Living through Change in Challenging Places: Stage 1 Report

July 2009

CRESR

Centre for Regional Economic
and Social Research

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CRESR Research Team

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Acknowledgements

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1.1   Introduction

The purpose of this research project, *Living through Change in Challenging Places,* is to examine, through a mix of research methods, the changing circumstances and experiences of households living in six relatively deprived neighbourhoods across Britain. The research is being carried out over three years and seeks to develop an integrated understanding of:

- how the experience of households living on low incomes in Britain varies according to space and time

- the salience of 'place' in the perceptions, actions and decisions made by different types of household, in different contexts

- comparisons and contrasts in the experiences of households in deprived neighbourhoods with divergent geographical, social and economic characteristics

- the implications of households' experiences and perceptions for the *assumptions* behind policies designed to tackle poverty at both the household and neighbourhood level.

This report concentrates on the first three aims, although the fourth aim is also addressed briefly in the Conclusion. This report is a conclusive account of the first stage of the research and is largely based on material from interviews undertaken in 2008 in each of the six case study neighbourhoods. In the second stage of the research, follow-up interviews have been undertaken with around two-thirds of the original respondents in each area. A third round of interviews will be undertaken in 2010.

This research project seeks to explore the interaction between 'poverty' and 'place' by focusing on how poverty is *experienced* and what prompts subsequent action and behaviour, in different geographical settings, and over a specific period of time. It seeks to draw on analysis and insights from two distinct analytical traditions and academic disciplines. Some of the established 'poverty literature' in the social policy tradition has focused, like this research, on qualitative interviews with and biographical accounts of people living on low incomes, but the focus has often been relatively *aspatial.* The impact of the neighbourhood, town or city on individual experiences tends to recede into the background compared to the focus placed on the role of family, home, school, workplace or social networks.

On the other hand, the 'urban studies' literature often contains a wealth of primary and secondary research on the characteristics of area-based deprivation, but these studies often fail to bring alive how this influences personal experiences of living in particular neighbourhoods, how it affects behaviour, social relationships, aspiration and ambition and how these might change over time. Some of the potential *diversity* of responses by households living in different kinds of socially and economically disadvantaged neighbourhoods has therefore tended to be neglected.

Recently, there has also been a shift from cross-sectional accounts of poverty to a more dynamic perspective, in which the duration of poverty spells has become a focus for analysis (Walker and Leisering, 1998; Alcock, 2004). While Rowntree's own contribution to a dynamic approach to poverty was made over a hundred years ago through his account of the 'poverty lifecycle', relatively little is known about the experience of disadvantage over time. The contribution of biographical and life course approaches in analysing poverty is at best embryonic (see Kothari and Hulme, 2004). This project seeks to add to our understanding of these processes, by undertaking an iterative study of a sample of households across the country and examining not just changing household circumstances but the ongoing interaction between households and the neighbourhoods they live in as well.

The increasing focus in research on the *dynamics* of poverty and disadvantage partly reflects the growing availability of longitudinal data sets in order to explore ideas of durations, spells, entries to and exits from poverty, low income and benefit receipt. This emphasis on the dynamics of poverty changes not only how poverty comes to be viewed and experienced, but also what kinds of policy responses might be developed (Ellwood, 1998). The contrast is drawn between poverty and disadvantage being understood as affecting a significant minority, over extended periods of time, or as affecting a larger number over much shorter spells (Smith and Middleton, 2007). The point scarcely needs to be laboured in the midst of the current economic recession that the financial position of many households can change dramatically over time, often as a result of unexpected fluctuations in macro-economic trends. Poverty is closer to a much larger proportion of the population than any snapshot count would indicate.

The research reported here seeks to complement those longitudinal accounts based on analysis of panel survey data of various kinds. It focuses on how those living in relatively deprived neighbourhoods make sense of changes their own circumstances, including their relationship with their immediate locality. It acknowledges their role as *active agents* seeking (within very obvious constraints) to act on, accept or change their circumstances over a specific period of time. This includes their propensity to stay in or leave their neighbourhood, and their reasons for this. The research approach has been designed to let respondents' *own accounts* of life in their neighbourhoods come to the fore. It seeks to examine '*a world comprised of meanings, interpretations, feelings, talk and interaction that must be scrutinised on its own terms*' (Gubrium and Holstein, 1997; 13). The nature of the qualitative research interview is one of constant negotiation between the respondent and the researcher, where the interviewer inevitably imposes some shape and structure on the encounter. But an attempt has been made to allow the accounts of respondents' personal circumstances and the extent of their attachment to, or disengagement with, their neighbourhood to emerge without trying to force these accounts into any pre-ordained analytical framework.

To set the context for this report, which is largely based on respondents' own accounts, we need first to unravel three research questions a little more:

- How do we account for how 'place' might impact on the experiences of households living on low incomes? What characteristics of place might emerge as important here? What variation should be sought in selecting different neighbourhoods for the research?

- How far can qualitative research go beyond surface attributes and reach into the underlying predispositions and motivations of its respondents? How have different analytical approaches sought to understand the perceptions and priorities of households living on low incomes?

- How do processes of neighbourhood attachment (whether strong or mild), manifest themselves in terms of intentions and actions over residential mobility? And what does this say in terms of the rather contradictory policy messages often directed to those living in relatively deprived areas: to *stay put*, to (re)build community and cohesion, or to *move out*, to shake off the detrimental shackles of place on economic ambition and opportunity?

These three issues are considered in turn below.

1.2 Place Effects on Poverty

In recent years there has been a resurgence of interest and a proliferation of studies exploring the place effects on individual experiences, attitudes and well-being. Much of this activity has taken advantage of developments in data collection and analysis and the availability of small area/neighbourhood statistics to apply quantitative methods to the analysis of place effects. In the UK, considerable effort has been put into identifying and charting the spatial distribution of poverty and disadvantage and the extent to which poverty is concentrated in some areas, and at some scales, rather than others (Fieldhouse and Tye 1996, Berthoud 2001, McCulloch 2001). Other studies have traced the trajectories of people living in poor neighbourhoods (Kearns and Parkes, 2003) and analysed the trajectories of change in different locality types (Beatty *et al*, 2008).

Research has also examined the characteristics, institutions and policies of areas which promote 'capability' and 'resilience' amongst their populations, despite apparent adversity (for example Bartley, 2006). We return to these notions later in our analysis, in Chapter 6. These debates have been important in informing policy discussions around the justification for area-based resource targeting, but the causal pathways through which place might inform experiences of poverty have remained largely uncharted. Some recent studies have used qualitative methods to explore individual experiences, behaviours and trajectories (Lupton and Power, 2005; Lupton, 2003; Power and Willmot, 2005). These have tended to reveal the sheer complexity and variation in outcomes in similarly deprived areas, and the impact of place on experiences of poverty remains elusive.

In the USA, this question has become something of a *cause célèbre* among urban researchers, especially since interest was ignited by claims that concentrated area poverty promoted 'underclass' behaviours (Wilson, 1987). Among the studies that were subsequently undertaken to examine the 'underclass' dynamic, and to chart place effects, most applied quantitative methods and statistical modelling. The focus was on the aggregated attributes of individuals - for example, as measured in censuses - and assumptions were made about potential place effects from population characteristics. Some studies have gone further, to consider whether observable differences between places might reflect aspects not captured through population characteristics alone, such as the wider social or institutional context (see, for example, Galster, 2003). The tendency, however, has been to treat population characteristics (who lives there) and contextual features of the physical and social environment (what is there) as competing explanations. Most of these studies have arrived at similar conclusions: where you live matters, but not nearly as much as the personal characteristics of the individuals themselves (Friedrichs *et al*, 2003).

There are some interesting parallels between these approaches in urban research and work exploring if, and how, places matter for variations in health status variation and the distribution of health inequalities. Similar quantitative methods have been applied, and place effects inferred from aggregated population characteristics, so that 'places' and 'people' have been constructed as mutually exclusive and

competing explanations. The result in many of these studies has been broadly the same as in research on neighbourhood deprivation: that where you live has an effect on your health status, but not as much as who you are (Pickett and Pearl, 2001).

Macintyre *et al* (2002) have provided a detailed critique of this approach, which has an important bearing on our own research study. They criticise the treatment of 'people' and 'place' as mutually exclusive competing explanations for health outcomes, for three key reasons: it is conceptually opaque; it inadvertently controls for, or overlooks, variables that might *mediate* causal pathways between place and health; and it therefore serves to undermine efforts to explain the mechanisms through which area of residence and health might be related. For these reasons, empirical evidence on what specific aspects of place matter for which health outcomes inevitably remains weak. In response, while recognising that existing empirical research has played an important role in putting 'place' back on the agenda for understanding how inequalities are created and maintained, Cummins *et al* (2007) argue for the need to move beyond existing conceptualisations. In particular, they emphasise the importance of recognising the *relational* nature of different dimensions of place.

Place is not space. It is not just an inert 'setting' or 'backdrop' to social life, and it is more than a cluster of variables. Place is a geographic location, which has a material form. It constitutes and contains social relations and physical resources and is invested with meaning and value (Gieryn, 2000; Cummins *et al*, 2007). In recognising the importance of these multiple dimensions of place for human well-being, Macintyre (1997) has put forward three types of explanation for geographical variations in health:

- *compositional* explanations, that draw attention to the characteristics of individuals living in particular places

- *contextual* explanations, that draw attention to opportunity structures in the local physical and social environment

- *collective* explanations, that draw attention to socio-cultural and historical features of communities.

These different modes of explanation may be applied to examine the relationship between neighbourhoods and variations in the incidence and experiences of other outcomes relevant to individual and area deprivation. In the literature on poverty and place, most attention has been devoted to 'compositional' explanations. Fewer studies have attempted to capture contextual explanations, looking at the impact of different social, locational and economic factors on opportunities for residents. Even less attention has been given to collective explanations, the 'collective memory' of the neighbourhood and the course of local social and cultural change - not least because such factors are not possible to unravel effectively through the dominant paradigm of quantitative research methodology. Of course, as Cummins *et al* (2007) acknowledge, these are not mutually exclusive. Individual experience, opportunity structures and collective memory inform and impact on each other through a host of processes and interactions. The challenge for research is to recognise and seek to comprehend this complex connectivity between people and places. We reflect further on the relationship between our research material and this triad of explanations in the Conclusion.

To approach this question, a broader methodological span is needed than is often the case in studies of poverty and place. Large scale quantitative analysis has often dominated, relying on closed questions on a standard questionnaire to cast light on the geography of poverty, and the associations between population characteristics and the incidence of poverty. Various studies have also explored the possibility of

'neighbourhood effects' on outcomes for households (Forrest and Kearns, 2001; Friedrichs *et al*, 2003) – whether living in a poor neighbourhood makes you poorer than you would otherwise be – although the messages and policy lessons from this research are contested territory (Cheshire, 2007). Specific studies of local experiences of poverty have also examined perceptions of neighbourhood change, residential mobility, access to and use of services, and the extent of cohesion or social capital among residents.

These studies have sometimes struggled to explain nuance or inflection in individuals' experiences and perceptions of place and what this means for them living on a low income. They have also found it difficult to develop conceptual models about to explain how living in particular types of neighbourhood might inform experiences of poverty. The qualitative methods in this research therefore seeks to understand more thoroughly the experiences and perceptions of people in low income households in six areas, as they move through different places and contexts over the course of a day, week, month or year and are in consequence exposed to, and react to, a range of different environments.

Rather than adopting a perspective in which 'neighbourhood effects' are in one corner, as it were, and 'personal attributes' in another, the research seeks to explore how members of low income households are affected by 'place', and by others' perceptions of their neighbourhood, and how in turn they 'use' place, what it means for them and how important it is in their daily life and in affecting their wider outlook. The study therefore attempts to explore the *reciprocal relationship* between 'people' and 'place', and how that might vary, both *within* a specific neighbourhood, and also *across* six deprived neighbourhoods with different social and locational characteristics.

1.3 Residential Mobility, Opportunity and Neighbourhood Change

The issue of residential mobility – previous histories, current plans, future intentions - perhaps expresses most directly the reciprocal relationship between individual dispositions and actions and the opportunities and constraints of different kinds of neighbourhood over time. What causes some people to leave their neighbourhood and others to stay put? What balance of opportunities and constraints is at play in these decisions? Or is such a calculus about the relative merits of moving or staying even seen in such terms by those living in these relatively deprived neighbourhoods? And what are the policy assumptions here? These processes are often expressed in terms of the distribution of economic opportunities and the relative constraints on, and incentives for, mobility among households on low incomes. This topic has been given considerable priority in recent policy discourses, for example, about the extent to which security of tenure in council housing might inhibit residential mobility, notably among workless households (Chartered Institute of Housing, 2008; Leunig, 2009).

In the development of welfare reform policies, the negative impact of poorer neighbourhoods on personal employment outcomes features strongly. The policy assumption lends support to a view that mobility out of poorer neighbourhoods is a potential escape route, and that households would therefore benefit from inducements to leave their own communities to strengthen their economic position elsewhere. But how is this seen from within? Do the same relative judgements prevail among those who live in these areas? Is mobility even seen as an option in the first place? Does this vary depending on the characteristics of the neighbourhood in question, or the severity of the economic hardship or the extent of social connectedness or isolation that is experienced? (For further discussion of this issue, see Crisp *et al*, 2009).

Understanding the drivers behind residential mobility (and immobility) also carries implications for area-based policies as well. One of the consequences in improving the quality of life for residents in deprived neighbourhoods is that the more affluent, healthier and better qualified move on to pastures new, while those 'new' households who move in may have characteristics closer to those residents who have remained. The result of this 'moving escalator' will be that, while some indicators of neighbourhood quality (property condition, better public realm, satisfaction with the area etc) may improve, the personal outcome measures for households may show little sign of improvement, because the internal composition of the area has itself changed little over time. This is one of the main findings that has emerged from the ongoing national evaluation of the New Deal for Communities (NDC) programme, for example (Cole *et al*, 2007).

The relationship between individual and household circumstances, area deprivation and mobility is *contingent,* rather than pre-determined. Tendencies and associations can be identified according to attributes such as age, household type, ethnicity, education and so on. It is more difficult to probe whether living on a low income has an independent effect on the *motivations* to move, and whether these intentions are then translated into actions. Studies of the different 'triggers' to mobility have tended to follow a 'rational actor' model, based on the materialist, resource-maximising paradigm of neo-classical economics, and again government policy, most recently in welfare reform proposals, has tended to pay homage to this perspective. It is more challenging to address how alternative calculations about the merits of moving or staying put can be assessed, based on the role of social networks, cultural assumptions and pressures, patterns of mutual support and so on (Hickman *et al*, 2007).

It is especially challenging, in research terms, to consider whether such decisions (to move or not to move) even enter the minds of individuals because they feel there is no case to answer, as it were. It might be deemed 'normal' or 'natural' to stay put and therefore not a subject for constant, for indeed even sporadic, interrogation. This raises the possibility that the 'rational actors' framed in policy assumptions are strangers to those very individuals who are being expected to respond in a particular way to a constantly changing mixture of threats or inducements.

This research project therefore seeks to make a contribution to such issues by seeing how far attachment to place and willingness or aspiration to move might vary according to neighbourhood context. Is the link between 'getting on' and 'getting out' made by some households, and if so under what circumstances? Is this more prevalent in some types of neighbourhood than others? And, if so, why? The qualitative approach of this study provides an opportunity to delve into predispositions and motivations, including the salience given to mobility in the first place, rather more effectively than a standard question included with a host of others characteristic of many social or household panel surveys.

1.4 Agency, Commitment and Motivation

To summarise a rather more complex process, modes of analysis of 'poverty' in social policy have reflected wider shifts in the discipline, by moving away from prescriptive, top-down and needs-based accounts towards more open-ended, bottom-up and agent-centred accounts. The shift to agency has helped to move away from external designations of 'the poor' as a discrete group, and marked by undifferentiated passivity in the face of multiple forces beyond their control. However, by giving a sense of 'agency' to those facing poverty, or living in deprived areas, there is a concomitant risk that this will produce an unduly voluntaristic approach, in which real and immediate constraints of factors such as ethnicity, class, gender are neglected (Deacon and Mann, 1999). Constraints do not just inhere in observable

attributes and characteristics, but in social processes as well. An example is Lister's (2004) reference to 'othering', a process that denies respect and recognition, as well as resources, to the poor. Hoggett (2001) has also pointed to how the construction of policy measures in itself may compound the sense of shame or stigma among service users. He refers to them being involved in '*complex negotiations about commitment and motivation'* with service providers, as they struggle to conform to an individualist agenda of 'responsibilisation' and choice.

