Unequal Neighbourhoods in European Cities: Are there solutions or only problems?

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Why do poor neighbourhoods emerge?

- Urbanisation sifts precarious incomers
- Precarious neighbourhoods emerge
- Economic growth
- Magnet for the ambitious and desperate
- Rapid urbanisation carries high social costs
- Social problems concentrate in poorest areas
- Poorest areas attract little/no investment
The poorest areas of Tarantaize, San Salvario
Why do poor neighbourhoods recreate themselves?

- Intrinsic and acquired characteristics
  - Impossible or very difficult to change

- Intrinsic drivers
  - Location
  - Industry/pollution
  - Physical assets/liabilities

- Acquired characteristics
  - Population
  - Skills/education
  - Economic change
What we know about neighbourhood problems

- Industrial boom > rapid growth and wealth creation
- Social upheaval, dramatic divisions, fear of revolution
- Dense, unplanned additions
- Influx of essential new workers created squalid slums
- Elegant inner and outer suburbs for rich manufacturers
- Emergence of new professions > new class divisions
- Massive inequalities, squalor, disease, social breakdown
Unrest

Digging up railways

Leipzig

Miners' strike
Mass housing solutions

- ‘Factory’ response to social and economic pressures
- Government subsidised/owned homes
- Mechanistic, replicable, unmanageable models
- Factory production methods for housing
- Mono-class, mono-structures, dehumanising
- Defects built in – hard to rectify
- Giant block forms difficult to manage
- Sharp break with tradition
- Costly to government
- Concentrate low-income new communities
Quartier Sud Est: view from the motorway
Original blocks in Quartier Sud Est – still cared for
Park Hill, Sheffield

- Before renovation
- After renovation
Migrants from abroad

- Legacy of depleted inner cities, decayed housing, slums
- Exodus of more skilled workers
- Inflow to fill lowest paid, least skilled, dirtiest jobs
- Crowded into declining, emptying inner cities
- Established workers move into ‘mass estates’
- Racial divisions grow
- Immigrant landlords acquire abandoned inner city homes
- Big minority concentrations in European cities
- Only access mass estates as they decline
San Salvario
– central immigrant area next to train station
Gröpelingen, Bremen – old port area with many immigrants
Collapse of heavy industry

- European industry loses dominance over 50 years
- Low-income work force loses economic rationale
- Working class neighbourhoods > marginal
- Immigrant communities > target of resentment
- Ambitious skilled young workers leave industrial cities
- Better-off families move out
- Sprawl housing compounds inner city/estate problems
- Mass unemployment > commonplace
Fiat Lingotto Factory: before and after
Mass building, sprawl, abandonment - Leipzig
Legacy of disinvestment

- Changing fortunes of high rise
- Expensive to maintain
- Expensive to demolish and replace
- Increasingly unpopular/popular
- Occupied by marginal groups
- Talk of European ‘ghettos’ forming
Mass estate rescue – Ostenholz-Tenever
Weak Market Cities recognise neighbourhood problems

- 1995-2005 – decade of targeted effort
- Inner areas and mass estates > focus and draw funds
- Government recognises multiple impacts
- Social, environmental, economic
- EU-driven social cohesion programmes
- Weak market cities attract extra help
- Funds support multi-stranded renewal
- Spread area-based projects
- Social/community enterprises emerge
Porto Palazzo, Torino
Community Enterprises – Sheffield
Lan Ekintza, Bilbao
Community Enterprises – Bremen and Torino
Recovery in dense cities depends on:

- Neighbourhood reinvestment
- Constant renewal of housing conditions
- Social integration/tolerance
- Upgrading poorest areas
- Recognising their physical and social assets
- Counting true costs of demolition
- Limiting sprawl
- Valuing the environment
Community budgeting
– Ostenholz-Tenever
Neighbourhood renewal becomes part of city’s recovery plan

- High costs of tearing communities apart
- Need to house minorities
- Cities need low-skill, low wage service workers
- Mass estates prove difficult and expensive to knock down
- Opportunities for social enterprise and skill development abound
- Poor communities fight their corner
Poor communities fight their corner
Belfast Peace Walls
Key methods of renewal

- Physical reinvestment and upgrade
- Environmental improvements
- Resident involvement
- Social and community spaces
- Intensive management of conditions
- Economic development
- Skill and enterprise development
Skill and enterprise
Bochum – reclaiming industrial relics
Restoring old buildings – Bochum
What works?

- Local management of problems – ‘intensive care’
- Giving residents a say
- Activity that brings the community together
- Support for vulnerable residents
- ‘Low level’ reinvestment
- Greenery
- Children’s activities
- Generating pride and loyalty
Moroccan bread-making co-op
Do neighbourhood problems go away?

- If we care for places, conditions hold
- But problems don’t disappear
- Many problems are ‘intrinsic’
- Inequality is a big long-term driver
- Some problems persist, some recreate themselves
- Have neighbourhood policies failed?
- On the contrary, multiple evidence of progress
- Stalled by economic crisis
Upgrading Mira Fiore, Torino
Belfast
– Cathedral Quarter

• Merchant Hotel  • Black Box Cultural Centre
Torino
– Social caretaking
International Slow Food Festival, Torino
2008-11 financial crisis hits low-income neighbourhoods hard

- New threat to Weak Market Cities
- Collapse of special funding
- Big investment plans thrown off course
- Job losses, business shrinkage, public cuts
- Youth unemployment
- Unrest
Bilbao’s encampment by ‘los indignados’
Birmingham – Riots, August 2011
Manchester – Riots, August 2011
Three stages of development

First Industrial Economy
- Explosive growth
- Social upheaval
- Environmental exploitation
  - Collapse

Second Post-Industrial Economy
- Public Infrastructure
- Social Integration
  - Recovery
  - New economy

Third Resource-Constrained Economy
- Resource saving
- Public transit
  - Community resilience
    - A New Phoenix
  - ‘Green’ Innovation

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## Scenarios for weak market cities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario I: Hit by further decline</th>
<th>Scenario II: Low-level survival economy</th>
<th>Scenario III: New resource-constrained economy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>· Follows recovery burst</td>
<td>· Ticks over, on past investments</td>
<td>· Grows within finite energy and material limits</td>
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<tr>
<td>· Current resource use unsustainable</td>
<td>· Recycling helps</td>
<td>· New breakthroughs / research and development</td>
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<td>· Loss of public support</td>
<td>· Shaky public support</td>
<td>· High public support</td>
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<tr>
<td>· Rapid de-skilling</td>
<td>· Retraining / rethinking</td>
<td>· New knowledge / skills</td>
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Will green, social innovation help?

- Labour intensive
- Retrofit, repair, recycle
- Potential of bicycles
- Potential of over-cladding
- Reuse of old industrial infrastructure
- New value of old space
- Only game in town