

# URBAN REGENERATION

*LEARNING FROM THE BRITISH EXPERIENCE*

*EDITED BY SASHA TSENKOVA*



UNIVERSITY OF  
CALGARY

FACULTY OF  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
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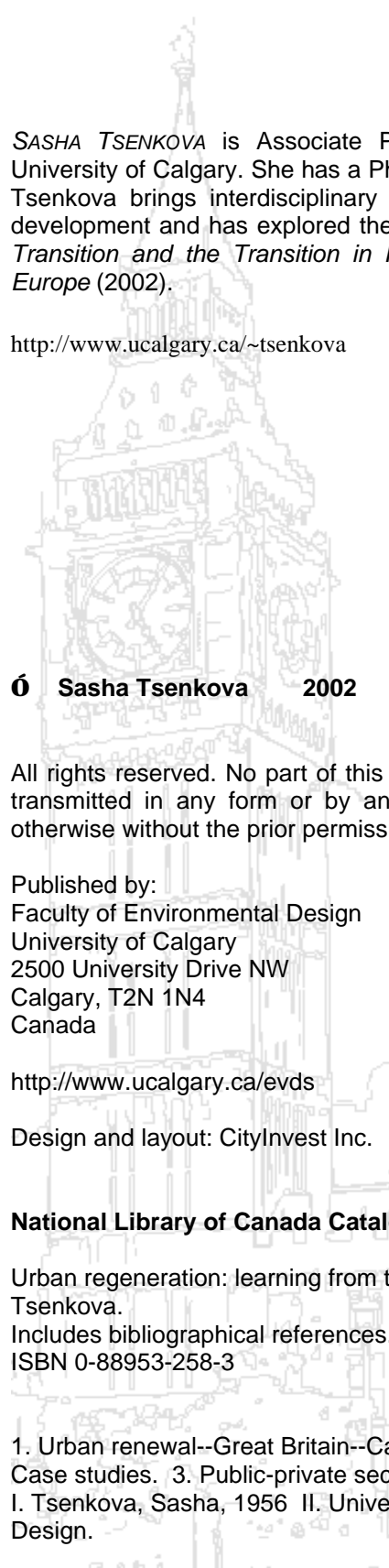
*For my students who made this experience unique*