Even if one acknowledges that the capacity to 'act' will vary by personal circumstances, social contexts and economic opportunity, the question remains: what *kind* of agency is being assumed here? What motivates action and behaviour and how might this differ, if at all, from one relatively deprived neighbourhood to another? In a recent overview, Taylor-Gooby (2008) presents what he terms a 'simplified spectrum of agency', between the rational actor goal-oriented approach stemming from neo-classical economics and more sociological perspectives which place greater emphasis on shared norms and values, social trust, reciprocity and cultural and social tradition. He notes the need to explore:

> *the extent to which the behaviour of service users may contradict the expectations of policy makers because embedded social values conflict with the interest generated by the incentives that policy manipulates. (p 271)*

We were interested in exploring this potential 'gap' in this research. The project provides an opportunity to describe the values, priorities and lifestyles of households living in relatively deprived neighbourhoods (of quite different kinds), as expressed in interview, through diaries, photographs and other visual representations. Their views are not necessarily the product of self-conscious deliberation about alternative moral paradigms or an exposition of behaving as reflexive social actors: it is, more prosaically, about what seems the 'right thing to do' in certain situations, about 'what matters' or what is 'normal' or 'natural' and therefore beyond debate or dispute. We can then consider how these predispositions and perspectives sit within the web of assumptions that underlie policies such as welfare reform, family intervention and support, or 'choice-centred' housing measures, as they often hinge on variants of the 'rational actor' paradigm.

1.5   The Focus of the Report

Bringing together the above themes and questions, this report therefore explores:

- how 'neighbourhood' mediates people's experiences of living on a low income, both in terms of the opportunities and constraints it offers, but also how the neighbourhood is 'experienced' on a day-to-day basis and the extent to which the neighbourhood is central or more peripheral to people's social, economic and cultural lives

- how neighbourhood experiences are affected by the relative proximity of the area to more affluent neighbourhoods nearby, whether this compounds any sense of social or economic differentiation and thereby how one's own neighbourhood is perceived

- how experiences and perceptions of living in relatively deprived areas are affected by the stage in the life cycle, personal and household characteristics and relative feelings of disadvantage and stigmatisation

- the different 'logics' used by households in different neighbourhood contexts to explain their mobility aspirations, intentions and actual decisions and how these change over time

- whether living on a low income in more socially and economically mixed areas reinforces or reduces any sense of household stigma, and whether it fosters or mitigates social divisions at the neighbourhood level

- what aspects of living in or on the margins of poverty seem to be most affected by neighbourhood context and which seem by contrast relatively impervious to context and to transcend 'locality'.

This report concentrates on how the neighbourhood permeates the predispositions, actions and aspirations of residents and how their family and social networks are bounded by, or extend beyond, the neighbourhood level. This report foregrounds 'place'. In subsequent reports from this project, the research team will interrogate more directly how other shapers of personal identity (employment status, class, ethnicity, gender) affect how households and individuals 'get by' in the face of financial or social difficulties and the extent to which these are reactive deflections of threats and risks, or more positive 'adaptations' to material or social circumstances;

The mixed research methodology for the project, the rationale for the selection of case studies and an overview of the six areas are presented in the next chapter. Chapter 3 considers the questions of connectivity in two of the case study neighbourhoods, in terms of different degrees of proximity to more affluent communities. Chapter 4 compares attitudes to place and social networks in one relatively homogenous and one more ethnically diverse neighbourhood. Questions of residential mobility and access to economic opportunity are considered in the final two case study neighbourhoods in Chapter 5. Chapter 6 explores the enduring importance of family networks for sociability, care and support, and the more place-specific attributes of social networks and local social interaction.

2. Research Approach and Case Studies

2.1 The Research Focus

The distinctive characteristics of this programme of research on the dynamics of poverty and place are that:

- it is based on large-scale predominantly qualitative research in six locations
- its geographical focus is primarily at the neighbourhood level and it covers areas in England, Scotland and Wales
- it involves the use of audio-visual techniques as a core component of the project
- it is undertaken over a three year period, with interviews undertaken on an iterative basis with some respondents every twelve months, and
- members of the case study communities are involved in aspects of research design, feedback and dissemination.

The research is not an evaluation of a specific policy measure, although it elicits messages for policy development by the very fact of examining the circumstances of households on low incomes living in relatively deprived neighbourhoods, talking about: their lives and their priorities; what pressures they encounter and how they deal with them; their jobs and family responsibilities; their social relationships; how they engage with service agencies; and how and whether they use neighbourhood facilities and amenities. Nor is it an analysis of a particular aspect or dimension of poverty. Indeed, it is not a study of 'the poor' – a process which by defining the topic in such a way can contribute to the very process of 'othering' by implicitly emphasising the potential differences in behaviour or outlook between this group and the 'rest of us' (Flaherty, 2008).

The initial research focus was, therefore, based on area selection – on identifying a few relatively deprived neighbourhoods according to widely accepted social and economic indices - not household selection.   At the outset, respondents were asked various brief questions about their household, age, ethnicity and length of residence, in order to ensure some spread of these characteristics in the eventual sample: but they were not selected according to whether they fell beneath any predetermined household income thresholds. They qualified as potential respondents by dint of living in the case study area, not because they possessed a particular attribute. As shown later, in one area (West Kensington) a small minority of respondents were relatively affluent, and the severity of household poverty varied between areas, though all six were relatively deprived according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation. The characteristics of the places, not the residents living in them, were sifted in order to select the case studies for the research.

The six case studies were selected as three 'paired opposites' according to underpinning themes designed to shape and structure the preliminary analysis. Three basic criteria were used to select the neighbourhoods:

i) *Geographical spread.* Four of the case studies are based in England, one in Scotland and one in Wales. Of the four English case studies, two were within New Deal for Communities areas, which allowed links to be made between this qualitative

analysis and the more quantitative tracking of change through longitudinal surveys being undertaken as part of the national evaluation of the NDC programme (Beatty *et al*, 2008).

ii) *Thematic links.* Three key analytical and policy-related themes framed the analysis at the primary research stage: poverty, place and diversity; poverty, cohesion and connectivity; poverty and mobility. Two case studies were selected to represent contrasting facets of each theme, to explore how the different experiences of households might vary according to neighbourhood context and to identify common features that seem to transcend neighbourhood differences.

iii) *Impact of special policies and initiatives.* The case studies included some neighbourhoods that were currently undergoing, or had been the recent focus of, regeneration programmes and others which were, in relative terms, more 'policy-off'. This enables a comparison of how attempts to improve neighbourhoods through specific policy measures can affect the perceptions and aspirations of the assumed beneficiaries of these interventions.

2.2   The Use of Qualitative and Dynamic Approaches

The research rationale outlined in the previous chapter suggested that it was important to complement the prevailing methodological preoccupation with quantitative analysis on attributes of those living in deprived areas with a concern with understanding the *experiences and voices* of the households resident there (Bennett with Roberts 2004). As Alcock puts it:

> *If our concern is to explore social dynamics, and in particular the decisions and actions which have shaped people's lives, we need to address questions of experience, attitude and motivation, which cannot be captured in quantitative surveys. (Alcock, 2004: p 404)*

The adoption of qualitative analysis over time, rather than as a snapshot, is still relatively rare (Molloy *et al*, 2002), and has often been focused on a discrete policy or initiative, especially in the field of programmes to reduce worklessness (for example, Lewis, 2007; Corden and Nice, 2007). This project is not directed towards evaluating a specific policy instrument or programme. Instead, it is concerned to examine how the assumptions behind some existing 'place-based' or 'person-based' policies are either aligned with, or are at odds with, the experiences and attitudes of households living in different types of deprived neighbourhoods, and the implications this carries for the future development of such policies.

This research is therefore an opportunity to develop a qualitative analysis of how poverty, neighbourhood disadvantage, household and area change, and local diversity and difference are experienced. It attempts to capture some of the complexities of motivation, behaviour and reaction of the respondents in the six different locations selected for study. It seeks to explain why some individuals may actively seek to change their circumstances (including where they live), while others respond more passively.

A number of previous research studies have taken a qualitative approach to examining individual and household 'transitions' over time among those experiencing poverty. They have often been primarily concerned with respondents' links to the labour market and how they cope with risk events, in either a tactical or in a more strategic manner (for example, Chamberlayne *et al*, 2002; Graham *et al*, 2005). The focus in this project is more about 'place' than 'workplace', but the idea of transitions can be a helpful way of capturing how changing material, locational and emotional circumstances are handled in a specified period. Millar (2007) makes the distinction

between transitions, adaptations and trajectories, to describe different qualities to processes of personal and household change, and notes that 'consolidation' (or even, one might add, 'stasis') may also be an appropriate responses to a life in flux. This offers an important corrective to the implicit assumptions that can run through both the research and the policy literature that the experience of 'deprivation' should automatically provoke 'action' (moving out, getting a new job, being more 'ambitious' etc) rather than 'adapting', 'reinforcing' or 'satisficing' instead. We reflect on this further in the Conclusion.

The initial stage of data collection through qualitative interviews was organised *thematically*, in order to develop an interpretative framework for categorising the material and to try and frame the different personal episodes and narratives that were being uncovered. The project team also sought to engage with members of the communities, in an attempt to avoid compounding any sense of helplessness, marginalisation or isolation that might already exist by treating the residents as mere inert research 'objects'. This is being achieved primarily through the use of audio-visual methods and the creation of community panels, described below.

2.3   Case Study Selection and Methods

For the case studies, four methods have been used for primary data collection, though the balance between them varies in different areas:

- preliminary and in-depth face-to-face interviews
- personal diaries
- audio-visual representation
- community panels.

These methods were selected to provide a different 'grain' of research information to build up a narrative of change over the study period.

Interviews

A survey company was engaged to carried out a short preliminary household interview. This acted as a recruitment method to enlist people to take part in the in-depth interviews and collect basic contextual details about the individual as well as contact information. Initially, it was planned to undertake a longitudinal analysis according to a strict 'before' and 'after' model, separated by a two year gap in order to assess the impact of intervening events on experiences of poverty, perceptions of neighbourhood change and the propensity to move out of the area or stay put. However, this was replaced by a reiterative 'life history' approach. It was felt that this approach was more naturalistic than artificially imposing a 'before'/'after' timeline that might be difficult for respondents to observe in practice when interviewed.

The wave 1 interview (with an adult member of the household, identified in the initial contact survey, and sometimes accompanied by their partner or children for all or part of the time) covered a wide range of issues about experiences of poverty and perception of the neighbourhood, how it has changed over time and ways of 'getting by' on limited household budgets. Thirty in-depth semi-structured interviews were undertaken in each of the six case study neighbourhoods. Interviews lasted between twenty and ninety minutes, but were normally around forty minutes. All the in-depth interviews were undertaken by experienced members of the CRESR research team skilled in qualitative interview and analysis.

The majority of interviews were undertaken at the respondent's home, but arrangements were also made to undertake them in a private room in a nearby community facility, if that was preferred. The interviews were undertaken on a relatively open-ended basis, according to an agreed basic topic guide. The guide contained core questions relevant to all six neighbourhoods, with a few additional questions relating to one of the three analytical themes. Follow-up interviews are being undertaken with a sub-sample of these households, in the second and third years of the research study, covering specific topics in more depth. The follow-up interviews provide an opportunity to revisit some of the biographical detail in more depth, as well as picking up on any changes in household or neighbourhood circumstances in the intervening period. Walker and Leisering have advocated a similar approach to this in their own research:

"Exciting possibilities arise from mixed designs that involve repeated interviews in which respondents are invited to look backwards and forwards in time. Data collection is recursive. Information is collected on intentions and expectations which are compared in subsequent interviews with actual events, behaviours and outcomes."
(Walker and Leisering, 1998: 28)

Full analysis of the interview transcripts was completed through the use of Nvivo 8 according to a common coding framework. The interviews examined underlying narratives about how people experience poverty differently, their attitudes to residence, their social networks, their views on the extent of 'community' in their locality, and the implications for intended and actual paths of residential mobility. This information will be supplemented by material gathered from residents' diaries, different audio-visual products and feedback from the Community Panel focus groups.

Residents' Diaries

This technique was used in three of the six case studies, to complement the insights from the one-to-one interviews. The potential to use diaries as a vehicle for research informants to observe situations which researchers cannot access has been explicitly developed in the context of ethnographic research (Elliott, 1997; see also Allen *et al* (2005) and Atkinson and Kintrea (2000).

The diary was kept by up to six of the sample of thirty interview respondents over a defined period of a week, and they were left with a disposable camera and asked to take photographs of parts of their home or neighbourhood that are important to them, for whatever reason. The cameras were returned to CRESR and the photographs developed. The interviewer then returned to talk to the respondent about their diary and to elicit comments about the photographs they have taken. One potential advantage of the diary-interview method is that it may be more possible to capture diarists' own priorities than relying on their responses to pre-given questions in an interview schedule. The very tangibility of the photographs also anchors discussion more on respondents' likes and dislikes about the area. It may also help as a means of understanding what is 'taken for granted' about an area or a respondent's own personal situation. Diary keeping is often a more successful approach with older respondents, although this is not always the case. Younger people are often more drawn to compiling visual, rather than written, records of their experiences, and their involvement has been important in the more explicit audio-visual approach outlined below.

Audio-visual Documentation and the Capturing and Presentation of Participant Voices

In three of the case study areas (not covered by diary method), residents have been encouraged to become creatively engaged in the generation of audio and visual material that captures the impressions, opinions and perspectives of groups of local residents. Local residents have become involved, in different ways, in a creative engagement, recording their own perspective and reading of life in their local neighbourhood. This process has been led by a creative practitioner in the research team (Andrew Robinson), who has invited the contribution of members of the community into a production process that provided a theme, purpose and structure for the management of the material (photographs, audio etc.) they have collected. The creative practitioner has provided the necessary equipment and the related technical, as well as artistic, training and guidance. This approach has been adopted to engage with people and capture insights and experiences that would not be recognised or understood by more traditional research techniques, and to speak to audiences that traditional research outputs can often fail to reach.

At this stage, a range of visual material has been prepared with residents in Knowsley, (slides, montages, interviews, written accounts by residents), and a 90 minute film has been produced with the involvement of residents in Amlwch. This was shown in the Community Hall and attracted considerable local interest, with over 90 people attending, and then taking part in a discussion about the past, present and future of Amlwch after each showing. Visual material has also been collected in west Kensington and will be developed further in the coming months

Community Panels

A key aspect of the research project has been the attempt to give an active role to those experiencing or on the margins of poverty, rather than treating them as inert recipients of forces entirely beyond their control. This has placed a responsibility on the research process to ensure that it does not, implicitly or explicitly, marginalise, disempower or objectify 'the poor'. It requires more than a tokenistic reference to consultation, and needs to reach into the research process itself.

In terms of *research methodology,* this approach highlights the application of innovative methods that can capture and represent experiences of poverty in different places. In terms of *research ethics*, it is about providing the individuals, households and communities engaged in the research process with a legacy of skills and competences. In terms of *research dissemination* it seeks to ensure that the various outputs generated during the research process will represent a significant (social, cultural and political) resource for the local communities in the case study locations.

The principal vehicle for engaging with members of local communities outside the interviews and participation in developing the visual record in three areas is through the formation of *community panels* in each area. The panel comprises a sample of interview respondents and members of key local community groups and acts as the main vehicle for the study team to communicate with local communities throughout the project. The process is conceived as a ongoing two-way *dialogue* during the research programme. The means of recruitment to the panel has been pragmatic, often linking into ongoing neighbourhood events or meetings. At the meetings, the emerging results of the research have been discussed, both in terms of the analysis of interview material and, where relevant, the audio-visual material. An open discussion has been held to assess how their perceptions of the neighbourhood are changing, and any new developments (influx of newcomers, new schemes,

'flashpoint' events, and so on). These meetings and reactions are also recorded as constituting research material in its own right.

