



UCL

MSc Social Development Practice
Student Report

Campaigning through Images: Exploring Housing Rights in North London

Alexandre Apsan Frediani, Tamlyn Monson
and Ignacia Ossul Vermehren, Editors
In partnership with Citizens UK and PhotoVoice

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Cover photograph: By N.E., workshop participant at City and Islington College. "This hole in the picture is meant to represent the problem of repairs. The shoes are meant to be walking over the hole, representing how ignored this issue is amongst the community, and how some think it's unimportant. The entire picture is to represent that some people do care about these issues in relation to the housing crisis."



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April 2016

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About the editors

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Forewords

Daniel Lawrence

*Head of Politics – City and Islington College
North London Citizens Leadership Group*

With the London Mayoral elections on the horizon for May 2016, London Citizens saw an ideal opportunity to address one of the most pressing issues of our times – housing. Citizens UK is a civic alliance of community groups from across the country who use their collective power to initiate change and hold political decision-makers to account. Each alliance conducted its own listening exercise to find out exactly what it means to live in a city characterised by unprecedented increases in house prices and rent levels that are around twice the national average.

After the results of the listening exercises were discussed, a set of policy asks were developed to present to the main London mayoral candidates. It is through the

testimonies of people who are directly affected by policy decisions and the increasing numbers of those willing to get involved, that the politicians see no option but to listen and act.

We are extremely grateful to the SDP students who added an extra dimension to the listening exercise conducted by A-Level students at City and Islington College. The presentation and analysis of their findings has made the case for radical reform of housing policy even clearer. The participatory photography project enabled the young people to consider London's housing crisis in a creative way, and has made them even more determined to bring about change.

Tom Elkins

CEO, PhotoVoice

For close to fifteen years, PhotoVoice has been delivering projects which use participatory photography for social change. Our projects have covered many issues in many countries – spanning from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe, and addressing topics including political engagement, disability, HIV, gender rights, and many more.

But we also have a strong portfolio of projects from within the UK too, and we were delighted to be part of a project helping people from different parts of London have their voices heard about the current housing crisis affecting so many.

At PhotoVoice, we believe in strengthening the capacity of our partners and participants in continuing to use photography in their work and lives. Working with DPU

and Citizens UK has been a fantastic opportunity to do just this – to share the knowledge that we have gained from our projects, and also for us to learn from how others are working on this important area. Together we've been able to embed the principles of ethical participation into academic research and advocacy projects, and I hope that this will continue.

Through this collaboration we've learnt about the many different experiences of people affected by the housing crisis. We've heard what is working, what isn't, and what needs to change. I hope that this project provides a platform for policy and decision makers to listen to these voices, take them into account, and bring about change that can provide solutions.

1. Introduction

Access to affordable and secure housing in London has become a major struggle not only for low-income households but also for a large numbers of Londoners, from social and private renters to first time buyers.

Inadequate housing supply and high prices have become a major barrier to homeownership, born out by the fact that an average London house now costs £526,000, 16 times the average Londoner's salary of £33,000 a year (National Housing Federation, 2016). The trend in homeownership experienced a defining shift in 1979 with the privatization of public housing and the introduction of the Right to Buy scheme. Although it allowed social renters to become homeowners, in reality most of those units were sold back to the market. In addition, less social housing has been constructed in the decades since, with the housing stock falling by 43,850 in 2013-14 alone (English Housing Survey, 2015). As a consequence, middle and lower-income households find that they no longer have the resources to become owner-occupiers, as less and less social housing becomes available via new building.

Since the privatization of social housing, the number of social renters has decreased from 33% to 19%, increasingly forcing tenants to rent through private landlords (English Housing Survey, 2016; Hodgkinson, S., Watt, P., & Mooney, G., 2013). With prices set by a competitive private market, the number of Londoners living in privately rented properties hit a record high in 2015, leading to an unstable and uncontrolled rental environment. That the number of evictions has increased by 53% over the five years from 2010 is a striking example of this (Osborne, 2016).

With fewer people able to afford private rents or buy a house, the situation in London has become dramatic; there are thousands of people on housing waiting lists, an increasing number of homeless people and the highest proportion of households claiming housing benefits of any region in the UK.

The new Housing and Planning Bill does not seem to address many of these problems, as the emphasis has been placed on the construction of houses for first-time buyers instead of building affordable rental homes. Moreover, it has been claimed that the Bill will reduce the security of council tenancy and force households with more than £30,000 to pay market rent, a move that will considerably effect low-income families.

1.1 Campaigning through Images

Much of the debate around the housing crisis has focused on economic and planning issues, but very little has been made of the experience of residents and the impact on citizenship. Social movements for housing such as Focus E15 Mothers in east London have been key in highlighting that the discussion does not only entail access to affordable housing but also the right to participate in local housing solutions. This research project is interested in understanding the housing experience of diverse residents, and their ability to enjoy full citizenship rights.

It has become evident that the housing crisis needs to be addressed not only as a technical problem but also a political one, and, as such, the Mayoral election of 2016 provides an important opportunity to discuss this issue. Throughout 2015-16, Citizens UK, an alliance of London-based civil society groups, has coordinated a London-wide housing campaign to identify key housing priorities with the objective of obtaining commitments from the candidates for London Mayor. During the campaign, members of Citizens UK conducted a series of listening activities, reaching 350,000 Londoners, which included one-to-one interviews as well as group meetings and workshops. The priorities identified in these activities fed into a delegate's assembly, where members voted and agreed on a Housing Manifesto (Citizens UK, 2016). The three housing issues voted as the most pressing across London were:

1. Affordability of housing
2. Rogue landlords in the private rented sector
3. Lack of control of residents over local developments and regeneration projects

1.2 DPU, Citizens UK and PhotoVoice Collaboration

The MSc Social Development Practice at The Bartlett Development Planning Unit (DPU), University College London, has collaborated with Citizens UK for the last three years, actively engaging local communities in policy and planning processes to ensure more equitable and transformative development outcomes. The exercise is

premised on the action-learning approach, which seeks to embed student learning in an ongoing process of activism, to generate both learning and practical outputs.

Past collaborations with Citizens UK looked particularly at the Borough of Camden and the impact of the High-Speed Two rail link for people living in the Euston area. The collaborations have produced two previous reports: *Regeneration aspirations for Euston: local perspectives on the High Speed Two rail link (2014)* and *Reclaiming regeneration: negotiating a citizens charter for Euston Area (2015)*. In 2016, we have worked for the first time with North London Citizens, which include community members not only from Camden, but also from Islington and Barnet, in order to support their ongoing listening campaigns.

This year we also partnered with PhotoVoice, which utilises innovative participatory photography and digital storytelling methods to build skills within disadvantaged and marginalised communities. These skills enable individuals to represent themselves and create tools for advocacy and communication. The engagement with PhotoVoice is aimed at introducing participatory photography as a methodology to support the listening activities.

1.3 Engagement and Structure of the report

This report is the result of a four-month research assignment conducted from October 2014 to January 2015 by students of the MSc Social Development Practice, entitled 'Campaigning through Images: Exploring Housing Rights in North London'. The objective of this assignment was to record and collect diverse housing experiences

expressed by distinct groups in North London, in the context of Citizens UK's ongoing housing campaign targeting the 2016 mayoral election.

The report aims to:

1. Contribute on the listening activities for the mayoral election, utilising visual methodologies as a way to deepen the engagement with London citizens.
2. Build on the collaboration with Citizens UK and support community-based knowledge.
3. Reflect on the role of participatory photography particularly in urban areas that are going through rapid transformation.

The students of the MSc programme were divided into four groups, each supporting a different organisation. The four chapters of the report each addressing one of the partnering organisations as an entry point to understanding a distinct set of housing experiences:

- Shelter from the Storm: A shelter for homeless people in Camden, which provides free accommodation and also helps with legal, health, food and permanent housing solutions. In Chapter 2, students examine issues of recognition, distribution and representation arising from the experiences of homeless guests.
- Ayesha Community School: A Muslim community school for girls in Barnet. Students consider issues relating to minority group identity and broader civic identity from the housing-related experiences of pupils at the school in Chapter 3.

Figure 1.1. Photovoice trained students in the use of Participatory Photography as a methodology for public consultation. Source: Ignacia Ossul Vermehren.



- City and Islington College: A college in Islington which provides education and training for young people and adults. The focus of Chapter 4 is on the ways in which the housing experiences of students and teachers impact on education.
- Development Planning Unit (DPU): A postgraduate department of University College London, with a high proportion of international students. In Chapter 5, students explore various ways in which housing issues impact on university student wellbeing.

The four student groups used similar methodologies. Each conducted participatory photography workshops

of at least three sessions, in which the participants took pictures to record and reflect on their housing experience with the aim of strengthening the listening activities. In addition, the groups analysed key policy documents and conducted semi-structured interviews with key informants from each of the organisations.

The photographs produced and issues raised by this research were initially presented on 15 January 2016 at the Surma Community Centre in Camden, in order to elicit feedback from participants and key local stakeholders. A second exhibition will be held at the London Citizens Mayoral Assembly, to be held at the Copper Box arena on 28 April 2016.

Figure 1.2. Exhibition in Surma Community Centre on 15 January 2015. Source: Ignacia Ossul Vermehren.



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2. Homelessness and Social Exclusion: Shelter from the Storm Case Study

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Mya Goschalk
Aneurin Jones
Francesca Nyman
Shally Pristine*

2.1 Introduction

Statistics show that the number of people sleeping rough on the capital's streets more than doubled over the last five years (Taylor, 2016). Almost three quarters of this increase over the past four years was attributable to rising numbers made homeless from the private rented sector (Fitzpatrick et al, 2015: p1). The data in Table 2.1, which shows what would have happened to wages if they had undergone the same increase as house prices, shows why becoming homeless simply through the inability to pay rent has become so commonplace.

Table 2.1. If wages had increased in line with house prices 1996 – 2012. Source: Shelter.org.uk.

London Borough	Average wage (£, 2012)	Housing-inflated wage (£, 2012)	Gap (£)
Westminster	41,194	146,569	105,375
Hackney	31,304	131,924	100,620
Camden	38,620	111,467	72,847
Lambeth	36,130	99,210	63,080
Islington	41,096	101,021	59,925
Ealing	27,732	80,917	53,185

This chapter will analyse the cultural underpinnings as to why homelessness in London has become such an unavoidable and serious problem. It will highlight areas of policy which perpetuate the issue and provide advice for future decisions, especially in relation to the housing campaign Citizens UK is engaging in for the coming mayoral election. We hope to raise the profile of homelessness as an issue in this engagement. Our research

in partnership with a homeless shelter makes an important contribution to the listening activities for Citizens UK member organisations in London, which up until now have not included the voices of homeless people.

2.2 Research Focus

We conducted research with Shelter from the Storm (SFTS) – London's only free homeless shelter, based near Caledonian Road in north London. Its three full-time staff and a host of volunteers provide bed, dinner and breakfast for forty-four homeless people every night of the year, in addition to providing other practical and emotional support (SFTS, 2016). Shelter from the Storm receives no statutory funding, and survives on donations alone.

Our research questions emerged from a literature review, which showed that homeless people are typically excluded from society, particularly due to the fundamental assumption "that homeless people are something less than citizens" (Feldman, 2006: p185). There is reason to believe that a strong tie exists between the social exclusion suffered by the homeless and their lack of housing. Housing processes produce social exclusion when they "deny certain social groups control over their daily lives, or impair enjoyment of wider citizenship rights" (Somerville, 1998: p772), such as housing, employment, access to healthcare, the right to security and the right to a family life.

We therefore chose to explore the relationship between homelessness and social exclusion, using the following three sub-questions to uncover this relationship at both institutional and individual levels:

1. What is the experience of homelessness?
2. What is the role that Shelter from the Storm plays in addressing the relationship between homelessness and social exclusion?
3. How do government policies perpetuate or alleviate this social exclusion?

2.3 Methodology

Having received training in PhotoVoice methodology, our primary research method was participatory photography, which was used as an entry point to provide a platform for the voice of the participants. We worked with three participants: two men and one woman; all migrants from outside the EU. Two were currently living at Shelter from the Storm, while one had recently moved into new accommodation. Issues such as time constraints, the perceived lack of benefits associated with participation, and the ill-health of one of our original participants, meant our sample group was small, and captured only a limited range of Shelter from the Storm residents' experiences. We conducted two workshops with the participants, and two follow-up semi-structured interviews after the photo exercises.

We also conducted action research through volunteering on a weekly basis from October 2015. This helped foster trust with the organisation and the participants, and allowed us to gain an understanding of the day-to-day workings of the shelter. An interview with Cookie Sami, Senior Caseworker at Shelter from the Storm, allowed us to gain a deeper understanding of the shelter's workings.

To add to our understanding of homelessness in London, we analysed secondary data and information such as reports, statistics, and academic articles, as well as conducting interviews with people working in the broader homeless sector. These included Beki Winter, Outreach Team Manager, and Dafydd Viney, Scottish Outreach Worker, from Connections at St Martins, a homeless charity in Westminster, London.

In addition to this, we gained insight into the work of Citizens UK by attending meetings in London both within and outside the North London network.

2.4 Framework and Analysis

We analysed our findings through a framework based on Nancy Fraser's work (Figure 2.1 on the next page).