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Ó **Sasha Tsenkova** 2002

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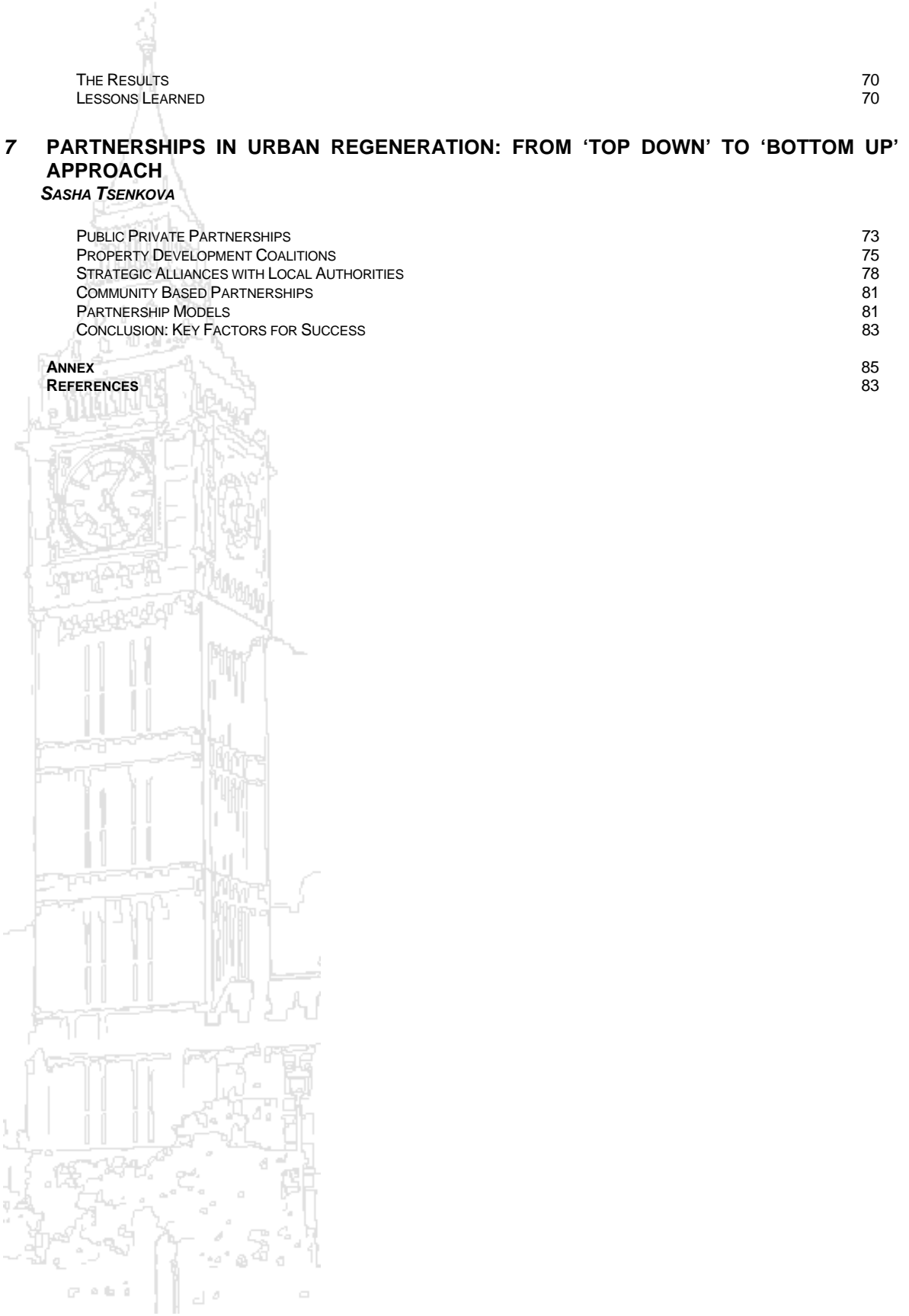
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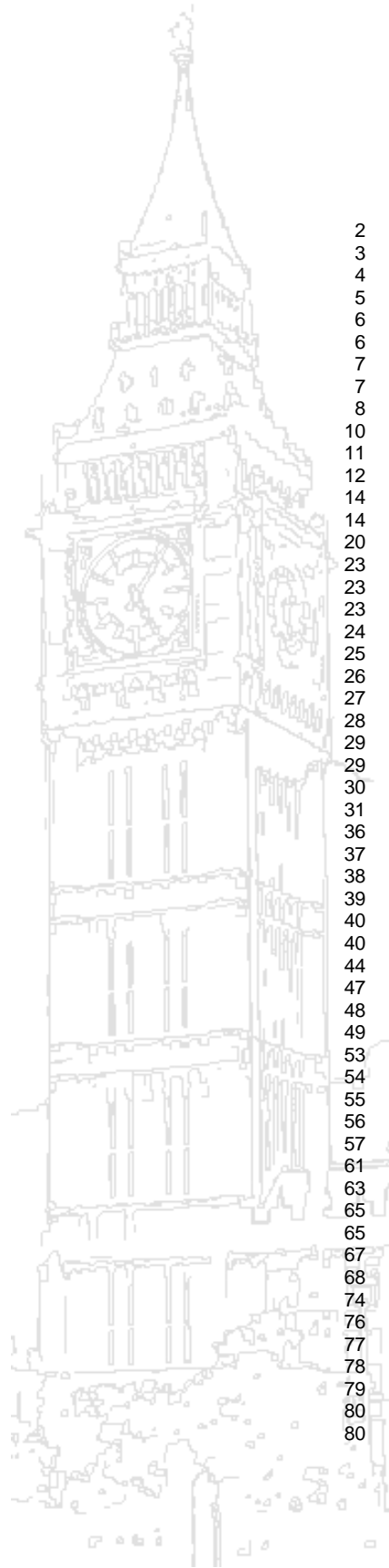
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## ABBREVIATIONS