2.4   Guiding Themes in the Research

As the research programme involves broad aims and diverse methods, a thematic approach was adopted for the first stage of the programme, to maximise coherence and discipline in data collection and analysis. The different methods described above were designed to enhance the understanding of residents' experiences in the six neighbourhoods and to produce a multi-textured narrative. Three themes were selected to organise the analysis and the case study selection in the first phase of the programme, stemming from the preceding discussion of potential neighbourhood/place impacts on household experiences. The first concerned the response of residents living on low incomes to issues of *'connectivity' and social cohesion*, the second contrasted places with *different degrees of social and cultural diversity*, and the third explored whether there were neighbourhood characteristics that might encourage or inhibit aspirations or intentions over *future residential mobility*.

These themes were established *a priori* as potential points of contrast in neighbourhood experiences, but with an awareness that *commonalities* of perceptions or experiences across the six areas might be as strong as any differences between them. In the second stage of the research the themes have been developed more inductively, picking up the conversation, as it were, from the voices of the residents themselves rather than imposing this framework on them.

The initial emphasis in two case studies was therefore on the nature of '*connectivity*' between different social and economic groups: whether between lower income households and more affluent households *within* a neighbourhood or in the wider connections between low income areas and more affluent neighbourhoods elsewhere. The development of 'bridging' social capital has been a key policy aim in many regeneration programmes, to combat physical and social dimensions of disconnection and exclusion. The physical dimensions may include a spatial mismatch between deprived neighbourhoods and employment opportunities, often exacerbated by poor transport connections and postcode discrimination. This may be compounded by less overt social and cultural disconnections between deprived and more affluent populations living in close proximity (Atkinson and Kintrea, 2001; Atkinson and Flint, 2004).

Given the recurrent policy interest in connecting workless residents more effectively to the labour market, and in promoting the apparently beneficial effects of social mix at neighbourhood level, the research was interested to explore the views of lower income residents themselves towards the experiences of more affluent households, whether they lived on their doorstep or further afield. The research wanted to assess whether living in a more mixed neighbourhood seemed to lead to the development of shared values, informal socialising and similarity of perceptions with more affluent households and, if so, whether this mitigated some of the exclusionary aspects of deprivation compared to the experiences of residents living in a more homogenous neighbourhood.

The distinctive element of the approach taken in a second case study pairing was the notion of *diversity*: how poverty might be experienced differently by distinct groups in a neighbourhood. Neighbourhoods can provide the focus for social organisation and identity and represent a repository of difference, with the nature of places reflecting internal cultural variations. Understanding the complex relationship between individual identities and the nature of places where they live is critical to understanding the distinct experiences of poverty *within* and *between* diverse groups.

Two case studies were therefore selected to support this analysis, allowing the experiences of diverse groups in distinct places to be explored (members of minority ethnic communities resident in a multi-ethnic neighbourhood, as opposed to those where ethnicity was more sharply divided). This also facilitated the comparative analysis of the experiences of people with shared identities living in different kinds of neighbourhood, and enabled an assessment to be made whether greater diversity in the locality frustrated, or stimulated, the development of closer social and support networks.

The distinctive element of the research approach taken to the final case study pairing was how residents in disadvantaged neighbourhoods responded to their situation in terms of their attitudes and intentions over future *residential mobility.* It was suggested earlier that the household decision to move (or to decline to move) often stems from a highly complex blend of financial, emotional, tactical, instinctive, and cultural motives. The qualitative and iterative research approach provided an opportunity for respondents to reflect back on their own patterns of mobility, to assess whether initial intentions were realised, thwarted or discarded, and to consider how changing individual experiences of poverty, and changing perceptions of their neighbourhood, might reshape their aspirations to move or to stay put.

The research was also an opportunity to explore the different salience of material, emotional, cultural, place-related or life stage factors behind households' mobility decisions. The case studies were also selected in terms of their relative *geographical isolation,* to consider how perceptions of, and decisions about, mobility might be affected if the opportunities to gain employment, for example, might require a relatively long distance move. It also sought to examine whether the 'sense of place' was less evident in those more 'porous' neighbourhoods more closely linked to other communities of a similar social economic and ethnic composition than in more isolated self-contained settlements, and whether different degrees of connectivity had much effect on the outlooks and aspirations of residents.

2.5 The Case Study Areas

The intention was to select two case studies representing different points along a continuum for each of the three themes outlined above. A variety of methods was used to sift statistically through local authorities that had relevant characteristics, and then smaller areas were chosen as neighbourhoods within the local authorities. The process is outlined in Appendix 1.

In terms of the 'cohesion and connectivity' theme, a number of physical and social dimensions of disconnection and exclusion were examined, and the Hillside area, which was part of a larger housing estate in North Huyton in Knowsley was selected to exemplify 'poverty in the midst of wider social and economic deprivation'. Oxgangs, Edinburgh, was selected to represent 'poverty in the midst of affluence.' In terms of the 'place diversity' theme an 'index of difference' was used to select a relatively ethnically homogenous area (West Marsh, Grimsby) and a neighbourhood with a relatively large white community and a minority ethnic community which were not, as far as could be established beforehand, territorially separated (Wensley Fold, Blackburn). In terms of the third theme, covering mobility and geographical propinquity and isolation, a contrast was sought between a relatively 'accessible' urban area with higher rates of population churn (West Kensington, London) and a more isolated semi-rural setting, with low rates of residential turnover (Amlwch, Anglesey). The neighbourhoods are described in turn below.

Hillside, Knowsley

The Hillside case study is made up of two adjoining neighbourhoods, Hillside and Primalt. Primalt is the formal name given to the area for planning purposes and by the NDC partnership, but the whole area is generally known by residents as Hillside, and this is as the term for the case study area in the rest of this report. The neighbourhoods make up one-third of North Huyton New Deal for Communities (NDC) intervention area (the other areas are Finch House, Fincham, Woolfall North and Woolfall South). These two neighbourhoods, and the wider NDC area, form a part of the collection of inter-war and post-war municipal housing estates that were developed as 'overspill' from the City of Liverpool slum clearance programmes and the expansion of the Liverpool Docks. The majority of dwellings are two storey semi-detached and terraced family houses arranged in traditional street patterns. Households in the case study area are predominantly White, with just one per cent of residents from a minority ethnic background, according to the 2001 Census.

Analysis from the 2007 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) for the two lower super output areas (LSOAs) that approximate most closely to Hillside show that the area is in the most deprived decile on four of the seven domains: income, employment, health, and education, skills and training; it is in the second most deprived decile on 'crime' and 'living environment', and the third lowest decile on 'barriers to housing and services'. The ONS statistics on population turnover for 2005/6 showed a rate of 50 per 1,000 (compared to a median turnover rate for Medium SOAs in England and Wales of 78 per 1,000). The age profile of the area according to 2006 mid year estimates broadly matches the wider local authority and national picture, with a slightly higher proportion of young people under the age of 16. In the 2001 census, 25 per cent of households were classified as lone parent (compared to 19 per cent in Knowsley and 10 per cent in England) and 53 per cent lived in social housing (compared to 32 per cent and 19 per cent respectively). In February 2008, 6.4 per cent of the working age population in the area was claiming Job Seekers' Allowance (JSA) (compared to 4.2 per cent in Knowsley and 2.2 per cent in England) and 19 per cent were claiming Incapacity Benefit (IB)/Severe Disability Allowance (SDA) (compared to 13.6 per cent and 6.8 per cent respectively).

Hillside is bounded by the M57, a dual carriageway (Seth Powell Way) and a park (Alt Park) and is one of the more isolated areas in the wider neighbourhood. In recent years void properties have been a significant problem in the housing stock, with many empty properties declared structurally unstable and dangerous. The sense of isolation has been reinforced by the demolition of a considerable proportion of the housing stock, leaving many unused open spaces that have yet to be developed as part of the masterplan for the area. New development to replace demolished dwellings has recently been suspended, as a consequence of the economic downturn. The area has few public buildings and amenities, and one of the last remaining post offices in the area closed last year. Beechwood Primary School, which was one of three primary schools in the North Huyton area, has also recently closed down. The one public building in Hillside, the 'Hillywood' Community Centre, is well used by a range of local groups, residents and stakeholders. It is staffed by two paid community workers and a small band of dedicated volunteers.

The Primalt area comprises 648 units of accommodation including a renovated tower block known as Knowsley Heights. There are around sixty owner-occupied properties in the area. There are problems with anti-social behaviour in parts of the estate, and environmental problems, although one area, Pennard Field, is seen as a potential amenity for the whole community. There are no other public amenities in the Primalt area.

Oxgangs, Edinburgh

Oxgangs is a suburb of Edinburgh, located in the south-west of the city. It is named after an 'oxgang', an ancient Scottish land measure. The development of the area started in the early 1950s; it had previously been mostly farmland and was considered part of the countryside on the fringe of the city. The area consists of large housing schemes, ranging from Edinburgh City Council-owned high rise tower blocks to private bungalows. A large proportion of former council-owned properties in Oxgangs have been bought by tenants under the Right to Buy scheme, and there is now a high demand for what remains of the council housing stock in the area.

An analysis of the LSOAs for Oxgangs in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) for 2007 shows that the area is in the third most deprived decile overall, and is classed in this decile for income, health and crime. It is in the second most deprived decile in terms of education, skills and training and housing, in the fourth most deprived decile for employment, and the fifth for geographic access. The age profile of the area in the 2006 mid-year estimates is broadly similar to the city and national picture, with a slightly higher proportion of older residents (21 per cent, compared to 17 per cent for Edinburgh and 19 per cent for Scotland). There was a relatively high proportion of lone parent households in the areas (14 per cent compared to 8 per cent in Edinburgh and 11 per cent in Scotland) and of households in the social housing sector (46 per cent compared to 18 per cent and 29 per cent respectively).

As of November 2007, 2.6 per cent of the working age population in Oxgangs was claiming JSA (compared to 1.6 per cent in Edinburgh and 2.1 in Scotland) and 14.7 per cent were claiming IB/SDA (compared to 7.2 per cent and 9.4 per cent respectively).

The neighbourhood is well served by a variety of shops, amenities and public facilities. It has two small shopping areas at each end of Oxgangs known to the locals as the 'top' and 'bottom' shops. The top shops (Oxgangs Broadway) are the larger and feature a small convenient store known as 'Denis's', named after the owner of the shop. Other shops in the top area include a newsagents, a hairdressers, and three take-aways. There is also a post office and a pharmacy. The local library is a popular hub of the community, and is regularly used for meetings and classes as well as for its wide range of books and IT facilities. Oxgangs has three primary schools, as well as a nearby high school with a very good reputation locally and further afield. Two neighbouring primary schools situated on Oxgangs Green (Comiston and Hunters Tryst) were recently merged and renamed Pentland Primary. Local churches in the area include: Church of Scotland, Scottish Episcopal Church, a Roman Catholic Church and a recently built Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses.

In 2003 Edinburgh City Council (in consultation with tenants) took the decision to demolish and redevelop Oxgangs high rise flats, originally known as Comiston Luxury Flats. In April 2005 the long-standing tower block, Capelaw Court, was demolished to make way for new housing. Capelaw was one of three high rise flats built in Oxgangs Crescent in 1961 and 1962. The other two buildings (Caerketton Court and Allermuir Court) were then demolished in November 2006. The new homes, built on the site of the high rises, were designed in consultation with local people, and provide a mixture of dwellings, including provision for the elderly and the disabled. The scheme reflected a local desire for 'low rise' housing, coupled with the need to achieve relatively high dwelling densities in the face of high housing demand. However, some local residents have expressed reluctance about moving into the newly available accommodation because of its location and lay-out.

Wensley Fold, Blackburn

Wensley Fold is a neighbourhood of Blackburn, a Lancashire town with a population of some 100,000 in 2001, and the administrative centre of the unitary authority of Blackburn and Darwen (population 137,000 in 2001). The neighbourhood is located immediately west of Blackburn town centre. It is bounded to the North by the A677 Preston New Road, to the South by a mixed use retail and industrial area and to the West by a large park. The area has a population of approximately 3,000, occupies a hillside situation and is characterised by rows of parallel terraced houses organised in a compressed grid pattern. Recently, the area has been subject to redevelopment, as part of the Pennine Lancashire Housing Market Renewal programme, with a number of terraces being demolished and replaced by new-build terrace properties, with more space between each row allowing for gardens and back yards to be developed.

Blackburn has a long history of immigration, particularly from India and Pakistan, and one in five (21 per cent) of the population in the town were recorded as of South Asian ethnic origin by the 2001 Census. In the study area, more than half of the local population were recorded as having a non-White ethnic origin by the 2001 Census, and 51 per cent were recorded as of South Asian ethnic origin. The LSOAs that were combined to create an area almost equivalent to the case-study neighbourhood were in the most deprived decile on the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2007. The area was in the most deprived decile on six of the seven domains measured by the IMD: income, employment, health and disability, education, skills and training, and living environment. In contrast, the area was in the least deprived decile in the 'barriers to housing and services' domain, reflecting its proximity to the town centre.

According to the 2006 mid year population estimates, the neighbourhood has a young age profile. A relatively large proportion of the population are children less than 16 years old (29 per cent, compared to 24 per cent in the local authority district and 19 per cent in England) and only 11 per cent are men over 65 years old or women over 60 years old (compared to 19 per cent nationally). The 2001 Census recorded a relatively large proportion of single person households (41 per cent) and households containing dependent children (39 per cent). The neighbourhood has relatively large social rented (30 per cent) and private rented (16 per cent) sectors, according to the 2001 Census. Only half (50 per cent) of the households live in owner occupied accommodation, compared to 71 per cent of households in the district and 69 per cent of all households in England.
A relatively high proportion of the local population were in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance or Incapacity Benefit/Severe Disability Allowance in February 2008. The proportion of people in receipt of the latter was almost treble the national level (18.8 per cent in the case study neighbourhood, compared to 11.6 per cent across the district and 6.8 per cent across England).

The area has a vibrant local shopping centre, with local shops specialising in South Asian produce. There are also a number of major supermarket stores on the edge of the area and the town centre is within walking distance. Local community resources include a community centre that runs various training, educational and social activities targeted at the whole population, as well as places of worship and parks.

West Marsh, Grimsby

West Marsh is a neighbourhood of Grimsby, the largest town in the district of North East Lincolnshire, with a population of about 90,000. Grimsby has a long history as a fishing port and nearby Immingham is a major container port. Other major employers in the district include the chemical and food processing industries.

West Marsh is located immediately adjacent to the town centre and also close to the A180, the main route into the town from the west. A major feature of the area is the River Freshney, which runs west to east through the neighbourhood. On the north side of the River is a park. Together, these two physical features divide the neighbourhood into two distinct areas. North of the River and West of the park is an area often to referred to locally as 'Gilby'. Centred on Gilby Road, this area is relatively isolated, and consists of three parallel no-through-roads, criss-crossed by six parallel no-through-roads. South of the river is an area that many local people refer to as 'West Marsh', which is characterised by parallel roads of terraced houses.

The population of the LSOAs that are almost equivalent to the study area was just over 3,000, according to the 2006 mid-year estimate. Almost two-thirds (64 per cent) were of working age and 23 per cent were less than 16 years old. The area has a relatively small older population (13 per cent of the population, compared to 20 per cent in North east Lincolnshire and 19 per cent in England). According to the 2001 Census, a relatively small proportion of households are couples, with or without children (46 per cent, compared to 57 per cent in the district and 57 per cent across England). 17 per cent of households are lone parent families, compared to 12 per cent in the district and 10 per cent in England.

The area is relatively deprived, falling within the most deprived decile of lower super output areas in England. The area is placed in the lowest decile in relation to education skills and training, crime and the living environment on the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). It is in the second lowest decile in terms of income, employment and health. In February 2008, 15.7 per cent of the working age population were in receipt of JSA or IB/SDA, compared to 11.1 per cent of people of working age in North Lincolnshire and 9.0 per cent in England.

The neighbourhood, like the wider district, is ethnically homogenous. According to the 2001 Census, 98 per cent of the population of the neighbourhood and the district were White British or Irish, one per cent were White Other and one per cent were Mixed Heritage. The study team did come across anecdotal evidence, however, that migrant workers from the EU accession states had arrived into Grimsby in recent years, with some people settling in West Marsh, although the scale of new immigration is unclear.

Terraced housing is the dominant built form in the neighbourhood. Many of these properties have no garden or curtilege at the front, the front door opening straight onto the street. A relatively large proportion of the housing stock is privately rented (20 per cent, double the district and national average), while the proportion in the owner occupied sector (64 per cent) is below the proportion in North East Lincolnshire (72 per cent) and England (69 per cent).

