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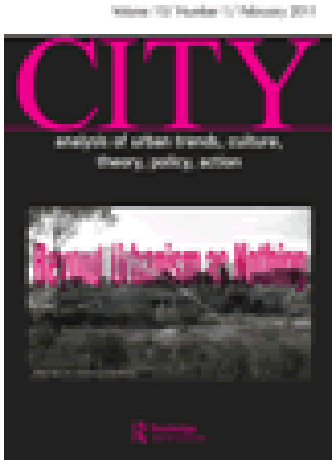

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Glasgow's new urban frontier

'Civilising' the population of 'Glasgow East'

Neil Gray and Gerry Mooney

Focusing on Glasgow's East End, home to the 2014 Commonwealth Games, this paper explores the ways in which narratives of decline, 'blight' and decay play a central role in stigmatising the local population. 'Glasgow East' represents the new urban frontier in a city that has been heralded in recent decades as a model of successful post-industrial transformation. Utilising Löic Wacquant's arguments about advanced marginality and territorial stigmatisation in the urban context, we argue that narratives of decline and redevelopment are part of a wider ideological onslaught on the local population, intended to pave the way for low grade and flexible forms of employment, for punitive workfare schemes and for upwards rent restructuring. To this end, the media and politicians have played a particularly important role in constructing Glasgow East as a marker of a 'broken Britain'. While the focus of this paper is on Glasgow's East End, the arguments therein have a wider UK and global resonance, reflected in the numerous cases whereby stigmatised locales of relegation are being re-imagined as elements in wider processes of neo-liberalisation in the city.

Key words: advanced marginality, territorial stigmatisation, blight, urban frontier, neo-liberalisation

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Only connect?

On 9 November 2007, the Commonwealth Games Federation chose Glasgow as the host city for the 2014 Commonwealth Games (Matheson, 2010). Deputy First Minister in the Scottish Government, Nicola Sturgeon, captured the zeitgeist as constructed by those politicians, business leaders and developers who form the neo-liberal consensus that is 'Team Glasgow' (see Purcell, 2008a), albeit tinted with her own Scottish nationalist hue:

> 'This will bring a host of benefits to Glasgow and Scotland, including everything from regeneration, job creation, inward investment and just a huge pride in being Scottish.' (*source*: BBC News, 9 November 2007, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/glasgow_and_west/7086680.stm)

Great claims are being made that the 2014 Games will transform the East End of Glasgow, where an indoor sports arena and a velodrome will be constructed, alongside an athletes' village. The focus on the East End is of particular significance for us. It represents the latest 'urban frontier' in Glasgow to be targeted for property development via urban 'regeneration'. In this respect, Glasgow's 2014 Commonwealth

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Games (further: CG 2014) cannot be adequately understood without appreciating its relationship to the wider waterfront regeneration ambitions along the planned £5.6 billion, 13-mile Clyde River corridor development. The 'return to the river' along a post-industrial disinvestment valley is seen as a key priority, building on previous regeneration drives which have attempted to transform Glasgow's image from recalcitrant Red Clydeside to successful post-industrial city (see MacLeod, 2002; Boyle *et al.*, 2008; Law and Mooney, 2009).

The 'Clyde Gateway' project, together with the Clyde Waterfront regeneration scheme, the latter including up-market developments at 'Glasgow Harbour', 'Pacific Quay' and the new International Financial Services District (IFSD), form key elements in the recently designated Glasgow metropolitan region growth corridor (Figure 1). These developments are central to the vision of Glasgow as '… one of the most dynamic, economically competitive and socially cohesive regions within Europe' (Clyde Valley Community Planning Partnership, 2008).

The Clyde Gateway project, in particular, offers enormous potential for land development and a reservoir of relatively untapped labour. After decades of abandonment and neglect the area is now deemed key to Glasgow's and indeed Scotland's national economic prosperity.

> 'The economic position of the East End remains poor … A complex set of factors combine to limit progress. The area continues to have high levels and concentrations of poverty and low levels of economic activity, and its residents suffer from poor health, significantly affecting their economic potential. The area still houses some of the poorest communities in the UK and contains high levels of derelict and contaminated land currently unusable for economic activity.' (East End Partnership Limited, n.d., p. 5)

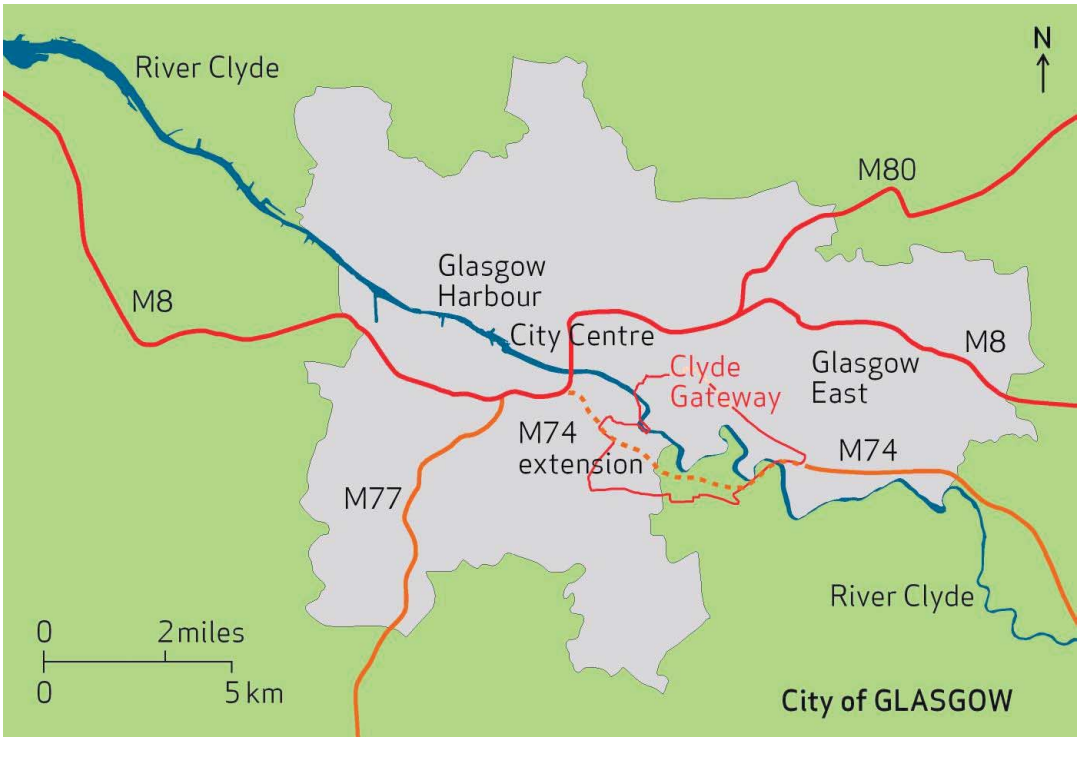

Figure 1 Map of Glasgow City, by Gerry Mooney 2009.

