Neighbourhood Restructuring and Residential Relocation: Towards a Balanced Perspective on Relocation Processes and Outcomes

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Abstract

*This introductory paper to this special issue of Housing Studies questions whether various characteristics of the debate and research on gentrification, displacement and restructuring justify a largely negative perspective on the processes and outcomes of 'forced' residential relocation. We argue that a proper and fuller consideration of issues around **policy, context, process, and outcomes** enable researchers and commentators to avoid ready characterisations and self-fulfilling investigations of restructuring which serve to present it as a singular (and somewhat suspicious or conspiratorial) phenomenon. To this purpose we present a broad conceptual framework for restructuring and relocation studies, based on these four themes. Subsequently, we review major issues in restructuring and gentrification discourses, and briefly reflect upon some of the factors underlying the negative loading of the term displacement. We also identify caveats in the evidence base of relocation studies, both in the United States and in Europe. Finally, we introduce the papers in this special issue. The overall aim of this issue is to offer a more open, balanced starting position for analysis of urban restructuring processes and relocation outcomes, particularly in relation to areas of social housing.*

KEY WORDS: neighbourhood restructuring, relocation, displacement, gentrification, poverty de-concentration, public housing.

Introduction

Most people know from personal experience that moving house can be a straining and stressful experience. Whereas the move itself and the choice of a new dwelling usually arise from a complex interplay between various triggers - (macro) opportunities and constraints, and (micro) resources and restrictions - the initial decision to move is usually made by members of a household itself.

However, this is not always the case. Over the last decades, the United States and many European countries have witnessed substantial housing and neighbourhood restructuring programs. Many programs involve demolition of public or social housing and new construction of rental and owner-occupied housing on the original site. Notable examples of such programs are HOPE VI (USA), urban renewal in France[1], the Housing Market Renewal Pathfinders in England and 'Urban Restructuring' in the Netherlands. These renewal programmes have adopted a myriad of goals, ranging from poverty de-concentration and the creation of mixed-income neighbourhoods, to improved social cohesion and enhanced area reputations. The common element in all these programs is the necessary relocation of a large proportion of the original residents from dwellings due to be demolished. Although the legal contexts differ between countries, restructuring programs usually enable public housing authorities and housing associations to relocate their tenants (and sometimes even owner-occupiers, see Cole & Flint, 2007) to other dwellings. Thus, policymakers, housing authorities and landlords decide who has to move, not households themselves. Since the 1960s, the imposed nature of such moves has inspired a tradition of research connected to urban clearance in the 1960s, gentrification in the 1980s (till present), and various urban regeneration policies with a strong housing market-oriented approach since the 1990s (till present; for an overview on England, see MacLeod & Johnstone, 2012).

Both in the US and in Europe, research on forced relocation has often been positioned in, and inspired by, a framework of gentrification theory and research, with an increasingly neo-liberal and predominantly negative displacement perspective on outcomes of relocation processes. The debate around gentrification has not only been fuelled by policy and research findings, but to a certain extent also by neo-liberal ideologies concerning the position of markets and states in gentrification-like processes. If we consider some of the usually-identified components of neo-liberalism (Martinez & Garcia, 2000; Harvey, 2005, p. 2)- such as 'liberating free enterprise', de-regulation of markets, public expenditure cuts and privatisation – it is apparent that the extent to which they apply to processes of neighbourhood restructuring will vary a great deal from country to country and from location to location within any one country. In some situations, restructuring may present considerable market opportunities, but in others not. In some places, the disposal of land to private developers represents the loss of public assets, but in others the demolition of obsolete housing may be seen as the off-loading of a liability. Often, it is the alleged 'social upgrading' of social housing areas that prompts the labelling of

neighbourhood restructuring as neo-liberal experimentation, with 'working class' communities being replaced by individualistic, middle-income home owners. This sort of critical perspective makes all-too-easy assumptions about the nature of social change which transpires, both in terms of pre- and post-restructuring social composition and with respect to social relations within places.