There are a limited number of community facilities in the neighbourhood and several shops are shut and boarded up. There is, however, a community centre on the northern fringe of the area, which provides various courses, classes and groups, including youth activities. Shortly before the study team visited the area for the first stage interviews a local man had been stabbed to death in the area. At the time of the visit, the police investigation was ongoing and police divers were combing the River Freshney for evidence.

West Kensington, London

The West Kensington case study area is located in west London, in the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham. The area is located within walking distance of Earls Court Exhibition Centre and a number of London Underground stations including West Kensington, West Brompton, and Earls Court. The area is

surrounded by several high status neighbourhoods including Chelsea, Baron's Court and Kensington.

The case study area, which comprises 1,800 properties in two social housing estates, West Kensington and Gibbs Green, forms part of a larger neighbourhood which most locals refer to as 'West Kensington.' The neighbourhood is centred on the intersection between North End and Lillie Roads, where most of the area's numerous shops, pubs and cafes are located. The area also has a bustling (semi-permanent) market which is located on Lillie Road. The West Kensington and Gibbs Green estates are located in the north of the neighbourhood on the eastern side of North End Road. Reflecting the diversity of the wider West Kensington area, the neighbourhood is a mixed income area and contains many households with above average incomes. In some parts of the area, property prices are very high, with some selling recently for more than £1.5 million.

The LSOAs for the area do not match the case study exactly, but are close enough to indicate the profile of deprivation in the locality. In terms of the IMD 2007, the areas were in the lowest decile for income and living environment, in the second lowest overall and in terms of employment, health and barriers to housing and services, and the third lowest for crime. It was however (just) in the least deprived half of LSOAs in terms of education, training and skills. In terms of the age profile, there is a slightly higher proportion of younger residents under 16 (20 per cent) than in the borough (16 per cent) or nationally (19 per cent) and a lower proportion of older residents (12 per cent) than in England (19 per cent). According to the 2001 Census, 23 per cent of households are lone parents, compared to 12 per cent in Hammersmith and Fulham and 10 per cent in England, and 11 per cent are multi-person households, compared to 13 per cent in the borough and just three per cent nationally.

65 per cent of households were described as 'white' or 'white other' in the area (78 per cent in Hammersmith and Fulham and 91 per cent in England) and 21 per cent described themselves as 'black' (compared to 11 per cent and 3 per cent respectively). The black and minority ethnic population includes members of Afro-Caribbean, West African and Somali communities. 57 per cent of households on the estates were in the social housing sector, compared to 33 per cent in the borough and 19 per cent nationally, and just 25 per cent were owner-occupiers (compared to 44 per cent and 69 per cent respectively).

The study area is covered by the North Fulham New Deal for Communities programme, and social housing units on the West Kensington and Gibbs Green estates are being modernised as part of this initiative. The West Kensington estate comprises approximately 1,000 units and was built in the early 1970s. It is a mixed development comprising five tower blocks, low rise flats, maisonettes and some terraced houses. The Gibbs Green estate comprises some 160 flats and maisonettes, built in the late 1950s/ early 1960s. The properties are set out in six four storey blocks and one eight storey block, which is due to be replaced by low rise housing and a communal hall under redevelopment proposals.

Amlwch

Amlwch is a small town located on the northern tip of Anglesey. It is the fourth biggest settlement on the island and has a population of 1,400. It is relatively isolated geographically and the nearest towns to it are Llangefni (13 miles away) and Holyhead (20 miles). Amlwch comprises distinct neighbourhoods, including Amlwch Port, which was once a thriving port, Amlwch town itself, where most shops and services are based, and Craig-y-don, a small local authority housing estate located between Amlwch and Amlwch Port. The residential areas contain a mixture of

property types, although most of the stock consists of houses of traditional construction.

The town was once of the main centres of industry in Wales. It had one of the world's largest copper mountains (Parys Mountain), was once a centre for ship building and repair, and the base for a chemical plant which extracted bromine from sea water. However, these industries have all closed and, despite the continuing economic value to the town of the nearby Wylfa nuclear power station, the town has been in economic decline for the past thirty years or so. As a relatively deprived area, there is some regeneration activity being undertaken in Amlwch, coordinated by the regeneration agency for Wales, *Communities First*.

The LSOAs selected do not match exactly the study area but they nevertheless provide reliable estimates of its socio-economic position. In terms of the Welsh IMD, Amlwch is in the second most deprived decile in terms of community safety, environment, access to services and housing, and in the third most deprived in terms of income and its overall ranking. It is in the fourth most deprived decile for employment, heath and education. It does not have as high a IMD score as many of the communities in the South Wales valleys, but the reason for selecting the area was due to its greater geographical isolation and relative immobility, signified by a population turnover rate for mid 2005 to mid 2006 of 44 per 1,000 population (compared to a median of 78 per 1,000 for England and Wales).

In the 2006 MYE, the age profile was broadly similar to district and national averages with a slightly higher proportion of those under 16 (20 per cent compared to 18 per cent for Anglesey and 19 per cent for Wales). Slightly higher proportions of the population were lone parent (13 per cent) or single person (35 per cent) households than in Anglesey (11 per cent and 29 per cent) and in Wales (12 per cent and 29 per cent). 98 per cent of the population is of 'White British/Irish' population ethic origin (the same as for the district and one per cent higher than the national average).

In the 2001 Census, just over two-thirds (67 per cent) of households in Amlwch owned their homes (68 per cent in Anglesey and 71 per cent in Wales) and 18 per cent were in the social housing sector (compared to 17 per cent and 18 per cent respectively). In February 2008, 5.1 per cent of the working age population were JSA claimants (3.1 per cent in Anglesey and 6.6 per cent in Wales) and 12.3 per cent were JSA/SDA claimants (compared to 9.5 per cent and 10.9 per cent respectively).

Many residents speak Welsh and it is the first language for some. In acknowledgment of this, residents were asked which language they would like to be interviewed in. Most did not have a preference, but two of the in-depth interviews undertaken by the research team were conducted in Welsh.

In the next chapter we examine some of the findings from the interviews conducted in the first of the paired comparisons, in Hillside, Knowsley and Oxgangs, Edinburgh, and focus on the responses to questions examining potential differences in terms of connectivity and social mix.

3

3. Connectivity and Social Mix: Hillside and Oxgangs

3.1 Introduction

Interviews were undertaken in late 2007 with 29 respondents in Hillside and 31 respondents in Edinburgh. In this chapter, the analysis explores issues related to the theme of connectivity and social mix: residents' perceptions of their neighbourhoods in the context of other adjacent areas, differences between the two neighbourhoods in terms of residents' attitudes and perceptions and what impact, if any, these perceptions have on residents' lives. This focus connects to debates about whether poverty is experienced as a relative and comparative phenomenon and how perceptions of sameness, difference or inequality might affect personal satisfaction or self-esteem (see for example Burrows and Rhodes, 1998). Hillside was selected as a deprived neighbourhood situated in a local authority district (and indeed a sub-region) that is also deprived. Oxgangs, by contrast, is a neighbourhood adjacent to a very affluent neighbourhood, and based in a relatively compact city (Edinburgh) which has both other 'pockets' of urban deprivation, but also localities containing very wealthy residents indeed (see Appendix 1).

The evidence. as in all these case studies, is based on relatively small number of residents and there was sometimes considerable variation in the views expressed by residents living in the same neighbourhood. However, there were clear patterns and differences in the responses articulated by residents in the two neighbourhoods. The sample of residents from Hillside contained a relatively high proportion of young people under 25 and it would be expected that, as a factor of their age, they would have less experience of other areas and neighbourhoods and spend a higher proportion of their time within their own neighbourhood. This needs to be borne in mind in the ensuing account.

3.2 Deprivation and the 'Normalisation' of Neighbourhood

While both the two neighbourhoods were relatively deprived according to the IMD, we were interested to explore whether that translated across to residents' own perceptions and whether the proximity to more affluent households in Oxgangs seemed to make any difference to their outlook. In interview, many residents viewed their neighbourhoods as 'normal' and the 'same as everywhere else'. This view was more common in Hillside but was also present in Oxgangs.

> *It [Oxgangs] is not the most glamorous area but it's clean and tidy. I would say about it compared to any other areas it's basically the same. (Female, 25-29, Oxgangs)*

This attitude extended to normalising problems within the neighbourhoods, so that they were seen as evident in all residential areas:

> *You get your usual things around November with bonfires and that but I suppose that happens everywhere you go. (Male, 35-44, Oxgangs)*

> *There are some bad people around, but I think every area's the same. (Female, 35-44, Hillside)*

Residents in Hillside were more likely to conceive of surrounding neighbourhoods as being similar to their own, whereas residents in Oxgangs were more likely to identify differences between Oxgangs and surrounding neighbourhoods:

> *I think the majority of estates in Huyton are very similar. (Female, 45-64, Hillside)*

> *So we're like stuck in the middle, surrounded by the posh, this area in the middle. (Female, 45-64, Oxgangs)*

Although the process of 'normalisation' was more apparent in Hillside, particularly in relation to surrounding neighbourhoods, this was coupled to an awareness that different types of residential area did exist in the wider Merseyside area. There was little evidence that this awareness of more affluent neighbourhoods created a sense of dissatisfaction with their own neighbourhood, or a desire to live elsewhere: the very differences between the neighbourhoods limited their appeal:

> *[Living in another part of Liverpool:] I'd like to live there but it'd be too quiet all the time wouldn't it ... It'd be like all posh people wouldn't it? (Male, 16-24, Hillside)*

Of course, part of the explanation for this attitude among Hillside residents is that their area was indeed fairly similar to adjacent neighbourhoods and reflected the less differentiated socio-economic profile of Knowsley compared to Edinburgh. A more telling factor, however, was that a large proportion of residents in Hillside had also been born and raised in the neighbourhood and had the majority of their social connections (including family) located on the estate. In contrast, residents in Oxgangs were more likely to have moved into the area or to have lived elsewhere and therefore to have had direct experience of living in other neighbourhoods. This direct experience of other areas provided a framework for Oxgangs residents to reflect in a comparative manner on where they currently lived:

> *Well I like this area, I think it's a nice area, compared to where we were before... it's a nice area. (Female, 45-64, Oxgangs)*

In addition, residents in Oxgangs were generally more likely to access the city centre and to travel to other areas of the city during their daily routines. The neighbourhood is located only three miles from Edinburgh city centre, in contrast to Hillside, which lies outside the city boundaries of Liverpool an is about seven miles from the centre. It is also due to the differing levels and types of employment, with more respondents in Oxgangs being in employment and working at sites further from their place of residence. Because the surrounding area was more permeable for Oxgangs residents than their Hillside counterparts, they could more readily talk in terms of a hierarchy of neighbourhoods within their 'field of vision' and based on their direct experience.

Several Oxgangs respondents therefore displayed an acute awareness of both the immediate and visible differences between their neighbourhood and adjacent areas and were able to locate Oxgangs within an implicit league table of popularity across the city of Edinburgh. The proximity and immediacy of more affluent neighbourhoods nearby and a local geography of difference was identified by most residents:

> *It's like you go from one bit of Oxgangs, literally you can see the first house in Green Bank: it's a different world.*

> *[Interviewer] It's very close by isn't it?*

Right next to each other, Oxgangs literally you can stand one foot separated and one foot's in Oxgangs and one foot's in Greenbank. (Female, 16-24, Oxgangs)

Yeah well if you walk out of here and down to the shops but turn right into Colinton Road and if you turn left that's supposed to be the dearest part of Edinburgh, it's called Greenbank, the houses are over half a million. They're very nice, big bungalows, the whole street is … I would stay snobbish compared to here and then I suppose you've got like Oxgangs Road up the side of Morrison's, if you go further up, again bungalows look very expensive, you know. (Female, 16-24, Oxgangs)

Well Oxgangs is like your local...as you go up there you've got Fairmilehead, Buxton and they're sort of snobby, they're well… once you get to just up the road there where the supermarket is... once you go up that way you're into the snobby houses. (Female, 35-44, Oxgangs)

Although these residents make references to areas being 'snobbish', this local social geography is primarily reported in a neutral manner, with no relative judgements about intrinsic worth, beyond noting the different style and value of properties. One resident made the point that people living in less affluent areas, at least in the context of Edinburgh, were as likely as those living in more affluent localities to attribute status and reputation to other areas of the city:

Yeah even people from like areas like Oxgangs know of Oxgangs, but I mean there's other places like Pilton and things, if you're from there if you said 'I'm from Pilton' I'd be like… it's the same sort of thing, just because you live in Oxgangs doesn't mean we don't think about other places like that. (Female, 16-24, Oxgangs)

Within this perceived hierarchy, Oxgangs was consistently placed within a comparative framework to other social housing estates in Edinburgh and was regarded as being one of the 'better', or indeed 'best', such estate(s) in the city:

I think in Edinburgh is like, council estates as in Niddrie, Muirhouse, Wester Hailes, Oxgangs, whatever other ones there are, I would rank this as one of the nicer areas to live. (Female, 35-44, Oxgangs)

As opposed to the other outlying areas round about like what you've got, you've got Gracemount and Burdiehouse? And the next areas that way, you've got Wester Hailes going that way, I would say nine out of ten would choose to stay here before either of those two given the choice. (Male, 35-44, Oxgangs)

An important part of these perceptions was the regularity with which the same areas were repeatedly mentioned. Several of these areas, such as Muirhouse and Pilton, are located on the other side of Edinburgh, which illustrates how many residents have a frame of reference that encompasses the entire city. Whilst Oxgangs is positively compared to these areas, this comparison also locates Oxgangs itself within a certain classification of neighbourhood. The fact that residents describe these areas as 'on a par with Oxgangs' and areas that 'you would want to compare Oxgangs to' highlights how residents have a nuanced understanding of the relative social and economic status of neighbourhoods that grades other social housing

areas, rather than relying solely on a binary classification of 'affluent' or 'deprived' localities.

Respondents were aware of processes of stigmatisation affecting areas including Oxgangs, and claimed that this misrepresented the real dynamics of these communities. However, this did not necessarily cause them to suspend judgements when passing comment on other areas in the implicit hierarchy of Edinburgh neighbourhoods:

> *Wester Hailes, it gets a bad name because there's junkies and that there. Craigmillar that's another place but no everybody there's bad it gets a bad name because there's drug addicts there and a lot of them doesnae work...and then there's Muirhouse...then they've got the posh areas, Morningside, the Grange, big houses. (Female, 45-64, Oxgangs)*

Only two residents, both from Oxgangs, articulated difference between their neighbourhood and elsewhere in 'class' terms:

> *I think you'd say we're in the lower end of the scale as far as...lower middle class is it? (Male, 45-64, Oxgangs)*

> *I would say it [Morningside] was quite, yeah, upper class I would say, I would say the kids in Morningside are a bit snooty compared to [us]. (Female, 25-29, Oxgangs)*

The evidence from these interviews challenges the idea that the immediacy and physical proximity of sharp social and economic differences necessarily increase dissatisfaction or resentment among low income households within deprived neighbourhoods. Instead, residents locate their neighbourhood within a spectrum that, whilst identifying more affluent areas, also enables them to position their area as being more desirable than others, based on the reputations that certain symbolic localities have within the wider urban area.

3.3   Neighbourhood Reputation and Stigma

Residents in both Hillside and Oxgangs reported that their neighbourhood had a poor reputation within the wider urban area, although the comparative reputation of the two neighbourhoods differed. Some respondents gave direct personal accounts of the stigmatisation and poor reputation of their neighbourhood:

> *People say to me 'where do you live these days? and I say 'Hillside' they go 'Oh my God, poor you', you know its reputation goes before it, which is a shame. (Female, 45-64, Hillside)*

> *I think it did have a bad reputation because that house up for sale over there, some seller was driving up so that's what they do, they look and he said to me 'what's the area like round here, is it still fully of scallys'? I said 'no it's a lot better' but I think that's why the houses weren't selling. (Female, 35-44, Hillside)*

There was also some anecdotal evidence that the reputation of the neighbourhood could impact on individual's ability to access the labour market:

They're talented kids but coming from the area these young people used to say soon as they hear where we're from we won't get the job and it was the truth they were speaking. (Female, 45-64, Hillside)

Some residents also admitted that they had negative impressions of their neighbourhood prior to actually living there:

Well I can honestly say that before I lived in Oxgangs I thought it was an absolute dump and I was pretty scared of the people who lived in it...it's like a stereotypical view that everybody in this place was a bit rough and a bit hard… (Female, 25-29, Oxgangs)

In both Hillside and Oxgangs, almost all the residents who perceived a negative reputation believed that this was unfairly perpetuated by outsiders and did not reflect the positive elements of their neighbourhood. They argued that this poor reputation was outmoded and did not take account of the (generally positive) changes that had occurred in recent years. Both areas had been subject to regeneration measures: a large scale neighbourhood remodelling exercise as part of the NDC project in Hillside and the demolition of some tower blocks in Oxgangs.