CMDC – CENTRAL MANCHESTER DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION  
CCF - CITY CHALLENGE FUND  
DETR - DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT, TRANSPORT AND REGIONS  
EAZ - EDUCATION ACTION ZONE  
EP - ENGLISH PARTNERSHIPS  
EZ - ENTERPRISE ZONES  
HAT - HOUSING ACTION TRUSTS  
LDC - LEEDS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION  
LIRB - LEEDS INITIATIVE SINGLE REGENERATION BUDGET  
LDDC - LONDON DOCKLANDS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION  
MEDC - MANCHESTER ENGINEERING DESIGN CONSULTANCY  
NDC - NEW DEAL FOR COMMUNITIES  
PPP - PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP  
RDA - REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES  
SRB - SINGLE REGENERATION BUDGET  
UDC - URBAN DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION  
UDG - URBAN DEVELOPMENT GRANT  
URG - URBAN REGENERATION GRANT  
YOT - YOUTH OFFENDING TEAM

# PREFACE

It might seem a bit odd for graduate students in planning from the University of Calgary to go to England to learn the lessons of British urban regeneration. This is especially true given that the Calgary of today is almost a brand new city having emerged from the construction cranes only within the last twenty-five years. With minor exceptions, urbanization in Canada's metropolitan areas is a post-World War II phenomenon which stands in sharp contrast to the urban history of London and other British cities of the Industrial Revolution. Therefore, what possible relevance could the British experience have for contemporary Canadian cities and for students of Canadian planning? The answer, as illustrated in this body of work, is perhaps more than we would care to admit and certainly more than would appear at a first superficial glance.

The very notion that urban regeneration is not about roads and public sewer and water infrastructure is bit of a wake up call in Canadian urbanism. The idea that urban regeneration is about jobs, investment and access to skills and opportunity is as important a message in Halifax as it is in Calgary as it is in London, Manchester and Leeds, or any city regardless of age. It is in fact these social dimensions of urbanism that are so difficult for the public sector to engage.

The British cases and demonstrations presented in this work are extremely valuable simply because they focus on implementation. Knowing what should be done or agreeing on what we want to do is not an easy process in democratic multiple stakeholder situations. But it pales in comparison with the difficulty of actually making these things happen. Implementation is the critical key to putting plans into action and making goals and ideas real. Finding and documenting examples of successful implementation applicable to other contexts is significant and makes an important contribution to planning education. The case studies included in this work are insightful not because of their geography but because of the strategies, partnerships and institutional mechanisms employed to achieve investment, employment and social equity and successful implementation of planning objectives.

The public-private partnerships emerge as significant in the urban regeneration process but as the case studies demonstrate the key drivers of change are the local businesses that in many instances have been in place for the last 100 years. Another key driver of change that emerges is the importance of how a community functions and the requirements of local residents. The message that 'money is not everything' may seem trite, but the evidence provided in these case studies of successful urban regeneration make it clear that while money is necessary, it is far from sufficient to create the change required.

Perhaps the most important planning lesson to be learned is that it is people, whether in public-private partnerships, public sector leadership roles, private sector involvement and local citizens who are the real key to change. In a North American context of high-tech information management solutions and public works infrastructure, where the car is king, perhaps the idea of urban regeneration being a basically social phenomenon seems anachronistic.

However, given that the current state of Canadian cities has recently been recognized in the editorials of every major Canadian newspaper as being in need of action to prevent further decay; the relevance of urban regeneration is very real. While most of the media discussion has been focused on the need for better government funding to cities, the lessons from the four case studies may go a long way to help broaden the thinking about what kind of urban regeneration is required

and how it might work in a Canadian context. The timing of this work couldn't be better and it adds a much-needed social and organizational dimension to the discourse.

