview on the Heygate with a BBC journalist on the future of social housing in London for ntslive radio (http://ntslive.co.uk/?p=8402).

A participant and critical voice in the discourse of the regeneration of Elephant and Castle was Southwark Notes Archives Group, linked to the popular anti-gentrification blog Southwark Notes (see http://southwarknotes.wordpress.com/). The group aimed to produce and disseminate alternative narratives around the Heygate Estate and the area more widely through public meetings and events, including 'gentrification walks' around the neighbourhood which usually ended inside the estate, where a 'permanent exhibition' of laminated newspaper cuttings, statistics and interviews with displaced residents had been mounted on display boards, to provide visitors with an explanation of the vacant estate and a counter-narrative to media representations of the 'infamous' estate (see Figure 4). One such walk, in April 2012, organized with the Aylesbury Tenants First group (see Figure 5), started at the nearby Aylesbury Estate, also affected by piecemeal demolition and redevelopment (see Lees, 2014a), and brought residents of that estate to the nearly empty site of the Heygate Estate to witness and discuss parallels between the two cases, and potential for organizing.

**Figure 4: Anti-gentrification counter-narratives in the Heygate Estate**

**Figure 5:Walking the Rip-off: Heygate to Aylesbury, poster (2012).**

Given the fragmentary nature of information on the changes in Elephant and Castle, on the one hand, and the urgency to bring together similar campaigns in London and share strategies and tactics, on the other, in November 2012 the group organized a one-day event '*The Siege of the Elephant: a convergence against the gentrification of the Elephant and Castle*'[12] (see Figure 6). The day brought together local residents and traders, activists, community groups and campaigners, locally and from across London, academics and other researchers to share evidence and discuss alternatives to gentrification in Southwark (SNAG, 2014; see also discussion in Lees, 2014b).

**Figure 6: SNAG, *The Siege of the Elephant* poster (2012)**

The interconnected issues of 'the spin of regeneration' and 'politicising consultation', discussed during the event, reflected the common experience of many community organizations trying to influence local developments through processes of consultation and trying to produce critical counter-narratives to local authorities' 'spin of regeneration'. The issue of consultation as a 'process of managing "activist experts"' has been analyzed in the context of other large-scale regeneration schemes in London (see Imrie, 2009:107) and was the focus of an article exposing the false representation and manipulation of participants in the non-statutory consultations held during 2011 and 2012 on the Heygate Masterplan (SNAG, 2013).

Intersecting with these forms of public awareness-raising on gentrification and displacement, some of the individuals and groups involved in keeping the estate open also took part in protests in conjunction with key planning committee meetings,

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[12] Partly funded by the Urban Geography Research Group of the RGS-IBG (2012), the Siege was subsequently built on in a conference co-organised by all partners in the Scholar Activist project at King's College London (where Lees then worked and was awarded public engagement funds for the conference) in early 2013, which considered the gentrification of council housing across London through the guise of mixed communities policy and prioritised the full discussion of alternatives from community land trusts to cooperatives and lifetime neighbourhoods.

such as on the Heygate Outline Masterplan application (15th January 2013); and on 5th February 2013, which approved the detailed planning application for Phase 1 of the redevelopment. Despite many deviations from the local authority's own policies, particularly around sustainable energy and the provision of 'affordable' housing (25% instead of the Council's 35% policy, including the provision of just 71 rented units to replace the over one thousand lost by the demolition) (EAN, 2013), both applications were approved. In the first case members of the audience staged a silent protest to object to the application; in the second meeting, members of the public who had not been allowed into the meeting room held a sit-in in the main foyer of the local authority building. Both protests gained media attention and the discontent of local residents and community groups was summed up in a double page spread in the free London daily newspaper - the *Evening Standard* under the headline 'New Heygate: It looks nice, but where's the affordable housing?' (Bar Hillel and Loeb, 2013).