This introductory paper and several contributions to this special issue of *Housing Studies* question whether various characteristics of the debate and research on gentrification, displacement and restructuring justify such a largely negative, critical, neo-liberal perspective on the processes and outcomes of forced residential relocation. In our view the predominant conceptual perspective of gentrification-and-displacement on relocation outcomes is not always appropriate, especially when framed in a neo-liberal discourse, as often happens in European debate.

The **aim** of this special issue is to offer a more open, balanced starting position for analysis of urban restructuring processes and (relocation) outcomes; a position which considers both policy and process; interventions and outcomes; and which studies people and places, including both origin and destination localities.. In the next section, we expand on our conceptual framework for restructuring and relocation studies, a growing area of inquiry that we hope will benefit from our contribution. After then reviewing major issues in restructuring and gentrification discourses, we also identify caveats in the evidence base of relocation studies, both in the United States and in Europe. Subsequently, we introduce each contribution to this special issue, by indicating the main arguments and key points arising from the underlying empirical research.

Almost all articles in this special issue were presented at the international conference "Neighbourhood Restructuring & Resident Relocation: Context, Choice and Consequence", held in Delft, The Netherlands, 4-5 November 2010[2]. At this conference, more than 40 scientists and policymakers from the United States, United Kingdom, Germany, France, The Netherlands, Austria and Turkey discussed relocation issues raised in two plenary sessions and three parallel paper workshop sessions. From the submitted conference papers, we made a selection and invited the authors to submit their work for this special issue of Housing Studies.

A Framework for Studying Restructuring and Relocation

There are a number of issues that require consideration in the studying of neighbourhood restructuring, which we group here into four areas: ***policy; context; process; and outcomes***. A proper and fuller consideration of each of these would enable researchers and commentators to avoid ready characterisations and self-fulfilling investigations of restructuring which serve to present it as a singular (and often somewhat suspicious or conspiratorial) phenomenon.

In examining restructuring policies, we are interested in policy intentions, policy theories and policy instruments (Knoepfel *et al*., 2007). The way restructuring is discussed, the language

used, can be loaded such that (neo-liberal) **policy intentions** are implied rather than demonstrated, for example by talking about the 'erasing' of public housing or the 'enticement' of the middle classes to live in restructured communities. Often, urban restructuring does not involve the wholesale replacement of one social group by another, higher class group, and the policy intentions often include the provision of housing mobility choices for local people (social renters) who wish to purchase a home without having to relocate elsewhere. We also know that **policy theories** can be flawed. The idea that housing tenure diversification in social housing areas can deliver a greater income mix (so-called 'social engineering' as a policy goal) has, for example, been questioned (Musterd & Andersson, 2005). Policy may also be interested in other forms of 'social imbalance' other than income groups, such as demographic imbalances, with high child densities and low numbers of older people within communities giving rise to problems of informal social control.

Restructuring itself can take different forms and involve different kinds of places, each of which presents different challenges and opportunities for policy, so that what is attempted through restructuring varies. Restructuring, at the very least, ranges across the following: the redevelopment of social housing estates, including both inner city and peripheral estates; in-fill development within the same kinds of estates; the re-use of derelict, brownfield sites; and the redevelopment of areas of low-demand, private housing. Not only do these situations vary in nature, but also in size and location, with some occurring in prosperous, high-demand regions and others in economically depressed regions. What policy interventions might attempt or indeed achieve in these different situations will vary, with some presenting more market opportunities than others, and some involving greater social change than others.

In our view, a 'one-label-fits-all' approach to studying these processes does not seem appropriate. Rather, there is an interplay of policy intentions and context to be considered. **Context** is important therefore in terms of the type of area, region, and location within the conurbation concerned, but also in relation to the nature of the pre-existing community subject to restructuring – in our view, one should not assume the homogeneity or cohesion of any communities, particularly those considered to be distressed in some way. Urban or regional context also has an effect upon the similarities or differences between restructured areas and other places to which relocatees may move, which in turn may affect their outcomes (see below).