Figure 2.1. shows the three elements of social justice Fraser outlines. Recognition refers to the extent to which equal valued and respect is granted to different categories of people. Distribution concerns the degree to which these different categories of people have access to resources or economic entitlements, while representation considers the extent to which different categories of people are treated as equal members of the political community and as equally deserving of representation (Asfour, Faghiri, Hernandez, Lara, Macfarlane & Mohamed, 2015: 37).

The elements of social justice are interlinked. For example, lack of government support (a recognition issue) means guests access support through a voluntary service where they cannot claim rights as they would from the state (a representation issue). They are provided with the resource of shelter, but the resource they receive does not match the quality distributed to others who qualify for social housing or can afford to access the private housing market (a distribution issue). Where relationships can be maintained in a normal home environment, guests of the shelter cannot bring friends, family or partners in, which

Table 2.2. Timeline of Participatory Photography Project at Shelter from the Storm. Source: Chapter authors.

isolates them from important support networks. The charitable and voluntary nature of the services means there is little space for the voices of guests in shaping the nature of the available resources, eroding agency and reinforcing the stigma of passivity and dependency associated with homelessness (a representation issue).

Figure 2.1. Social Justice Framework. Source: Fraser, 2000.

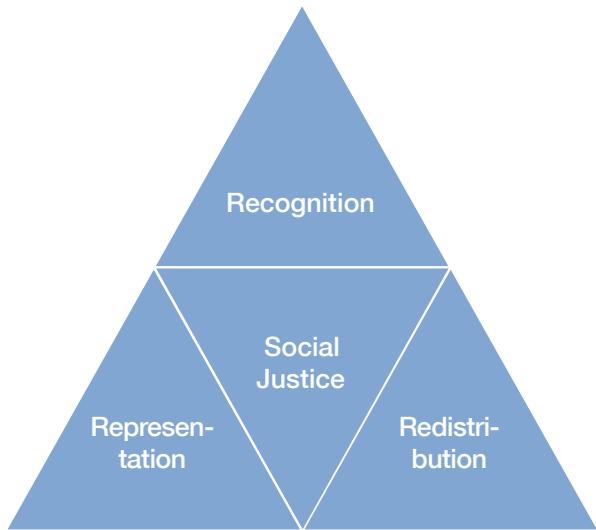
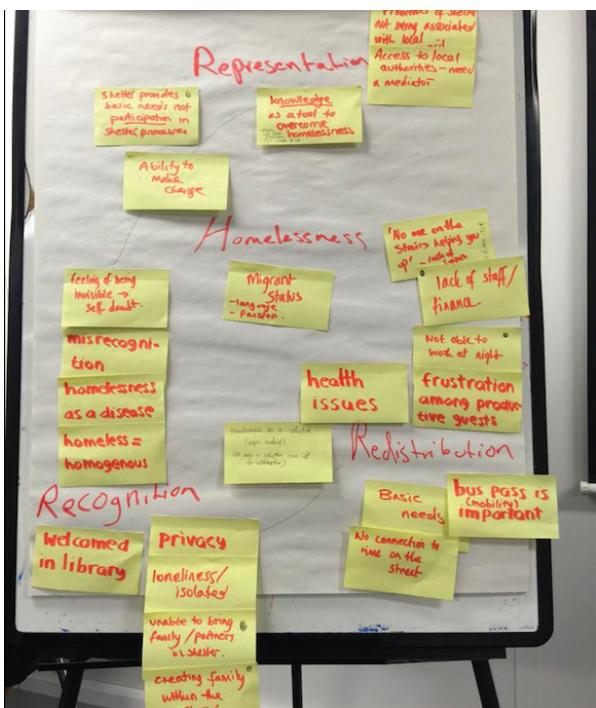


Figure 2.2. Using framework to analyse our findings. Source: Chapter authors.



Our findings below are articulated through this framework. Most notably, we demonstrate how the 'misrecognition' of the homeless influences the spheres of 'representation' and 'redistribution'.

We will argue that homeless people suffer 'misrecognition' through a stereotypical perception that serves to belittle their cultural status (Chhachhi, 2011: p301). This leads to a lack of influence on policy in the sphere of representation, and therefore being seen as unworthy of economic entitlements (Fraser, 2000: p113).

Misrecognition

"When you say 'homeless' people think of the guy sitting outside the train station with a cup, but we're not all like that."

The quote above from a participant during our workshop highlights the perception that homeless people exhibit "unusually dangerous, disruptive, or unaesthetic behaviour or appearance" (Phelan et al, 1997: p.325), which goes against accepted social norms. Whilst this may be the case for a small number of visible homeless individuals, these behaviours are often seen as representative of the entire homeless population (*ibid*).

The reduction of homelessness to a range of stigmatised behaviours covers up the huge diversity within homeless people. As Dafydd Viney claimed "there are as many causes of homelessness as there are homeless people". Connection at St Martins assists homeless people facing a variety of issues, including complex trauma, relationship breakdown, substance misuse, and lack of employment (from interview with Beki Winter). This is confirmed in the literature which claims there is no single theoretical framework that could provide a full explanation for the diverse causes of homelessness in Britain (Anderson and Christian, 2003).

The tendency to associate the entire homeless population with a small number of visible, and sometimes disruptive, individuals leads to the perception that many are not worthy of help. This creates a distinction between those seen as deserving and others as undeserving of assistance (Sommerville, 1998 : p762), a dangerous discourse that can be used to deny social justice to homeless people. Drawing on their experience of living on the street one participant claimed that homelessness was like a "disease" which people do not want to come into contact with. The participant took a photo of a mirror, arguing the importance of being able to see your reflection. This is in contrast to the experience of being a homeless person on the streets, where people ignore you, leading you to question your own identity; you become "nobody." This reflection on profoundly on the everyday experience of misrecognition; of not being seen, valued or respected.

Figure 2.3. "Fresh, keeping the best looking great" - one participant expressed how self-doubt can be a consequence of not seeing yourself for days. Source: Workshop participant.



Table 2.3. Priority need criteria. Source: Department for Communities and Local Government (2015).

Priority need criteria	Eligibility for council housing	Intentionally homeless
Pregnant women	A UK citizen or a non UK citizen with indefinite leave to remain	You did or failed to do something that caused you to lose your home
Dependent children	Resident in the UK in recent years	The act or failure to act was deliberate or you were aware of what was going on
Those vulnerable as a result of old age or mental or physical illness	Have a local connection with the area	It was reasonable for you to continue living in your accommodation
Aged 16 or 17 years old		
Aged under 21 years old if under local authority care between 16 and 18		
Vulnerable as a result of leaving the armed forces or prison		

Misrecognition is not only to be devalued by others, it is also to be denied representation, or the opportunity to interact and have a say in society as citizens (Fraser, 2000, p.113). As we will go on to show, misrecognition has impacted the representation of the interests of homeless people in the political sphere as well as their access to entitlements, relating the sphere of distribution.

Policy Analysis

As previously outlined, an increasing number of homeless people are in need of housing. But rather than provide more housing, governments over the last two decades have narrowed the scope of eligibility for housing assistance. This can be seen in policies such as the local authorities' criteria to determine eligibility for council housing which states that they will only offer assistance if the applicant is "eligible for assistance, is in priority need, and has become homeless through no fault of their own" (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2015: p.2). Those in "priority need" are determined through a checklist of vulnerability requirements (as outlined in Table 2.3).

Definitions of priority need

A closer look at some of these definitions shows the large numbers of vulnerable people that they exclude. A person can be labelled "intentionally homeless," for instance, if they fail to pay their rent or mortgage (Reeve-Lewis, 2012). Given the disproportionate rises in housing costs in relation to incomes (see Table 2.1), it is astounding that the inability to meet rising house prices is seen as becoming "intentionally homeless." By focusing on whether the loss of the home was due to non-payment, rather than why an individual was unable to pay (such as the loss of a job), the local authority renders these people undeserving of state assistance, showing how misrecognition translates directly into injustices of distribution.

In addition, the 2011 Localism Act gave local authorities the power to make their own lists, which according to Crisis has led to even more people being excluded. This is because many local authorities have introduced even more stringent criteria regarding long-term residence in the local area and not having a history of anti-social be-

haviour (Fitzpatrick et al., 2015: p14). Cookie Sami, case worker at Shelter from the Storm, corroborated this, noting that the shelter is seeing an increase in referrals from people who have a designated priority need, such as pregnant women (Interview, 2 January 2016).

But there are many in urgent need who do not fit the bureaucratic profile of "priority need." As Sami observed, "there are so many boxes you have to tick [to be eligible for help] and in reality people don't tick all the boxes." The practice of "box-ticking" often ignores more nuanced cases of vulnerability and social exclusion experienced by homeless people. Daffyd Viney (Interview, 23 December 2015) pointed to the fact that many young homeless people are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender. LGBT factors are not encompassed in local councils' 'priority needs', despite the people who identify in this way are often forced to leave home because of prejudice and fears for their safety.

In this sense, homeless people appear to be seen as an exceptional population or charity case rather than bearers of a right to government assistance. As such, government policy extends only discretionary support to those defined as most in need. This failure to acknowledge the broader homeless population as worthy of assistance is once again a clear case of misrecognition, resulting in a misrepresentation through priority need and therefore a lack of redistribution for those who do not fit the stringent criteria.

Disconnect between policies

A further problem is created by the fact that government housing policy is created in isolation from other government policy such as immigration. In some circumstances, the destitution which leads to homelessness is the direct consequence of another government policy, which is not taken into account. An example is the decision in 2002 to prohibit asylum applicants from working for their first twelve months in the UK (Allsopp et al, 2014: p15-16). The goal of policies such as this was reducing the incentive for economic asylum seekers to come to the UK, suggesting that they are not deserving of help in the same way that "genuine refugees" would be.

The inability to work in their first year as asylum seekers makes refugees vulnerable to homelessness when they are given indefinite leave to remain. Although at this point they potentially become eligible for council housing, refugees' circumstances are extremely precarious as they are generally given 48 hours to exit their emergency temporary accommodation. The fact that they are unable to earn money in the first year of their claim means that by this point they generally have no savings to fall back on. Support to help refugees in this transition is scarce, as Sami outlines below:

"We have seen a rise of refugees and people who are awaiting emergency temporary accommodation while their asylum status is decided. But we'll also get the refugees who have had that accommodation, been granted leave to remain and are then chucked out. They haven't been able to work whilst they've not had a status [and] they haven't been able to save money. So they come out of that accommodation with nothing and nowhere to go..." (Interview, 2 January 2016)

Wider austerity measures can be just as damaging as housing policies. While inability to access housing entitlements is one cause of homelessness, UK citizens who become homeless have often experienced childhood trauma and have complex support needs, which contribute to their vulnerability to homelessness (Fitzpatrick, Johnsen and Bramley, 2012: p14). Recent studies have shown that social service expenditure on mental health across England fell by 48% between 2008 and 2014, with NHS expenditure on mental health in some areas being cut by 32%. (Docherty and Thornicroft, 2015). Given the acknowledged correlation between mental health and homelessness (Mental health network, 2012), the withdrawal of this support should be considered a contributing factor in a holistic picture of homelessness. However, because of the piecemeal approach by government ministries, it is seen to be a separate issue. Inadequate recognition and representation of homeless people in public life may also be a contributing factor in the failure to make appropriate links between a variety of policy areas and the problem of homelessness.

Non-governmental service providers

The restricted access homeless people have to public entitlements, which has emerged from cuts and priorities within government policies, has led to non-governmental organisations (NGOs) having to step into the gap. Our case study, Shelter from the Storm, provides an example of one such organisation.

The fact that responsibility for homelessness is increasingly taken on by the non-governmental sector points to a policy environment in which homelessness is not seen as a long-term problem requiring a government solution but a special humanitarian case which is outside the remit of government. This can be seen as a failing in the sphere of representation, as it means that homeless people are seen as a group whose needs are not worthy of equal attention by the state, and fall outside its jurisdiction.

Even where action has been taken by government – such as the London Mayor's 'No Second Night Out' campaign launched in 2011, which aims to assist individuals sleeping rough for the first time not to be out for

a second night (St Mungo's, 2016) – it often attempts to solve the immediate problem of visible homelessness without acknowledging the responsibility of the government to address the deeper causes. As NGO capacity and resources are not equal to those of the government, voluntary organisations such as Shelter from the Storm are also confined to easing some of the symptoms of homelessness, making the best of the current situation. In the bigger picture, this represents a shortfall in representation and contributes to a lack of space to pursue holistic, long-term solutions that could work towards justice in the distribution of resources to support the homeless population.

"No one will protest for the homeless"

The misrecognition of the homeless is exacerbated by the fact that homeless people are not included in decision making and political representation. The reality is that it is very difficult for homeless people to participate. The jargon and requirements to access services is beyond the capacity of many homeless people – for instance, one of our participants felt that they lacked the expertise to communicate with local authorities. Furthermore, the struggle to survive day to day is so time-consuming and tiring that the option to protest for political change is near impossible.

Many groups are not represented in homeless policy. Hidden homelessness encompasses those who are not sleeping on the street, but in cars, garages, friend's couches, on the bus and in squats. Reeve and Batty (2011: p18) found that 92% of their respondents had

experienced hidden homelessness. The 'invisibility' of these groups means that they aren't represented in policies at all. Once again this emanates from their lack of recognition as a part of a group in legitimate need of government support.