Nothing really happens like you'd expect, like loads of people from an estate like this, think there'd be lots of trouble, there's not, none of the kids...they're dead well behaved and that. (Male, 16-24, Hillside)

Residents' primary experience of their neighbourhood was one where social problems were largely limited, and whilst these existed they did not necessarily impinge on them directly on a daily basis. This enabled some residents to be relatively sanguine about the negative reputation of their neighbourhood portrayed in the local media.

The dynamics of neighbourhood reputation and stigma played out in different ways in the two neighbourhoods. Residents in Hillside were more likely to identify their neighbourhood as having a negative reputation as one of the 'worst' areas in their wider locality. This may be expected to lead to a greater level of dissatisfaction and stigmatisation than in Oxgangs. However, although residents in Oxgangs frequently contrasted outsiders' views of their neighbourhood with the (even) poorer reputation of other neighbourhoods in the city, the greater social diversity of neighbourhoods in Edinburgh as a whole meant that they were equally likely to be affected by negative stereotyping:

There's a dreadful snobbery, Oh Edinburgh's always been like that, specific areas are snobby. (Female, 45-64, Oxgangs)

Neighbourhood reputations are therefore not only generated by, or experienced in relation to, immediately adjacent areas. The extent and form of stigmatisation is not just linked to the actual socio-economic characteristics of a neighbourhood but also the city-wide calibrations that can be made about neighbourhood status.

3.4   Inter- Neighbourhood Interactions

The interviews aimed to explore the interactions that residents had with other neighbourhoods, both adjacent to their own neighbourhood and further afield, in order to assess whether the more geographically 'bounded' nature of deprivation in Oxgangs had an impact on overall perceptions. It was apparent that many residents did not spend much time in other neighbourhoods, even those adjacent to their own, and therefore recognised that their ability to comment on differences was limited. In both neighbourhoods, but especially Hillside, people travelled through urban areas,

for example on public transport, but did not subject them to a comparison with their home locality:

> *You go by [other neighbourhoods] on the bus and it doesn't even, like I say it's never even come into my mind...I've never even thought about it until you said. (Female, 35-44, Oxgangs)*

The wider urban area is often experienced as a series of trajectories and nodes. For example, many young people from Hillside travelled directly to college and back again, without any interaction or engagement with the other neighbourhoods that they pass through. Mirroring the processes of reputation, image construction and assumption that they identified having an impact on their own neighbourhoods, residents acknowledged that they applied similar judgements to other areas they had no personal knowledge or experience of:

> *You know Oxgangs, it's like when you say Broomhouse they're like 'oh we're not going up there' it's just.... I think it's just names. You say Corstorphine that's the posh area so it's just names. People sort of judge it before they've actually lived there. (Female, 16-24, Oxgangs)*

The physical differences between their own neighbourhoods and more affluent areas were noted by many respondents. By noting that they did not know people who lived in these areas, they tended to play down any differences between people, as opposed to the more tangible differences in the quality of the built environment:

> *If you go to Knowsley Village it seems quiet and clean...the houses look good and things you know? I don't really know anyone, it's just as you go through it seems clean and quiet and there's no gangs or anything like that, or rubbish thrown. (Female, 35-44, Hillside)*

> *I suppose just different houses, the style of the houses and things like you know, you just think like 'it must have cost a big mortgage to...' but something like that and people like, I don't know, me, I wouldn't put myself into a lot of debt just to buy a house but I suppose some people do so I don't suppose you can really tell, can you? (Female, 25-29, Oxgangs)*

Some residents of Oxgangs who have visited other neighbourhoods did comment upon them in favourable terms:

> *Hunter's Tryst...Well they're all private houses and cottages and bungalows, things like that and then there's Swanston, I know somebody actually stays in Swanston and it's a wee thatched cottage and it's got, you would nae see it from the street, it's surrounded by trees and you go right round and there's 5 or 6 wee thatched cottages and there's a wee river with a wee bridge going over the top of it, it's really lovely up there. (Female, 65 or over, Oxgangs)*

Most other residents in Oxgangs who had direct experience of more affluent neighbourhoods were more likely to view the residents of these areas in a positive light and to perceive them to be living in 'different worlds' compared to Oxgangs:

> *Well I work for people, people that I work for, they're millionaires, they live in a totally different world.*

> *[Interviewer] And does that bother you?*

They're nice people but they live in a different world. It doesn't bother me, no, because that's the world, that's life, you just get on with it, you're gonna get the scruffy part and you're gonna get the more affluent part as well, you've got to make your own… (Female, 25-29, Oxgangs)

Whilst residents identified differences between their own area and surrounding neighbourhoods, these differences were largely limited to visible signifiers such as dress, cars, jewellery and voice pronunciation, rather than differences in attitudes, behaviour or moral worth:

I wouldn't say it was a different accent, I just think maybe they pronounce things a lot better..and their clothes...it's like your suits, like your business men and their wives...dripping in their gold...at the parents night you know the mothers are dolled up to the eyeballs. (Female, 45-64, Oxgangs)

Whilst residents in Oxgangs were more likely to encounter and be aware of differences between themselves and others than residents in Hillside (which is not surprising given the relative heterogeneity and homogeneity of their neighbourhoods), this did not seem to affect levels of either self-esteem or resentment of others. Rather, there was an 'equalising', or 'normalising', process where the populations of neighbourhoods were regarded as being essentially similar, apart from obvious surface income differentials.

The lack of interaction between residents in other areas of the same estate and between their area adjacent neighbourhoods suggests that barriers to interaction were not merely constructed on social class or income lines. However, the permeability of Oxgangs and its proximity to affluent neighbourhoods did appear to lead to greater interaction between individuals from different social backgrounds in daily encounters.

Aye you just go to Colinton Road there, Colinton… I used to walk to the bowling club and go along that Colinton area, you're talking couple of hundred thousand for houses up there. But these people still come into Oxgangs, the Broadway to do their wee bit of shopping and that. (Male, 65 or over, Oxgangs)

A key event and site for this interaction between residents of Oxgangs and its surrounding neighbourhoods had been the recent amalgamation of two local primary schools. Some respondents viewed this diversity and interaction as entirely positive:

Yes they are quite wealthy areas.... because that side of the road and that's a wealthier type area compared to this side of the road really ?... I suppose that's why it works so well because the schools round about, they're dotted round about so it's like you're no just having kids from that area go to the school, kids from both areas go to the school, they come from this area as well see, I think that's probably why they work so well. (Male, 35-44, Oxgangs)

However, several other accounts identified tensions arising from this 'mixed' profile:

A lot of [parents at the school] didn't want their kids mixing with riff raff. (Female, 65 or over, Oxgangs)

Some residents from Oxgangs who had attended the school believed that they had been subject to a degree of stigmatisation based on suppositions about their financial status and their cultural attitudes:

Well it was more kids from posher areas that were in my school.

[Interviewer] What school was that again?

That was Comiston primary, the majority of them would have been from bought houses.

[Interviewer] Ok, were you aware that they were better off.

You could notice the difference.

[Interviewer] How would you know?

Just from their attitudes, even I think even the children, like my sister goes to St Marks and even my wee sister's pals, a lot of them are a lot more common than what my sister is, so I think it's just the different way they talk, the way their parents are, it's like the way you're brought up, where we've lived here there's certain things that we just weren't allowed to do. My sister, she's seven, she's not allowed out to play, whereas the other children the majority of them are allowed out on the street to play, children as young as three and four. When I was wee you probably could have did that but you can't really do that now because there's too many strange people coming into the area. But I think the difference, people just sort of think 'oh from Oxgangs, Oxgangs isn't a very good area' people are of that opinion, haven't got a kind word to say, but I always felt I got judged because I was from Oxgangs and they were from other places, houses that cost quarter of a million, stuff like that. (Female, 25-29, Oxgangs)

The interviews suggested that, whilst adjacent neighbourhoods and populations were often viewed in a neutral or indeed positive manner, more direct and personalised interaction, such as through schooling, can accentuate social, economic or cultural differences. This can create tensions due to more direct comparisons being made of social status, with due consequences for a sense of self-esteem.

A common theme in the literature on urban inequality, social mix and neighbourhood differentiation is that being relatively deprived amidst affluence may increase the sense of neighbourhood dissatisfaction and lower self-esteem. However, the research in both these localities found little evidence for this. Residents did not articulate resentment towards those living in more affluent neighbourhoods:

You see other people, you don't begrudge other people getting by. Don't get me wrong, I'm not like that, I'm like 'good luck to you, I wish I could do it' but you think oh yeah I'd really love to do that things like that, but other than that I just like to see people getting by. I'm not one to think 'that should be me'. (Female, 35-44, Hillside)

No I've never ever done that in my whole life, never. I've never even thought about until you said, it's just like nice houses. I mean I've worked for people, I've worked for millionaires in Mansion House Road when I've been doing cleaning jobs and home help for folk that have got money but even that doesn't interest me, it's just where you live is where you live. I mean it's like even this house, I'm overwhelmed with this house. Why would I want a huge big I mean it's a quiet area as well, it's a quiet stair, nothing comes into it, I don't know if you're meaning jealousy or something? (Female, 35-44, Oxgangs)

The widespread process of equalisation and normalisation caused residents from different neighbourhoods to be regarded as essentially 'the same', despite different financial and housing circumstances:

The only differences are the houses and the cars, the people in it are the same as everywhere else. (Female, 45-64, Oxgangs)

I think you get good people and bad people everywhere sort of thing, I don't think it's too much different about more affluent areas but I think obviously they're not having to struggle and scrape around for money and things, which is less tension already. And if you're in an area where you've not got as much money and a lot of the houses around here it's people that are on benefits or get their council and there's maybe problems already there, so that's why I think it's maybe a bit more friction sometimes in areas like this.

[Interviewer] Right because people are …

Maybe have just not got as much as they'd like to have, so everybody's trying to get more than they've got sort of thing. (Female, 16-24, Oxgangs)

Other residents recognised that households living in more affluent areas or larger properties could also experience relative financial hardship:

[Interviewer] And what about here and other areas nearby, is there a clear difference in the money or whatever between Oxgangs and other areas around here?

I don't perceive it as that, I certainly did years ago but when you get to know the people if you work out of this area, round about here, you know maybe in the bigger houses and all, they're not any more financially (better) off than we are, they maybe have more money but they're not necessarily have any more extra money than we have. We know people who don't go on holiday because they can't afford to. (Female, 30-34, Oxgangs)

Although there was little resentment directed towards more affluent people living nearby, this was accompanied by a very strong belief that no additional moral worth should be attached to them either. Living in a relatively deprived neighbourhood should not therefore be an admission of failure: others had just been 'luckier':

They probably aren't any different really, but they're maybe just been lucky or they've been born into families that maybe had a bit more money, that doesn't make them any better people. (Female, 25-29, Oxgangs)

This translated into the belief that there should be no sense of shame about living in a relatively deprived neighbourhood, even one surrounded by visibly affluent developments:

I've never been embarrassed by living here, there's nothing wrong with it, it's just houses; a house is a house. (Female, 35-44, Oxgangs)

It is important to acknowledge that these residents were responding to direct questions asked of them about their own and adjacent neighbourhoods. However, many other responses suggested a need to rethink comparative conceptualisations of neighbourhoods. Many residents (especially in Hillside) have been brought up in their neighbourhood, or spent most of their lives there. Here, several responses suggested that residents did not conceptualise neighbourhoods in comparative terms, so that the dynamics of neighbourhood reputation and stigmatisation simply did not exist:

To be honest...I don't know really, probably just the same everywhere you go really init...just depends if you know them and that like, I think they're sound round here meself like...I don't know like, I mean...think nothing like but you ask someone off a different estate what they think about it [Hillside] they'll probably tell you something different, whatever, as you do, they'd probably say something different.
(Male, 16-24, Hillside)

[Interviewer] People from outside of Oxgangs, do you know what they might think of the area?

I would nae say people think about areas in a general way like that, they're no… people dunnae sit and think about what's actually round about them, I would nae even have thought it myself if you had nae asked me if you know what I mean. Obviously I'm aware of what's round and about me and I use what I need to use, other than that I would say that most people would be the same. They're aware of what's there and use it if they need it.
(Male, 35-44, Oxgangs)

Residents therefore conceptualised their neighbourhood from close proximity as 'lived space' rather than something to be objectified and 'graded' from a distance. These responses indicate that care needs to be taken in interpretation, for risk of imposing a conceptual and analytical framework that does not reflect the reality of residents' daily lives. In particular, the responses above: '*It's not an interest until you actually said it to me*" and "*I've never even thought about it until you said*" highlight how comparative neighbourhood images may be less important for some residents than one might suppose, and that the interview process itself might generate immediate or 'artificial' responses that do not necessarily capture residents' perceptions of their localities.

3.5   Discussion

We were interested to explore the extent to which living in a neighbourhood that was a 'pocket' of deprivation near to affluent areas engendered a different sense of their area than the contrasting area which was surrounded by other deprived neighbourhoods. Did residents feel a greater sense of resentment, or lower self-esteem because they lived nearer the daily experiences of more affluent areas? Or would they seek to emulate in some manner the ostensibly 'successful' lives of those affluent households who lived nearby? No, on both counts. Indeed, respondents from both areas did not attribute any higher relative moral worth to residents living in wealthier neighbourhoods, but nor did they articulate any resentment against those living in more affluent areas. Residents in Oxgangs perceived some physical, financial and social distance between themselves and those living in surrounding neighbourhoods, but they did not express this distance in terms of different forms of behaviour or values.

However, there were also clear distinctions between residents' perceptions in the two neighbourhoods. In Hillside, the neighbourhood was commonly perceived as 'the same as everywhere else'. In Oxgangs, by contrast, the neighbourhood was often perceived as being located within a hierarchy of neighbourhoods, in which Oxgangs was seen as one of the better 'council' estates in Edinburgh. This greater awareness of neighbourhood difference in Oxgangs was a function of the visible physical, economic and social differences of adjacent neighbourhoods but also the greater levels of personal mobility amongst residents. In terms of their daily lives, more of the respondents worked outside the area than in Hillside, and a higher proportion had lived elsewhere before moving into the neighbourhood. It was also a function of local school catchment areas: in Oxgangs the primary school provided a site of direct

interaction between residents from different types of neighbourhood. This 'shared' space tended to be the site of parallel social networks, rather a crossing of the boundary between the more and the less affluent groups.

The different mechanisms through which residents conceptualised the status of their neighbourhoods suggests that one needs a more complex and nuanced understanding of how perceived neighbourhood status impacts on self-esteem. Residents' conceptualisations of their neighbourhoods should not be regarded as deliberate 'coping strategies' as a response to stigmatisation or inequality. The overall balance of responses suggests that many residents do not conceptualise their circumstances through a keenly honed relativist framework, or a 'deficit' view, as sometimes assumed in urban research paradigms. These findings also cast doubt on much of the rationale underpinning the promotion of 'mixed communities': the idea that more affluent residents or those in employment will act as 'role models' for others residents and influence their behaviour accordingly. If your area is perceived as 'normal', then the desire to emulate something else is unlikely to be present.

4. Diversity and Social Networks: Wensley Fold and West Marsh

4.1 Introduction

Thirty interviews were undertaken with residents in West Marsh, Grimsby and thirty interviews in Wensley Fold/Bank Top, Blackburn. These neighbourhoods were selected as a contrasting pair, in order to explore the extent to which the (penalising and mediating) effect of place on household experiences may be encountered differently by distinct groups in different settings. Attention focused on the social networks, relations and interactions of respondents resident in the two neighbourhoods and the analysis explores the impact that various dimension of diversity have on the breadth and depth of social resources/capital/wealth available to different people. As Appendix 1 shows, West Marsh is an ethnically homogenous area of White British residents, while Wensley Fold contains a White British and a south Asian community. Do these differences in the ethnic composition of the two areas manifest themselves in any pronounced differences of outlook and identity, or in the development and maintenance of social networks?