The East End has long been identified as an area of decline (Lever and Moore, 1986; Donnison and Middleton, 1987; Pacione, 1995). It was a key locale during Glasgow's 'second city' era in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, home to many of the heavy industries that fuelled the expansion of the British Empire. As the Empire declined, so Glasgow's economy suffered, signified not least by the ravages of successive decades of deindustrialisation (Figures 2 and 3).

Glasgow East, like other 'regeneration areas' such as the large outlying housing estates, is viewed as a drag on economic growth and the continuing prosperity of both the city and Scotland as a whole. In much of the official narrative Glasgow East has come to symbolise a place of backwardness and decay. Importantly, as we will see, it has been depicted as a 'decivilised' landscape, a marginalised space where 'incivility' and 'disorder' (often couched under the umbrella label 'anti-social behaviour') are prevalent (see Haylett, 2003; Fyfe *et al.*, 2006). Urban regeneration policy comes to be targeted therefore on particular populations in particular locales. It

> '… focuses on places and spatially delimited areas or the groups of people associated with them. Its problem definition starts from area rather than individual or even social group, although, of course, a concern with area is often a coded way of referring to a concern about the particular social groups which are believed to be concentrated in it.' (Cochrane, 2007, p. 3)

The potency of such narratives should not be underestimated. In this paper we argue that they play a crucial role, fostered by sections of the media and politicians, in stigmatising the East End. Such territorial stigmatisation (see Wacquant, 2008) is part of a wider ideological offensive on the local population, intended to pave the way for low grade and flexible forms of

Figure 2 Vacant land adjacent to Celtic Park to be developed as the East End Regeneration Route, photo by Neil Gray.

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Figure 3 Tenemental Blight, Dalmarnock, Glasgow East, photo by Neil Gray.

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employment, for punitive workfare schemes and for property development schemes. Despite media representations and political rhetoric which construct Glasgow East as a 'welfare ghetto' (Nelson, 2009) (or 'welfare colony' to quote former Conservative Minister Norman Tebbit in *The Telegraph*, 11 May 2010), it is important to note that Glasgow East does not have anything approaching the ethnic concentrations of the French *banlieue* or US ghetto (though recent in-migration has begun to affect some shift in this direction—and of course there are the continuing legacies of past episodes of mass Irish migration).

However, Glasgow East is increasingly functional in ways that are not entirely dissimilar from some aspects of the *banlieue* or the ghetto. Indeed, the 'Broken Society' narrative conjures up images of a 'ghetto Britain', creating what Ceri Peach (1996) has termed 'reputational ghettos', areas that suffer the symbolic violence and injuries of class prejudice and classed stigmatisation. As Ruggiero (2007) has commented:

> '… ghettos are inhabited by disposable but usable people, rabble and labour at the same time'. (p. 393)

Glasgow East, like many other relegated localities across urban Britain, experiences the imposition of a range of narratives of deprivation and decline; narratives which are co-produced by policymakers and politicians, public relations and corporate spin industries, property developers, sections of the media, researchers and academics (see Musterd, 2007; Allen, 2008; Wacquant, 2008). This does not imply that the populations of such localities are in some ways isolated from real economic and social hardships. However, we argue that the dominant representations of Glasgow East that have recently been constructed reflect a particular market-driven view that constructs the

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'problems' of the area in a particular way which both produces and reproduces territorial stigmatisation; that Glasgow East is, in different ways, a 'problem place' with a 'problem population' (Young, 2007; Mooney, 2008, 2009).

Echoing the perspectives advanced by Ward (2003) in the context of 'New' East Manchester and Uitermark and Duyvendak (2008) in Rotterdam, we argue that there is a concerted effort by the local state in conjunction with a range of central state and other agencies to 'civilise' the population of Glasgow East, understood by us to mean the regulation and, where required, disciplining, of those sections of the population deemed to be recalcitrant or 'incivil'. Glasgow East represents in our view a particularly useful context in which we can see the interplay between notions of an urban frontier, devalorisation, territorial stigmatisation and public sector market-friendly policy interventions. In order to unpack these ideas theoretically we use the next section to re-appraise the work of Neil Smith (1996), Loïc Wacquant (2008) and Rachel Weber (2002) in the contemporary context of the East End of Glasgow.

Priming the new urban frontier

In 1996, Neil Smith argued that Frederick Turner's influential essay 'The Significance of the Frontier in American History' (1893) had crucial import for those challenging contemporary strategies of urban gentrification (Smith, 1996, preface). We argue that Smith's mobilisation of the frontier motif still provides a powerful, if incomplete, heuristic with which to understand, and ultimately 'unhide', contemporary gentrification strategies. For Turner, the western frontier was envisioned as the outer edge of a westwards wave; 'the meeting point between savagery and civilization'. The 'wilderness' of the west was seen to be breached by 'lines of civilizations growing ever more numerous': its penetration part and parcel of a colonial attempt to make 'liveable space out of an unruly and uncooperative nature' (Smith, 1996, p. xxiv).

For Smith, the important conclusion to be drawn from frontier discourses is that they attempt to 'rationalise and legitimate a process of conquest, whether in the eighteenth and nineteenth century American West, or in the late-twentieth-century inner city'. The 'highly resonant imagery' of the frontier works precisely because it manages to capture a complex series of aspirations 'bound up with economic progress and historical destiny, rugged individualism and the romance of danger, national optimism, race and class superiority' (ibid., p. 190). Much like a domestic form of Orientalism (Said, 1995), the frontier motif compounds a host of accumulated symbolic meanings, including 'the social differences between "us" and "them", the historical difference between past and future, and the economic difference between existing market and profitable opportunity'. The demonised 'other' ('them') is the essential, and essentialised, binary opposite in the frontier programme (the forward march of 'us'). Thus, the 'civilising' urban pioneer has his/her nemesis in the 'urban outlaw', who, like the native American Indian, is seen as little more than a natural element of his or her physical surroundings. Indeed, the very notion of 'pioneer' suggests a territory 'not yet socially inhabited'; its inhabitants of 'less than social' provenance.