This is compounded by a perceived passivity of the homeless, which goes hand in hand with the charity-based approach mentioned previously. When support is provided as a charitable act or favour rather than as a right of membership in society, there is little room for homeless people to act and speak for themselves. At Shelter from the Storm, for instance, guests do not have a voice in the decision making of the shelter, such as input into dinner choices. While these policies are understandable from the point of view of safeguarding and health and safety requirements, they illustrate that there is limited space for active participation of the homeless in such forms of non-governmental support. If the homeless are to become full partners in society, it is necessary to move beyond the limits of a charity-based approach.

The observation by one participant that "no one will protest for the homeless" rings true. If homeless people cannot practically represent themselves, and they are perceived to lack agency, then who would protest for them? Given the fact that misrecognition of the value and needs of homeless people is built into policy, and emerge from the idea that homeless people are not equal citizens, the question of who will protest for the homeless remains unanswered.

2.5 Implications for Housing Campaign

As this research has explored, the misrecognition experienced by homeless people has led to the construction of particularly degrading perceptions and treatment of homeless people. We argue that in order to fight this misrecognition, homeless people must be given a voice (Appadurai, 2004: p66).

There is a need for an organising civil society group, such as Citizens UK, to help bring homeless people together in order to give them a platform to share their views. This would allow homeless people to become empowered as full citizens and partners in society, changing the unhelpful perceptions that currently prevail. As this research has shown, the day to day struggle of homelessness leaves very little time and energy for wider projects of political participation, and this is where the support of external agencies is necessary. The participants in our project expressed interest in attending Citizens UK meetings, and one participant urged us to use their words, demonstrating that the desire to contribute to political change is there, but needs to be fostered.

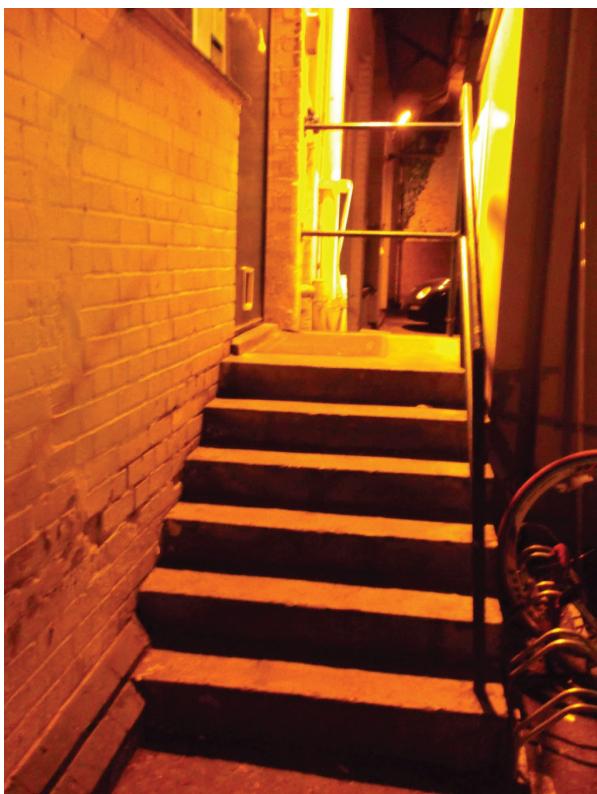
Figure 2.4. "Food reuniting our souls" – One participant articulated that food can bring the guests together but can also create barriers between them and the volunteers. Source: Workshop participant.



In terms of the Citizens UK Housing Campaign, this research agrees with its argument that “the current balance of power between landlords and tenants in London is grossly unfair” (Green, 2016). In beginning to address the problems within the housing sector we can also combat one of the causes of homelessness. Therefore we would greatly support strong legislation restricting landlords in what they can charge for rent.

However, the Citizens UK agenda does not tackle council allocation of existing homes. While policies such as a ‘Good Homes Charter’ and a ‘London Living Rent’ aim to make the housing market more favourable and accessible, they overlook the problems within government legislation. Issues such as the definition of “priority need” in local authority policies are of great importance in tackling homelessness, but currently are not covered within the manifesto. In order to enact any long-lasting change, policies must go beyond making the market more favourable. While it is understandable that Citizens UK has created a manifesto based on the priorities of its members, there is a danger of excluding the voices of homeless people from the platform, perpetuating their exclusion from equal recognition as citizens.

Figure 2.5. One participant believed that one day the door is going to open, but no one will help you to get there. Source: Workshop participant.



2.6 Conclusion

This research has shown how the misrecognition of homeless people has led to a denial of their ability to enjoy full citizenship rights. This has led to a lack of representation and redistribution, and the branding of some groups as being “undeserving.” The fact that assistance to homeless people is limited to a series of safety-net mechanisms (such as assistance from NGOs and provision to those who fit the profile of “priority need”) goes hand in hand with a failure to ask how wider systems of redistribution must be challenged to address the causes of homelessness.

Finally, the misrecognition of homeless people has been reinforced by the struggle homeless people face in representing themselves in the political sphere. We believe therefore that social exclusion is related to homelessness through misrecognising both the nature of the problem, and the homeless themselves. This permeates into wider processes of access to entitlements and misrepresentation. We hope that enabling the voice of homeless people will be a first step in combating some processes of misrecognition, and toward the inclusion of those made homeless.

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3. Social Identities and Housing: Ayesha Community School Research

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3.1 Introduction

London is one of the most diverse cities in the world, with residents from 239 nations or states (GLA 2011a), representing a wide variety of ethnicities, cultures and religions. Inasmuch as London is promoted as a cosmopolitan city, it has also been argued that housing-related processes in the city place a disproportionate disadvantage on minority groups (Millington, 2011, p 108). The fact that certain minority groups have historically been identified as “second-class citizens” (Tariq Modood, cited in Millington 2011, p. 99) makes it all the more essential to listen to minority group voices within the Citizens UK housing campaign. As a starting point to such a process, this report explores the relationship between social identity and housing experiences through the eyes of a diverse group of pupils at Ayesha Girls Secondary School, an Islamic-oriented community school in Barnet, North London.

Table 3.1. Participants’ countries of origin and percentage of London population. Source: GLA (2011).

COUNTRY	POPULATION	% LONDON POPULATION
Serbia	4,316	0.05%
Somalia	65,633	0.80%
Bangladesh	109,948	1.35%
Afghanistan	37,680	0.46%
Kyrgyzstan	600	0.01%
Indonesia	2,893	0.04%
Others	7,952,871	97.30%
Total London	8,173,941	

Participating students were but a small selection of voices from among the 13.5% of London residents who identify as Muslim (pp.2). This population is spread widely across several London boroughs, and in a similar way, participants were resident across the boroughs of Barnet (3 participants), Brent (2), Camden (1) and Westminster (1). While the pupils we worked with shared common ground in their identification as Muslim, they came from diverse multinational backgrounds. Their countries of origin included Somalia, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, Indonesia and Serbia. Another commonality within their diversity is the fact that each participant hails from an ethnic minority group (see Table 3.1).

Ethnic minority status is also relevant to housing, as a number of minority groups are underrepresented in terms of home-ownership and overrepresented in the social housing arena. An example can be seen in Figure 3.1, which depicts the way in which Londoners originating from Bangladesh are distributed across housing types, and Figure 3.2, which illustrates the increased levels of overcrowding experienced by this population. In this sense, ethnic minority Londoners have a significant stake in the issues addressed by the Citizens UK housing campaign.

Figure 3.1. Bangladeshi-origin Londoners are underrepresented as owner-occupiers and overrepresented as social housing tenants. Source: Jorge Marcelo Araus, based on GLA (2011).

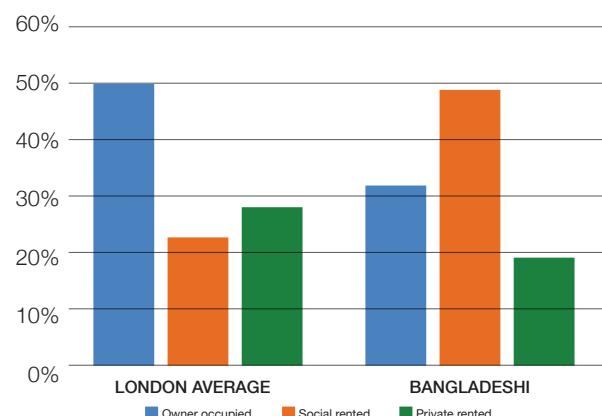
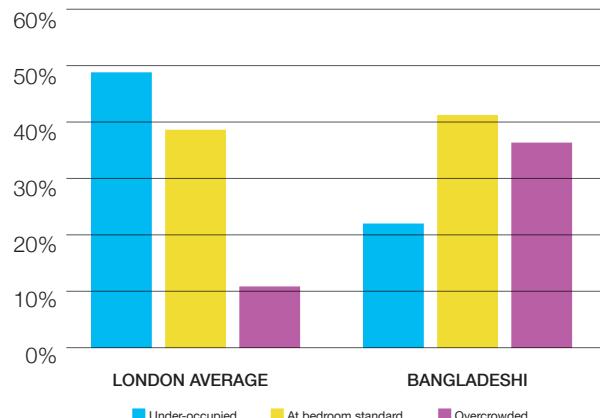


Figure 3.2. Bangladeshi-origin Londoners experience over three times the average level of overcrowding in London. Source: Jorge Marcelo Araus, based on GLA (2011).



3.2 Methodology

Our research question explored how housing experiences are related to the social identities of our participants. In order to answer this question, a variety of qualitative, participatory methods were used, including participatory photography – a methodology rooted in international development and photojournalism, which aims at empowering members of marginalised groups through the use of photography. It seeks to “bring lasting change to participants, empowering them to inform others and to be actively involved in decisions that affect their own lives and their community development” (PhotoVoice, 2007, p. 9).

In an introductory session the participants received the cameras and were given some time to familiarize themselves with them, before being tasked with documenting in pictures a range of positive and negative aspects of their homes and neighbourhoods. In the second session, a mapping activity was used to enable participants to identify their family backgrounds with countries on the world map. This was followed by a mapping of their neighbourhoods in London. The two activities helped bring to light the multiple identities of our participants. Thereafter, a prioritising game was executed, exploring participants’ perceptions of social bonds. Finally, participants scored their housing situation on a 7-point scale in order to give us a general understanding of their current state of living.

In the last session, an interview was conducted to discuss participants’ housing experiences in light of the photographs they had taken. We asked about students’ happiness where they reside, why they like or dislike it, what problems if any exist in their home or neighbourhood, and whether they were satisfied with their living conditions. Following on from this work, we engaged in further secondary research, reviewing literature, census data, and the policies

of local authorities in London. In the section that follows, we discuss some key themes emerging from the research in the light of our analytical framework.

3.3 Framework

The engagement at Ayesha Community School made it clear that participants had generally positive feelings about their homes and neighbourhoods, yet the daily housing experiences displayed and discussed during the workshops also reflected aspects of social injustice. In response to this engagement, our theoretical framework moves beyond what was explicitly discussed to consider hierarchies of power and structural factors that may be at work beneath participants’ experiences. We draw on Iris Marion Young’s work on aspects of oppression, as well as on ideas of urban justice that promote the protection of social group membership alongside the promotion of vibrant civic engagement that cuts across such groups.

Facets of injustice

Iris Marion Young observes, on the one hand, that social justice requires institutions promote respect for group differences without oppression. On the other, she highlights the fact that group differentiation can itself be a cause of oppression (Young, 2011, p.197). She identifies five “faces of oppression”, which we drew on to define three facets of injustice that seemed potentially relevant to our participants:

Marginalisation

Although access to housing is in itself a social good, “marginalisation does not cease to be oppressive when one has shelter and food” (Young, 2011, p. 55). There are multiple forms of injustice that can persist even where basic housing needs are met, and for the most vulnerable, being dependent on government provision can result in marginalisation where the quality of such provision is inadequate.

Powerlessness

Direct participation in public policy decisions is rare among the vulnerable, who lack significant power and authority. The powerless usually have to follow orders and rarely have the right to give them. In terms of our context, it is important to consider whether participants have the power to join and shape collective action, such as through the Citizens UK campaign.

Violence

Young argues that violence, which includes less overtly violent acts, such as harassment, is a reflection of social injustice because members of oppressed groups often experience it as an everyday aspect of life, and it can be

a long-lasting problem because it is tolerated and thus gains legitimacy. In our view, violence in the form of harassment intersects with cultural imperialism, because the targeted groups are often stigmatised in terms of their perceived difference from the dominant culture.

Constructive dynamics of difference

Another aspect of our analytical framework relates to the complexities of reconciling valued group identities with the crucial need for broader civic identities to which a cross-section of the diverse city can belong, and through which they can participate together. We draw on the idea of multiculturalism not as a set of potentially antagonistic identities to be ‘tolerated’ and left alone (Millington, 2011, p.98) but as an “arena of struggle” in which difference is maintained and made positive (2011, p.100). In the words of Sandercock, the ideal situation is one in which one can be immersed in one’s own culture while also “collectively forging new hybrid identities and spaces” with other groups and engaging across identities in “dialogues on matters of common destiny,” recognizing that the groups that comprise the city have “intertwined fates” (2011, p.113).