The **process** of restructuring itself also merits study. Here, there is an interface between the people involved and the policy instruments to which they are subject and/or which are made available to them. Policy processes of restructuring involve different degrees and means of choice, control, compensation and support for the residents involved, whether they wish to move or not, and whether they do in fact relocate or remain in situ. Variation can also be evident in policy attitudes towards issues such as community empowerment, and the degree to which social housing should be targeted to those in 'greatest need' rather than to a slightly wider range of occupant. These aspects of restructuring are affected by institutional arrangements and legal frameworks and are thus likely to differ greatly between countries.

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Lastly, in studying restructuring, we are interested in **outcomes**, not only for individuals and households, but also for places. In terms of individuals, such outcomes can be residential, social, psychological and economic. For those who relocate due to restructuring, such outcomes may be affected by the contrasts between their original and post-move locations: if the differences are too great, they may not settle in very well; if the difference are too small, they may not gain as much from the move as they might have. Thus, there is the potential *displacement of people **between** places* as a result of relocation, though this should be the subject of inquiry, not assumption. And for those locations which receive relocatees – destination neighbourhoods - there may also be impacts. Recently, interest has grown in in the potentially negative effects of receiving 'troublesome' residents from more deprived areas, though a recent review concluded that the evidence for such negative spillover effects was contested and inconclusive (Kleinhans & Varady, 2011).

There is also the potential *displacement of people **within** places*, as a result of the restructuring of origin neighbourhoods, with outcomes for in situ residents seemingly affected by the extent and speed of change around them, and the degree to which they feel involved and part of that change. In the case of gentrification, these kinds of place-based changes to the social and service environments have been termed 'the hidden costs of gentrification' (Atkinson, 2000), 'indirect displacement' (Davidson, 2008), and the 'class-based transformation of place' (Davidson, 2011). Freeman (2005) has maintained that in-movers rather than out-movers are the driving force behind neighbourhood change in gentrifying neighbourhoods, thus implying that displacement within places is a more significant phenomenon than physical displacement of residents out of gentrifying or restructuring areas.

Again, however, the extent to which a narrative of change as witnessed in gentrification, described as involving the 'wiping away' of a pre-existing working-class infrastructure and the 'experience [of] loss due to the projection of middle-class habitus' (Davidson, 2011, p. 1991), can be applied to the restructuring of deprived neighbourhoods in many towns and cities is very dependent on urban/regional social and economic context and thus an open question. In the case of entirely social housing areas, particularly those which have been distressed for some time, this kind of 'indirect displacement' may be less likely than in more mixed tenure, inner city areas, both since the pre-existing social and service infrastructures are more likely to be weak or absent in the former, and because a large middle class influx is less likely (at least outside very prosperous regions with 'hot' housing markets). Further, research on place attachment indicates that residents in more deprived areas have lower levels of attachment in any case, due to the impacts of deprivation and residential turnover on social cohesion and safety (Bailey *et al*., 2012). Furthermore, Savage (2010) argues from his research that nostalgic perspectives on working-class place attachment may be outmoded and that people's relationship to their place of residence depends more on whether it can satisfy their future aspirations. This kind of recent evidence

prompts further caution over the ready adoption of a gentrification-type perspective on the processes and impacts of restructuring and relocation policy interventions in deprived areas.

But we also note that even in the case of a study of gentrification in a more mixed area in a relatively prosperous city like Edinburgh, the in situ residents were found to have 'mixed views' about gentrification – welcoming some changes but not feeling part of others. This led Doucet (2009) to argue that gentrification studies should not 'compartmentalise [people] into discrete "winners" and "losers"' (ibid. p. 313). Given the range of possible outcomes (as outlined above) and the variety of circumstances involved, we would similarly expect to see a complex mixture of positive and negative outcomes for individuals and places as a result of restructuring and relocation. However, as we explain in the next section, such a 'mixed-bag' of outcomes is often not countenanced in studies of the latter phenomenon, where displacement is frequently substituted for relocation as the focus of inquiry, and in so doing often undermining the neutral basis of investigation.

Displacement or Relocation for Residents?