Perhaps, it is worth remembering that the Canadian urban context - our legal and governance systems and land tenure -- is a derivative of the British experience and the traditions of Canadian planning flow from British town and country planning. Perhaps the British experience of urban regeneration has more to offer to Canadian planning and planning education than would first appear.

Dr. Mary-Ellen Tyler

Dean of the Faculty of Environmental Design  
The University of Calgary



## CHAPTER 1

# URBAN REGENERATION: LEARNING FROM THE BRITISH EXPERIENCE

Sasha Tsenkova

### DEFINING REGENERATION

Urban regeneration has been and is one of the most important strategies to address inner city decline and deprivation. Urban deprivation in England in the last forty years has been addressed through economic and planning policies geared to physical and economic renewal and revitalization of local areas. Recognition that successful regeneration should also incorporate social and environmental policies resulted in a shift from urban renewal and revitalization techniques to a comprehensive urban regeneration approach. Couch (1990) summarizes this transition:

*Urban regeneration moves beyond the aims, aspirations, and achievements of urban renewal, which is seen as a process of essentially physical change, urban development (or redevelopment), with its general mission and less well-defined purpose, and urban revitalization (or rehabilitation) which whilst suggests the need for action, fails to specify a precise method of approach (Couch, 1990, p.2).*

The Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) is the institutional anchor for the development and implementation of regeneration policies and programs. It views urban regeneration in terms of practical outputs that contribute to the economic and social restructuring of an urban area.

*Urban Regeneration is about jobs: their creation, protection, quality and skills and the accessibility to various groups within society. It is also about investment: in businesses, in the urban infrastructure of roads, railways, airports, factories, offices, houses, and public utilities, and in facilities like shops, tourist attractions, sports and cultural facilities. Finally, it is about wealth: the generation of profit, of income, of resources, and how these are distributed between rich and poor areas, and groups. It is a highly political discipline: it is about people and power (DETR, 2000).*

Another more inclusive definition of urban regeneration has emerged in the literature. Roberts and Sykes (2000) state that urban regeneration is a comprehensive and integrated vision and action to address urban problems through a lasting improvement in the economic, physical, social and environmental condition of an area. They feel that given its emphasis on partnership and strategic approach, it can perform an enabling role in achieving sustainability. The authors of this report have taken this definition as their point of departure in the subsequent formulation of research objectives and approach to the study.

### OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH

This study focuses on the evolution of urban regeneration and the public-private partnership models that have contributed to its success. It aims at exploring regeneration outcomes in a comparative perspective using evidence from several urban centers in England.

The research is guided by the following objectives:

- To analyze the evolution of the partnership framework and regeneration processes implemented in England since the 1950s;
- To evaluate the results of urban regeneration policies in London, Manchester, Leeds and Brighton with an emphasis on economic, social, environmental, and physical impacts;
- To identify the main elements of a successful public-private partnership model in the context of urban regeneration.

## LEARNING FROM THE BRITISH EXPERIENCE

The methodology for the research combined qualitative and quantitative methods. A literature review was conducted to bring together theoretical concepts and perspectives on urban regeneration and public-private partnerships. The analysis of secondary sources of information on the topic and discussions with experts working in the field of urban regeneration assisted the development of an analytical framework for the research and the selection of conceptually appropriate case studies. The selection process was based upon the following criteria:

- Case studies that would allow the exploration of a diversity of regeneration programs addressing a variety of social, economic, environmental and physical problems;
- Case studies with regeneration results and achievements that were recognized as successful by scholars, public officials, community groups and the business community;
- Case studies where regeneration was delivered through public-private partnership which allowed the results of regeneration efforts to be sustained over time.

In summary, the focus was on successful urban experiences with regeneration programs, where diversity of approaches, sustainability of results and partnerships were the key. The case study approach was selected to illustrate the diversity of results as they relate to urban policy evolution in general, and the shift from welfare planning regimes to market based planning policies. Further, the case studies allowed in-depth exploration of changes in urban regeneration policy and practice and better understanding of local dynamics.

