

Evidence for Just Fair Report

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The ICESCR Article 11.1 is relevant to my area of research, particularly with regards the “right to an adequate standard of living” in relation to housing, and that there should be “continuous improvement of living conditions” (ICESCR, 1966, p.4).

Within my research I am investigating the influence economically and politically powerful individuals have on processes of urban development within London. Within these processes of urban development an example of where ECSR are not being met is in relation to the demolition and re-development of public housing estates. These re-developments have resulted in the short- and long-term displacement of thousands of families (Elmer and Denning, 2016, p.272), wide ranging negative social and economic impacts on those who have been affected (Watt, 2021), and often an overall reduction in social and affordable housing (Lees, 2014, p.153). A pertinent example of this is the re-development of the Heygate estate in London, where 1,212 council houses were demolished, to accommodate for the development of 2,535 new homes, only 79 of which were designated for social housing (Lees, 2014, p.153).

These processes of urban development within London appear to be primarily focused on attracting further national and international investment into the city, through the re-development of prime inner-city locations, which then enables the construction of high-end housing that can be sold at prices that are largely unaffordable to the wider population (Tunstall and Lupton, 2010; Power, 2008). Therefore, these processes of urban development are often not prioritising the unemployed, those on low-incomes, or even those on middle-incomes. Hence, this is resulting in living conditions being negatively impacted, with individuals and families being displaced, communities being torn apart, and with many households not being able to return to the area where they previously lived (Watt, 2021; Lees, 2014).

This type of urban development, however, does not correlate with aspects of urban planning set out in official planning documents, which discuss the importance of meeting the housing needs of those who are currently living and working within the city (GOVUK, 2019, p.17). Thus, this demonstrates the influence of those that are economically and politically powerful within processes of urban development in London. In particular, their ability to prioritise housing developments that attract investment into the city, over providing and protecting adequate and secure housing for the wider population, especially for those who are most vulnerable (Glucksberg, 2016, pp.238-239; Elmer and Denning, 2016, p.274; Atkinson, 2020).

References

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