3.4 Key Findings

‘United we are stronger’ – complexities of participants’ social identity

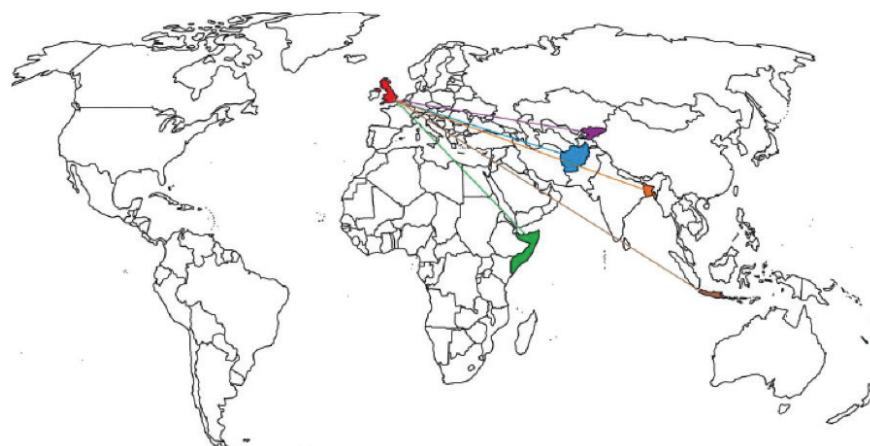
Discussions and activities relating to participants’ social identities opened up interesting complexities that have links to social justice. Participants were all British-born, but with parents from a range of different countries, as shown in Figure 3.1.

A common aspect amongst the families of the participating young women was their parents’ focus on cultivating their religious beliefs, which are an important part of the culture of the parents’ home countries. As the headmaster told us in an interview, the main feature of the school is its religious Islamic orientated curriculum, and as a result parents prefer their children to study there regardless of the distance between their home and the school.

This finding has resonances with several studies of Muslim identity, in which researchers highlight the potential tensions that can arise for Muslims living in the UK in reconciling Britishness with an Islamic orientation (Sartawi and Sammut, 2012, p. 562). “Islam” and “Britishness” sometimes appear as two opposing categories (Sartawi and Sammut, 2012, p. 562), pressuring Muslim Londoners either to fully identify with Muslim values and practices, or pragmatically assimilate themselves to their environment (Sartawi and Sammut, 2012). In terms of our social justice framework, this is not a constructive set of choices, since assimilation means submitting valuable aspects of group and religious identity to conform to a dominant culture. This could be classed as injustice in the form of cultural imperialism. On the other hand, retreating entirely into cultural and religious identity could serve to further marginalise individuals and erode their power to join in broader debate and participate in important collective struggles.

Attending a Muslim community school, which offers a space respecting religious education, prayer times, and Islamic dress, as well as a peer group with similar beliefs and practices, can be seen as one way in which the families of young Muslim Londoners, and they themselves, maintain Islamic aspects of their identity, in an environment sheltered from the prejudice that is often directed at those who maintain a strong Islamic identity (Sartawi and Sammut, 2012). However, participants also

Figure 3.3. A world map capturing the diversity of participants’ countries of origin. Source: Chapter authors.



demonstrated positive feelings about being Londoners, as well as acknowledging their multinational heritage. All observed that as soon as they leave the school, they find themselves in culturally diverse neighbourhoods, moving into a space of engagement beyond a faith-based identity group (Stryker, Sheldon, & Serpe, 1994). In this sense, they are not confined to a single identity – a finding that echoes findings on British Muslim girls elsewhere in the UK (Hutnik 2011).

During the image prioritising game, we observed that most of the participants perceived an individual marching under a national flag (see Figure 3.3) as the most positive image, associating it with the concept of being “united.” As one participant said, “If we are united, we are stronger.” On the one hand, this could be seen as an expression of the value of unity as a group of Muslim schoolgirls. On the other hand, the students’ sense of being Londoners more broadly, and their enthusiastic participation in the Citizens UK housing campaign, indicates that they also value the civic unity and being united with other London Citizens in pursuing common goals of social justice in housing for the city. This simultaneous identification with a narrower faith community and a broader civic community is a positive finding. As Millington points out, in order to move beyond the isolation and stigmatisation of minority groups, it is important to open up space for a productive encounter between different groups within the urban fabric, rather than mere “tolerance” between different publics. The dual identification participants at Ayesha Community School expressed suggests that Citizens UK can contribute to the consolidation of hybrid spaces of public debate and the opening up of “dialogues on matters of common destiny” among London citizens (Millington, 2011, p.113).

Housing experiences in daily life

From activities and interviews we found that there are two main types of accommodation the participants are living in: rented housing and social housing. This stands in accordance with the statistics on minority underrepresentation in the owner-occupier category (see Figure 3.1) and with research indicating that home ownership is relatively low in Muslim groups (Brimicombe, 2007). Several participants considered housing affordability as a central housing problem, recognising that this is an issue common across social groups and identities in London. Furthermore, overcrowding and security were also important concerns mentioned by participants, especially in social housing. One of the participants described the security situation in her neighbourhood as ‘really bad’, as well as noting that seven people in her family have to share three bedrooms. While overcrowding is a problem shared by the whole array of social housing tenants, we have seen that this problem is magnified among those of particular minority identities (see Figure 3.2).

The majority of participants made positive comments on their housing experiences, but we found it important to explore those problems that they did report. This reflects Young’s observation that marginalization can be at work even where it appears that a person’s basic needs are met. One way in which this occurs is in the form of dependency – the most vulnerable people in society depend on state institutions for support or service, while wealthier citizens often have the option of fulfilling their needs through the market. Participants’ position as social housing tenants puts them at risk of this sort of marginalisation – one girl’s account of the long waiting list for more rooms gave an impression of how families are dependent on the council to overcome the problem of overcrowding. Another student spoke of a broken lock posing severe security risks to residents in her council block, and their inability to address this problem on their own. However, in this section we focus on aspects of everyday housing experience that map more specifically onto questions of social identity.

Figure 3.4. “I like the location of my neighbourhood.”
Source: Workshop participant.



Public Spaces

Following Duncan et al (2015), we define “spaces” as places where participants in their neighbourhoods can interact with their families, friends and other neighbourhood residents. Public spaces, such as shopping centres, parks and gardens, can improve the well-being of the members of a community.

These spaces can serve to promote the multifaceted “unity” discussed earlier. On the one hand, they provide places for members of particular groups within the urban environment to participate in collective activities, and to build a sense of belonging within their social group by interacting and sharing similar values and interests. For instance, one student valued the ability to “go shopping, watch movies and have snacks with her friends” in her town-centre neighbourhood. On the other hand, public

spaces are also arenas for productive encounters between the groups that make up the city. Previous studies have revealed the strong connection between public space and the formation of a sense of community (Francis, et al, 2012), and the role public space plays in granting urban social groups access to the public realm, ensuring their visibility in society (Mitchell, 1995).

Discussions with participants suggested the young women would like more mutual spaces of encounter within their neighbourhoods. One participant drew attention to the value of the public park in her neighbourhood both as a place to spend time with her family members on weekends, and as a place that is peacefully shared by a diverse community. In this sense, public spaces can be seen as places where participants negotiate between their "Muslim" and "neighbourhood" group identifications, and situate their identities within the family, the faith community and the diversity of a city neighbourhood. This is a valuable practice in terms of our emphasis on the need to balance group membership with broader civic membership.

Figure 3.5. "We need more public space where we can meet family and friends." Source: Workshop participant.



Provision and management of infrastructures

The management of neighbourhood infrastructure emerged as an important aspect of participants' experiences of their home environments, going beyond the four walls of their dwelling places. Whereas we have argued that public spaces can serve as productive spaces of encounter in diverse communities, pressure on infrastructure can also cause tensions and even bring out racism and identity-based harassment. We consider this a form of violence and hence of injustice, according to Young's framework, which presents a threat to the integration of a social group into the social order.

A participant's experience demonstrates this assertion, showing how lack of adequate and well managed infrastructure contributes to tension in communities. The par-

ticipant referred to the way in which parking spaces in one neighbourhood (Neighbourhood A) were being used by members of a nearby neighbourhood (Neighbourhood B), because the latter lacks car parking facilities. As a result, residents of Neighbourhood A have had to pay additional fees on top of fees already paid to secure parking in local bays. These residents felt that their needs were being overlooked in the interests of profit, and lack of response to their complaints left some feeling they were being deprived of their rights.

The mismanagement of infrastructure not only produces a negative housing experience for residents, but also creates conflicts linked to social identity. Compared to other cities in Britain, the minority population (both ethnic and religious) is much more concentrated in London. Although residential segregation still exists, neighbourhoods are relatively mixed (Brimicombe, 2007). Due to the heterogeneity of communities, interactions between different groups may cause daily conflicts. These kind of clashes promote the formation of antagonistic in- and out-groups, and subject minorities to the violence of verbal harassment, with resonances of cultural imperialism. For instance, a participant living in social housing said that inadequate parking space in a shopping centre close to her home had triggered conflict between members of her community and visitors to the neighbourhood. Another participant mentioned that arguments about the parking issue always end with rude attacks aimed at her religion and culture. Although parking is a problem common across the whole of London, its effects on different communities and groups differ. The fact that minorities are more likely to suffer harassment on the basis of their identity or group membership as a result of conflicts over infrastructure is an indication that violence and cultural imperialism remain as a form of injustice in the cosmopolitan city of London.

Figure 3.6. "Shortage of infrastructure leads to conflict." Source: Workshop participant.



3.5 Conclusion and Recommendations

This chapter has acknowledged some of the common housing issues participants share with Londoners more broadly, as well as highlighting certain patterns and experiences more particular to ethnic minority groups in the UK, which move beyond the four walls of the home. We have tried to unpack some of the complexity of social identity for our participants, and to show how issues of identity emerged as salient in the areas of public space and neighbourhood infrastructure. In particular, we have highlighted the potential for housing and neighbourhood experiences to nurture group and hybrid civic identities, or on the contrary to produce tensions within and between neighbourhoods, and even subject minority residents to the violence of harassment based on their ethnic or religious identity. The fact that these experiences can either magnify or reduce the negative impacts of group identity differences is an important reflection for the Citizens UK housing campaign.

Based on the key findings, we want to voice recommendations for Citizens UK, as well as point out implications for the London mayoral election in May 2016.

Figure 3.7. Students with guests from Ayesha Community School at a presentation of findings at Surma Community Centre. Source: Ignacia Ossul Vermehren.



Public Space

Our participants have identified a shortage of community spaces outside their houses that would allow for encounters within and between the different neighbourhood groups. These concerns should be addressed to the North London branch of Citizens UK. We recommend that the boroughs of Brent, Barnet, Camden, Islington and Haringey, which constitute the

North London branch, should conduct surveys within their districts in order to assess if there exist similar needs with regard to mutual space.

The north-western neighbourhoods of London are among the most diverse in terms of ethnicity and culture (Aldridge et al, 2015, p.15). Enabling neutral spaces for encounters has the power to foster this range of diversities while working towards the mutual understanding and social cohesion many local authorities aspire to in their equality and diversity policies.

Dynamics of difference

A further recommendation is that Mayoral candidates should encourage councils in promoting equality, and investigate the nature and quality of existing initiatives to identify best practices. For instance, Barnet Council – the borough in which Ayesha Community School is located – articulates priorities such as eliminating harassment and discrimination (London Borough of Barnet, 2014, p. 2) and promoting the active participation of all communities (2014, p. 2). It also refers to the development of a ‘Communities Together’ network, with the council facilitating different local groups – including Ayesha Community School – to share information and build understanding (2014, p.3) in the interest of promoting wellbeing as well as safe and cohesive communities. This has great potential to prevent the problem of powerlessness among minority groups. Another highly diverse borough – Newham – recognizes in its Equality and Cohesion policy the importance of cultivating trust and fairness through transparent services where there is no ambiguity, such as in housing allocations based on the clear principle of “first come first served” (Newham, 2011, p. 2). This in turn has potential to prevent urban myths about favouritism or prejudice towards residents based on their group identity. These are all promising actions, and further research could help councils share experiences and promote good practices in terms of promoting equality and creating an environment where different social groups can engage together.

A broader conception of housing rights

In October 2016, Quito will host the UN Habitat III conference on housing rights. Its agenda will reflect the fact that housing in a city can no longer be seen as restricted to the four walls one lives within, but must also be seen more broadly as what one encounters when one leaves those walls. This extends the question of housing to how residents of a city connect, live, work and spend their free time while residing in their city.

In this respect, we recommend that mayoral candidates view their claims as regards housing rights in the light of the Habitat III agenda, which we hope will draw their

attention to issues such as those we have identified, including the need for public spaces of encounter and the need to view neighbourhood infrastructure, such as parking provision, as a housing-related issue that can potentially involve everyday experiences of injustice for Londoners from minority groups.