These tactics of demonisation are further dissected in Wacquant's recent study of 'urban outcasts' (2008), where he argues that any comparative sociology of post-Fordist, post-Keynesian urban poverty must start with the powerful *territorial stigma* attached to residency in the bounded and segregated spaces of 'advanced marginality'. For Wacquant, advanced marginality is 'the novel regime of socio-spatial relegation and exclusionary closure […] that has crystallised in the post-Fordist city as a result of the uneven development of the capitalist economies and the recoiling of welfare states' (2008, pp. 2–3).

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In the neo-liberal context within advanced capitalist regimes, advanced marginality is more than ever concentrated in isolated and bordered territories, de-linked and disconnected from city 'growth' and from the mediated security of 'gainful' employment. Alongside this economically and socially precarious situation has come serial *defamation*, now routinely inscribed in the 'brute facts' of disinvestment: an area's physical dilapidation, the 'inferiority' of its public and private institutions, and the increasingly contemptuous attitude of outsiders to the area as negative 'neighbourhood effects' intensify through sustained disinvestment.

Our interest in territorial stigmatisation arises from its deployment, and effects, at a public policy level of urban 'regeneration'. As Wacquant further notes (p. 240), the logic of defamation works to legitimise and justify 'special' measures and urban interventions, which can have for effect the *deepening* marginalisation of local residents at the behest of deregulated labour markets and property development strategies. Just one example: Wacquant cites the '*barrio social degrado*' of Sao Joao de Deus in Portugal where territorial stigmatisation led to an 'urban renewal' programme that effectively scattered the unemployed, squatters and other marginal groups so that the neighbourhood could be inserted back into the city's real estate circuit—'without worrying in the slightest way over the fate of the thousands of residents thus displaced' (pp. 241–242). Thus, the *political construction of place* can act as a neo-liberal alibi for accumulation strategies led by the owners and managers of private capital. Meanwhile, the construction of place through territorial stigmatisation tends to obfuscate fundamental structural and functional differences underlying neighbourhood effects, and displaces questions of culpability and collective responsibility away from the state and business sectors. Yet, as Wacquant reminds us, the 'widely despised zones of relegation' are first and foremost 'creatures of state policies' in matters of housing, urban development and regional planning. The production of urban space is an eminently political question (Lefebvre, 1974; Swyngedouw *et al.*, 2002; Brenner and Elden, 2009), yet the emotive metaphors of territorial stigmatisation, whether or not these discourses have any grounding in people's real and varied experience of an area, can tend to deflect critical enquiry from just where it should begin—at the level of governance.

Wacquant usefully emphasises the *negative* role of territorial stigmatisation in fostering advanced marginality. Rachel Weber (2002) meanwhile, stresses the *productive* role of stigmatising discourses of 'blight', which generate a neo-liberal alibi for 'creative destruction' and spatialised capital accumulation in places targeted for 'urban renewal'. Power produces (Foucault, 1977), and for Weber, the state's willingness to subject its property and land base to market rule, and its desire to control and disperse native populations, accounts for the zeal with which it stigmatises certain people and certain places. For Weber, regeneration policies, backed by negative discursive regimes, can be seen as little more than 'property speculation and public giveaways to guide the pace and place of the speculative activity' (2002, p. 190).

The idea of blight metaphorically adopts associations from plant pathology and medicine to conflate descriptions of areas and people with death and decay. Weber relates how, between 1949 and 1965, one million people from US cities—predominantly low-income—were evicted from their homes in the name of eliminating blight. Blight provided a quasi-scientific basis for the use and abuse of redevelopment powers to legitimise projects that were *already planned*. Weber cites L. Friedman who argued that finding blight in the American inner city merely meant 'defining a neighbourhood that cannot effectively fight back, but which is either an eyesore or is well-located for some particular construction project that important interests wish to build' (Weber, 2002, p. 177). Perhaps unsurprisingly,

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'indicators' of blight typically conflated the race and class of the residents in the areas targeted for demolition with the condition of the buildings themselves. In the Chicago Plan Commission of 1942, for instance, one of the three indicators of blight included 'percentage of Negroes' (Weber, 2002, p. 179).

In order to make the built environment more 'flexible and responsive' to the capitalist demand for liquidity, local states routinely reorientate public funds to reduce the risks and costs of development for capital (Harvey, 1989; Swyngedouw *et al.*, 2002). Local governments are then compelled to juggle the political imperative of 'managing' potentially recalcitrant local populations, with the financial imperative of maintaining or creating the conditions for profitable capitalist investment. This balancing act—between accumulation and legitimation—is in part achieved by place-specific discourses of blight and decay which act as a 'convenient incantation' (Weber, 2002, p. 181) for the devaluation and disposal of *unprofitable* properties and land. Here, a 'discourse of decline' (Beauregard, 2003) functions to create a convergence of thinking 'around such critical issues as the economic life of buildings, the priority given to different components of value, the sources of devaluation, and interrelationships between buildings and neighbourhoods' (Weber, 2002, p. 177).

Smith's 'frontier' thesis likewise draws on the notion of disinvestment as a 'necessary if not sufficient condition for the onset of gentrification' (1996, p. 193). Central to his argument is the premise that capital devalorisation and urban deterioration are 'a strictly logical, "rational" outcome of the operation of the land and housing markets' (Smith, 1996, p. 62). Sustained disinvestment begins as a result of predominantly 'rational' decisions by owners, landlords, state agents and a phalanx of financial institutions. Disinvestment in one area allows capital to be profitably invested elsewhere, and the devalorisation, or 'blight', associated with disinvestment produces both the cultural legitimation and the objective economic conditions that eventually make capital revaluation, or gentrification, a 'profitable' market response. The fate of those residents who have suffered for decades in this slow cycle of creative destruction (deteriorating housing conditions, loss of housing stock, increased health and community hazards, concentration of neighbourhood crime) is to suffer the social and environmental consequences exacerbated by disinvestment, and to endure the wrath of territorial stigmatisation—deflecting critical enquiry away from previous policy and economic decisions, and providing a convenient alibi for large-scale gentrification and working-class displacement.