Site visits of selected urban regeneration schemes were conducted during a two-week field study course in England in April-May, 2000. The field work focused on data collection and documentation of results in London, Brighton, Manchester and Leeds (Figure 1.1). In-depth interviews and discussions were carried out with a variety of stakeholders -- leading planning and industry professionals, project directors, developers and government representatives -- participating in urban regeneration schemes. The interviews assisted with the understanding of the urban regeneration

process, the application of public private partnerships, and evaluation of results. Data collected through the fieldwork – interview protocols and videotapes – was analyzed to produce this report and an educational video on urban regeneration processes in England. The Annex contains a sample interview protocol and a list of people interviewed.

**Figure 1.1 United Kingdom: Location of Case Studies.**



Source: Adapted from Lonely Planet website, 2002

An analytical framework has been developed to guide the comparative analysis of urban regeneration in four different cities and to capture the dynamics of a significant diversity of regeneration initiatives and approaches (Tsenkova, 2001a). The analytical approach is presented in Figure 1.2.



ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

CHALLENGES/OPPORTUNITIES

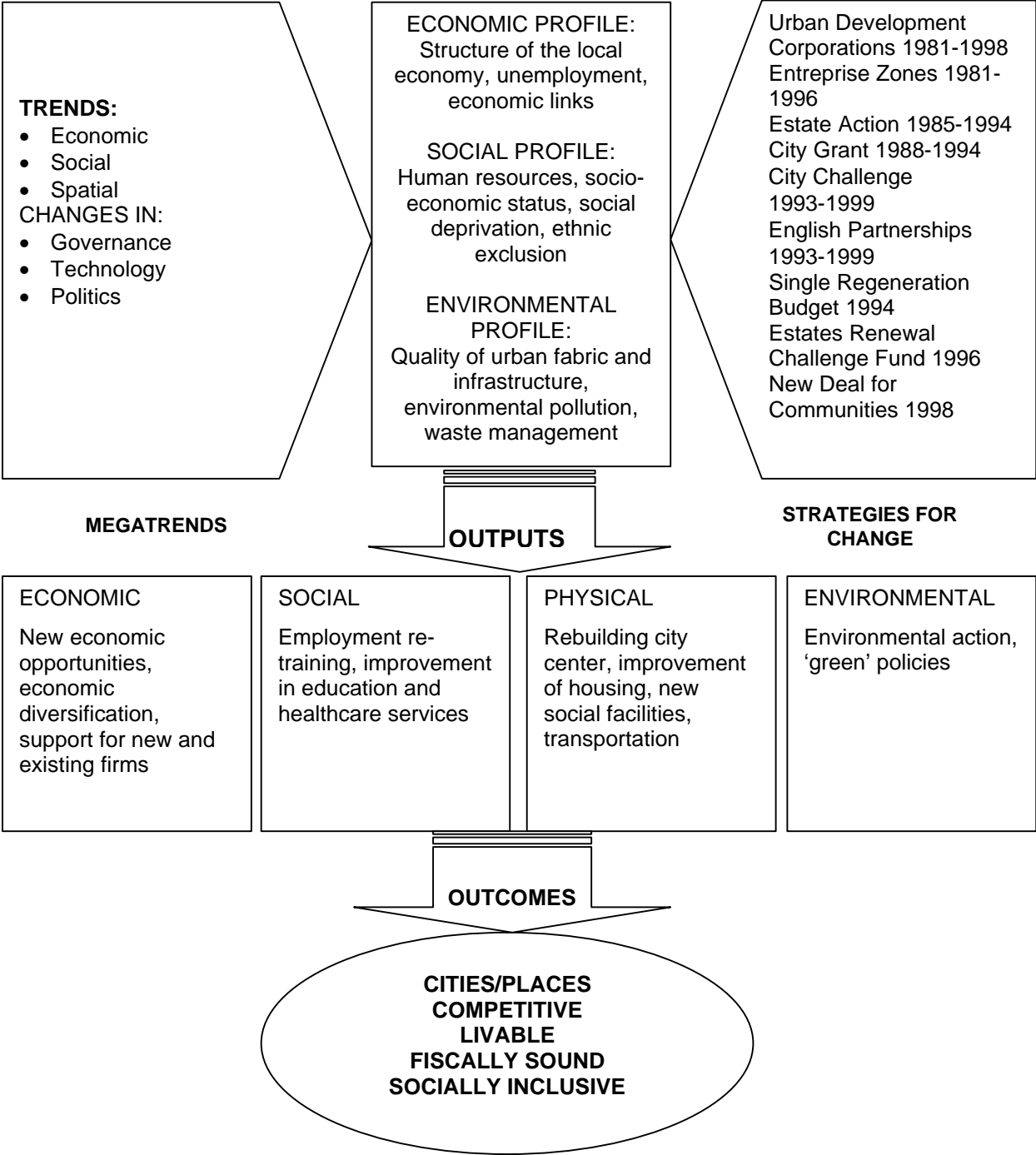


Figure 1.2 The Process of Urban Regeneration. Source: Tsenkova, 2001a

**Megatrends.** Urban regeneration needs to be understood in the context of major shifts in the British economy that are beyond the control of specific localities. These sectoral changes are driven by a rapid decline of manufacturing activity and employment of semi-skilled workers, contrasted by growth in the financial and business services. The result is a 'two-speed economy' with a profound impact over the social and spatial fabric of cities. Rapid economic and social differentiation, coupled with deterioration of the urban fabric in poor communities, accelerates the spiral of urban decline. Correspondingly, the evolution of policies and strategies to respond to these urban problems is associated with changes in political regimes and urban governance.

**Response to Challenges.** The challenges that confront urban regeneration vary from place to place and over time; different places have a set of unique opportunities that translate into different priorities and strategies for change. Despite that diversity, a number of common challenges are likely to appear in most localities, and these common elements remain as the core issues for urban regeneration. Economic restructuring, unemployment, social deprivation and exclusion, as well as problems related to obsolete infrastructure, contaminated land and environmental pollution often define the content of the regeneration process and its operation (see Figure 1.3). Urban regeneration is an interventionist activity incorporating a variety of strategies for change and programs for action.