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4. The Impact of Housing on Education: City and Islington College

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Zaw Htun Lat

Bo Ren

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Kentaro Tsubakihara

4.1 Introduction

Housing is one of the most pressing issues in London and across the UK, and is worsening with time. Average London house prices increased by 7% in 2014 (GLA, 2015), while the annual growth rate of average private sector rents rose to 4.2% (GLA, 2015). In fact, one mayoral candidate's research suggested that certain Londoners could save £403 per month by commuting to work in London from Spain (Sandhu, 2015). The issues have affected many, especially those in the lower income bracket, as rising numbers of homeless people attests. Education is one of the sectors affected significantly by the housing crisis, with its primary stakeholders – such as school children, parents and teachers – bearing the brunt of the crisis.

Housing and Education

To disentangle the complex links between housing and education is a mammoth task, as each affects the other as well as being confounded by other cross-cutting factors such as government policy, investment, employment conditions, public infrastructure, and so on. On the one hand, research shows that physical environment, such as neighbourhood and housing conditions, can have an impact on students' educational achievement and future development in many interrelated ways. In general, disadvantaged housing status may lead to negative learning outcomes for students. For example, one empirical study showed that small home size results in lack of individual privacy and undermines students' behavioural development and academic results (Li, 2012), whereas academic performance was also "partly related to mixed tenure, close proximity of differing socio-economic neighbourhoods and the sharing of social capital to provide equal opportunity." Overcrowding can also have a negative impact on children's developmental and educational outcomes (Labell & Brennan, 2007), such that providing more affordable housing in order to reduce overcrowding could positively impact school performance. The impacts of poor housing conditions are articulated particularly strongly by Friedman, who cites "strong evidence that poor housing conditions result in educational underachievement, with children in better quality homes gaining greater numbers of GCSEs, 'A' levels and degrees, and therefore having

greater earning power." Based solely on the associated differences in GCSE results, Friedman forecasts a total of "£14.8 billion pounds in lost earnings... for this generation in poor housing" (Friedman, 2010).

Against such evidence of the relationship between housing and education, the research aimed to further examine the nature of the link and its specific impacts on students and teachers. The participants of the research included students and teachers of City and Islington College (CANDI), which is Located in London borough of Islington. This A Level Sixth Form College has approximately 1,500 students enrolled from all over London, with an Ofsted rating of "outstanding" in every single measure. Alongside other members of the North London chapter of Citizens UK,¹ City and Islington College has been actively involved in the coalition's housing campaign. In fact, some of the participants in our research had been involved conducting a survey to support the Citizens UK Listening Campaign, which aims to gather information and opinions from member institutions in order to lobby London's mayoral candidates for better housing for residents. This chapter builds on students' survey data using participatory photography, literature analysis, and interviews and focus group discussions with teachers and students, to look specifically at the impact of housing on their ability to teach, study and learn.

4.2 Framework of Analysis

The capability approach was used as a framework of analysis. Pioneered by Amartya Sen, the capability approach focuses on understanding human well-being as a composite of people's choice and ability to achieve what they have reason to value (Frediani, 2010: 176). In contrast to more traditional measures of poverty and inequality such as income, the capability approach provides a normative framework that is more holistic and emphasises the importance of people's freedom to achieve their aspirations. In this sense, the capability approach distinguishes what people value doing or being (known as *functionings*) and their freedom and ability to actually achieve these values (known as *capabilities*) (Alkire, 2002:4). Development work based on the capa-

bility approach therefore focuses on enhancing people's capabilities to achieve what they value in life. As Gasper notes, in the capability approach, "expansion of freedom is viewed....both as the primary end and as the principal means of development" (Gasper, 2004:172).

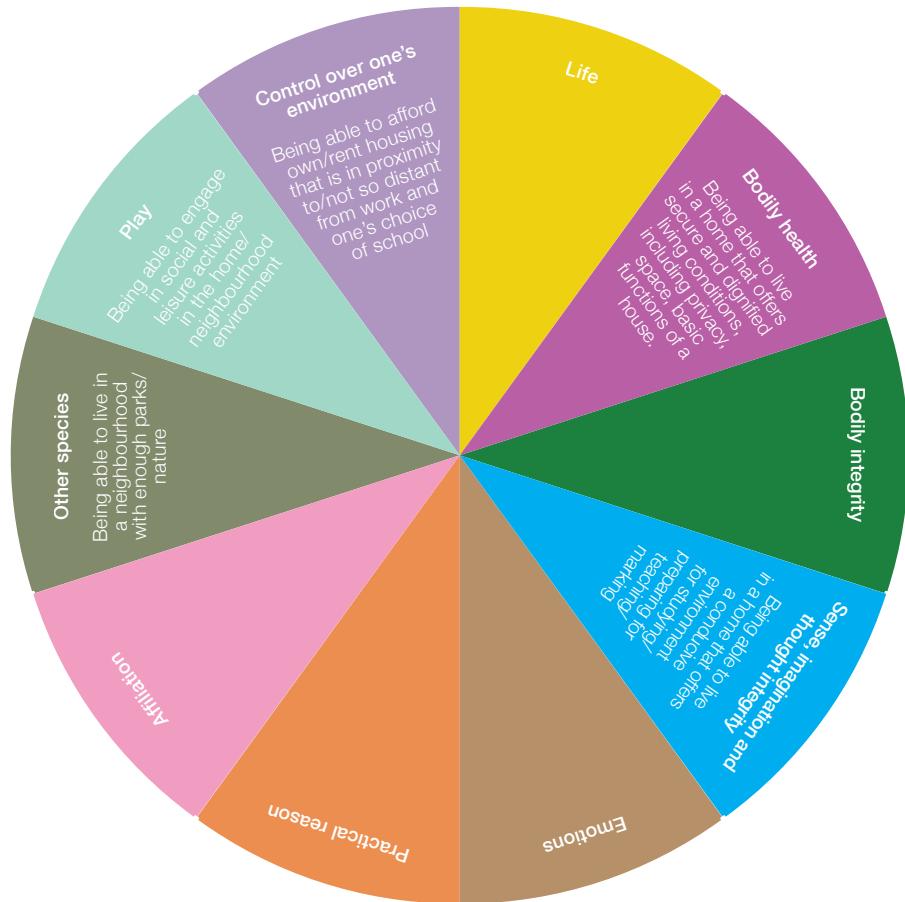
Various scholars have operationalised the capability approach in order to evaluate human well-being and measure development. The most well-known of this is UNDP's Human Development Index which incorporates income, education, and life expectancy as indicators of various human capabilities that broaden people's choices. For the purpose of this research, Martha Nussbaum's list of 10 central capabilities² is used as an evaluative framework for understanding the interconnection of housing and education (Gasper, 2004: 177). The 10 central capabilities relate to life; bodily health; bodily integrity; senses, imagination and thought; emotions; practical reason; affiliation; other species; play; and control over one's environment. Figure 4.1 shows a few examples of how capabilities can be contextualised in the case of housing.

4.3 Methodology

Research activities were undertaken between 19 October 2015 and 17 January 2016. To collect both primary and secondary data, a variety of methodologies were utilised, including participatory photography, survey data analysis, focus group discussions and interviews, and a literature review.

The first and main method employed was participatory photography, in order to get a deeper understanding of how students and teachers experience housing issues. The participatory photography method has been used with many marginalised communities, such as children, homeless people, rural women and on many subjects, including education and public health (Lat, 2016). The process involves participants using cameras to represent their experiences and perspectives on a given topic. They then collectively discuss and analyze the photos, and typically create a product, such as a book and/or exhibition. The photographs and accompanying information are used for community projects and advocacy for social change.

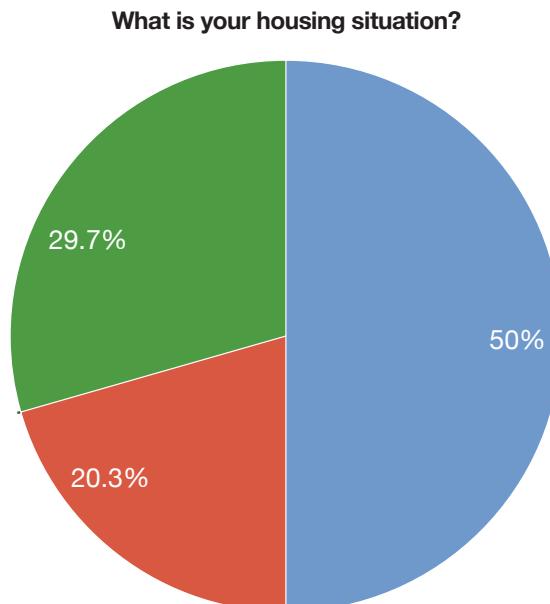
Figure 4.1. Central capabilities in the context of housing. Source: Chapter authors.



We faced certain obstacles in using this method at City and Islington College, which limited consistent participation of a single group of students across the series of participatory photography workshops. For instance, some participants' expected their participation to involve training in advanced photographic skills, which was beyond the scope of our work. It was also difficult to co-ordinate group meetings to suit the constraints of individual participants' class timetables and personal obligations, especially as the fieldwork period coincided with a period of exam revision.

As well as participatory photography, our research was informed by the housing survey conducted by City and Islington College as part of their listening campaign, which focused on identifying housing issues for students (please see Annex 1). This survey, answered by 68 students altogether, asked them about their housing environments, such as where they live, how long they have lived there, what their housing situation is, and whether they have experienced any housing issues. Quantitative analysis was conducted by using the data, with the limitation that the survey did not involve staff, and did not include demographic data that would have helped gauge its representativeness of the larger student population.

Figure 4.2. Housing situations of students. Source: Student survey data.



- Live in Social Housing/Council property with parents/guardians
- Live in property privately rented by parents/guardians
- Live in property owned by parents/guardians

Figure 4.3. Length of stay in current house. Source: Student survey data.

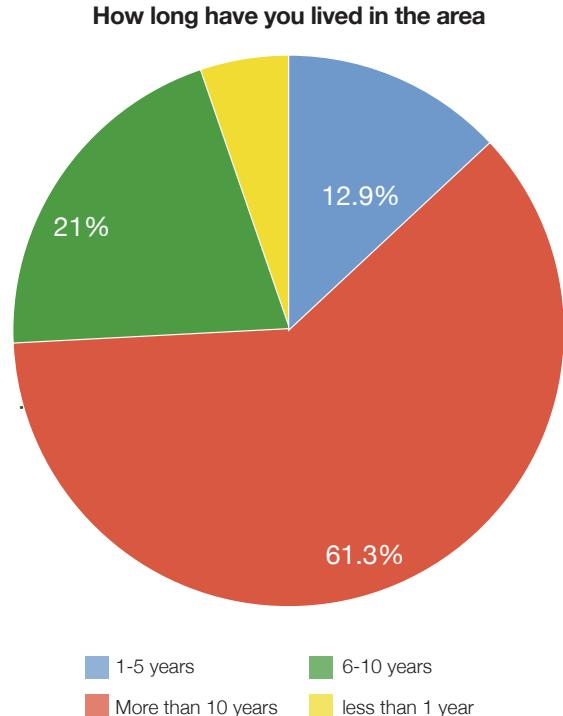
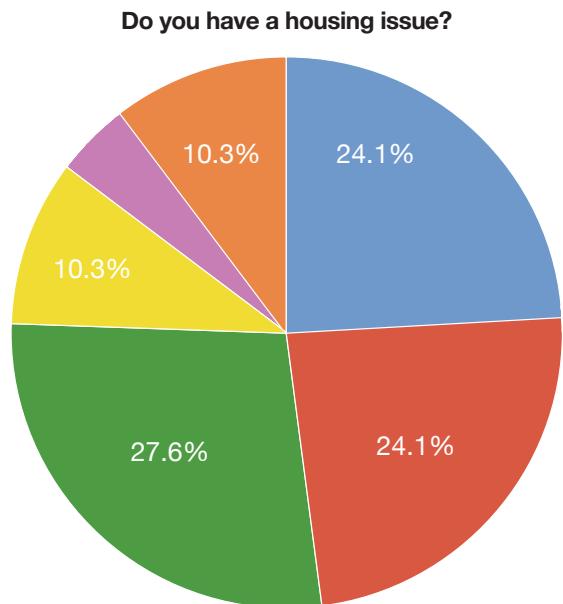


Figure 4.4. Housing issues that impact students. Source: Student survey data.



- Repairs/Condition
- Rent levels
- Overcrowding
- Waiting list/availability
- Relocation
- Neighbourhood problem

Finally, an extensive literature review was also conducted on the relationship between housing and education as well as the capabilities approach as a framework of analysis for understanding housing aspirations of students and teachers.

4.4 Key Issues

Several key housing issues and their impact on education were identified during this research. In order to understand this link, it is helpful to begin with some key statistics from the housing survey conducted by City and Islington College (see questionnaire in Appendix 1). The survey results below show that 50% of students live in social housing (Figure 4.2), and that the majority have spent a large part (if not all) their life in their current housing (Figure 4.3).

The results also highlighted various housing issues that impact students as well the various London Boroughs they live and commute to school from. As Figure 4.4 shows, the three most common housing issues that students are impacted by include Overcrowding (27.6%), Rent levels (24.1%), and Repairs/Condition of housing (24.1%). We believe that the proportion of students highlighting rent levels as a problem may not be a good indication of the extent to which rent is experienced as a

problem in their households, and may instead reflect the fact that participants are on average 18 years old, and living with their parents in social housing, rather than paying rent themselves.