Describing the archetypal industrial working class neighbourhood and its networks of association and interaction, Bott (1957) observed the concentration of people of the same or similar occupations living in the same neighbourhood, whose jobs and homes were in the same area, which was characterised by low population turnover and continuity of relations, opportunities and need for family and friends to help one another, little demand for physical mobility and little opportunity for social mobility. The result was a high degree of density or close knit social networks, where kin, work associates and neighbours were largely all the same people (Young and Wilmott, 1957). These three realms of interaction and relations - family, neighbours and work - dominated the social networks of respondents in West Marsh (Grimsby) and Wensley Fold (Blackburn). However, the situation was far more complex and variegated than the picture painted by Bott. Access to, engagement with and utilisation of these different forms of network varied considerably between respondents.

4.2 Realms of Interaction and Contact: Family, Neighbourhood and Work

Networks of family emerged as the most significant ties within the social networks of most respondents in both case studies, providing a source of both financial and social support. Indeed, this theme emerged as important across all six neighbourhoods, as we shall see in Chapter 6. However, the proximity and significance of family networks and the support that they provided varied widely. At one extreme there were respondents who had multiple family members living locally, and in some cases on the same street:

> *[Interviewer] Does your daughter live round here then?*
>
> *She lives next door.[Interviewer] Ah that's maybe why you don't want to move?*
>
> *It could be, she moved in 2007, used to be Mrs X who lived next door, she was one of the originals that was with me grandparents and of course she died and*

the chap who bought it rented it and since then she's moved in and bought it and it is very convenient actually when I've not been very well as well, she can pop over and make sure we're all right.

[Interviewer] Do you find you wouldn't be able to do the things you do if you didn't have that sort of support?

Yeah [name of daughter], the one with the two children, she's brilliant, she's very asthmatic as well but she helps me an awful lot, she takes me to the shops and if she sees I'm struggling it's a case of 'sit down mum and I'll do it' she's very good, if she went out to work I'd be lost actually. (Female, 65 or over, West Marsh)

Evidence of the continued importance of the local area as the facilitator of close kinship ties emerged in both neighbourhoods and among respondents of different ages and from different ethnic groups. However, close geographical proximity within family ties was most obviously apparent among respondents in Wensley Fold and, in particular, among Pakistani respondents. Within this group of residents there were examples of people living with and next door to immediate family members, with and next door to cousins, next door to brothers and sisters, and on the same street, or within close walking distance, of family members.

I was born round this area, I was born on [name] Road in Blackburn and my parents were living at [name] Road and we moved from there to there at [second name] Road where we are now, I'd say about 20 years of my life I've been living at the address I'm at now.

[Interviewer] And how many of you are there in the house?

In my household there is 9 of us not including my brother's kids, he's got two kids, so 11 in total but we've got two houses

[Interviewer] Next door to each other?

Yeah next door. (Male, 16-24, Wensley Fold)

Living in such proximity to family members gave these respondents access to forms of support and assistance that are dependent upon proximity. Probably the most frequently cited example was help with child care, but other examples included help looking after a sick or disabled relative, help getting around (for example, to work, the doctors, more distant family and the supermarket), practical help around the house (for example, with DIY tasks) and friendship and companionship.

The significance of proximity as a key determinant of the support and assistance provided by family contacts was further revealed by the experiences of respondents whose family networks were more geographically dispersed, stretching often beyond the town where they were living and even outside the UK. It is an obvious point, but it was clear from the experiences of these respondents that distance can serve to make some forms of supportive ties unsustainable. Face-to-face engagement is often more intermittent, with contact maintained through telephone conversations. Nearby associates (whether family or not) therefore tend to be the source of practical forms of support, such as child care, while more distant family can serve as a source of advice and financial support. This pattern of family contact and support is well illustrated by the experiences of a single mother with two children aged nine and five years old living in West Marsh:

[Interviewer] So how often do you see your mum or do your mum and dad come here?

Yeah they're coming this weekend, I don't go there very often cos I haven't got any transport and going on the train and that it's just extortionate. Sometimes my mum even comes to pick me up, it's like 35, 40 quid round trip, it's a lot of money, but yeah we get to see them probably every couple of months which isn't enough but…

[Interviewer] Kids get on with them do they?

Oh adore them, me daughter speaks to me mum every day, the minute she gets in the door, 'can I ring me granny' 'yeah go on then' every day and me mum sends us letters and they write letters to me mum and email and so yeah we're still… and as I say me brother, he just lives near the college and we see him nearly every day, nips in nearly every day.

[Interviewer] So has he got family?

No he's on his own and he works but he is me rock me brother, I couldn't do what I do without Stuart, I mean especially going to college and that, he was the one who took her to school when I had a course and you know he was… and still now, he's brilliant, I couldn't do half without him and I do feel so sorry for these young lasses that have got nobody. I don't know how they cope, you know got no family round them and nobody'll help them, it's such a shame. (Female, 35-44, West Marsh)

The above reference to the financial cost of visiting the respondent's mother and father underlines the extent to which distance can be an 'unsupportable cost' for many people with limited economic resources (Fisher, 1982). This was overcome, in some instances, by the mobility of family members, who were able to pay regular visits. One woman in West Marsh, for example, talked about her parents driving in from outside town once a month to baby sit so that her and her partner could have a night out. Another woman in West Marsh, who originally came from East Anglia, talked about only being able to maintain contact with family members who were relatively nearby and who were willing and able to travel to see her. This respondent noted that these family contacts were becoming increasingly important, because her mobility problems required greater practical assistance, which was not met by associates nearby. Other respondents also commented on the difficulties of substituting nearby (non-family) associates for absent family contacts, particularly in relation to child care.

Respondents who had looser knit, more geographically dispersed family networks that stretched beyond the local neighbourhood and town of residence to other parts of the UK and beyond, typically pointed to financial assistance as the principal form of support from family members. This form of assistance was not without its problems, however:

Me freezer went a few months ago and I had to save and get one.

[Interviewer] how long did it take you to save up for it?

Well me daughter helped me out and I borrowed a bit off me mam so we were only without a month …. I don't like asking me mam because I know she's in a scrape sometimes so… and then you've to pay it back so you're as bad off you know what I mean, it's just one roller coaster. (Female, 45-64, West Marsh)

The neighbourhood provides the opportunity for the development of social networks through interactions in local public space. There are opportunities for repeated interactions on the streets, in shops, pubs, parks, in places of worship and at schools that can help to promote local social networks. Evidence of such locality based networks was found in both case studies. Typically, these contacts consisted of convivial acts of neighbourliness, involving non-intimate exchanges (a wave, quick 'hello' in passing or brief chat), the exchange of help and assistance and support in emergencies.

For many people, particularly in West Marsh, neighbourhood contacts were frequent but rarely intimate or supportive, other than in an emergency. In network terms, the neighbourhood provided the realm of practical relations involving the exchange of small services as well as convivial relations. It is important, however, not to underestimate the importance of such relations, both in contributing to a general sense of security and well-being, as well as a source of help and assistance in an emergency:

> *[Interviewer] So do people help each other out and stuff?*
>
> *Yeah there is quite a lot going on round here like that. Couple of days ago someone knocked on the door 'have you seen old bloke across the road?' and I was like 'yeah he was at my house last night' because he fetches me TV mag and stuff 'oh cos we hadn't seen him we was a bit worried about him' things like that go on yeah which is nice because I'll be old one day and it'll be somebody looking out for me. But I think with the things in the paper recently about look after your neighbours, there was a bloke found, he'd been passed away since I think they said December and they've only just found him. (Female, 30-34, West Marsh)*

However, neighbourhood ties in West Marsh were typically weak and rarely extended beyond the convivial, even for people who had no other points of connectivity to social networks. It frequently appeared that people had retreated behind their front door and possessed only loose knit networks at neighbourhood level. By contrast, there was evidence in Wensley Fold that the local area was playing a role in the fostering of close friendship or kinship ties. In particular, there were numerous instances of neighbours being both regular contacts and social intimates. Some respondents talked about having friendships in the neighbourhood that stretched back to their childhood and their schooldays. The sustainability of these friendships was underpinned by the fact that both respondents and their friends had remained in the area. In Blackburn, this was true for many younger, as well as older, respondents.

> *[Interviewer] And thinking about your family round here or friends, do you think your life would be very different if you moved somewhere else? Oh yeah definitely*
>
> *[Interviewer] What would you lose?*
>
> *I'd have no friends at all if I moved away …. All my family live in Blackburn so I'd have no family to go to and same with schools, cos I went to the school that the children go to and so did [name of partner] and so did our mums so we all know the teachers and you feel comfortable where you know you are and that's how I feel living here, I feel comfortable living here and with what's around me, so I'd lose everything if I moved away, I'd have nothing left.*
> *(Female, 30-34, Wensley Fold)*

Longer-term residents from West Marsh tended to be older and often struggled to forge contact and develop positive relations with younger residents. They were therefore reliant on networks of social contact that were gradually shrinking, as old friends and associates moved out or died:

> *[Interviewer] Do you think people in general round here look out for each other or do you think it's just between the people who've been here a long time?*
>
> *It's just between the people that's been here a long time.*
>
> *[Interviewer] … What makes them different, is it just because like you said there's a lot of younger people moved in that end?*
>
> *It's just the young people, they're not as sociable, I mean when the last person moved in there I felt sorry for her, she had two kids and expecting another one. And when I did a dinner I always did too much and I always give them and when I baked I got no thanks or nothing from 'em and I got all sorts chucked in the yard from them, dirty nappies and everything and so I stopped. And I said if anybody moved in there again I wouldn't help 'em, not like I have done.*
> *Female, 65 or over, West Marsh)*

In Wensley Fold, in contrast, family and neighbourhood based networks frequently overlapped. This was very much the case for the South Asian respondents, for whom place also provided both a territorial focus for a sense of identity and belonging, and provided access to important social resources. For example, recent immigrants from Pakistan talked about the sense of identity that was to be gained by living in what was frequently referred to as an 'Asian' area.

> *[Interviewer] So that means that since you've come from Pakistan you've mostly stayed in this area? Yes*
>
> *[Interviewer]So are you happy that you've lived in this area?*
>
> *Yes, it's because we have a lot of our community here, I can't speak English so it's nice that I have my own people here cos I can speak Urdu or Punjabi and also the whole family lives in this town, that's why.*
>
> *[Interviewer] So all of your relatives live here, and what about facilities and services?*
>
> *We have everything, all services here.*
> *(Male, 30-34, Wensley Fold)*

It is important to point out that strong ties to the neighbourhood were not universal among respondents in Wensley Fold. In particular, there were a number of White British respondents who, while not mentioning any major problems about living in the neighbourhood, regarded it as little more than the place where their home was, to which they returned at the end of the day. Some of these respondents had access to a car and detailed extensive everyday geographies of daily life and contact:

> *[Interviewer] One of the things we're interested in is asking people to describe a typical day, like yesterday or something, where do you go, what do you do and where do you go to do certain things like shopping or training or working?*
>
> *My local shops, my use of them has changed over the years because there's been kind of these big garagey shops built now, Somerfield with a garage and all that kind of stuff and get everything now. Before I moved out of the area I*

would use the local shop on XXX Street, walk down, and for, I mean I'm lucky in that I've got a car so I tend to, I've got friends in a lot of places so I tend to socialise and shop wherever I find myself and my home in Wensley Fold is where I come back to, in Bank Top, whatever, I don't know it doesn't really have a set identity in the name.

[Interviewer] So you seem to be saying that the car gives you transportation which allows your life to spread beyond the neighbourhood?

Absolutely yes. I don't tend to shop locally, I'm a Lancashire lass, I eat hotpot and mince and potatoes, I'm not one for being an ethnic chick who goes buying all these hippy trippy spices and trying to cook something up, and 'I want to be like you', I'm myself, I'm a Lancashire lass but I accept everybody for being how they are. I just don't shop locally.
(Female, 35-44, Wensley Fold)

The workplace emerged as a locus for interaction, similar to the neighbourhood, in that it brought people into close proximity but did not necessarily result in intimacy or supportiveness. This was true for people in formal and informal employment and engaged in voluntary work. However, against this backdrop of routine, some people had developed friendships that involved the exchanges of support and small services. One respondent in Grimsby, for example, reported spending his time 'chilling out' after working three 12 hour shifts in three days. He said he knew few people where he was living, other than immediate neighbours to say 'hello' to. However, he had developed a close friendship with work colleagues, who would come around for a chat and a drink on an evening and who had been helping him with DIY around the house.

This was not the only instance where work was contributing to the geographical dispersal of personal networks beyond the neighbourhood. Indeed, in most cases where people were in work, the contacts that they made were typically with people from outside their neighbourhood and there was little evidence of any significant overlap between work and neighbourhood contacts; neighbours and work associates were not the same people. Many respondents were also not currently in (voluntary or paid) work and so had no access to work related contacts. Some people, however, did report strong networks of friendship that had originated at work and survived either being made redundant or retirement.

The nature, form and function of social networks are, in part, conditional on the locality or place where people live and the geography of their social network. Comparing the experiences of the sixty respondents interviewed in West Marsh and Wensley Fold, there appeared to be some shared experiences, rooted in similar life histories, personal circumstances or material situations. However, there were some distinct differences between experiences in the two neighbourhoods. While West Marsh was characterised by less dense, looser and more geographically dispersed social networks, Wensley Fold revealed overlapping family and neighbourhood ties and relatively dense, locally rooted networks that more readily provided resources that could serve to mediate experiences of poverty.

4.3   West Marsh: Loose Ties and Dispersed Social Networks

Social networks among West Marsh respondents tended to be looser, less dense, more geographically dispersed and less productive as a source of support that served to mediate the challenges of getting by in the face of poverty. Family contacts were geographically dispersed and kinship ties within the immediate vicinity were not common. Many respondents did have family members living in other areas of Grimsby or in nearby towns (for example, Cleethorpes or, further afield,

Doncaster), but even these relatively short distances often serve to limit access to the support and assistance that family members might be able to provide. There was some evidence of a division between older, long-standing residents and younger, more recent arrivals into the neighbourhood. Many respondents were not in work and none of those who were worked in the local neighbourhood, limiting the potential for productive relations to develop with colleagues outside the work place.

Residential mobility was marked among younger respondents, reflecting the relatively large private rented sector within the neighbourhood and its function as a sector where ready access and high turnover are at a premium. There is always the potential that socially mixed neighbourhoods will be divided and marked by tensions and conflict. In recent years, research and policy attention has tended to focus on struggles between different ethnic groups over the ownership and use of public space and key resources. In the Grimsby case study, the most apparent dimension of difference leading to tensions over public space was *age*. In particular, older people said they were fearful of younger people, because they had quite different expectations making co-existence more difficult. As a result, respondents talked about keeping themselves to themselves:

> *[Interviewer] What's the worst thing then about living here?*

> *Well that neighbour mainly and we have got what they call the Gilby Gang, a gang that come down and put your windows through regular, used to put mine through regular, now this one's gone through that much they've put toughened glass in it so when they throw anything it just bounces off but as I say you do get them at night just belting things at your window, they come past and they've got an empty can they'll just belt it at the window. It hasn't been too bad lately because I think a lot of them were put in prison or ASBOed, they've got that.*

> *[Interviewer] Does it make you feel frightened?*

> *Yeah I don't sleep at night at all, I'm very alert all the time. The boy's only got to touch my door handle and I'm awake 'what's the matter?' yeah I don't sleep very much.*

> *[Interviewer] Do you think there are places round here that are different to here, can you see other places in Grimsby that you might want to go to or do you think everywhere's more or less the same?*

> *Well as I say I don't venture much from here so I don't really know how the other half live*
> *(Female, 65 or over, West Marsh)*

A striking difference between West Marsh and Wensley Fold was the extent of opportunities for residents to develop interpersonal ties within the neighbourhood. There were few opportunities for people in West Marsh to meet in pubs, cafes, corner shops, community centres, parks or a library. The local schools emerged as the only local service provider where people were regularly making interpersonal connections within the neighbourhood. The neighbourhood appeared to have been emptied of the institutional and physical infrastructure that helps support social connectivity. There were therefore few opportunities for people, even if they were inclined, to show an interest in the well being of others. Entertaining and socialising was often taking place in the home and when people went out, alone or with others, they frequently left the neighbourhood.