### *Mode III: The CPO Public Inquiry - a legal challenge against the 'public interest' of the demolition*

The third mode of organised resistance was through an appeal against the Compulsory Purchase to which the last remaining Heygate leaseholders and non-residential freeholders[13] were subjected. In 2010, leaseholders that hadn't reached a settlement with the Council formed **the Heygate Leaseholders Group** in order to share information and prepare for a collective response. Once the CPO was served, in August 2012, the group issued a press statement declaring their intention to exercise their right to object. Their argument was two-fold: on the one hand, they objected to the unfair valuation of their properties at half of the borough average price per square foot, which they claimed would 'result in us being dispossessed of our homes and permanently priced out of central London' (interview, 2013); on the other hand, they further objected on the grounds that the development proposals were not in the public interest, as they would create 'a private gated high-rise citadel'. From the press release:

> 'The 1200 homes here on the Heygate were truly affordable to local people. The 2500 luxury new homes set to replace them will cost upwards of £500,000 to buy, and if there are any new "affordable" homes provided then the most affordable of these will likely cost around £275 per week to rent. This regeneration scheme was conceived on the premise of creating a more 'mixed community'. In reality what we are seeing is state-sponsored segregation: the large-scale displacement of those on lower incomes by high earners and overseas buy-to-let investors. […] We are not lone voices of discontent: our objections are being supported by a local residents group who have launched a campaign to object to the proposals and hold developer Lend Lease to council policy on a number of points including the minimum affordable housing requirement' (Heygate Leaseholders Group, 2012)

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[13] The Crossways Church on the estate footprint, which subsequently pulled out of the CPO inquiry on reaching a deal with the Council.

This statement is important because it both explains the rationale of the individual leaseholders and the dynamics that brought them to challenge the CPO, and it connects their struggle to the wider organizing that had been taking place in the neighbourhood around gentrification and housing 'affordability', such as the 35percent campaign, a local campaign demanding for the enforcement of the 35% affordable housing policy in all new developments (see *www.35percent.org*), as in the original targets for the borough. The Heygate Leaseholders Group, drawing on support from individuals and local groups, submitted a challenge to the CPO and started the process that brought a Public Inquiry in February 2013.

The Inquiry ran over four days in February 2013 and allowed representation from several statutory objectors, which included the remaining Heygate leaseholders as well as members of the Elephant Amenity Network and other local campaign groups, to an external Planning Inspector. Some representations focused on deconstructing the myths of the residents' consensus about the demolition of the estate and on exposing the stressful conditions of the rehousing process, and the detrimental effects it had on many ex-Heygate tenants and leaseholders. Others focused on the original regeneration proposals and their promises of sustainable energy, car-free development, social housing and open public spaces, in contrast to what had been approved by the Masterplan outline planning application two weeks prior. By involving a range of objectors presenting a wider critique of the scheme, the Inquiry was a collective attempt to challenge the logic construed by the legal framework as a question of private property rights of individuals against the right of expropriation of the state, by turning the case into a public issue around which to articulate a series of challenges to the presumed 'public interest' of the new developments.

The long-term scrutiny of the planning application and policy documents that had made up the activities of the EAN was central to the objectors' ability to challenge the 'regeneration spin' on a professional and technical level through a deep engagement with policy and planning frameworks. The case became a platform both to give evidence about the effects of direct displacement on tenants and leaseholders, to discuss exclusionary displacement (cr. Marcuse, 1985), and to discuss alternatives (such as refurbishment) to demolition and sale of the land to a private developer. The objectors were also able to draw on a range of expert witnesses, which included the original architect of the Heygate Estate, Tim Tinker, as well as several academics presenting on issues ranging from open space provision to the failure of 'mixed communities' policy, on dynamics of direct and indirect displacement caused by the proposed changes in tenure from social rented housing to owner-occupiers and private rented housing.[14] Overall, the purpose of the objectors' statements was to challenge the 'public interest' of the proposed redevelopment, which by that point had lost much of its legitimacy in the local press as well as with some of the local councillors. This was done by revealing a range of evidence proving that the new developments did not respond to the housing needs of the area nor of the borough, and moreover would be detrimental to existing low income communities, who would not be able to rent or buy, and who might not have access to the green areas within the development.

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[14] Respectively: Michael Edwards, UCL-Bartlett; Loretta Lees, then at King's College London; Mara Ferreri, then at Queen Mary University of London; and Paul McGann, London Metropolitan University.