**Results.** The immediate results of urban regeneration strategies can be grouped in four broader categories – economic, social, physical and environmental. Providing new employment opportunities, improved education and health care services, homes, transportation, and better quality of life in environmentally sound urban areas are the most important outputs that define the success of urban regeneration efforts. In looking for ways to define long-term success, the following appears to be the key -- cities/places become economically competitive, livable, fiscally sound and socially inclusive.



**Figure 1.3** Warehouses at Butler's Wharf, London.  
*Source:* Tsenkova, 2001

### REGENERATION POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

Although urban regeneration in Britain is a well-established facet of urban policies and programs, the nature and content of regeneration practice has changed considerably. The paradigm shift was driven by disillusionment with the bulldozer type of renewal of the 1970s, concerns about the loss of community and the waste of resources. Conservative politicians in the 1980s encouraged private sector involvement, drawing inspiration from the success of public-private partnerships (PPP). Regeneration at that time was mostly about property development, measuring success by the leverage ratio of public to private investment. Utilizing the potential of land and property in the process of economic development, various regeneration initiatives also did benefit from enhanced provision of social and educational services to local areas.

Despite a growing financial commitment on behalf of the central and local government, it became apparent that property-led solutions couldn't be expected to address the range of urban problems. The diversity of regeneration initiatives has been characterized as 'a patchwork quilt' without continuity of policy approach, as one political initiative quickly replaced another (DETR, 1999). Correspondingly, the mid-1990s encouraged innovation and refocusing of efforts on a wider range of economic, social and environmental concerns. Three characteristics can be identified that will be of particular importance in the future practice of urban regeneration: the need for a comprehensive approach that deals with economic and social issues, the provision of a long-term integrated strategic perspective and the adoption of the goals of sustainable development (Roberts & Sykes, 2000).