The impact of these factors on social networks was most acutely apparent in the experiences of the older people interviewed, possibly reflecting the environmental dependency that can make older people more vulnerable to the overall characteristics of their neighbourhood.

4.4 Wensley Fold: Dense Ties and Locality Based Social Networks

Social networks among the respondents in Wensley Fold tended to be relatively dense and tight knit. Networks of family, friends and neighbours overlapped far more than in West Marsh. People who had moved into the area tended to have more geographically dispersed networks, but virtually all of the Pakistani respondents who had moved into the neighbourhood had either joined or arrived with family members, resulting in the rapid establishment of locality-based ties. Kinship ties in the immediate vicinity were common.

White British respondents often had close relatives living in other parts of Blackburn and in neighbouring towns. Neighbourliness was common and often extended beyond the street and immediate neighbours. Many respondents expressed a commitment to the neighbourhood and a desire to remain, rooted in their association with a place-based sense of community and belonging. This was particularly apparent among South Asian respondents, although there was also a strong commitment to the neighbourhood among long-standing White British residents. Divisions and tensions between different population groups were not obviously apparent. Problems were reported to have existed ten to fifteen years ago, but to have subsided in recent years.

Relatively new residents of Wensley Fold had typically chosen to live in the area, rather than being 'washed up' in the area, as some West Marsh respondents had recounted. Old and new residents alike frequently expressed a desire to remain, pointing to various benefits of living in the area. The result was a picture of stability and familiarity. The neighbourhood appeared to be a destination of choice in which people were keen to remain, and familiarity and strong, locality-based social ties developed, particularly among South Asian respondents. Some of the White British respondents shared this perception, but many expressed little loyalty or commitment to the area, spending much of their time (shopping, working, socialising) outside the neighbourhood. However, in contrast to West Marsh, there was no strong desire to leave the neighbourhood among these respondents, who tended to agree that the area had seen major improvements in the recent years. At least one respondent related this change to a shift in the profile of the White British population, with fewer transient, vulnerable single people with multiple complex needs and more families moving in, as a result of regeneration renewal activities in the area.

> *[Interviewer] So did it used to have, the area, a bad reputation then?*
>
> *Yeah I would say so. It was probably wasn't worse in Blackburn in the sense of there were some of the council estates that probably in those days had worse reputations for more working class, anti-hero behaviour if you know what I mean, rebellious young men fighting and drinking. It wasn't like that, it was more like disenfranchised lost souls who were doing drugs and prostitutes wandering around and Asian people trying to have some kind of a normal life around dregs of our society, trying to ignore it or deal with it or whatever. So there was a real stark contrast between that community and the Asian community. Because for me I see the Asian community as being very respectful on the whole and also quite insular and they respect each other and they respect their beliefs and they're not good at being challenged on them either particularly on the whole. And I think that's why they don't seek challenges out because they're naturally shy and humble people and having to*

be faced every day with drug users and alcoholics and prostitutes.... I think they found that incredibly difficult.

[Interviewer] Do you think now people in other parts of Blackburn would be happy to move into the area?

Yes, I would imagine that it's one of the more sought after inner town areas at the moment.

[Interviewer] That's quite a turnaround isn't it?

It is a turnaround, it feels like it's a place where people want to live. I'm glad I came back, I really didn't want to come back.

[Interviewer] Do you think other people who live in the area are loyal to it?

Yes I think they are now. I think there has been times when there's been a lot of comings and goings, there was a guy who lived across the street and his family, I don't know whether they were evicted but they moved out very quickly after their dad died, and 12 months later I heard that one of them was in prison for decapitating his girlfriend with a chainsaw. It was all in the papers. But it was that kind of area where there was always that feeling that you don't know what kind of secrets lie behind people's front doors. I mean you never do with anybody but it feels much more like there's people with families, young kids, there's black faces, brown faces, white faces, white faces from all over Europe living in the area, it's much more multi-cultural as opposed to a dichotomy of opposites.
(Female, 35-44, Wensley Fold)

A number of respondents talked about how in the past there had been conflict between different ethnic groups in the neighbourhood. One respondent confirmed that inter-ethnic tensions had been a major problem, which had subsided but had now begun to change again, with the arrival into the neighbourhood of migrant workers from Eastern Europe.

[Interviewer] Is there anything else you'd say is a good thing about living where you live?

Well I would say it's quiet, not too quiet, but it is quiet. … (it was) always the Asians against the Whites or the Whites against the Asians, now it's the foreigners that's come in now.

[Interviewer] When you say foreigners who are you talking about?

Well Polish…

[Interviewer] Are there a lot of Polish people moving in?

Yeah taking housing and jobs and all that, I don't know why like but…

[Interviewer] Are there quite a few Polish people moving in round where you are?

Well not exactly round where I live but XXX Street area, a lot of these Asians got houses for rent so they come and rent 'em, the council pays so as long as he gets his money he's not bothered who goes in.
(Male, 45-64, Wensley Fold)

Other respondents referred more positively to inter-ethnic relations in the neighbourhood.

> *[Interviewer] What would you say are the best things about living in this area?*
>
> *There's more a mixture of people, you've got the Asians, the English and our communication together, it's stronger than what it used to be, there's certain, it was quite tense when it came to September 11th but otherwise communication with the Asian and the English is quite close, I've got quite a few English friends locally. I've a pair that come to my house and we communicate well, there's not that much racism as it used to be, there used to be quite a lot but I think people are more or less combining together. I think now that the Asian community is going more wide, it's going into businesses, it's uniting more with the western side really, because our Asians have changed a lot in that sense, so it's improved things in this area.*
>
> *[Interviewer] So you feel there's less segregation amongst the different communities, do you feel generally all the communities have come together or are there any differences that you can think of?*
>
> *They have come together, you'll find certain areas which they won't accept things like that and people that just don't like the Asians.*
>
> *[Interviewer] Which areas are they?*
>
> *I've heard through my husband, he finds that the Mill Hill area is more where the White people are living, hardly any Asians, that is as he works there of a night. It's a bit rough there and people there are not very good with the Asians, racist remarks and they just don't get along with them but most of the other areas they're fine, they're accepting.*
> *(Female, 35-44, Wensley Fold)*

Positive neighbourly relations with people from different ethnic groups were reported by most respondents. In the comments of White British respondents there was sometimes a hint of surprise that South Asian neighbours engaged in acts of neighbourliness:

> *[Interviewer] And does everyone get on? Is it the sort of place where everyone will look out for each other?*
>
> *If we talk, but we don't mix cos like, it's a bit Asian on my road, there's only two White people but we get on. I've got one across the road who's Asian and I talk to him all the time, we do look out for each other, me next door neighbour's Asian and she went to India and she asked me to look after the house which I did. And also when I was done about 15 years ago, next door saw somebody break into the house and they went so he was looking out for me. I've got no problem at all with the people, sometimes it's the Whites who are worse, there's a lot of … just drinking, there's … you always see them with cans and they're all over the place, I've got no problems with Asians, it's the Whites mainly but I don't get no trouble.*
>
> *[Interviewer] Your neighbours on your street, would you say they're in a similar position to you, money wise, work wise?*
>
> *I'd say so yeah, we're all working class really, there's no-one higher or lower.*
> *(Male, 45-64, Wensley Fold)*

Meanwhile, in some of the comments of South Asian respondents there was sometimes the suggestion of surprise that White British neighbours did not cause trouble.

> *[Interviewer] Do people around here get on with each other, do they help each other out?*
>
> *Yeah they do a lot, like a big community.*
>
> *[Interviewer] Is it a mixed community, are there people from different backgrounds?*
>
> *Ethnic minority, no, it's just Asians.*
>
> *[Interviewer] And do the Pakistanis mix with the Indians and…*
>
> *Yeah*
>
> *[Interviewer] So there's quite a community spirit?*
>
> *Yeah there is*
>
> *[Interviewer] What about with the White people?*
>
> *There's a lot in this area within a couple of streets down it's more Pakistanis and Indians so they get on with each other a lot but as you go further down this way there's more White people, within this community you'd find really few White people.*
>
> *[Interviewer] But do they get on?*
>
> *Yeah they do, we've got a few living on the street, they're ok, they don't cause any problems.*
> (Female, 16-24, Wensley Fold)

Alongside these positive stories of inter-ethnic neighbourliness and convivial relations, some respondents also reported divisions and tensions. Many respondents told stories of drug-related crime and the anti-social behaviour of gangs of young people. As in West Marsh, the fear of crime had a particularly corrosive effect on the lives of older people. A second problem reported by two mothers was the racism that South Asian children were experiencing when visiting a local playground. However, unlike West

> *[Interviewer] In what way do you think it's changed? You said the ethnic mix had changed. Well there's a lot more different accents, there's a lot more different languages spoken. It's a diverse community now, there's lots of different Eastern Europeans moved in so you're hearing lots of different languages, Polish and Lithuanian and what have you, whatever languages they speak, I really don't know, but I know that there's. To me, what happened was suddenly the Asian people who felt like outsiders created this, almost a ghetto of a place where they feel safe and it's their identity and it's their shops and the women don't feel unsafe, all the worries that the community have about our society, dogs, that's another one. Suddenly they're not the newcomers any more, they're not the 'alien', they're the settled community, and I think it's been a really good thing to me for the Muslim people around me because they seem to have much more of a sense of identity and purpose, and they don't seem as angry, or misunderstood would be the word maybe.*

(Female, 35-44, Wensley Fold)

Alongside the numerous stories of inter-ethnic neighbourliness, respondents frequently articulated detailed racialised micro-geographies of the neighbourhood. This typically involved people detailing particular streets or sub-areas of the neighbourhood that were 'White' and others that were 'Asian':

[Interviewer] How do you think this area compares to other parts of Blackburn you know?

It's predominantly a large Asian community that lives in Bank Top as far as I see but… it's weird because I think if you look at it, you separate it into north, south, east, west, where my friends live now is predominantly a White area, you'll get the occasional weekend, people go out drinking and they'll smash their cars and you get those kind of problems. You live round here and it's a different thing, obviously crime does happen but people in a strange way they, I wouldn't say keep an eye out for each other but.... if everyone's going through a problem then you're in the same boat cos it's happening to the whole street or whatever, that sort of thing but I wouldn't say there was much of a difference in it. If you go to the other side of town you've got a lot of Asians in Queens Park and things like that, it's the same, I think the only thing parents worry about is their kids aren't exposed to drugs and stuff like that, that's what's really happened. You could come here in the 90s and not many kids would get involved in that. (Male, 25-29, Wensley Fold)

Finally, one should note the particular importance that South Asian respondents attached to living in what was frequently referred to as an 'Asian area'. Comments picked up on many of the long recognised benefits associated with minority ethnic population clusters. The area was reported to provide a territorial focus for a sense of identity and belonging. People talked about the safety and security associated with not appearing unusual simply because they were not White. Recent immigrants and residents with limited English language skills talked about being able to engage with services and facilities in the local area, and people frequently pointed to culturally relevant facilities and amenities, including shops and places of worship.

When it came to opportunities for residents to develop interpersonal ties within the neighbourhood, Wensley Fold was rich in local resources, in contrast to West Marsh. Although some respondents bemoaned the loss of many of the local pubs, there were still two in the neighbourhood; there was an array of general and specialist stores, local places of worship, a community centre, two parks within easy reach and local schools. The neighbourhood was rich in the physical, institutional and human resources and environments that underpin active community ties. This fact was reflected in the everyday activities of respondents, which were frequently rooted in the local neighbourhood. This was particularly the case among South Asian respondents. However, even the White British respondents, who had more dispersed everyday lives, leaving the neighbourhood to shop, socialise and visit families, commented favourably on the attributes of the neighbourhood.

[Interviewer] Would you say Bank Top is a typical area of Blackburn compared to the areas you know is it better, is it worse?

To tell you the truth I'm proud of where I live, I'm not saying it cos I don't want to say… all the other areas are no good, to try and make my area look good, but if you look at I personally would say we've got new houses being built round our area, we've actively engaged with the councillors and stuff …. and I'd say as constituents we're proud of who we've elected and we've got a lot of

facilities around our area as well and resources in terms of we've got the football pitches here, got basketball courts, we've got everything really.

[Interviewer] And which of the facilities would you use?

We used to use, I don't now so much, but we used to use this football pitch a lot, we've got this community centre here, we used to come here a lot.
(Male, 16-24, Wensley Fold)

4.5 Discussion

These two case study neighbourhoods were paired to explore ways in which poverty is experienced by distinct (ethnic) groups and the extent to which living with diversity can impact on these experiences. The analysis of responses in the interviews has shown how everyday neighbourhood practices and social relationships can help to mitigate some of the harsher aspects of living in poverty. More homogenous communities (or sub-sets of larger communities) can provide important resources of support for residents to help them 'get by' in both material and emotional terms. These patterns can be challenged or undermined by higher rates of residential mobility, especially in terms of support provided across the generations. This deficit is often experienced more strongly by elderly residents, because of their greater reliance on resources within the neighbourhood.

Of the two areas, West Marsh was ostensibly the more homogenous area in terms of ethnicity, but was more marked by divisions caused by age differences, integrally linked to concerns about the corrosive effects of crime and anti-social behaviour. The social networks in this neighbourhood were more attenuated, and older residents in particular often felt isolated and effectively house-bound. Others managed by virtue of having access to a car, or working outside the area, to help them maintain more dispersed links with family and friends. The material condition of the local neighbourhood (provision of facilities, amenities and resources) can inform opportunities for the development of interactions in public space that help build local social networks. The public realm in West Marsh had been decimated, as a physical representation of an underlying process of decline affecting both economic opportunity and patterns of sociability.

The neighbourhood in Wensley Fold comprised different ethnic groups and in these sections of the community there was ample evidence of strong immediate and extended family and friendship ties. This provided many residents with material, emotional and symbolic forms of support. Place-based communities of sameness can be rich in resources, support and assistance that can prove critical in helping members of those communities in getting by. The co-existence of these close communities had brought a new vibrancy to the area that was readily identified as a reason for staying put.

However, spatial proximity in contested spaces can also foster defensiveness and the bounding of communities on the basis of *difference*, which can serve to undermine neighbourhood contact and limit access to associated resources (convivial relations, exchange of services and assistance and help in emergencies). Relationships between the White and Asian communities in Wensley Fold had, according to most respondents, eased over the past ten years or so, helped by physical investment and property refurbishment in the area and the regeneration of local facilities such as shops and community centres .

Overall, the comparison of the two areas reveals the difficulties in assessing the closeness and density of social networks on the basis of population attributes alone. The pattern of in-migration and out-migration, the physical quality and accessibility of

shared public spaces, the existence of settled and contested zones within the neighbourhood: all are important elements that cannot be revealed from simply counting up deprivation scores or by vesting either 'sameness' or 'difference' with intrinsic qualities. The way neighbourhoods have changed over time matters a great deal to the subsequent formation and durability of social networks in the locality.

5. Residential Mobility and Opportunity: West Kensington and Amlwch

5.1 Introduction

The case studies of West Kensington/Gibbs Green estates in London (hereafter referred to as *'West Kensington'*) and the small town of Amlwch on the northern tip of Anglesey were selected to provide a contrast between *higher* and *lower* mobility areas and between 'connected' and more geographically 'isolated' settlements. At the 2001 census, West Kensington had an annual household turnover rate of 11.4 per cent, compared to just 4.3 per cent in Amlwch. However, it is important to note that most respondents in both areas had stayed put in recent years, and so the proportion of mobile households was relatively small in both cases. The anticipated dichotomy between a relatively mobile and a relatively immobile area did not emerge, but the common *constraints* on mobility in two sharply contrasting 'tight' housing markets, where affordable housing is scarce, are illuminating. These differences are highlighted throughout the chapter.

5.2 Exploring Past Mobility

The housing history of residents was explored and this exemplified the "tightness" of the local housing market in both West Kensington and Amlwch. Most respondents had made relatively few moves in the past and in both areas a substantial core of residents had lived in the neighbourhood all their lives, with a handful of residents having lived in only one property. Both areas also had significant 'incomer' populations, although in both West Kensington and Amlwch 'indigenous' residents still represented the largest population group. In Amlwch, many of the newcomers originated from the North-west of England, and many were retirees. Newcomers to West Kensington were a more diverse group.

