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052161970X - Landlords and Property: Social Relations in the Private Rented Sector

John Allen and Linda McDowell

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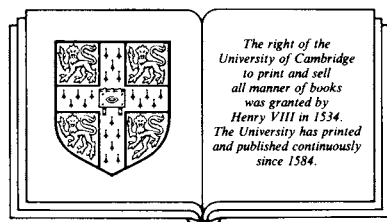
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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Contents

<i>List of figures and tables</i>	page vi
<i>Preface</i>	ix
1 Introduction	1
2 Private landlords: the anatomy of uneven decline	12
3 The structure of private landlordism	40
4 Research design and methods	59
5 Landlords in profile: an intensive survey	74
6 Landlords in the inner city: an extensive survey	110
7 Political ideologies and private rental policies	160
<i>Policy postscript</i>	184
<i>Appendix 1: Selecting the landlord sample from housing waiting list records</i>	189
<i>Appendix 2: Who was rehoused?</i>	194
<i>References</i>	198
<i>Index</i>	203

Cambridge University Press

052161970X - Landlords and Property: Social Relations in the Private Rented Sector

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Figures and tables*

FIGURES

2.1	The rate of decline of the private rented sector in the post-war period	<i>page</i> 16
2.2	The percentage of households who in 1981 were renting privately in each of the 403 districts of England and Wales	17
2.3	Regional rates of return in the private rented sector, 1981	37
4.1a	The tenure distribution of the housing stock in Greater London, 1981: households in owner-occupation	63
4.1b	The tenure distribution of the housing stock in Greater London, 1981: households renting from the local authority	64
4.1c	The tenure distribution of the housing stock in Greater London, 1981: households renting from private landlords	65
6.1	Location of the Boroughs of Islington and Hackney	111
6.2	Housing conditions in Hackney and Islington in 1981	112
6.3	Indicator of municipal response to poor housing conditions	113
6.4	The decline of the private rented sector in Hackney and Islington, 1971–81	115
6.5	Household types in Hackney, Islington and Greater London, 1977	116
6.6	Household size in Hackney, Islington and Greater London	117
6.7	Percentage of the population born outside the UK (heads of households), Hackney	120
6.8	Percentage of the population born outside the UK (heads of households), Islington	121
6.9	Socio-economic structure of Hackney, Islington and Greater London	122
6.10	Hackney Housing Tenure, 1981	127
6.11	Islington Housing Tenure, 1981	128

TABLES

2.1	Major post-war housing legislation affecting the private rented sector	15
2.2	Decline of the private rented sector, 1938–77	18
2.3	Regional variations in the selling price of second-hand dwellings and average incomes of mortgage borrowers during the 1970s	21
2.4	Improvement grants for housing associations in England and Wales 1967–77	22
2.5	Region and privately renting sub-sectors	32
2.6	Local studies of the motives and intentions of private landlords in the post-war period	35

Cambridge University Press

052161970X - Landlords and Property: Social Relations in the Private Rented Sector

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

viii

Figures and tables

4.1	Ownership structure of private lettings in Greater London, 1963, 1976 and 1977	66
4.2	Ownership structure of private lettings in Hackney, Islington and Greater London 1977	67
4.3	Private landlords in Hackney and Islington	68
4.4	The six-fold classification of landlords in Hackney and Islington	69
4.5	Intensive and extensive research: a summary	71
6.1	Dwelling types in Hackney and Islington, 1977	123
6.2	Estimated capital values of dwellings and rent as a percentage of capital value as at 1 January 1981	124
6.3	Landlords' reactions to vacancies in their dwellings	130
6.4	The strategies of informal landlords	132
6.5	Household structure of previous and new tenants of informal landlords in Hackney and Islington, 1977–81	133
6.6	The strategies of investor landlords	138
6.7	Household structure of previous and current tenants of investor landlords in Hackney and Islington, 1977–81	139
6.8	Who replaced whom?	143
6.9	Decreasing densities of occupation	143
6.10	Low income owner-occupation	144
6.11	The strategies of commercial landlords	148
6.12	Household structure of previous and current tenants of commercial landlords in Hackney and Islington, 1977–81	151
6.13	Who replaced whom?	155
6.14	Decreasing densities of occupation	155
6.15	The process of gentrification	155
A1	Housing points schemes in 1980	190
A2	Lettings by the London Boroughs of Hackney and Islington, 1978 and 1979	192
A3	Rehoused households in Hackney and Islington	195

Cambridge University Press

052161970X - Landlords and Property: Social Relations in the Private Rented Sector

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Preface

The private rented sector of the housing market, for all its overall decline, has remained an object of interest and fascination to researchers in a wide range of disciplines. Each, from their own perspective, have attempted to describe and explain the key attributes of this decline. What we hope we have done here is to provide a new perspective, a different way of looking at the changes that have taken place in this sector of the market since 1945. The arguments in this book cross established disciplinary boundaries. We draw upon evidence from many areas but if we are to be classified at all we fall into what may be termed the ‘new geography’ with its concern to link the particular to the general; that is to preserve both aspects of social change in one explanation. We attempt to explain the general decline of the private rented market in Britain, the wider processes of investment and disinvestment which lie behind the decline, without losing sight of particular form that the processes have taken in different local housing markets.

This book is the end product of an enjoyable research collaboration between the two authors over a six year period at the Open University. The collaboration was made possible by grants, at various times, from the Social Science Research Council, The Nuffield Foundation and the Research Committee of the Social Science Faculty at the Open University. We are grateful to all these bodies for their financial support. We should also like to thank our colleagues at the Open University, especially those involved in writing the geography course D205: *Changing Britain, Changing World*. Arguments and debates in that course team helped us clarify many of the issues raised in this book.

We derived our information from a wide range of sources. In particular we had help in selecting the samples from the Housing Departments of the London Boroughs of Hackney and Islington. We are very grateful to them for opening their records to us. We also received information from a wide range of organisations and individuals, too numerous to list, involved in private renting in one way or another. Thanks to them but in particular to the households and tenants who so patiently answered our questions. We hope they find what follows interesting.