The Inquiry, moreover, enabled cross-examination and cross-questioning of several senior officials in the local authority regeneration team and the request for further documentation that hitherto had not been in the public domain, including the relocation sites of all leaseholders. The process also enabled the public disclosure of the agreement that had been signed between the developers and Southwark Council in 2010, and which had not been made public until then despite several formal requests by local residents, including a Freedom of Information request. This occurred when part of the document was uploaded on the Council website in late January 2013 in preparation for their CPO statements. The document had been redacted, however local residents and activists working on the case quickly realized that the pdf had been simply blackened out, and that a simple operation of cut and paste would reveal key information such as the fact that the Council would receive a payment of just £50m in return for the sale of the 23 acre site, a loss in comparison to the £65.4m costs that it had incurred in emptying the estate (Heygate Was Home, 2013). The constant work of blogging and the liaison with local and national press over the previous years meant that sympathetic ground had already been furrowed and the news of the blundering disclosure of the Regeneration Agreement rapidly spread to local and national newspapers and blogs, with the *Evening Standard* publishing an article titled: 'Elephant and Castle estate revamp "ripped off taxpayers"' (Bar-Hillel, 2013; see also Dugan, 2013; and Private Eye, 2014).

**Debating the 'public interest' of council housing demolition**

The Public Inquiry reproduced the three modes of resistance and collective positions from which organizing and resistance had been articulated in and around the estate in its last three years: from exposing the 'broken promises' of the regeneration scheme, to making the process of enforced relocation visible to the general public, to raising the question of the wider repercussions and future displacements to be caused by the demolition of low-income public housing, not just in the neighbourhood, but also in the borough and London at large. In this context the Inquiry provided a crucial tool for individuals and community activists to re-examine and make public their reconstruction of the history of the estate, and to draw media attention to the shortfalls of the proposed new developments (cr. the class action suit discussed in Morales-Cruz, 2012). The legal challenge should be read in the context of a wider strategy to mobilize around the events and dynamics affecting the estate and the neighbourhood at large in order to "set the record straight" (CPO notes, 8th February 2013) and influence ongoing redevelopment plans, as well as, importantly, to establish a legal and political precedent for other struggles around council housing demolition in London (such as the 2015 Public Inquiry on the adjacent Aylesbury Estate) and beyond. Interestingly, the criticisms of the future provision of 'affordable housing' on site, particularly the higher levels of rent compared to those previously available to secure council tenants, was declared by the Heygate CPO Planning Inspector as 'a matter of wider social policy consideration, not unique to the Order Land [the area of the Heygate Estate still inhabited] or this CPO' (Fabian, 2013, p. 31). Nonetheless, the scheme was deemed compliant with affordability levels defined by the Council and the GLA, and the CPO was confirmed. While unsuccessful, the Inquiry was extremely useful in holding the local authority accountable for decisions made along the way about the rehousing process and the

slow erosion of most of the 'public benefit' of the proposed regeneration of Elephant and Castle.

At the same time, it is important to highlight that out of the entire estate population, only three leaseholders and one former tenant spoke at the Inquiry. Both the legal framework and the knowledge and financial requirements for appealing to a CPO make such Inquiries highly exclusionary processes. As observed by Imrie and Thomas (1997:1416), resistance to compulsory purchase in contexts of urban renewal can reveal multi-layered and complex mechanisms of exclusion, overall impacting on the relatively poorer and socially and politically marginal. But in response to Hackworth's (2007) argument that opposition through litigation is hindering the creation of a wider movement of oppositions because it 'requires a narrowing of tenant issues to correspond with relevant case law' (p. 177), the experience of the Heygate Estate indicates, on the contrary, the possibility of deploying a Public Inquiry, alongside other forms of organising, and questioning of 'regeneration', as a strategy to broaden the issue from the fate of the estate's residents to a questioning of the whole regeneration plan, its promises, aims, financial model and modes of delivery.

If seen in terms of raising the media profile of the Heygate Estate's planned demolition and redevelopment, the three forms of organising outlined in this paper have been highly successful. In the words of a campaigner active in another London borough: 'the Elephant has become a political issue in a way that it wasn't before' (interview, 2014), and is widely considered, at the very least, a case of urban mismanagement. Nearly one year after the eviction of the last remaining leaseholder, in an interview in the *Guardian* newspaper the Labour leader of Southwark, Peter John, declared, reflecting on the history of the Heygate, that '[i]f the opportunity ever arose again to clear out a whole estate, you wouldn't do it. It's not the right way to regenerate. It's terrible' (Hill, 2014). Across London and beyond, the case of the Heygate has become a symbol and a point of reference for the scandal of council housing demolition for several campaign groups, including members of the recently formed Radical Housing Network, 'a group of groups' fighting for housing justice across all tenures in the city (http://radicalhousingnetwork.org/). Some members of the Radical Housing Network took the lessons of the Heygate Estate further through the occupation of vacant units in other London council estates threatened with demolition, such as the Carpenters Estate in Newham (September - October 2014)[15], the Aylesbury Estate in Southwark (January - April 2015)[16], and the Sweets Way Estate in Barnet (March - September 2015).[17]