Return to the river: a back to the city movement by capital

As highlighted above, the Clyde Gateway project is part of the Glasgow City Region's 'metropolitan growth corridor' along the Clyde River (Figure 4). The Scottish Executive's *People and Place: Regeneration Policy Statement* (2006) identified this corridor as 'Scotland's regeneration priority' (Glasgow City Council, 2007, p. 58). Plans to 'regenerate' the Clyde Gateway area tend to emphasise the scale of urban decline in the area as if it were the result of inevitable processes of impersonal quasi-natural forces:

> 'The need for such an initiative is evident from the concentration of economic, social

Figure 4 River Clyde in Glasgow East: a corridor of growth?, photo by Neil Gray.

> and physical deprivation found in the area. It suffers from high levels of unemployment and low levels of economic activity; from social deprivation and poor health; and, from a concentration of derelict and contaminated land that blights the physical environment.' (*source*: http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/coins/commpdfs/public/1213.pdf)

> 'Historically, the area has suffered from under-investment, resulting in one of the most significant concentrations of urban dereliction in Scotland. The legacy of this dereliction is reflected in high levels of unemployment, poor health, low incomes and low business investment. Development constraints on many sites create significant additional costs that inhibit new investment.' (Glasgow City Council, 2007, p. 64)

These descriptions of contemporary dereliction routinely fail to acknowledge the much criticised role of slum clearance, 'redevelopment' and 'top-down' policy frameworks by previous administrations in the East End, such as the Glasgow Eastern Area Renewal project of the 1970s (Damer, 1990, p. 13; Pacione, 1995, pp. 221–224), but the legacy of disinvestment is keenly felt by those who live and work in the 'degenerated' (or unevenly regenerated) areas along the 'post-industrial' River Clyde. The City Council sees the extent of vacant and derelict land in the Clyde Gateway area as a major issue facing development, especially if, as it demands, development must provide 'added value'. The Clyde Gateway project seeks to tackle this physical and economic devalorisation by 'capturing the potential of the area's location, its assets and underutilised land resources' (Glasgow City Council, 2007, p. 64).

The statistics for vacant and derelict land in Glasgow and the Clyde Gateway area reveal the extent of disinvestment in the area. In 2006, 57.3% of Glasgow's population lived within 0–500 metres of a derelict site, as compared to an average of 26.6% in Scotland overall. In the Shettleston ward, at the heart of Glasgow East, the figure jumps to 84.6%. This figure is outdone by the Calton ward, which bridges part of the wealthy 'Merchant City' and the inner East End, with 99.4% of the population living within 0–500 metres of derelict land (*source*: Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics at http://www.sns.gov.uk/). The East End edge of the city centre, marked by the eastern fringe of the 'Merchant City' along the north/south axis of the High Street, suggests a line where Glasgow's 'new urban frontier' can be mapped, a 'turning point' where reinvestment had, until the recent recession slowed its progress, begun to supplant disinvestment. This frontier line in advance of the Merchant City potentially represents the closing of an enormous 'rent-gap' (Smith, 1996) between the East End of Glasgow and the city centre. CG 2014 and the Clyde Gateway Initiative can be seen in this context as key catalysts in a major property development strategy.

In relation to this, we return to Rachel Weber's argument that neo-liberal states depend on discursive practices which deliberately stigmatise properties targeted for redevelopment and renewal, in order to make the built environment more 'flexible and responsive' (2002, p. 173) to the criteria of investment capital. Neil Smith has argued that any theory of gentrification must explain the process of devalorisation that precedes and makes possible profitable *re*investment (1996, p. 61). The crucial nexus for Smith is the relationship between land value and property value. Following Smith, Wacquant and Weber, we argue here that this relationship is significantly influenced by narratives of decline and strategies of territorial stigmatisation.

The 2008 by-election and Glasgow East: 'Glasgow's Guantanamo'?

While in some policy narratives the economic difficulties and social problems associated with Glasgow East are attributed to historic economic shifts, or to policy failures or much vaguer past 'neglects', such structural accounts are often entangled with other narratives which focus on the failures,

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limitations and inadequacies of the local population. It is a short step from understanding problems *in* an area to presenting them as problems *of* an area or its population. Thus, the steadily increasing policy focus on Glasgow East in the early 2000s has prioritised economic inactivity and 'worklessness' as key problems to be addressed:

> 'Glasgow faces real challenges of worklessness: unemployment and economic inactivity. Worklessness, especially dependence on welfare benefits, restricts Glasgow's productive capacity … "Work for those without" is a major focus for UK, Scottish and city policy makers in Glasgow.' (Glasgow Economic Forum, 2006, p. 30)

Vincenzo Ruggiero has recently written in *City* of the ways in which social disorder is linked to perceptions of particular groups as 'troublesome individuals'. But what is feared, he argues,

> '… is less the criminal capacity of these groups than their indolence, their absence from markets and their relative deprivation …
>
> Productive activities and consumption remain today the only signs of social health and acceptable order. Even the concept of antisocial behaviour, in the last analysis, might be associated with indolence and failure to play a role in the marketplace.' (Ruggiero, 2010, p. 164)

This links to Zygmunt Bauman's claims around marginalised groups as 'flawed consumers' (1998, pp. 38–40). Glasgow East in this respect comes to represent a morally and culturally problematic place, where unproductive and flawed lifestyles flourish. These themes came to dominate much of the debate during the by-election campaign for the Glasgow East Westminster constituency in July 2008. The representation of the locality was overwhelmingly negative, drawing upon stereotypical representations of poverty. Specifically, Glasgow East was portrayed by some politicians and sections of the media as wholly representative of the 'welfare dependent' places which urgently required welfare 'reform'.