Historically, *displacement* has been a central concept in the gentrification debate, and one which has migrated to substitute for the consideration of relocation within restructuring studies. During the 1970s, the term was coined as any situation in which "any household is forced to move from its residence by conditions which affect the dwelling or its immediate surroundings, and which: (1) are beyond the household's reasonable ability to control or prevent; (2) occur despite the household's having met all previously imposed conditions of occupancy, and (3) make continued occupancy by that household impossible, hazardous, or unaffordable" (Grier & Grier, 1978, p. 8; cf. LeGates & Hartman, 1981, p. 214, see also Marcuse, 1986). It is important to note that this definition of displacement does not include a reference to housing policy, market forces or any form of neo-liberal policy.

Over time, the notion of displacement has increasingly acquired a negative loading in the discourse on residential moves which are triggered by gentrification. "[T]he fear of displacement has in the minds of many, however, come to dominate all other concerns regarding gentrification" (Freeman, 2005, p. 487). A systematic review of gentrification studies has revealed that the majority of such works identify displacement as a significant problem (Atkinson, 2004). More recently, a substantial number of the 40 chapters in the comprehensive *Gentrification Reader* (edited by Lees *et al*. 2010) also deal with this issue, again primarily with a negative framing. Naturally, the negative loading is partly a consequence of a range of studies showing negative outcomes for the residents involved.

However, part of the negative framing may be attributed to blurring boundaries between 'pure' market forces and various forms of state and government intervention in housing

restructuring. Many of the aforementioned restructuring programs are strongly influenced by activities and policies of the state, federal government or local authorities, and not primarily driven by market forces. In some countries the question has emerged whether gentrification is becoming a deliberate strategy in urban regeneration policies (see e.g. Atkinson, 2004, p. 107; Hackworth & Smith, 2001; Uitermark *et al*., 2007; Lees & Ley, 2008). Residential displacement is one of the primary dangers mentioned by those concerned about the exclusionary effects of market- driven *as well as* state-driven gentrification (Newman & Wyly, 2006, p. 27).

The common premise is that low-income groups suffer most from displacement, in terms of the quality of their dwelling, increased rents and fewer housing opportunities in general. Nevertheless, the tendency to frame forced relocation connected to state-led restructuring in a gentrification discourse tends to ignore or downplay fundamental differences between these phenomena, especially in terms of the institutional context. A foremost difference is that restructuring policies usually enact a range of legally established compensation mechanisms for residents facing a forced move (see e.g. Kleinhans & Van der Laan Bouma-Doff, 2008, p. 569; Manzo *et al*., 2008, p. 1856). Such measures are primarily based on a general consensus that forced relocatees should not suffer any negative effects from public policy programs without proper compensation. As a side effect, policymakers hope that compensatory mechanisms, such as a priority status on the rental housing market, facilitate a relatively smooth relocation process within a reasonable period of time.

Another, connected issue concerns the options and perspectives of residents facing an impending move. The displacement discourse implies that these residents have little or no agency, and tend to be 'victims' of market and/or political forces. This stance is opposed by studies showing that forced relocation is being utilised as a chance to improve the quality of the dwelling in which disadvantaged residents live (e.g. English *et al*., 1976; Buron *et al*., 2002; Baker & Arthurson, 2006; Kleinhans, 2003; Kleit & Manzo, 2006). In other words, forced relocation may help to 'launch' some residents who are already considering a move, whether or not dissatisfied with their current dwelling and/or neighbourhood, onto a new residential and/or life trajectory. This can be assisted through counselling, compensation and prioritisation within social housing allocations. In such cases, forced relocation may not be perceived as 'forced' at all, because residents anticipate a degree of 'betterment', both in housing and other personal terms (Kearns & Mason, *this issue*). Various institutions which are responsible for the relocation process itself acknowledge this. Curley and Kleinhans (2010) have recently shown how relocation counselling is deliberately combined with broader supportive services, in order to improve the socioeconomic prospects of residents in distressed areas, both in the US and the Netherlands (see also Varady and Kleinhans, *this issue*). Such approaches are very uncommon in 'full gentrification' processes. This again implies that outcomes from gentrification versus restructuring processes are difficult to equate.