**Conclusion**
In this paper we have discussed three modes of resistance to the gentrification of the Heygate Estate in London, including civil society organising, direct action, and legal challenges. The different modes of resistance within and around the Heygate Estate raised its public visibility as a symbol of the effects of 'regeneration' schemes involving the demolition of council housing. In this, despite differences, all groups and individuals involved shared a position of critique of the 'regeneration': the EAN

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[15] Focus E15, focuse15.org
[16] Fight for the Aylesbury, fightfortheaylesbury.wordpress.com
[17] Sweets Way Resists, sweetswayresists.wordpress.com

and the 35% Campaign took this critique one step further by actively producing and promoting alternative visions for the redevelopment (EAN, 2011, cr. Brownill, 1988, on the People's Plan); and SNAG found it increasingly important to radicalize the terms of the debate by calling the proposed redevelopment plan 'gentrification', a term that had not been used prior (SNAG, 2012). Using the 'dirty word' (Smith, 1996: 30-34) 'gentrification' was politically strategic in its own right (cr. Davidson and Lees, 2005).

The combination of campaigning work and forms of direct appropriation of open spaces through public events kept the estate open and accessible over its last three years, something that should not be underestimated, since both constituted an important physical and symbolic entry point into the history of the 'actually existing estate' for local residents as well as for visitors, activists and researchers. On a symbolic level, these activities attempted to reverse the narrative of a 'sink estate', used as a smokescreen and a justification for regeneration (cr. Lees, 2014a), and by valuing the estate as a public good, local community groups and former residents were able to expose the loss of social housing and community spaces that the proposed new development would entail. While ultimately unsuccessful, the Public Inquiry into the CPOs enabled members of local community organisations, former and existing Heygate Estate leaseholders, as well as engaged urban researchers, to expose the degree to which the 'regeneration' of Elephant and Castle, and its centre piece demolition of the estate, was not in the 'public interest'; and to discredit both the local authority's 'regeneration spin' and the developers' marketing for the new developments. Like the litigation around Las Gladiolas in Puerto Rico (see Morales-Cruz, 2012), the Heygate Inquiry was about trying to raise public awareness about cross-tenure displacement, state-led gentrification and the dangers of demolishing public housing units in London. The role of 'expert witnesses' in the Inquiry was a positive, it did not mean deference to outsiders who were acting out of a different set of priorities from residents (as Hartman, 1974:140, feared), quite the opposite for all objectors offered a detailed critique of the 'regeneration' in their challenge to the demolition of council housing. The experience gained in the 2013 Heygate Estate Public Inquiry helped strategies in the subsequent 2015 Aylesbury Estate Public Inquiry[18] which went beyond raising public awareness and tried to show that the Council had not considered alternatives. The value of constructing a detailed critique of a 'regeneration' plan is one of the key lessons to be taken away from the Heygate Estate Public Inquiry.

Resistance to gentrification deserves renewed attention in gentrification studies and beyond, this paper makes significant strides towards that. Resisting the gentrification of public housing will be different to resisting the gentrification of housing owned by private landlords. We must understand gentrification in all of its guises and articulate different modes of resistance based on those types. Scholars and activists alike must understand both the policies and labels used to promote gentrification without the name, whether 'mixed communities policy' (Bridge, Butler and Lees, 2011) or quite simply 'urban regeneration' or 'urban sustainability' (Lees, 2014b), but also how these are re-appropriated by organisations campaigning for neighbourhood investment without displacement, in a tactical move that engages

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[18] Lees and some of the Heygate Estate CPO objectors were involved in the Aylesbury Estate public inquiry too.

with the language of policy and planning in order to reclaim space for local and national debate on what a 'true' urban regeneration could look like. For example, EAN strategically embraced the language of 'regeneration' to demand benefits for existing local communities (rather than wholesale dismissal of regeneration as a term). As a strategy it was unsuccessful, but not naive. Everyone in EAN knew that the Council's 'regeneration' would bring displacement, but chose to play the Council's game to engage in negotiations and gain recognition as an actor, and from that point make demands.