Such media reportage and ongoing political debates around welfare reform reinforced each other in ways that stigmatised the local population, and played an important role in helping to generate consent for more punitive government policies as well as working to harden attitudes towards poverty and social welfare more generally. Following Wacquant (2008, pp. 141–142), we stress that the 'problems' of Glasgow East are not reducible to media symbolic constructions but nonetheless the media play a vital role in structuring the perception of such marginalised locales. As in the case of the French *banlieues*, but also with regard to several well-publicised cases of welfare neglect in the UK in recent times (see Mooney and Neal, 2010), the media have been instrumental in increasing the visibility of council estates and other disadvantaged working-class areas as 'problem places' (Figure 5). Such characterisations were key aspects of media reporting of the Glasgow East by-election in 2008.

To quote Reid (2008) in *The Times*, Glasgow East is that 'part of the world that defies exaggeration', where the 'law of the jungle, not Westminster rules'. Fraser Nelson, editor of *The Spectator*, deems Glasgow East a 'hideous social experiment', a 'no-go-zone', 'that cost billions to achieve' (2008a), while in *The Telegraph* (Tweedie, 2008) we are informed in no uncertain terms that:

Figure 5 Revaluation. Oatland. Photo by Neil Gray.

> 'In some parts, time has stood still. Stroll down the Shettleston Road, one of its seedy arteries, and you will find yourself in another era—pre-Blair, pre-Thatcher, virtually pre-war.'

Not surprisingly, in publications based primarily on the political right, real problems with real histories tend to be presented in a sensationalised manner. Glasgow's long-standing location at the top of UK morbidity and mortality league tables is a recurring theme in many of the media reports. Asks Gill (2008) in *The Sunday Times*:

> 'Who would you expect to live longer: an east Glaswegian or a man from Colombia, Albania or North Korea? The answer is that the Colombians, Albanians and North Koreans would drink a toast at the Glaswegian's wake.'

The choice of Albania and North Korea is particularly insidious given the tendency to construct Glasgow East with its high proportion of socially rented housing as a state-dependent locale. Such comparisons are meant to shock: other journalists threw in comparisons with Bangladesh, The Gaza Strip, Uzbekistan, the Sudan, Cambodia and Ghana for good measure. Meanwhile, crime and anti-social behaviour—often couched in narratives which highlight the alleged failures of social welfare—were prominent in media reportage. A notable headline in *The Times* referred to 'Glasgow's Guantanamo':

> '… Shettleston, Barlanark, Garthamlock, Easterhouse, Parkhead … communities that figure with monotonous regularity both on the charge sheet at Glasgow Sheriff Court and at the top of the lists of the most socially deprived wards in Britain. They might as well be called Guantanamo. For many thousands of welfare prisoners on sink estates, marooned by bad housing, violence, addiction, unemployment, ill health and shattered relationships, there is little chance of escape.' (Reid, 2008)

Two recurring and entangled themes inform these narratives. First, the representation not only of Glasgow East as a signifier of social problems, but of council housing as housing that has failed or that denotes individual failure, state dependency and flawed consumption (Watt, 2008). The second theme is the persistency of ideas of individual deficiency and moral decline, marked by recurring references to 'worklessness' and 'welfare dependency'. The by-election offered an opportunity for voice to be given to ideas of 'problem places' and 'welfare ghettos'. Macintyre, for instance, describes the area as 'a ghetto ringed by some of the saddest statistics in Britain' (2008). Here the idea of an unproductive and disorderly urban realm features strongly. Glasgow East is overwhelmingly constructed as a homogenised place of *misery*, *apathy* and *despair*. With few exceptions (see Orr, 2008), there is little recognition in the reporting of 'Glasgow East'—a label which itself invokes a sense of uniformity—of the diversity that exists in Glasgow's East End, of complex local geographies, multiple histories and contrasting life chances. Instead, 'Glasgow East' is viewed as a site of material, moral and physical isolation—a place redolent of the dangers of 'failure', where the 'meta-humiliation' of poverty is potently inscribed (Young, 2007, pp. 76–77).

Glasgow East as a 'broken society'

During the July 2008 by-election, Glasgow East became the crucible for ongoing UK-wide political debates about poverty and welfare reform. Iain Duncan Smith, subsequently Secretary of State for Work and Pensions in the new (May 2010) Conservative/Liberal Democrat Coalition Government, then Chair of the Conservative Centre for Social Justice (CSJ) think tank, made well-publicised trips to the area in 2002 and in February 2008 to publicise the CSJ's *Breakthrough Glasgow* report. Using terms that were readily picked up in the media, Glasgow East came to represent par excellence the 'broken society' (Mooney and Neal, 2010). In this context, the Glasgow

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East by-election was labelled the 'broken society' election (see, for example, Elliott, 2008; Pickard and Barker, 2008).

Following Smith to Glasgow to launch the Conservative campaign, party leader and now Prime Minister David Cameron also invoked ideas of a 'broken society', portraying the local population in very disparaging terms, albeit the main target being New Labour's failure to eradicate welfare dependency (Cameron, 2008). In particular, '*Shettleston Man*'—Shettleston being one of the more deprived areas in the east end of Glasgow—is identified as a particular problem subject:

> 'This individual has low life expectancy. He lives in social housing, drug and alcohol abuse play an important part in his life and he is always out of work. His white blood cell count killing him directly as a result of his lifestyle and its lack of purpose.' (Smith, 2008b; see also Centre for Social Justice, 2007, p. 21; 2008, p. 7)

Elsewhere Smith (2008a) makes reference to 'Shettleston Man's' 'couch potato' lifestyle, the message advanced that ill health, unemployment and poverty are primarily matters of individual failure, of a failure of personal responsibility. 'Worklessness' and welfare 'dependency' are pinpointed as *the* principal reasons for the multitude of problems being experienced by the population of Glasgow East. Some journalists sought to take these ideas further. Notable here again is Nelson in *The Spectator* who argues that Glasgow East is:

> '… a hideous social experiment, showing what happens when the horizontal ties which bind those within communities to one another are replaced with vertical ties, binding individuals to the welfare state …' (Nelson, 2008a)

He continues:

> 'State handouts may have been the cure to post-war poverty, but it's the cause of 21st century poverty as we have seen in Glasgow East.' (Nelson, 2008b)

These welfare-baiting claims are echoed by Heffer in the *Telegraph* who states that, 'In Glasgow, the weapon of mass destruction has been welfarism' (2008). Heffer describes the area as a 'hell-hole of a constituency', 'serviced by epic amounts of public money'. Glasgow East is, he claims, 'a monument to Labour's profligacy, its penal taxation and its addiction to welfare'. Such views are entirely in line with those of Smith and Cameron, and are now providing legitimacy for the enactment of punitive welfare policy in the new Conservative/Liberal Democrat Coalition Government. In 2008 in Glasgow East, Smith (2008a) commented:

> 'For too long, people have been allowed to languish, trapped in a dependency culture that held low expectations of those living there and made no demands of them either. You only need to look at the social housing system that successive governments have pursued to realise why, on so many of these estates, lone parenting, worklessness, failed education and addiction are an acceptable way of life …
>
> To rectify this we need to accept that the welfare system has become part of this breakdown, giving perverse incentives to too many people. It needs to be changed. It needs to have a simple purpose: to move people from dependence to independence …
>
> At the heart of this lies work. The system must help people to not only find work but also to remain in work, to get the "work habit".'

As Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, Smith now has the opportunity to mobilise the system in order to 'help' people get the 'work habit' throughout the UK. Of course, many of the ideas being mobilised here can be seen as a return not only to some of the harsher 'underclass' narratives of the 1980s and early 1990s (or at least to weaker versions of social exclusion which tend to stress 'self-exclusion'), but also a further revitalisation of ideological categories which have long been historically embedded in

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accounts of poverty in the UK. Central here is the distinction drawn between labour/work and idleness but these age-old classifications are now reinforced with a language which occludes historical and socio-economic determinants of poverty, and constructs marginal populations as deficient, lacking in aspirations and social capital—flawed worker–consumer citizens.

Welfare 'reform' and 'reforming' Glasgow East

The branding and stigmatisation of Glasgow East as a place of worklessness and welfare dependency positions it directly in the front-line as the kind of place to be targeted by the increasingly punitive welfare reforms envisaged following the 2007 Freud Report on Welfare Reform (Freud, 2007). Largely influential in shaping subsequent UK New Labour government thinking on welfare, represented by the 2008 Welfare Reform Green Paper *No One Written Off: Reforming Welfare to Reward Responsibility* (Department for Work and Pensions, 2008a) and the subsequent White Paper, *Raising Expectations and Increasing Support: Reforming Welfare for the Future* (Department for Work and Pensions, 2008b), the overwhelming emphasis of these welfare reforms is on increasing conditionality and on the responsibilities of individuals to take up any work that is available. The emergence of a harsher behavioural change-oriented policy approach, in which social policy and criminal justice become increasingly entangled, marks a major shift away from the more structural welfarist state policies of the past, and to a more punitive concern to criminalise, demonise and, where required, to incarcerate problem individuals such as the street homeless, 'feral' youth and the long-term unemployed (Cochrane, 2007; Young, 2007; Wacquant, 2008).

Among the key targets of government policy are those in receipt of incapacity benefit and single mothers without paid employment. Incapacity benefit is to be replaced by an Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), with increased expectations on those receiving this to show that they are actively seeking work and a greater role for the private and voluntary sectors to find work for those unable to find work themselves. ESA recipients will be required to attend regular job interviews while those out of work for a year will be expected to undertake four weeks' full-time work-related activity. Those still not in paid employment after two years may have to undertake full-time work in receipt of benefit. This approach is very much in line with New Labour claims that the 'reform' of social welfare has 'lifted' all but a relatively few 'difficult' cases out of poverty and has otherwise successfully integrated the 'socially excluded'.

Given the levels of unemployment and sickness benefit take-up in Glasgow, it should come as no surprise that the city has been selected as one of five UK cities for a three-year pilot starting in March 2011 to push those on sickness benefits into work. In the proposals there is a greater role for local authorities to develop measures (such as training schemes) to move people into paid work and there are incentives for them to do so in that they will be allowed to keep any monies that would have been paid to benefit recipients.

The impact of such measures on a sizeable proportion of the population of Glasgow East is likely to be immense. In 2006, the population of East Glasgow was 124,000 (in 60,000 households). Over 23,900 households (40%) are single adult households, with 6500 single parent households, representing 39% of all households containing children (*source*: Glasgow Centre for Population Health, 2008, p. 6). In Glasgow as a whole, it is estimated that around 53,000 people are in receipt of sickness or incapacity benefit (Peev, 2008) and in mid-2008, Glasgow East had about 11,000 benefit claimants, the highest of any parliamentary constituency in the country, rising to around 50% of the

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working-age population in some parts (Johnson and Brown, 2008). In the Parkhead and Dalmarnock areas, 60.7% of children are raised in unemployed households, and incapacity benefit is claimed by a third of the residents, the highest proportion of any neighbourhood in Glasgow (MacAskill, 2008). Meanwhile, around 40% of the population of Glasgow are living below the poverty line (Dorling, 2004).

Welfare reform of the kind outlined here is directly aimed at reforming the 'workless' population of Glasgow East. That there is sufficient paid work to meet the employment needs of the population is highly questionable. Research by the Work Foundation found that for the year from February 2008 to February 2009, there was a 41% increase in jobseeker benefit recipients in Glasgow, from 3.7 to 5.2% of the workforce (McConnell, 2009). Further, the jobs that are available are predominantly in 'lower paid and lower skilled services' (Purcell, 2008b), with this sector likely to receive further downwards pressure and wage suppression through competition from welfare reform, redundancies and public sector cuts. According to Cumbers *et al*. (2009), the 'norm' in Glasgow for young people seeking work is, 'a low wage and casualised work environment, or an unregulated and degrading training system'. Meanwhile, the deepening economic crisis that has gripped the world since 2007 is biting hard in places such as Glasgow where the legacies of previous periods of policy failure and economic decline are still all too evident.