To sum up, whilst it is important to take the possible unintended negative (as well as the intended positive) effects of policy into consideration, restructuring and relocation studies should

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also acknowledge that resident transitions may themselves be intended or unintended, either voluntary or involuntary, and treat the desirability and effects of relocation more openly as being potentially positive or negative for those concerned.

Caveats Evident in the Research Base

The previous section has argued against labelling all kinds of residential relocation and restructuring as invariably leading to displacement. Apart from the theoretical and conceptual issues involved in this discussion, the current body of research on relocation has several caveats which highlight the difficulty of making claims about whether relocation is "either bad or good".

A first issue concerns time. Much relocation research is cross-sectional, although a good number of panel designs and longitudinal studies exist. With the exception of the latter, many studies do not sufficiently recognise that outcomes of relocation processes may substantially differ over time, as the span of time since the move increases. For example, satisfaction with a new dwelling and neighbourhood may be high shortly after the move (feeling relieved that "it's all over"), but strongly decrease over time due to various (unforeseen) developments in residents' immediate living environments and/or personal circumstances (see especially Goetz, *this issue*). Equally, the opposite may also occur, with an initial sense of 'loss' due to a move from a familiar neighbourhood being later replaced by a growing attachment to the new location. Hence, relocation outcomes are, by definition, dynamic phenomena which do not take on absolute or fixed values.

A second, related caveat is the variability and contingent nature of relocation outcomes. We recognise that a substantial body of research deals with impacts beyond the changes in dwelling and neighbourhood. However, much less work clearly shows *how* different types of outcome may vary for individual households. For example, a household may report better housing and a safer environment on the one hand, but much higher utility costs, loss of social ties and less access to employment opportunities on the other hand. This type of pattern has been found in HOPE VI studies (see e.g. Popkin *et al*. 2004; Curley 2007) but not always systematically connected to individual households. The fact that relocation has impacts on domains beyond the housing situation (i.e. employment, health, social networks, and use of facilities, transport, etc.) demonstrates the difficulty of making an overall judgement of the benefits and costs of relocation. This not only applies to researchers, but also to relocatees themselves who make judgements about relocation outcomes (see also Oakley, Ruel and Reid, *this issue*). Moreover, Lelévrier (*this issue*) explains how relocatees perceptions and experiences are strongly affected by their previous residential trajectories.

Thirdly, a further addition to this complexity is the fact that outcomes may differ between members of the household. Two adults in one household may hold different opinions, and, even

more strongly, adults and youths may have different experiences of relocation. Apart from a few exceptions (e.g. Fauth, 2004; Clampet-Lundquist, 2007), youths and children have rarely been a subject of relocation research. This caveat is taken on by Visser and Van Kempen (*this issue*).

Fourthly, the interplay between relocation, choice and destination is a poorly understood phenomenon. Whereas tracking studies have mapped the whereabouts of relocatees, precious little is known about choice processes underlying the move and relocatees' personal experiences in this context (see Bolt *et al.*, 2009, p. 515; Clampet-Lundquist, 2004, p. 422; Kleit & Manzo, 2006). This especially applies to the trade-offs between opportunities and constraints with regard to dwellings and destination neighbourhoods. Even when the initial decision to move is not made by households, but by a housing authority or housing association, equating forced relocation with a lack of choice is a gross simplification. The extent to which relocatees can choose their new dwelling is of crucial importance. When properly enacted, legally established compensation mechanisms can increase relocatees' options substantially compared to regular house seekers (see e.g. Kleinhans & Van der Laan Bouma-Doff, 2008). Also, when residents relocate, do they collectively move into particular destination areas or do they spread throughout the city and suburbs? What are the patterns and determinants of residents' decisions to stay within or move away from those deprived areas subject to restructuring? In the latter case, housing vouchers and prioritization in housing allocations may offer relocatees opportunities in the local housing market. In sum, restructuring and relocation studies need to give more attention to issues of the process itself, rather than simply inferring the nature of that process via the outcomes observed. This point is also made by Rosenfeld (*this issue*).