### DELIVERING RESULTS: HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE CASE STUDIES

Whilst traditionally many forms of intervention in the 1980s were state-led, the desirability of intervening to recycle urban land or to deal with market failure has increasingly become a matter of public-private consensus. This shift to new ways of mobilizing collective effort in the 1990s has encouraged a diversity of responses with a particular emphasis on PPP. Regeneration through English Partnerships (EP), the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) and the New Deal for Communities (NDC) have marked a transition to a more holistic and participatory process. A brief summary of these approaches in the cities under review will illustrate these trends.

**Urban Development Corporations (UDCs).** LDDC was given considerable powers to regenerate the 8.5 square miles of the Docklands in London by bringing land and buildings into effective use (see Figure 1.4). It encouraged the development of existing and new industry and commerce, creating an attractive environment, while ensuring that housing and social facilities are available to encourage people to live and work in the area (Cox, 1995). Similarly to other UDCs operating in major industrial centers (e.g. Leeds, Manchester), it was funded by grants from the central government and the income generated

by the disposal of land for property development.

**Figure 1.4 St. Kathrine's Docks Redeveloped by LDDC, London.**



Source: Tsenkova, 2001

**Enterprise Zones** complemented the actions of UDCs. Delineated as planning free zones, they also offered economic incentives such as a 10-year local tax relief and a 100% capital tax allowance on new commercial and industrial buildings. The EZ of the Isle of Dogs, for example, acted as a catalyst for its transformation. It provided a major boost for the Canary Wharf development, which now stands as a major financial and business district with 13.5 million square feet of office space (LDP, 2000). EZ promoted major infusion of private capital in Salford Quays, Manchester. Originally the epicenter of port and industrial activity, Salford deteriorated rapidly during the 1980s. The UDC transformed the area into a thriving business park, center of culture and entertainment using the economic incentives of the EZ package. Some £30 million were invested in utilities and land reclamation, which leveraged £400 million of private monies (Tsenkova *et al.*, 2001).

**Figure 1.5 Salford Enterprise Zone**



Source: Tsenkova, 2001

**City Challenge.** Launched in 1991, it demonstrated a commitment for a comprehensive approach to regeneration. Funded through the SRB, it encourages synergies between departments and reduced overlap in service delivery and programming efforts. Hulme City Challenge, for example, aims at redevelopment of a significant portion of Manchester incorporating 3,000 dwellings units, improvements to infrastructure and provisions for retail and commercial development (Figure 1.6). Close to £7.5 million annually over five years were invested to assist the transformation in Hulme. A partnership was set up to secure funds for housing, highways and the extension of the metro system. Another £110 million was raised from both the public and private sector to rebuild the entire community (Conway & Konvitz, 2000).

**Figure 1.6 Social Housing in Hulme**



Source: Tsenkova, 2001

**English Partnerships.** This new national force for regeneration was instrumental in broadening the scope and the content of regeneration efforts through PPP. In London,

EP capitalized on the legacy of LDDC and the critical mass of property-led regeneration created over the years. The agency retains similar powers and successfully manages the regeneration of the Royal Docks, Europe's largest development site. The 94 ha of water and 220 ha of land are rapidly transformed into a mix of commercial, retail and housing opportunities with large recreation and convention facilities. Similar objectives, although at a much more moderate scale, are pursued in Manchester. Manchester City Center, devastated by the recent IRA bombing, is reinventing itself to become the cultural, educational, entertainment and financial hub of North Western England. The regeneration initiatives, well under way, draw on a variety of incentives and programs to implement a new vision for the city center based on economic growth and socially responsive regeneration.