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Welcome back? Welfare to workfare in Glasgow East

Glasgow has long played the role of UK 'problem city', rivalled perhaps in recent decades only by Liverpool. Glasgow's positioning as a UK 'internal-exotic' was marked by its long-standing image as a city of decline, poverty, crime and socialism (see Damer, 1990). Glasgow East in turn epitomises the idea of an unreconstructed and detached Glasgow; an internal-exotic *within* Glasgow that needs to be reconnected to the perceived economic success story around it (Mooney and Danson, 1997; Mooney, 2004). The Scottish Executive's urban policy document, *People and Place: Regeneration Policy Statement* (2006) outlines the policy context for urban regeneration within its wider growth-oriented framework:

> 'Growing the economy in a sustainable way is the number one priority for the Scottish Executive. Economic growth leads to prosperity and gives us the means to tackle poverty and disadvantage. Economic growth is the route to a fairer society, to social justice, and to securing equal opportunities for all. Regeneration is a crucial part of growing the economy and improving the fabric of Scotland …' (Minister for Communities, Foreword, Scottish Executive, 2006)

The new role for Glasgow East is to contribute to economic growth through the increased participation of the local population in the labour market, enhancing the competitiveness not only of Glasgow but also the Scottish economy. Such thinking finds clear expression in the claims advanced by politicians and policymakers in Glasgow City Council and other 'city partners' such as the Glasgow Economic Forum (2006):

> 'The success of this scale of regeneration activity will be measured by its economic, social and environmental contribution to the city as a whole. *Regeneration must allow areas and their residents to make a greater contribution to improving the economic, business and environmental performance of Glasgow*.' (pp. 14, 15, 29; italics added)

> '… the serious deficit in the number of businesses operating in Glasgow demands a fresh analysis to establish why entrepreneurship has been so relatively weak, and how partners can best work together to boost entrepreneurial culture in the city. Also, Glasgow's low employment rate (67% of working age people are in jobs compared

> with 76% in Scotland and 74% in Great Britain) *means far too many Glaswegians are still neither benefiting from, nor contributing to, the city's economic achievements*.'
> (Glasgow City Council, 2008, p. 2; italics added)

Central to the proposals to regenerate the East End is an active labour market policy that will turn welfare into workfare. The perspective that it is clearly evident here is that those who experience poverty and unemployment across Glasgow, but particularly in Glasgow East and the Clyde Gateway area, are understood only in relation to their potential contribution to, or otherwise brake on, economic prosperity. The effectiveness of government policy, and the value of provision by the local state and other local agencies, is increasingly defined and evaluated by the extent to which it contributes to economic growth and how far it effectively disorganises and undermines older forms of welfare.

In this paradigm, Glasgow East exists as an untapped reserve of cheap labour. Again this leaves unanswered the question of what kinds of jobs are likely to be available, especially as the much vaunted new service economy has failed to replace the huge job losses experienced as a consequence of decades of deindustrialisation; a process that continues to shape the economy and labour market of Glasgow today and which has contributed to the dereliction and impoverishment of communities across the city.

The reality of Glasgow's 'low-wage' service economy in a time of recession means that what is likely to be offered, if anything can be offered at all, is low wage, flexible and casualised forms of employment for some; for others, the newly reformed welfare system will push people into unpaid volunteering and community work in the hope that this will encourage the incubation of the correct attitudes to work and the right aspirations in terms of individual responsibility (Cumbers *et al.*, 2009). In a recurring and enduring distinction between the deserving and undeserving poor, the 'respectable' working population will be increasingly distanced from those recalcitrants who require more punitive measures.

In a climate of harsh welfare there is a steady lowering of the expectations and horizons of the local population in terms of work and income. There is a dumbing-down of expectations that either meaningful work will be available, secure incomes possible, or that the welfare state will be there to offer the support that it has in the past. As Ruggiero (2007) notes in relation to ghettos, impoverished populations that suffer from long-term economic decline and from stigmatisation, learn

> '… to devalue themselves and reduce their demands, so that those fortunate enough to be employable will accept any job at any condition. If the workhouse of the industrial revolution performed an educational function for individuals lacking the necessary work discipline for the factory system, the ghetto trains its dwellers to the culture of the "precariat".' (p. 395)

The role of the state in this (de-)educational process, both centrally and locally, is pivotal. By the lowering of expectations and ambitions, aspirations may come to be modified in terms of engagement with an increasingly fragile and insecure labour market.

Returning to Wacquant, we argue that territorial stigmatisation in Glasgow East, which typically conflates the dilapidated state of the environment with the residents therein, acts as a neo-liberal alibi which allows developers and state agencies to submit residents to the 'deregulated labour market, render them invisible, or drive them out of coveted space' (Wacquant, 2008, p. 240). For Wacquant (2008, p. 263), perhaps the most conspicuous aspect of urban marginality is its relegated position in a context of rising inequality within rapid economic advancement and overall prosperity. While this neo-liberal context may be undergoing what we hope will be a deepening 'legitimation crisis' (Habermas, 1975;

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Harvey, 2009), its ramifications from the last few decades are still felt keenly in areas like Glasgow East. Wacquant's diagnostic of advanced marginality is apposite here: wage labour as a vector of social instability and life insecurity; functional disconnection from macroeconomic trends; territorial fixation and stigmatisation; spatial alienation and the dissolution of 'place'; loss of hinterland, and social fragmentation and symbolic splintering.

The double tendency towards precaritisation and de-proletarianisation in areas of advanced marginality has as an effect, Wacquant argues, a sense of 'symbolic derangement' (2008, pp. 245–246). The inability of labour organisations and trade unions, traditionally focused around the industrial workplace, to provide an updated common idiom for the new forms of unregulated work, unemployed experience and casualised working poverty, deprives areas of advanced marginality of a shared language, 'a repertoire of shared images and signs through which to conceive a collective destiny and to project possible alternative futures' (Wacquant, 2008, p. 246). In this context, the discourse of regeneration, the engineering of collective hyperbole around the Commonwealth Games and the advancement of the 'Team Glasgow' mantra, operate as both placebo for genuine participation models, and as alibis for property-led regeneration activity and punitive labour market policy (Figure 6).

Figure 6 Rent me. Dalmarnock. Photo by Neil Gray.

The Clyde Gateway Initiative claims it can provide 10,000 new homes, and 21,000 jobs in Glasgow's East End, while the City Council projects that CG 2014 will create 1000 new homes and 1000 jobs. Aside from the fact that, as George Monbiot (2008) pithily puts it, 'The employment figures attached to large projects tend to be codswallop'; the promise of houses and jobs, especially in a recession, is bound to appeal to many unemployed and poor residents in Glasgow East. Yet, here we wish to return to what is perhaps the most striking aspect of Wacquant's dissection of advanced marginality: his radical position on the wage-labour contract. Indeed, for Wacquant, while urban policy aimed chiefly at housing may alleviate some of the symptoms of urban marginality, it does nothing to attack its root cause: 'the fragmentation of wage-labour feeding unemployment and casual employment' (2008, p. 35). In the post-war Fordist/Keynesian zenith of organised capitalism the wage-labour relation was able to mediate many of the problems associated with urban marginality. Under neo-liberalism, he argues, it is part of the problem: 'This is because the wage labour relation itself has become a source of built-in insecurity and social instability at the bottom of the revamped class structure' (p. 252).