Finally, the destination of relocatees is also important for other place-related reasons, and yet most relocation research deals with the experiences, benefits and costs only for relocatees themselves, and not for the communities or neighbourhoods involved. However, the perceptions and experiences of residents in receiving communities of relocation processes are hardly studied. There is a widespread perception among politicians, practitioners and community activists, at least in the US and the Netherlands, that 'multi-problem' tenants from restructured areas move to and recluster in already fragile (nearby) neighbourhoods where they may cause incivilities, conflict, crime and lowering property values. This phenomenon is often referred to as negative spillover effects. As noted above, a systematic literature review has revealed that there is hardly any conclusive evidence for cause-effect relations underlying negative neighbourhood spillover effects from forced relocation (Kleinhans & Varady, 2011). Nevertheless, both the academic and policy debate have witnessed an increasing interest in providing more intensive relocation counselling efforts and supportive services, not only to minimise negative individual relocation impacts but also to prevent potentially negative area spillovers (see also Varady and Kleinhans, *this issue*).

The papers in this issue

Having provided a broad overarching framework to the analysis of relocation in the context of restructuring and relocation, we will introduce the papers in this special issue. Each of the papers takes a critical perspective on one or more of the issues mentioned above.

In the first contribution, **Ade Kearns** and **Phil Mason** continue the conceptual discussion started in this introductory paper. They retrace the discussion around restructuring and 'state-led gentrification' back to the 1950s and 1960s before reviewing recent relocation studies. Subsequently they argue that two key components of restructuring processes and studies thereof, i.e. 'forced relocation' and 'displacement', are too crudely constructed and depicted to properly describe the intricate nature of decisions and perceptions of policymakers and residents. In particular, the term 'displacement' has important dimensions other than the physical one of moving; other potential dimensions are functional, social and psychological displacement. The interplay of these dimensions combined with various other factors will eventually determine to what extent residents perceive their relocation as 'forced' and/or 'voluntary' or desired. Kearns and Mason then turn to their empirical study of people who have moved out of restructured areas in Glasgow. Their study shows that whilst there is some evidence of physical displacement, there is little evidence of social or psychosocial displacement after relocation in this case. Prior attitudes to moving and aspects of the process of relocation – the degree of choice and distance involved – are important moderators of the outcomes. They argue that issues of time and context are insufficiently taken into consideration in studies and accounts of restructuring, relocation and displacement.

In the second contribution, ***Deirdre Oakley, Erin Ruel*** and ***Lesley Reid*** take on the plea of Kearns and Mason for more robust studies. Their case concerns an extreme example. By early 2011, Atlanta became the first city in the United States to eliminate traditional public housing; an endeavour rooted in the national HOPE VI program aimed at de-concentrating the poverty long associated with public housing. Since 2008 almost 10,000 public housing residents have been relocated, with the help of a voucher subsidy, to private market rental housing. The paper of Oakley and colleagues presents findings from a longitudinal study of this relocation process, by following approximately 380 former public housing residents across six communities. After providing a historical background to U.S. low-income housing policy, they introduce the case of Atlanta. Intriguingly, the 1996 Olympic Summer Games and new leadership at the Atlanta Housing Authority (AHA) set in motion 'a decade of unprecedented redevelopment of Atlanta's urban core'. Oakley, Ruel and Reid analyse the relationship between changes in relocated residents' satisfaction with their dwelling and neighbourhood in the context of the socioeconomic, racial composition, and crime characteristics of their destination neighbourhood. In line with earlier research, they show that residents moved to somewhat safer neighbourhoods with less poverty than public housing areas. In addition, they find that residents perceive their new dwellings and

neighbourhoods as improvements over public housing. The authors challenge one of the assumptions of poverty deconcentration policies, namely that destination neighbourhood characteristics, such as lower poverty rates or more racially integrated neighbourhoods, determine post-move satisfaction. Conversely, they find that 'subjective pre- to post-move changes in satisfaction are not driven by objective changes in neighbourhood characteristics (such as reductions in poverty and crime), but mostly by decreases in perceived social disorder and increases in feelings of community attachment'.