It is also important to note that although the college is located in Islington, students commute from all over London boroughs to study (Figure 4.5). As issues around transport costs were not listed as a potential housing issue for respondents to select from, this is an issue that may be underrepresented in the survey data.

Overcrowding

Overcrowding was the largest issue reported by surveyed students. Fifty percent identified overcrowding as one of the major issues they face in housing. This statistic was further corroborated by the in-depth descriptions students provided of the specific housing issues they face, as well as through the photographs they took and shared during the participatory photography sessions. One student for example, explained "I share a room with my brothers and it is hard to study as they sleep early and use the room as well." This example provides insight into how housing impacts capabilities in the sphere of sense, imagination and thought integrity. Overcrowded living conditions do not offer a conducive environment for studying.

Figure 4.5. Where students live (the red mark is the school location). Source: Student survey data.



Another participant stated, "Grandmother has Alzheimer's and has to share with my 4 year old sister, with my parents sleeping in the living room. We have a 2 bedroom flat. This is unfair for my little sister and grandmother and we need the extra space to make it easier to care for my nan." From the lens of capability, overcrowding can therefore be seen to undermine secure and dignified living conditions, including privacy and space, impacting on the sphere of bodily health by making care more difficult. It also impacts on the sphere of affiliation, as familial relationships and interaction are constrained when overcrowding requires the sacrifices of basic functional spaces of a home, such as a living room.

Rent levels/Affordability

Although many students live in social housing, rent levels were also identified as a key issue for students. This has led to many students living far away from the location of the school and commuting long distances. On an average students takes between 40 and 90 minutes to get to school (see Figure 4.5), which impacted on participants' ability to:

- get to school on time,
- be in a good mood for studying,
- socialize with peers,
- interact with nature, and
- engage in leisure activities.

Figure 4.6. "This picture is meant to represent the ever growing problem of overcrowding in London. The first two pairs of shoes are meant to represent how many people are meant to be living in one flat, and the total amount of shoes is the total amount of people. The shoes stacked on top of each other represents the lack of space the people living in London." Source: N.E., workshop participant.



The high cost of housing is also a major challenge for teachers. Although the teachers at the school are paid above-average salaries, they noted that rent levels in London mean they have to spend a significant amount of their income in rent. One of the teachers noted that this may also be a generational issue, since teachers over 40 years of age tend to own a house, whereas younger teachers rent.

High rent levels also mean that there may be a brain drain from London, whereby teachers move out of London in order to be able to access more affordable housing. As one of the teachers said, "I have to leave London in the future if I want to have children, as I cannot afford to live in the city and raise a child." Due to exorbitant housing prices, this teacher cannot reconcile the aspirations to work and raise a family while living in London.

This echoes the finding of a YouGov survey that "A sobering 70% of the employees aged between 25 and 39 surveyed said their rent or mortgage makes it difficult to work in London, of whom half said they would consider moving out to a job and dwelling in a different city or region as a result" (Hill, 2014). From a capabilities perspective, this issue concerns control over one's environment: housing should be within reasonable proximity of one's workplace or choice of school. Where it is not, the clearest impact on education is the possible loss of experienced teachers from the city as they are forced to move out of the city. This turnover is likely to impact on teaching quality.

Although lack of affordable housing is a crucial issue in London, that fact that there are unoccupied buildings in the city means students do not necessarily believe there is a housing shortage. As one of the students highlights in her photo (below), there are many houses in London that are empty while many people live in crowded houses and are struggling to afford housing.

Repairs/Conditions

Repairs and the condition of their housing is also a major issue for both students and teachers at City and Islington College. In the survey, many students described the challenges they faced in dealing with councils and landlords with regards to this issue. One student for example highlighted the issue of having to wait for long periods to get anything fixed in the house: "If something in the property breaks, for example a shelf, you would have to call the housing agent to assess the problem, which takes long to book the appointment. Then, once it's been assessed, you have to be put on a waiting list for it to get repaired." Depending on the nature of the repairs needed, this issue has potential impacts on bodily health. It could also erode the conditions for study in students' homes, impacting the sphere of sense, imagination and thought integrity.

Figure 4.7. "This is where the Regent's Canal goes through a tunnel under Angel. The houses above are some of the most expensive in London that most living and working in Islington (including myself) would never be able to afford. My work is just around the corner." Source: Teacher.

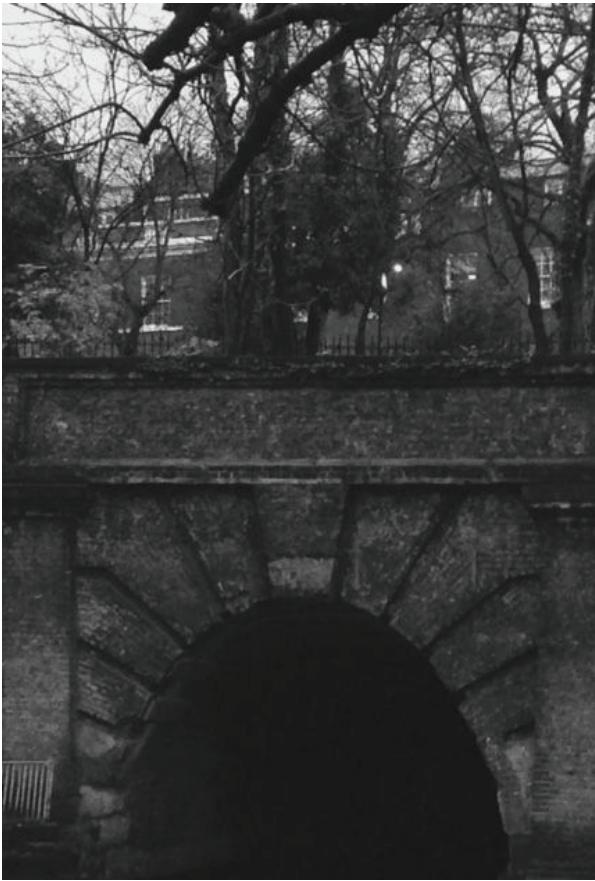


Figure 4.8. "This house is fully furnished and empty since more than six years. It looks similar to my house where my whole family of 4 members live." Source: anonymous workshop participant.



Figure 4.9. "This hole in the picture is meant to represent the problem of repairs. The shoes are meant to be walking over the hole, representing how ignored this issue is amongst the community, and how some think it's unimportant. The entire picture is to represent that some people do care about these issues in relation to the housing crisis." Source: N.E., workshop participant.



4.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, despite challenges in securing students' continued and full participation in the participatory photography element of the project, the research has produced considerable knowledge and insights into the housing experiences of students and teachers from City and Islington College. The results clearly identify several capabilities that are impacted by housing, including bodily health, affiliation, control over one's environment and sense, imagination and thought integrity.

How, then, do the housing concerns of students and teachers impact on education? Bringing the literature on housing and its impact on education back into view, the link becomes quite clear. As we demonstrated in the introduction, the quality of housing, as well as its affordability and accessibility, all impact educational outcomes such as student performance and achievement in school. Therefore, given that many students face housing issues such as overcrowding, high rent, and challenges with the condition of their home environment, it's highly likely that these issues then negatively impact their educational aspirations, such as the desire to achieve good school performance.

There are also longer-term implications to these impacts. As the literature suggested, if lack of quality housing leads to educational underachievement among

students, these students will then also have difficulty with employment and earning in the future. Similarly, if exorbitant housing causes teachers to move out of London, the entailing brain drain is likely to create challenges in retaining experienced teachers in London schools. If left unaddressed, housing issues such as overcrowding, high rental costs, and poor living conditions as a result of delayed repairs, can therefore further exacerbate people's aspirations for quality education.

Participants' powerful photographs and photo dialogues reflected some of the core housing concerns identified in the Citizens' UK's housing manifesto. In particular, their voices highlighted the issue of overcrowding and its subsequent impacts on students' ability to study and teachers' ability to prepare for classes. The research also suggested that soaring rent, which propelled participants to live far from the school and commute long distances, impacted punctuality, mood, and time for socialising and leisure activities, as well as forcing younger teachers to leave the city if they wish to establish a family in London. The limitations of our research means that these findings, while eye-opening, are preliminary and limited. Further research both at City and Islington College and beyond would be useful to solidify and elaborate the account we have presented.

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NOTES TO CHAPTER 4

1. Founded in 1996, Citizens UK is a charitable NGO that is a coalition of over 250 community-based organisations including schools, mosques, synagogues, churches, trade unions and others, with a mission to organise "communities to act together for

power, social justice and the common good" (Citizens UK, 2015).

2. These include, life; bodily health; bodily integrity; senses, imagination and thought; emotions; practical reason; affiliation; other species; play; and control over one's environment

5. Life as a (UCL) Student: A Wellbeing Approach to Student Housing in London

Emma Howard

Yangyu Hu

Ruiqi Liu

Natasha Menon

Rosa Salazar Benazar

Cécile Sánchez

5.1 Introduction

London is in the midst of a housing crisis that cuts across all income levels. With 34% private sector rent increases over the past decade, it is currently the world's third most unaffordable city to live in. This report focuses on one particular group that this is relevant to: students. As London is globally recognised as a city that boasts many prestigious universities, a significant number (100,000) of international students choose London as their preferred option for higher education. The city currently ranks first for attracting students from all over the world (Mayor of London, 2015). UCL demonstrates this, with students coming from more than 150 countries. However, although they represent about one-third of the student body (UCL, 2016), London's university student housing provision remains strikingly insufficient.

In 2003, only 4% of student halls were privately provided; by 2014, this had gone up to 41%. It is also important to note that in current policy "new student accommodation is exempt from the usual requirements relating to mixed use and affordable housing provision" (Greater London Authority, 201, p.2). Therefore, high rent levels and lack of availability leads to students renting from the private market, forcing them to compete with the rest of the population for affordable housing (Greater London Authority, 2015, p.2).

Research into student housing has typically focused on the quantitative impact of students on the housing market and there has been a lack of subjective study into student attitudes and experiences of their housing situations. With student accommodation costs in London currently absorbing up to 95% of the maximum loan allocation for UK students, and potentially more for international students, we were interested in hearing student voices within this crisis (Osborne, 2015). As a journalist for the *Guardian* describes:

[...] for students the housing crisis can have a hugely detrimental effect on life chances, earning potential and even their ability to gain a good degree, since students are working more hours than

ever to even fund their studies. If university is the best catalyst for social mobility, sadly the student housing crisis is the biggest barrier to equality facing aspirational graduates (Foster, 2015).

This context informed our research within the broader listening campaign on the London housing crisis, undertaken by Citizens UK and supported by PhotoVoice and the Development Planning Unit (DPU). We were interested in applying an experiential focus to our research, and to frame our understandings within a wellbeing framework, in order to reflect the multiplicity of the student experience beyond the familiar notion of affordability.

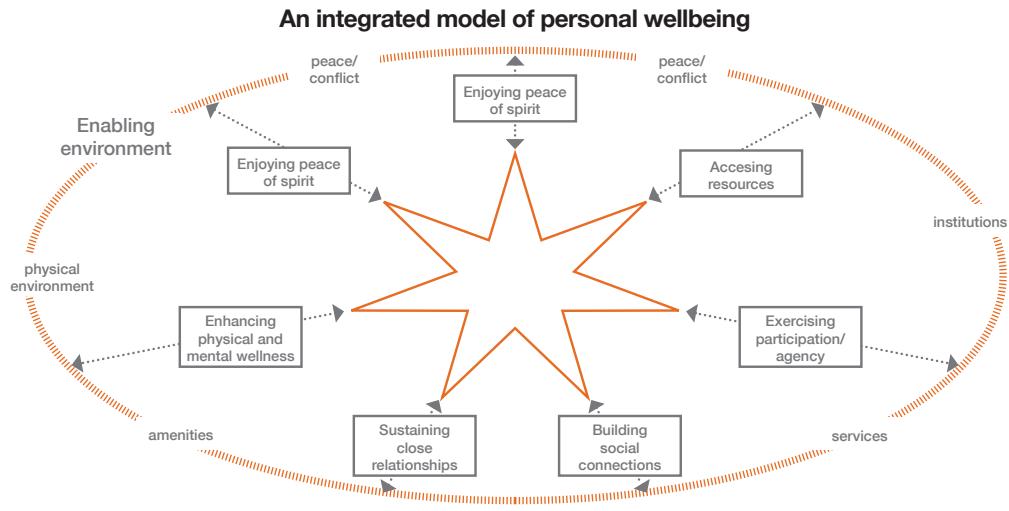
5.2 Framework

We chose Sarah White's Integrated Model of Personal Wellbeing to guide the analysis of our research findings. A very basic definition of wellbeing is "having what you need for life to be good" (White, 2009: 3). In the past, wellbeing was mainly conceived as the amount of material resources people had, as measured by income. However, we have applied a wider lens which has incorporated subjective and relational aspects of wellbeing.

We considered the approach well-suited to our research area, as housing researchers argue that the meanings people attach to contemporary housing have changed (Clapham, 2005). No longer understood as just "four walls", housing is increasingly viewed as a means of personal fulfilment whose quality is subjectively determined. Judging from our own experiences of student life, as well as our conversations with other students, we felt this sentiment to be true of the student housing experience, and this helped to reinforce our commitment to a wellbeing framework.