In the context of advanced marginality outlined by Wacquant—polarised economic growth; the fragmentation of wage labour; the casualisation of employment; the autonomisation of the street economy in degraded areas; mass joblessness amounting to outright deproletarianitisation; and state policies of social retrenchment and urban abandonment—'it is a delusion to think that bringing people back into the labour market will durably reduce poverty in the city' (p. 252). The work of Swyngedouw *et al.* (2002), analysing 13 large-scale urban development projects (UDPs) in 12 EU countries, concurs with Wacquant by claiming that official rhetoric around social issues in UDPs typically mask policies which are in fact based primarily on rent extraction. In a

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politico-economic context characterised by 'an absence of regulatory (labour, financial, and income) standards or income redistribution systems at the national or EU level' (p. 217), the assumption of 'trickle-down' cannot hold true. The deregulation of labour markets leads to a 'double-edged dualisation' of labour markets, with a group of highly paid executives on the one hand, and large groups of insecure, often informal, workers on the other: 'the segmentation of labour markets, which is facilitated by the national deregulation of labour-market rules and other changes in the national regulatory frameworks, becomes cemented in and expressed by the socio-economic composition of the UDP's' (p. 224). As Wacquant diagnoses the situation, laissez-faire policies, as embodied above by Glasgow City Council's pro-business approach, should not deflect us from seeking more radical solutions, as *causes* of advanced marginality should not be counted on to provide *remedies* for it (2008, p. 252).

Conclusion

Against claims that suggest a rolling back of the state, the role of the state in the civilising of Glasgow East is all too evident here, actively attempting to secure its grip on all social life, regulating those individuals, groups and behaviours considered to be disorderly or incivil via welfare reform and top-down 'community regeneration'. Regulating the population of this part of Glasgow and the Clyde Corridor in general, and extending responsibilisation around paid employment and consumption, is seen as key to future economic prosperity for the city, and for Scotland as a whole. We would also suggest that as a crystallising location for many Conservative ideas around welfare reform—now being applied throughout the UK in a time of recession and deepening poverty for the most vulnerable—the lessons from Glasgow East and its 'regeneration' via the Clyde Gateway project and Commonwealth Games 2014, have much heuristic value. Not least, the role of territorial stigmatisation in legitimising punitive and market-led policy changes in welfare, environment and housing.

In the current economic context, the ideologically loaded notion of the frontier, and the analysis that goes along with it, should no longer be seen as a guaranteed fait accompli of neo-liberal urban development. However, we believe that if the frontier did not exist, it would have to be invented—along with the binary codes that legitimise the concept. As Smith notes, disinvestment in urban property and land, the corollary of many stigmatising discourses, develops a certain momentum that gives the appearance of being self-fulfilling, 'but there is nothing natural or inevitable about disinvestment' (1996, pp. 190–193). In this context, territorial stigmatisation continues to play a vital role as a legitimising tool for creative destruction in the inner city. Returning to Weber (2002, p. 190), we agree that, 'the state's dependence on its own property base, and its willingness to subject that base to market rule accounts for the zeal with which it stigmatises space'.

At this early juncture (with the CG 2014 still four years off, and the Clyde Gateway Initiative in the early stages of a 20-year plan) there is an opportunity to challenge this 'discourse of decline' along with the market-led, state-supported strategies that developers and state agencies present to areas like Glasgow East (Figure 7). One crucial aspect of this should be a rejection of, and counter-challenge to, stigmatising narratives designed to legitimise spatial accumulation strategies. Here, Edward Said's suggestion (1985, pp. 135–159) for a 'counter-practice of interference', involving a critique of official representations, alternative uses of informational modes and a recovery of (the history of) others, is only one model which should be applied. Glasgow Games Monitor 2014 (http://gamesmonitor2014.wordpress.com/), a group of locals, activists, campaigners and academics, are one grass-roots organisation that has begun this process, albeit in a limited form as yet.

Figure 7 Site of Commonwealth Games 2014 Athletes' Village Dalmarnock, photo by Neil Gray.

The role of criticism and critical scholarship in Glasgow East in the run up to CG 2014 will be to exploit the legitimation crisis that is arguably already unfolding in Glasgow, as elsewhere, for the neo-liberal project. Wacquant's research and observations around wage labour profoundly challenge the narrative of a disenfranchised minority that can be pulled into the schema of a highly stratified labour hierarchy and lifted out of poverty via market mechanisms. As Wacquant has successfully shown, a tacit adherence to this line is complicit with dominant forms of neo-liberal *ideology* and will simply *fail to resolve* the acute problems of advanced marginality. In the context of advanced marginality, a thorough questioning of working poverty and the new casualised forms of wage labour is required in order to de-legitimise narratives of 'worklessness' and entrepreneurialism linked to moral questions around responsibilisation. Although, not drawing on Wacquant, Cumbers *et al*. (2009) have already shown one model of how this critical work might be conducted with young people in the East End.

As Glasgow City Council attempts, like other competing urban regions, to secure inward investment for large-scale urban development via public subsidy, its ability to ensure satisfactory social reproduction, and to balance the conflicting requirements of accumulation and legitimation are increasingly being called into question. A recent spate of demonstrations and occupations of school buildings by parents and activists throughout Glasgow (Williams, 2009; see also BBC News, 1 May 2009, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/glasgow_and_west/8029154.stm), and continuing strikes by Culture and Sport Glasgow workers (an unpopular arm's length external organisation derived from the former City Council department for cultural and leisure services) hint that the transfer of public

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wealth to the private sector via the built environment, so typical of gentrification strategies, may run up against the recalcitrance of an increasingly insecure and restless population. The scale of development in the East End, and the symbolic weight attached to its regeneration, suggests it as a key site in ongoing struggles over the right to the city.

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