The third contribution also relates to longitudinal research, but using a quite different method. *Ed Goetz* starts off by observing the huge amount of research attention focused on low-income residents as a result of public housing redevelopment. Tracking studies of HOPE VI and similar redevelopment efforts in the U.S. have depicted a record of mixed and inconsistent benefits for relocated families. Whereas the proliferation of tracking studies has allowed comparison across redevelopment sites, cities and even policy programs, the main weakness of a survey approach is "the difficulty in obtaining a deep and contextual understanding of the findings". As part of a larger study, Goetz conducted repeated in-depth interviews with adults of four households over a five-year period, following their progress throughout the relocation process and charting their reactions to changes in their lives. The detailed case studies of individual families illustrate the variable and contingent nature of the impacts of relocation away from public housing, as well as contradictory and counter-intuitive patterns of benefits and assessments of the process. Goetz especially shows how experiences of displaced families can change, sometimes dramatically, over time and how this affects their own assessments. Goetz concludes that ethnographic research into the experiences of relocated public housing residents is useful in understanding how relocation affects the lives of very low-income households.

After two cases from the US, the fourth contribution makes a transatlantic move to Europe. In France, an urban renewal programme was launched in 2003 with the aim of boosting social mix by restructuring social housing in disadvantaged neighbourhoods known as "Sensitive Urban Zones". Like Goetz, *Christine Lelévrier* has adopted a qualitative research approach to acquire deep and contextual understanding of the relocatees' experiences. The central concept in Lelévrier's analysis is 'residential trajectory', i.e. the succession of residential situations over time. She claims that the manner in which the restructuring-related mobility is perceived by residents will depend on the household's residential trajectory over time and how and where exactly forced relocation occurs along this trajectory. By using this concept, the author takes a neutral perspective on forced relocation. Drawing on 121 in-depth interviews conducted in seven neighbourhoods in the Paris region, this paper questions how socio-residential changes are experienced by those actually being resettled. Three broad types of residential trajectories are used as an analytical framework. Not only relational and material resources, but also place attachments, bargaining power and negotiations with relocation officials vary by trajectory. The same applies to perceptions of opportunity, improvement and deterioration. The analysis shows

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how forced relocation can be a positive step in residential trajectories, whether or not residents stay in their neighbourhood or leave it, but it again underlines the importance of context.

In the fifth paper, **Hanneke Posthumus & Gideon Bolt** address the Dutch case of Urban Restructuring, i.e. the large-scale demolition of low-rent dwellings, followed by the construction of more upmarket alternatives. Regardless of the pre-relocation experience (forced, voluntary or even desired), demolition forces residents to make a step in their housing career. On average, their low socioeconomic position restricts their relocation options to the social rented sector, although some range of choice may be available. Especially in large cities, cheaper social rented dwellings are often concentrated in socioeconomically disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Posthumus and Bolt examine which kinds of households move to disadvantaged neighbourhoods and why they do so, by analysing quantitative and qualitative data from five Dutch cities. Their analysis indeed shows that many relocatees end up in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, but not simply as a result of limited choice. The authors reveal a broad array of preferences that affect residents' relocation choices in conjunction with both personal and institutional restrictions. Posthumus and Bolt thus challenge the common conceptions that displaced residents are the victims of relocation because they move to other disadvantaged neighbourhoods and that they cannot satisfy any of their preferences for a relocation dwelling and neighbourhood.

The sixth paper retains a view on the Netherlands, but focuses on a highly neglected category of relocatees. **Kirsten Visser and Ronald van Kempen** maintain that hardly any attention is paid to the effects of relocation on youths, whereas we know much about the impacts on adults. Visser and Van Kempen have studied the impacts of restructuring and relocation on dwelling and neighbourhood conditions for different categories of youth in the city of Utrecht. They compare the situation of forced relocatees over the last ten years with a control group of other (voluntary) movers. Their findings indicate that the youths who were forced to move often perceive progress in terms of the dwelling conditions. However, their steps on the housing ladder are generally small. More than half of these youths, especially those with a low socioeconomic status, moved to quite similar low-income neighbourhoods as the ones left behind. Their evaluation of the new neighbourhood is often not very positive, as they miss their friends and need time to adjust to the new situation.