Wellbeing is a multidimensional concept that takes into consideration both objective circumstances and people's subjective evaluation of those circumstances. These are shaped by the environment in which individuals evolve. White's approach is best summarised in the diagram depicted in Figure 5.1.

Figure 5.1. Principal domains of wellbeing. Source: White, 2009, p. 13.



The principal domains of wellbeing are depicted in the boxes that appear at each point of the central star in Figure 5.1. These interact with "enabling conditions" in the external environment, such as infrastructure, institutions and services, which are represented by the circle (White, 2009: 12). The dotted lines are lines of power that represent the fact that wellbeing is not equally distributed and some groups tend to be excluded or left behind. The blue spiral represents time and the fact that wellbeing is a process.

For our research, we focused on the domains of wellbeing that seemed most relevant to our participants, based on the photographs they took and the issues they raised in interviews. These were: accessing resources, enhancing physical and mental wellness, sustaining close relationships and exercising agency. For our analysis we will focus our attention on how these domains interact, as well as taking into account the enabling environment.

- Three workshops
- One individual semi-structured interview with each participant
- A survey of all DPU students

Participants were asked to complete take-home tasks, by taking photographs relating to different aspects of housing from their everyday life (for example, somewhere they feel safe, something they want to change, or photos recording a day in their life). The aim was to keep the tasks broad enough to enable students to convey their feelings towards housing through photos, which would generate further inspirations and thoughts without imposing our research aims. As part of the workshops, we held group discussions in relation to participant photographs and homework tasks, debated their key concerns about housing, and reviewed digital storytelling concepts to illustrate key PhotoVoice techniques (Figures 5.2 and 5.3).

All activities we used were based on the PhotoVoice method. This methodology is mainly developed from Robert Chamber's work on Participatory Rural Appraisal (1992). Burris and Wang (1994) were the first to coin the term 'photovoice', which is described as:

A process by which people can identify, represent, and enhance their community through a specific photographic technique. It entrusts cameras to the hands of people to enable them to act as recorders, and potential catalysts for social action and change, in their own communities. It uses the immediacy of the visual image and accompanying stories to furnish evidence and to promote an effective, participatory means of sharing expertise and knowledge. (Burris and Wang, 1997, p. 369)

5.3 Methodology

The findings of this report are based on qualitative research methods, which aimed to explore how the housing situation in London affects student wellbeing. We recruited the participants from the DPU masters cohort, via an email call for participation. Fifteen students, both male and female, volunteered to participate in the project. All were international students who had recently arrived in London from countries including China, Taiwan, Mexico, Colombia, France and Jordan.

The ten-week-engagement involved:

Our status as both students and researchers was helpful to create a head to head dialogic process. This feeling of "shared" struggles meant that we were able to identify strongly with the issues raised, and enabled us to be reflexive in our research. However, there were a few limitations to our methods. These included limited time to probe deeper into participants' views, some dropouts from the workshop process, and a low response rate on the survey.

Figure 5.2. Sorting through photographs at a PhotoVoice workshop. Source: Chapter authors.



Figure 5.3. Discussing photographs at a PhotoVoice workshop. Source: Chapter authors.



5.4 Key Issues

Using Sarah White's wellbeing framework, we analyse in this section the participants' interviews, pictures and workshops discussions. We structure the analysis according to the four domains that we considered most

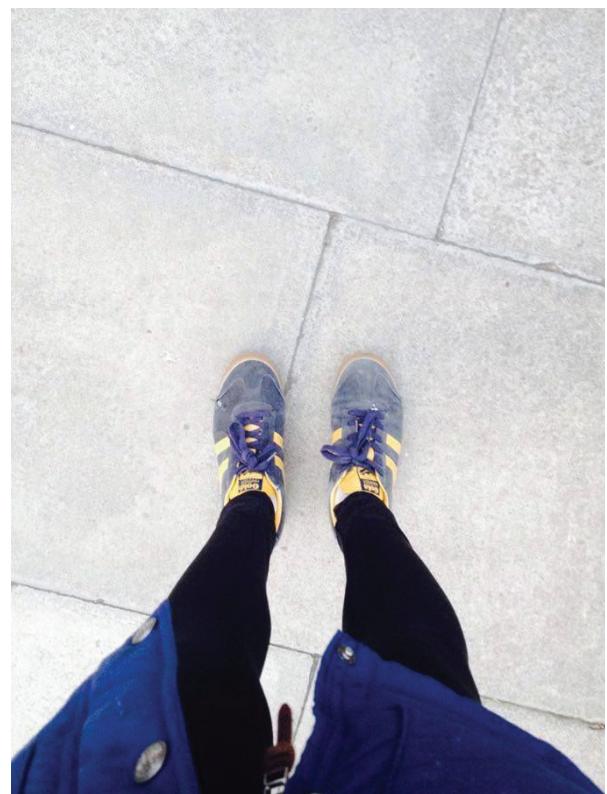
relevant to our participants: enhancing physical and mental wellness, sustaining close relationships, accessing resources and exercising agency.

Enhancing physical and mental wellness

Two of our participants said that living near UCL allowed them to use alternatives modes of transport, cycling or walking, which they felt improved their physical health. A female participant, for example said: "Commuting daily on foot has a positive influence on my life because I don't need to think about anything...it's just like refreshing my mind...a break between university life and home life." This suggests that proximity to university allows students to commute in a healthy way both physically and mentally (see Figure 5.4).

This contrasts with the experience of students who live further away and feel the strain of having to think constantly about how to get home, particularly at night. For example, during our third workshop, a female student stated that her location meant she was constantly worrying about commuting home. Moreover, she raised concerns, echoed by another participant, around her safety and walking home alone at night (see Figure 5.5).

Figure 5.4. "Commuting daily on foot has a positive influence on my life." Source: Workshop participant.



Furthermore, one participant was so profoundly affected by their housing situation that they sought psychological support. In the personal interview this participant explained: "In the place I used to live I didn't have someone to talk to... I felt I really needed a change of environment, I even went to the psychological service for this issue." We can notice how for some students a house is more than just a physical structure, and that a lack of close relationships can affect student mental health. Student mental health is a significant issue. Data from the National Union of Student's survey revealed that 78% of students across the UK experienced mental health issues last year (Gil, 2015).

Figure 5.5. Getting home at night is a worry to some students living further from campus. Source: Workshop participant.



Sustaining close relationships

Students' mental wellbeing is also affected due to a lack of channels for social connection with the broader environment. According to the National Health Service (NHS, 2013) building stronger social connections helps people feel more secure, gain a greater sense of purpose, belonging and self-worth, which improves overall mental wellbeing.

In this regard, many of our participants expressed how the sense of "home" is closely related to maintaining close relationships. They highlighted how having a communal living space where they can relax and socialise with friends is very important. One participant said: "I like it when there are some people around... It has

to feel like home." When reflecting on a photo he took of food on a large table, another participant explained: "It's not about the food, it's also about the people who I am sharing it with" (see Figure 5.6). We can see how a lack of communal spaces has a significant impact on living experience. Students then have to search for alternative spaces to foster a sense community as their living space cannot always provide this.

Beyond having spaces to enable social interactions, having a social circle was also an important aspect for many of the participants. For example, some students wanted to be able to connect to their home culture. As a female

Figure 5.6. "It's not about the food, it's also about the people I'm sharing it with". Source: Workshop participant.



Figure 5.7. For one participant from China, Chinatown was a comfortable place to build a social circle. Source: Workshop participant.



participant reflected, "For overseas students in London... it's a little lonely. Although I have my flatmates and 200 Chinese people in my accommodation, I still need a social circle." As a result, she enjoyed meeting with other Chinese students in Chinatown, where she feels comfortable and can build her social circle (see Figure 5.7).

On the other hand, one student complained that her neighbourhood "consists of people of one-type... there are not many kids, nor many people from different ethnic groups." As a result, she is considering moving to a more diverse area, and expressed the concern that Londoners are being pushed out of the city.

It can be inferred that students' choice of housing can be significantly influenced by their sense of belonging to the community surrounding them. Due to the fact that students in London are highly cosmopolitan, their need to build close relationships and have a sense of community is particularly relevant.

Access to resources

Issues of affordability in London pervade both the literature, the news, and the student experiences described in this chapter. While notions of affordability differ widely in the literature, with debates about how to define such a normative concept, affordability is not merely a characteristic of housing, but exists as a relationship between housing and people. This is because for some people all housing is affordable, no matter the cost, but for others, nothing is (Stone, 2006).

For the purposes of our research, we have understood housing affordability as "an expression of the social and material experiences of people... in relation to their individual housing situations" (Baer, 1976, p.383). This definition, which considers how a person's housing situation impacts their ability to participate in other areas of life, allows for a deeper examination of the subjective and relational aspects of student wellbeing.

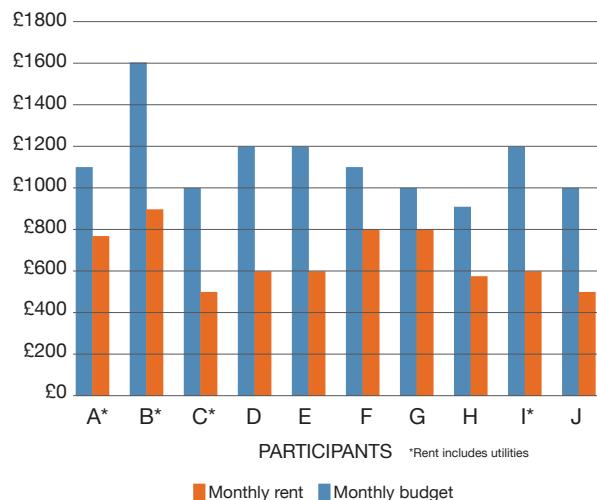
Participants revealed that their rental costs consumed between 50 and 80% of their monthly budget. Table 5.1 visually reflects the burden that this represents. Managing a tight budget is not easy in London, and as we can see in Table 5.1, our participants spend most of their money on housing, with little left over for transport or food. A female student stated: "After paying my rent and transport I am only left with £7 per day for food." This finding was reinforced by the survey where students reported having to live very far away and spend extended time commuting just to be able to study at UCL.

In turn, our research has shown that this cost has played a prominent role in student wellbeing. For example, although one participant was pleasantly surprised that her

North London neighbourhood had been so welcoming, she has been unable to make use of the range of social spaces available to meet people due to her constrained budget. "I don't go out to different restaurants, or different mainstream areas of the city because I can't afford it... because the rent is so high that the money left goes to basic needs like food," she explained. Relating this to the wellbeing model, it is clear that the unaffordability of her housing situation acted as a key determinant in this participant's access to resources, and restricted her ability to sustain close relationships, resulting in a diminished "sense of belonging" in her local community.

For a male participant, the trade-off for living very close to university was that he has to spend 80% of his budget on rent: "I have a scholarship that is £1,000 per month, and I pay £800 for my rent... But needing to have about 1,200 pounds just to live each month, I'm running out of my savings pretty quickly" (see Figure 5.8). In addition, he has to pay rent in cash and does not have a legal contract with his landlord, as he has been unable to secure a UK guarantor. Notably, during his search for accommodation, this landlord was recommended to him by UCL.

Table 5.1. Participants' housing costs. Source: Chapter authors.



Exercising participation and agency

In the wellbeing approach, an enabling environment is key to people's wellbeing, and as such the ability to impact on that environment, for instance through participation in civic activities, can be seen as crucial. Yet most of our participants felt disempowered and unable to improve their housing situation, particularly because as international students they are regarded as temporary residents. In the third workshop, we talked with our participants about the Citizens UK cam-

paign. Although participants showed a genuine interest in being involved in a related event, some of them had doubts about how much power they really have. A male respondent encapsulated these doubts as follows: "Why should they hear us?... If I was the Mayor I wouldn't."

Nonetheless, our secondary research has shown that international students represent an important asset to both London and UCL. Last year London international students directly contributed £2.8 billion to UK economy, as well as helping to maintain its status as the most international city in the world (London First/PWC, 2015; The Economist, 2012). Politicians know the importance of international students for the city's economy and image (Mayor of London, 2015) and some have argued in favour of offering special visa benefits to the student population (Warrell and Parker, 2015). Therefore, there would seem to be ample reason to listen to international students' housing experiences, alongside those of "home" students. It is also important to note that, while there may be certain differences in the experiences of these two groups, there are also likely to be significant overlaps in the challenges they face.

Figure 5.8. One participant, spending 80% of his scholarship on rent, is running out of savings very quickly. Source: Workshop participant.



5.5 Conclusion

Examining the relationship between material, subjective and relational wellbeing, it became clear that while there is much more to the student housing experience than simply a lack of money to afford it, the extent to which material resources influenced subjective and relational sense of wellbeing was striking.

We found that commuting and proximity to the University were closely tied to a sense of physical and mental wellbeing, with those living further away experiencing more fatigue, and limited participation in their social networks.

However, living further away did, in some cases, translate into a greater sense of belonging in one's home environment. Those who lived more centrally tended to make a different set of compromises, such as cycling or walking instead of using public transport, restricting food and travel budgets, and feeling less settled in their homes or connected to their communities. A common thread, however, was that the crisis of affordability of housing in London directly inhibited their social and economic participation in non-housing-related expenditure.