**Single Regeneration Budget.** Leeds Initiative Regeneration Board through SRB has delivered significant results. The underlying philosophy of the agency is "people based," which means an explicit emphasis on improvement of the social rather than the physical environment. Contrary to the experience of UDC and EP that focused on the regeneration of former industrial sites in Leeds, the success of the Board is measured by sustainability of results in the area of social advancement and inclusion (DETR, 1998a).

**New Deal for Communities.** Launched in 1998, it targets Britain's most deprived communities through neighbourhood-based regeneration. In Brighton, one of the 17 "pathfinder" areas that pioneered the program, £20 to 50 million pounds for up to ten years will be used to deal with social exclusion through access to jobs, education and health.

### KEY FACTORS FOR SUCCESS

Unlike earlier ad hoc attempts to develop and implement urban regeneration, recent programs and strategies for change have emphasized strategic approaches. A clear vision is fundamental to urban regeneration and is likely to continue to be a hallmark of successful regeneration scheme. However, it also implies the need for strategic long-term resource commitments, which still appears to



be beyond the delivery capabilities of many public and private sector bodies.

**Figure 1.7 Private Residential Investment in London Docklands**



Source: Tsenkova, 2001

Experience has shown that because regeneration is often seen as property development, or creating islands of excellence in design, strategies for change fail to turn visions into successful results. The key to the process is balanced incremental development, where new uses are attracted to the area, new investors and partnerships are established and the risk is carefully managed (Figure 1.7). Public investment in infrastructure needs to be carefully orchestrated to leverage additional flow of capital, to generate investors' confidence and a critical mass of development. The cumulative effect of well-coordinated strategies for change establishes a threshold when private investment starts to flow into the area -- a classic example of how the whole can be greater than the sum of its parts.



**Figure 1.8 Londoners Demanding Funding for Social Programs.** Source: Tsenkova, 2001

Successful regeneration seems to involve a process of balanced incremental development, in which a combination of pilot projects and flagship schemes is used to attract and establish new uses for redundant space. Proactive planning concerned with economic and social, rather than just physical and or environmental development can assist the process (Figure 2.1). Although each city/place is unique, five key factors are instrumental for success:

- Partnerships are the *modus operandi* of urban regeneration and have proved to be a powerful vehicle for accelerating the process of change;
- The public sector has a key role in providing strong leadership, and needs to ensure that positive synergies arise from different strategies and programs;
- Public investment is a catalyst for change, regeneration should provide a ladder of opportunities for private sector involvement and community participation;
- Regenerating people, rather than places, although difficult to achieve, needs to be the primary goal of regeneration initiatives;
- Sustainability of results is the key.

## ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT

This report explores the relationship between the economic, social and political forces shaping urban regeneration and its impact in different cities. It draws on experiences with planning and delivery of regeneration schemes through different forms of public/private partnerships in London, Brighton, Manchester

## LEARNING FROM THE BRITISH EXPERIENCE

and Leeds. The report begins with an outline of the objectives of the research, its approach and analytical framework. Chapter two provides an overview of major regeneration policies, programs, and initiatives. The third chapter focuses on urban regeneration efforts in London with an explicit emphasis on results achieved in the London Docklands. The following three chapters explore recent regeneration programs in Manchester, Leeds and Brighton. The final chapter summarizes the most important findings and highlights the importance of public/private partnerships to achieve successful and sustainable results.

### THE TEAM

Professor Tsenkova collaborated with several students on the urban regeneration project. Carol-Ann Beswick, Gordon Dickson, Hugo Haley, Jason Ness and Karen Rendek joined their efforts to provide an overview of regeneration initiatives in the four cities under review.

Professor Tsenkova has the overall responsibility for the development of the analytical framework, the choice of conceptually appropriate case studies, as well

as for the organization of the research and the editing of the report.

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**Figure 1.9 The Team in Brighton**



**Additional information on urban regeneration is available at:**

[http://www.ucalgary.ca/UofC/faculties/EV/designresearch/projects/Urban\\_Regeneration/index.html](http://www.ucalgary.ca/UofC/faculties/EV/designresearch/projects/Urban_Regeneration/index.html)