Different types of gentrification and different types of eviction/displacement demand different forms of resistance and a renewed attention to how these may converge in unexpected ways, as they did on the Heygate Estate. In the UK context, tenure changes within traditionally low-income public housing should be carefully re-examined not just as an instance of divisions and exclusions internal to estates and crucial to the drawn-out process of differential 'decant', but also as a new axis for a potential political re-composition with new cross-tenure, cross-class alliances and forms of solidarity and resistance.

In our analysis of the last three years of the Heygate Estate, it could be argued that the strategies of 'resistance' to direct displacement were accompanied and at times superseded by strategies of 'reworking' and 'resilience' (cr. Sparke, 2008) across traditional organising around planning and legal challenges, but also less traditional forms of public education through walks and social and cultural programming. While this could be categorised as a post-political attempt to limit action to what seems feasible under neoliberal circumstances (cr. Mayer, 2009; Swyngedouw, 2007), the case of the Heygate Estate shows both the limits *and* the possibilities for cross-tenure and solidarity-based resistance to the gentrification of public housing in London.

Understanding the different modes of resistance to gentrification has significant political and practical implications for urban scholars. This article has put forward an argument for the renewed engagement of urban scholarship with different forms of resistance, not just through the production of relevant research using archival and social inquiry, but also through direct involvement in public debate and challenges to established urban regeneration orthodoxies and through a clear and targeted strategy of dissemination. The lessons of the Heygate Estate have been collected in the already mentioned *Staying Put* booklet (LTF, Lees, Just Space, SNAG, 2014) with the aim of contributing to a global knowledge commons (cr. The Autonomous Geographies Collective, 2010:264). The booklet has been widely read among campaigning groups in London and is currently being used as a template by activists in Swedish cities who are similarly resisting evictions due to gentrification there too.

But equally important, we need realistic alternatives (cr. Curran and Hamilton, 2012; Pearsall, 2013; LTF, Lees, Just Space and SNAG, 2014) that other campaigns and groups, locally and internationally, can draw upon in their challenges to the 'public interest' of social housing demolition. This is something that we outline in *Staying Put* (eg. refurbishment, community land trusts, cooperative housing, lifetime neighbourhoods, community-led self build, community housing associations, community planning, and neighbourhood planning) and that we are researching further. The role of public urban geography scholarship could be key, in the UK and

internationally, for exposing and politicising, but also, importantly, for proposing (Marcuse, 2009) alternatives to the wholesale destruction of the very idea of public (and low income) housing.

The fight goes on, for as we write council tenants across London continue to be evicted and displaced from their homes. Progressive activism to retain public housing might be difficult, but we do not think it is as 'elusive' as Hackworth (2005) states, and as our *Staying Put* booklet makes clear there are alternatives. In post-war New York City Jane Jacobs fought the federal bull dozer and was successful, indeed the practices and tactics used by those resisting the gentrification of the Heygate Estate have a lot of similarity – from public meetings, protesting outside (and inside) municipal hearings, litigation, and so on (see especially Zipp, 2010, on the resistance from residents of Lincoln Square in New York City). There are other similarities too, for the residents fighting Robert Moses's urban renewal in New York City in the 1950s held banners saying 'you don't tear down homes in a housing shortage' (see Zipp, 2010:228); similar banners were held up recently during the 'March for Homes' in London in January 2015. But there are also differences, Jacobs was fighting the demolition of private housing and the construction of public housing; in London the fight is against the demolition of public housing and the building of private housing. But like Jacobs in 1950s New York City we need to stand up to the 'bull dozer', and like Chester Hartman in 1970s San Francisco we need to fight what Harvey (2005) calls 'accumulation by dispossession'. That fight has begun in London and is re/emerging in other cities around the world as we speak. Critical or radical urban critique of gentrification is no-longer enough, we also need active and intelligent resistance and importantly viable alternatives if gentrification studies is to move beyond its prophecy of doom. Council estates are one space in which alternatives to gentrification could just be viable, a space of hope.

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