Loneliness, together with a lack of sense of community and spaces to meet with friends, were important concerns raised by our participants. They considered it essential to have the ability to stay connected with friends and feel a sense of belonging.

Moreover, due to their perceived powerlessness as temporary residents of the city, some students demonstrated a sense of learned helplessness, and experienced a lack of agency and feelings of empowerment. It is important to contrast this finding with the general aim of the Photo-Voice method to foster participation, empowerment and voice. A powerlessness to effect change could potentially limit student organisation around issues that are important to them, which represents a threat to the democratic inclusion of students on the national agenda.

5.6 Recommendations

We have shown that, despite the importance of international students for London, their experience of the city does not fulfill the multiple dimensions of students' wellbeing. Therefore, universities and local government should aim to enhance their wellbeing, and organisations such as Citizens UK should include student housing concerns in their advocacy around this topic.

London Living Rent

Student inclusion in a London Living Rent scheme would go a long way to addressing the crisis of affordability outlined in this report. With average rents that are out of touch with student budgets, a rent linked to financial ability rather than the market would be much fairer.

Citizens UK is currently proposing such a scheme in its Housing Manifesto (2015). This scheme would be grounded in the principle that for housing to be affordable, it should only occupy up to a third of a person's income. While we support this initiative, the language of "income" may exclude students from the discussion. As students often rely on other means of financial support, a London Living Rent that included people on "lower budgets" as well as lower incomes might be an improvement.

Dedicated rogue landlord university taskforce

Students currently suffer from tenancy agreements that are skewed in the landlord's favour, and they frequently fall prey to scams, precarious tenancies and soaring rents. Linking up with the Rogue Landlord task force proposed by Citizens UK, a university task force could strengthen both the visibility of support and the capacity of students to exercise their housing rights, while still operating in a larger governing structure that aims to improve landlord accountability.

Improve the quality of information supplied to students

Students in this project felt strongly that the information on accommodation provided by the university was inadequate, insufficient or came too late. Lacking awareness of what a normal tenancy looks like, and in the rush to secure accommodation before or soon after arriving in London, students felt very pressured to sign agreements they were not familiar with. Students proposed, for example, having a more user-friendly design of relevant web pages, with more accurate information.

Further research on student housing by the DPU

Despite being widely involved in urban contestations and being situated in central London, where the housing crisis is at breaking point, the DPU has generally overlooked the housing of its own students in London. With international students representing a significant proportion of the DPU, and given the evidence we provide on the effects that housing has on their overall wellbeing, more research and actions in this area are necessary.

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6. Conclusion

The research presented in this report has sought a more nuanced understanding of London's housing crisis as experienced by those living, working and studying in the city. In particular, it has sought to reflect on the housing experience of distinct groups of north London, moving beyond the familiar problem of access and affordability of housing to reflect on the meaning of housing in everyday life for different sets of people.

Chapter 2 draws attention to the issue of homelessness through the experiences of guests at Shelter from the Storm, a free homeless shelter near Caledonian Road in north London. It is argued that stereotypical perceptions of homelessness, and the wider invisibility of the situation, limits the possibility for the problem to be recognised and acted upon. Thus, the findings make a direct link between misrecognition of homelessness and issues of low representation in decision-making, and lack of priority in the redistribution of resources. Participants' pictures, though not all featured in this report, illustrated the importance of networks, the value of safe spaces and issues of recognition and identity.

The focus of Chapter 3 is on the relation between minority group identity and housing experiences. Taking into consideration stigmatisation of minority groups, one of the key findings was the role that public space plays in hindering or facilitating the encounter between different groups, and thus promoting meaningful integration at the neighbourhood level. Photographs were used by participants from Ayesha secondary school to express their relationship with the built environment, pointing out, for instance, the importance of community spaces and neighbourhood infrastructure in the city.

Chapter 4 addresses how housing opportunities can impact on a just educational system. The research conducted with teachers and students of City and Islington College showed that affordability, accessibility and overcrowding could be a hindrance to education outcomes in two respects. On one hand, it is an obstacle to those students who have to commute long distances and live in overcrowded dwellings, and therefore have less time and space to study. On the other hand, there is also a potential impact on the ability of the College to retain key staff, since teachers cannot afford to continue living in the area when they settle down to start a family. Pictures taken by students and teachers reflected these issues, with images representing overcrowding and the unaffordability of housing in the area near the college.

Finally, Chapter 5 discusses the impact of housing on the wellbeing of students at UCL. As the research shows, in the last decade, most of the student's accommodation has been privatised, leaving students to rely mostly on the private sector to find a place to live. This impacts negatively on their wellbeing, not only in terms of affordability but also in terms of access, security of tenure and the challenge of dealing with sometimes difficult landlords. Mental wellbeing was also one of the key findings, relating to the need of international students for a living space that can be called "home." With very few communal spaces in small housing units, spaces of interaction are limited. Student photographs covered a range of topics from transport, to home space and affordability.

6.1 Findings in Relation to Housing Manifesto Priorities

The Housing Manifesto of Citizens UK has identified three priorities in relation to the Mayoral election – as mentioned in the introduction, these are affordability, rogue landlords and lack of control over local development. Students' research findings lined up in many respects with these priorities, but we also highlight overcrowding as a matter of priority, since it was a key issue for many participants. Overcrowding was in fact identified as a priority by North London Citizens, but this issue was later left behind in the general London prioritisation.

Affordability

Affordability is the clearest priority across the four groups. It emerges not only as a characteristic of housing but also as a relational aspect impacting wellbeing and the possibility of fulfilling aspirations in other aspects of participants' lives. Data from UCL students and City and Islington College shows that participants spend around 50 to 80% of their income in rent, limiting participants' choices in other aspects of their lives. In these cases, difficulty in affording housing near to educational institutions not only impacted students capacity to study but also the possibility of retaining teachers, particularly when schools are in well-located areas of the city.

Citizens are proposing a London Living Rent scheme, where rent should not be more than one-third of a household income. In the findings in Chapter 4 and 5, there is a concern with the use of “income,” as it may exclude students from the discussion. As students often rely on other means of financial support, a London Living Rent that included people on “lower budgets” as well as lower incomes might be an improvement.

Rogue Landlords

The problem of rogue landlords, as defined by Citizens UK, includes insecure tenancies, rent hikes, neglected repairs and discrimination towards tenants. This theme was evident across all four chapters of this report, and is particularly relevant considering that most participants were tenants. City and Islington College and Ayesha Community School emphasised the tensions produced in the home space by neglected repairs, such as health problems caused by mould, or overcrowding in the remaining space when a room in the home is not fit for use. In the case of UCL students, some of the findings pointed to the precarious situation of students with respect to their tenancy agreements. Linking up with the Rogue Landlord task force proposed by Citizens UK, a university task force could strengthen both the visibility of support and the capacity of students to exercise their housing rights.

Lack of control over local development

Lack of control over local development refers to the struggle people face in staying in their areas of residence, especially in the context of displacement by new housing projects. In line with this, some of the findings from Ayesha Community School indicate that housing goes beyond the home space, extending into the neighbourhood and the availability of adequate public space and infrastructure. More generally, across the groups there seemed to be a subtle sense of resignation regarding the possibility to exert agency and influence, and as such gain more control over local development in participants’ areas of residence. In part, this is because decisions on housing development are associated with powerful actors.

Overcrowding

The findings that have emerged from this report give great importance to overcrowding. Particularly, surveys conducted in the internal listening campaigns of City and Islington College and Ayesha Community School highlighted this issue. In both cases, overcrowding was particularly problematic for social housing tenants, and we also saw that this problem is magnified among those of particular minority identities.

6.2 Beyond the Scope of the Housing Manifesto

In addition to deepening the understanding of the priorities identified for the Housing Manifesto by North London Citizens, the findings of this report shed light on new elements that go beyond the scope of the manifesto. Although we do not intend to solve them here, these are important considerations when thinking more widely about the implications of housing.

Homelessness

First, homelessness is an important aspect of the housing crisis that has not been addressed in the manifesto. The findings of Chapter 2 point to the invisibility and, thus, misrecognition of the problem of homelessness. Full recognition of homelessness seems to be the first step in addressing this situation. While it is understandable that Citizens UK has created a manifesto based on the priorities of its members, there is a danger of excluding the voices of homeless people from the platform, perpetuating their exclusion from equal recognition as citizens.

Unequal experiences of London citizenship

If we are to address the housing problem, it seems that there is an underlying question of who that solution is for. This raises complex questions about what it means to be a Londoner, and about who has access to the city in what way. It came out strongly in the findings of UCL students that although one-third of the student body in London comes from abroad, international students are regarded as temporary residents, which affects their confidence and limits their agency to act on their housing situation. In a different situation, students from Ayesha Community School made reference to ways in which prejudice based on their ethnic and religious background sometimes emerges in everyday conflicts over infrastructure. A further example is the way in which policies limiting asylum seekers’ ability to work predispose this group to subsequent housing vulnerability and homelessness. In asking how citizens can expand their agency in order to act on pressing housing problems, it becomes key to address these underlying issues and re-examine fixed ideas of what it means to be a Londoner.

Housing as a route to other rights

As seen in this report, housing should not be considered in isolation but in relation to other elements. Therefore, we see opportunities to improve housing as a way to access other sets of rights. Education is a clear example of this, since housing opportunities can hinder or facilitate educational outcomes and school staffing. In some

cases, such as among international students, the high cost of housing restricted access to other resources and impacted on quality of life – for students forced to live far from campus, this was expressed in time spent commuting, and limited time for study and for sustaining relationships with others.

In closing, housing has become a matter of vital importance for Londoners, and one of particular importance in relation to London's upcoming mayoral elections. In ad-

dition to producing this report's findings, the opportunity to actively support the Citizens UK listening campaign has allowed us to witness how men and women of different ages, places of origin, and ethnic and religious backgrounds want to and do engage in local politics. What remains as an important challenge is the question of how policy makers can create, enable and foster a space to engage with existing practices of participation in the city, and how we can better support organisations that form the bridge between these two levels.

Appendix 1: Housing Survey Questionnaire (City and Islington College)

NAME				
LOCAL AREA/BOROUGH				
WHAT IS YOUR HOUSING SITUATION? (tick relevant box)				
Live in property owned by parents/guardians		Live in property privately rented by parents/guardians		
Live in social housing/council property with parents/guardians		Other		
HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED IN THE AREA?				
DO YOU HAVE A HOUSING ISSUE? Please tick the description that best fits the issue you are facing or use the blank box to describe the problem yourself				
Overcrowding		Repairs/condition		Waiting list/availability
Relocation		Rent levels		Neighbourhood problem
Other				
DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF ISSUE. Including impact, any action taken and outcome.				
IF THE COUNCIL WANTED TO REDEVELOP YOUR AREA WHAT WOULD THEY NEED TO DO TO FOR YOU TO BE OK WITH IT?				
What would you be willing to do to contribute to the campaign?				
Case study feature in report		Attend meeting		Speak in meeting

SDP STUDENTS REPORT 2016 - DPU

The Development Planning Unit, University College London, is an international centre specialising in academic teaching, research, training and consultancy in the field of urban and regional development, with a focus on policy, planning management and design. It is concerned with understanding the multi-faceted and uneven process of contemporary urbanisation, and strengthening more socially just and innovative approaches to policy, planning management and design, specially in the contexts of Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East as well as countries in transition.

The central purpose of the DPU is to strengthen the professional and institutional capacity of governments and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to deal with the wide range of development issues that are emerging at local, national and global levels. In London, the DPU runs postgraduate programmes of study, including a research degree (MPhil/PhD) programme, six one-year Masters Degree courses and specialist short courses in a range of fields addressing urban and rural development policy, planning, management and design.

Overseas, the DPU Training and Advisory Service (TAS) provides training and advisory services to government departments, aid agencies, NGOs and academic institutions. These activities range from short missions to substantial programmes of staff development and institutional capacity building.

The academic staff of the DPU are a multi-disciplinary and multi-national group with extensive and on-going research and professional experience in various fields of urban and international development throughout the world. DPU Associates are a body of professionals who work closely with the Unit both in London and overseas. Every year the student body embraces more than 45 different nationalities.

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MSc Programme in Social Development Practice. The central focus of the course is the relationship between active citizenship and development, with the recognition that diverse identities and aspirations are critical components of social change. This course responds to the increasing focus on well-being and 'people-centred' approaches, evidenced both by the revised policy priorities of many development agencies, and the discourses of grass-roots organizations, which question market led processes of development. At the same time, there is a need to problematize such approaches, given the power relations operating at various scales, from the global to the local, and the social dynamics of rapidly urbanizing societies. These concerns highlight the challenge of recognising and valuing difference in a way that strengthens, rather than fragments, collective action, and ensures universal principles of equity. This course offers the opportunity to engage with the theoretical and practical implications of promoting well-being and citizenship in the context of social diversity, exploring the traditional realm of the social sector as entry point to influence wider contestations of rights and citizenship as manifested in development initiatives.

To find more about the course, please visit our website: <http://www.bartlett.ucl.ac.uk/dpu/programmes/postgraduate/msc-social-development-practice>

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