In the seventh paper, the main focus shifts from experiences and perceptions of individual *residents* to the impacts of relocation on receiving *neighbourhoods* of restructuring and mobility programs. **David Varady and Reinout Kleinhans** observe that little attention has been devoted to spillover effects outside target neighbourhoods, compared to the ample research into the effects on both target neighbourhoods and individual residents. Many American politicians, policymakers and citizen activists fear that the relocation of public housing residents, with housing vouchers, simply moves social problems and nuisance to other areas. In an earlier paper, the authors concluded that HOPE VI *involuntary* relocatees often re-cluster in already fragile neighbourhoods where they continue to struggle with poverty, deprivation and conflict (Kleinhans & Varady, 2011). In the current paper, the authors review the literature on relocation counselling efforts and

neighbourhood spillovers connected to four *voluntary* housing mobility programs: Gautreaux 1 and Gautreaux 2 (Chicago), the Moving to Opportunity Demonstration (five cities), and the Baltimore Housing Mobility Program. Although these programs involve voluntary moves—in contrast with involuntary relocation in HOPE VI—a great deal may be learned from them because of (1) efforts in the voluntary programs to forestall resistance in the destination neighbourhoods of program movers and (2) special counselling and supportive programs provided to ease individual adjustment into low-poverty and low-minority areas. The authors indeed find evidence for negative spillovers in the MTO program. However, they also conclude that selection and screening processes in the programs substantially reduce the potential for negative spillovers from the programs. Unfortunately, much of the 'spillover evidence' from studies with regard to the preventative effects of counselling, screening, landlord outreach and clustering is descriptive or lacking. Varady and Kleinhans conclude with a range of recommendations for further research.

The last paper examines governance processes shaping the outcomes of neighbourhood restructuring-induced residential relocation (RR) in the Housing Market Renewal (HMR) areas in England. As noted earlier, since the 1950s and 60s, residential relocation has been examined as a matter of social and political debates, especially gentrification studies, focusing mainly on negative RR outcomes long after the process was over. **Orna Rosenfeld** argues that such a focus has led researchers to ignore subtle, practical dimensions of relocation delivery and the causal relationships between these and often very diverse relocation outcomes. The innovation of this paper resides in the development of a conceptual model for capturing and analysing processes of residential relocation governance. Through a first application of this conceptual model, Rosenfeld shows that the central government had little influence over the processes of relocation once local plans in the HMR areas were approved. 'Residential relocation in the HMR framework was delivered by a complex network of actors including those outside the Pathfinder and local council; from other public, private and community organisations.' Like other authors in this special issue, Rosenfeld challenges the stance that displacement outcomes are predominantly negative regardless of the process, context and cause of the relocation efforts. Relocation processes appeared to differ significantly, not only between HMR areas but also within them. She shows that 'emerging processes change at different rates and in different directions, reflecting local circumstances, the network structure and relationships delivering any given project and stage of implementation.' This underlines the importance and utility of a governance perspective. Although Rosenfeld acknowledges the need for further research on this matter, she concludes that 'the approach taken in this article has considerable potential both to reveal the contingency of RR outcomes on governance processes in other contexts and to provide a basis for further development of process focused residential relocation'.

All in all, the papers in this special issue highlight different aspects of the relocation process and outcomes and the various ways in which these can be perceived by residents, policymakers and researchers. The special issue takes a critical position with regard to the predominantly negative

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displacement discourse in much of the literature. We hope that this introduction paper, and the special issue as a whole contribute to a more open and balanced perspective on these matters, raising as they do, issues of theory, epistemology and language, and research practice in the study of restructuring and relocation.

Acknowledgements

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Notes

[1] The program has no commonly used name, but is based in the Urban Development and Renovation Law of August 2003 (*Loi de programmation sur la ville et la rénovation urbaine*).

[2] All program information, abstracts, papers and plenary presentations can be downloaded from the conference website: http://otb.tudelft.nl/index.php?id=14651&L=1