Many residents in both areas, especially in West Kensington, reported that they had moved to their current property not because they wanted to do so, but because it was the only option they had. It seemed that the local authority's adoption of a choice-based lettings scheme had not been perceived as extending choice.

> *I didn't have a choice. When they offered me [this property] they said I had to take it or … put them [the respondents children] in a home, so I had to take it…*
> *(Female, 30-34, West Kensington)*

> *They (London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham) have got a system where you can bid for your property. But before, it wasn't like that. Before, it was like, they give you a choice. They give you a property and you go to view it. If you don't like it you could say you don't want it, but then they won't offer you another one for twelve months. So you haven't really got a choice, you've kind of gotta take it.*
> *(Female, 25-29, West Kensington)*

It was possible to categorise respondents into four groups in terms of the impact of previous mobility on perceptions of poverty and place:

- *dissatisfied incomers*, whose experiences of living elsewhere appeared to be a central factor in shaping their dissatisfaction with their current place of residence

- *satisfied incomers*, whose more negative experiences of living elsewhere contributed to their satisfaction with their current place of residence

- *satisfied locals*, who had always lived in the area and who, as one put it, 'didn't know any different', and

- *returning locals,* who had left the area for a period of time and who had since returned 'home'.

Dissatisfied Incomers

Residents in this group were brought up outside the study areas and had spent significant parts of their lives in other parts of the country. Amlwch had a higher proportion of dissatisfied incomers than West Kensington. For this group in Amlwch, their main reasons for not liking the area were: the perceived insularity of residents; the remote location of the town; and the lack of shops, services and leisure facilities. One dissatisfied incomer, who had spent most of his life in northern English cities, highlighted the insularity of indigenous Amlwch residents and the 'mundaneness' of their lives.

> *There's a chap I know, he's an electrician. The furthest he's ever been, I should imagine, is Bangor, he's never been anywhere else. They [indigenous Amlwch residents] tend to live in their own little world round here….. All they live for is to go to work – get up, have a wash – some don't bloody wash … they go to work, finish work, straight into the pub. That's as much round here as what people do. (Male, 35-44, Amlwch)*

Amlwch was too disconnected from the 'real world':

> *It takes you half an hour to get to civilisation. What I call civilisation is Bangor. (Male, 35-44, Amlwch)*

His partner, who was brought up in another part of Anglesey, felt the same way and attributed the attitudes and behaviour of indigenous Amlwch residents to the fact that they had not experienced other cultures.

> *Oh yes, there's a lot of people that don't know any better. .. they're in their own little world. Do you know what I mean? They haven't seen anything else. (Male, 45-64, Amlwch)*

He was very critical of Amlwch as a place to live:

> *I detest the place to be absolutely honest with you …they [Amlwch people] are nosey people, and what they don't know about you they'll make up about you. They're very nosey people.*
> *(Male, 45-64, Amlwch)*

One single parent had moved to Amlwch from a town near Edinburgh, missed urban life and, as a consequence, found Amlwch too dull.

> *I feel stuck in here, that you can't go anywhere and that… it's just so boring. (Female, 16-24, Amlwch)*

The presence of incomers was a source of resentment for several indigenous residents, who were concerned that some newcomers were trying to change the culture of the town.

[Interviewer] When they (newcomers) get here, is it what they expect when they get here, when they've made the move from Manchester or wherever?

No, I think it's a big culture shock.

[Interviewer] That's interesting. What do you think the culture shock is?

Well, they're leaving a supermarket on the corner, a cinema down the road, a night club or two or three night clubs in the same strip, a career. We see people up here, the old stagers we call them, the old men, who've worked and they end up poor . It's a big shock sort of thing, it's a big shock.

[Interviewer] Do you think they adjust all right in the end, or...?

Some do, some don't. Some try and change it.

[Interviewer] How do they do that, by doing what?

Simple little things, they come into the pub and we're having a quiet Sunday afternoon pint. They're talking and having a party…. there on a Sunday. And they'll come in and put the juke box on. They put loud music on….you know – oh, it's too loud …. you know, especially the Scousers are the worse ones. Oh yeah, the worse, they are the worse.
(Male, 25-29, Amlwch)

Satisfied Incomers

The high degree of residential satisfaction among a number of incomers to both Amlwch and West Kensington was in part attributable to the improvement in their housing situation. For example, one incomer in Amlwch who had moved to the area from Wigan, enjoyed the new tranquillity and "quietness" of her life:

I've put a lot of work in it, I've paid a lot of money for it (the respondent's property). I won't move for anyone. I love the area. I'm happy. I'm settled…. Yeah I love it, my husband loves it, he wouldn't go back to Manchester….It's quieter (in Amlwch)….Yeah, lot of police patrols here.. Yeah, it does (make the respondent feel safer than in Manchester). Because I had people back where I used to live… my neighbour next door tried to set fire to the house.
(Female, 35-44, Amlwch)

Satisfied locals

In both Amlwch and West Kensington, a group of residents were satisfied with their lives and were less concerned about those negative aspects of the residential environment that troubled newcomers, such as the relative isolation of Amlwch or anti-social behaviour perpetrated by teenagers in West Kensington. They tended to see these aspects as being 'normal', 'ordinary' and something that they were 'used to', as they only had ever lived in the area. One resident in Amlwch acknowledged this point as follows:

[Interviewer] Does it bother you that you are geographically quite a long way away from other places?

No, I don't think it does because I don't know any different, do you know what I mean? I've always lived here, so in that sense, no, I'm quite happy. If I could just lift my house and just move it….

[Interviewer] Where would you move it if you could?

I'd still stay in Amlwch, an area I know, I don't know, somewhere nice with a bit of land…. I wouldn't go from Amlwch because I know everyone.

[Interviewer] Some people say there's lots going on in Bangor and in Amlwch there's nothing there. Would you agree with them or not?

Well, I'd agree with them to say there's nothing here, but I'm used to it, so. But for someone from Bangor to come and live here, they'd be bored to tears because they've got the cinemas, they've got the pubs, the clubs, whatever. So I suppose they'd find it really dull, you know?
(Female, 35-44, Amlwch)

In a similar vein, another resident in Amlwch noted that the perceived remoteness of the town and its lack of recreational and leisure facilities did not trouble him too much.

I'm, like, a local lad, I love it round here. We haven't got a cinema but I've got Sky movies so that doesn't bother me. That doesn't bother me. Shopping, as I said, shopping's a day out really.
(Male, 25-29, Amlwch)

The high level of neighbourhood satisfaction among some residents in West Kensington could also be explained by their housing history, and their close social ties:

This is where I've grown up, I don't know any other area so I didn't want to live outside, and my family's close as well.
(Female, 16-24, West Kensington)

Returning locals

A number of residents in the two samples had returned to their area after a period of time living elsewhere. For most of these their decision to move back to their home area was a positive one and most spoke very favourably about Amlwch or West Kensington. It appeared that the time spent living elsewhere had either reminded them about the positive aspects of life in their home area or given them a new outlook on life there. For example, one West Kensington respondent made a number of references to her former place of residence when describing what she felt about the area:

[Interviewer] Were you happy when (the London Borough) of Hammersmith and Fulham offered you this place?

Well, yeah, … the only thing I was worried about was the violent bits. But I know the area, and I thought okay, well, it was better than Shepherd's Bush, anyway.

[Interviewer] What was Shepherd's Bush like?

Horrible.

[Interviewer] In what sense was it not good?

I don't know. You walk down the road, it seems like a very dirty area, there's a lot of shops that are not proper shops. There's lots of groups of people hanging around. You know, like, a lot of religious groups, like Muslim groups and other groups, and then they used to have all the shops in the High Bridge Road. I don't know, it's just not a nice area at all.
(Female, 25-29, West Kensington)

In a similar vein, a resident in Amlwch was pleased to move back to the town after living in Liverpool for three years while at university.

I prefer the seaside and the quietness around here, to be honest with you. I prefer… how can I put it? I prefer the environment around here. It's a lot nicer than living in the city where everybody's got some sort of agenda and everything's a rush.
(Male,25-29, Amlwch)

Finally, a West Kensington resident who had recently returned to the area noted:

It's family, in'it? … I've been away and there's nothing that great out there…. it'd be family that I would miss.
(Male, 30-34, West Kensington)

5.3 Mobility as a Response to Poverty

Respondents were asked if they wanted (or aspired) to move from their current neighbourhood and whether in reality they would do so in the near future. Respondents who said they were likely to move or wanted to move were asked to indicate where they would like to move to and they were also asked about their tenure preferences. Only one of the respondents in this analysis said they would be leaving their current neighbourhood in the immediate future i.e. in the next six months. This respondent – a policeman in West Kensington – was relatively well-off compared to most other respondents in both areas. This exceptional case did not mean, however, that all the other respondents were happy to stay put. Indeed, more than half the respondents said that they aspired to move, but in most cases this was over a short distance. Three key issues emerged from their accounts about their future aspirations: their understanding of 'their neighbourhood'; the preferred destination; and their views on tenure.

Many respondents seemed to have a clear understanding of the spatial boundaries of the neighbourhood they lived in. These neighbourhoods often comprised relatively small geographical areas – a street, a block of flats or a 'mini-estate', so that the case study areas appeared to comprise a number of distinct areas. Amlwch comprised a number of neighbourhoods including Craig-y-don (a small estate comprising approximately 100 properties), Amlwch Port and Amlwch. In West Kensington neighbourhoods identified by residents included the Aisgill Avenue area, the Gibbs Green estate, and the North End flats. In both areas, these neighbourhoods were seen as having distinct characteristics.

Most residents in both Amlwch and West Kensington wanted to make a short move either to a "better" part of their neighbourhood or to an adjacent neighbourhood, and did not plan to make longer distance moves. Of the minority of residents who wanted to make a longer move, a number in West Kensington reported that they aspired to move abroad, with Portugal, Grenada and Australia cited as destinations.

Most aspirationally mobile residents anticipated renting, usually from a social landlord, as their preferred immediate housing option, although this was coupled with

a longer term aim of purchase. One should recall that these interviews were conducted some time before the credit crunch emerged.

I hope to be able to buy my own house and to do some travelling… Well, I've gotta get my own house and then probably remortgage it and take £10,000 out to go round the world.
(Male, 25-29, Amlwch)

Ideally in a perfect world we'd like to buy a place … but in this world it has to be a council house at an affordable rent.
(Male, 16-24, Amlwch)

Respondents could be categorised into three groups in terms of their future mobility plans:

- those who wanted to move from their area but could not afford to buy a property or could not secure rental housing

- those who wanted to move from their neighbourhood but who were reluctant to do so for a range of factors, including their age, family commitments and the upheaval of moving

- those who were happy living where they lived and who did not want to move.

Nearly half of respondents in West Kensington and Amlwch reported that they would like to move from their neighbourhood but were prevented from doing so because they did not have the financial resources to buy a property, or because of the unavailability of affordable rental housing in the area. For some respondents, the scarcity of local affordable housing was such that 'escaping' from their neighbourhood was seen as a 'pipe dream', which could only be secured with a lottery win.

[Interviewer] Can you see yourself getting to a situation where you might move back to Ireland?

No, not unless I win the lottery.
(Female, 25-29, West Kensington)

No, (I won't move) not unless the lottery comes up tonight. I can't afford a house around here. The nearest house I can think of is across the road in Ramfield Place and that would be about 450,000. I don't have that kind of money. I've got some money but not that kind of money. And I wouldn't want to have a mortgage of that kind of money unless I could afford to pay it straight off.
(Male, 30-34, West Kensington)

Many respondents in both Amlwch and West Kensington reported that they were effectively priced out of the local market.

No, I'm glad the thing about the car came up because that's quite a big thing really. I've been priced out of the house market many years ago. When I was in banking I did have a property and sadly I gave it up during the slump and I spent the cash on a holiday and doing up the flat and so although it was a council property I did spend a lot of money doing up the flat.
(Female, 45-64, West Kensington)

That [not being able to move] is the only thing that really gets to me. Obviously, if I did and if I was wealthy I could move wherever I wanna move to. I could sell my place. But it makes it a little bit difficult. So that's the only thing that's not good.
(Female, 25-29, West Kensington)

In a similar vein, one Amlwch resident, who lived in a private rented flat with his pregnant partner, said he was being priced out of the local housing market:

The [house] prices around here [Amlwch] are just so stupid.... I mean, I don't know anybody my age, that graduated from school, who actually owns their own house.

[Interviewer] So the cheapest one here, what would it be?

About £90,000, and you're only talking two or three of those, and they're really not to a good standard.
(Male, 25-29, Amlwch)

The same respondent noted that it was his low income, combined with relatively high local house prices, that was preventing him from moving:

If we had a higher income we won't have to live here. It's as simple as that.
(Male, 25-29, Amlwch)

Respondents in West Kensington highlighted the high price of property, both in their area and in adjacent areas:

You can buy a house up there [Manchester] for £50,000. You can't even buy a garage down here [West Kensington] for £50,000.
(Male, 45-64, West Kensington)

It is yeah, London's very expensive. Even you just walk ten minutes up here the houses are going for a million pounds because you're in Fulham, you're in that area.
(Female, 25-29, West Kensington)

In both West Kensington and Amlwch, a number of residents reported that they had little chance of securing social rented housing. The view of one West Kensington resident about the operation of the banded choice-based letting scheme was typical of several respondents.

Every two weeks you can get a magazine from council or library, anywhere, agencies and all that. So you just bid at that, you can bid up to three flats or houses or whatever, and then if you get anywhere – there's no chance me to get any 'cos I'm on benefit. There is A, B, C rent, I'm on C. So, A's the more priority, and then B, and then C, so I'm the last one, so…. I don't have a girl, but three boys, so they give me reason like three boys can sleep all in one room. I don't think it's right, because once they grow up they need their own bedroom, they will want their own and everything. So, yeah, the problem is feeling like you don't have a choice. You want to do something but you can't do it because of so many reasons.
(Female, 30-34, West Kensington)

Some respondents felt that the allocation systems of the principal social housing landlords in their area were iniquitous:

If you're a single mother, sixteen years of age, you'll get a council house. If you're a working family like us two, we're not as much priority, the government will penalise us ... we're paying our rates and paying our taxes and everything else. It doesn't feel that the government's giving us any chance or trying to help us. I feel that I pay my taxes, they help people that take advantage of the system.
(Male, 25-29, Amlwch)

In both Amlwch and West Kensington, residents talked about the scarcity of affordable private rented housing in the areas. Securing private rental accommodation in Amlwch could be a very difficult task because much of the stock was let informally by 'word-of-mouth.' There were differences between the areas in terms of available options. Residents in West Kensington had (in theory at least) an opportunity to gain access to affordable housing close to the area, including the Clem Atlee Estate, located only a quarter of a mile away, or estates in Shepherd Bush or the White City, some two miles away.

But residents in Amlwch do not have similar opportunities: Holyhead and Llangefni, the only nearby settlements of any size, are twenty and thirteen miles respectively away from the town. For many residents, particularly those with close family and friendship ties in the town and without access to a car, Holyhead and Llangefni do not represent viable housing options - a situation heightened by the general lack of rented housing.

Residents were asked how they felt about being effectively "trapped" in their neighbourhood because they could not secure alternative housing. While the occasional respondent in social housing felt poorly treated by the allocation system, most adopted a phlegmatic approach to their situation, as one of life's many challenges.

I suppose you make problems for yourself. I don't know, I don't really think I face any problems, apart from wanting to move, but I can't move because the council has stupid things on moving. But I think, me myself, I don't face many problems.
(Female, 25-29, West Kensington)

No [I'm not moving] because I know I can't afford to… [There is] no point living in limbo land is there, dreaming.
(Female, 25-29, West Kensington)

In some cases, this quiescence was coupled to a hope that things would change, whether by 'luck' or by dogged waiting:

You know, because I am bidding now... I don't know, maybe with luck, I might get it. Because they said, once they offer to band A, and if they don't like it or don't want it, they give it to B, and if they don't like it then give it to C. So, that's quite far away to come. Sometimes I thinking maybe luck means I get it….I don't give up hope, no, because I want to move.
(Female, 30-34, West Kensington)

No, I'm quite happy with what life I've had, what I've got at the moment. Yeah I suppose a little extra money would be nice and I suppose picking up this flat and putting it somewhere else would be a bonus but I wouldn't change anything, I think we all have ups and downs and you've just got to get on with it really, or sort it out as best you can, because nobody else is going to do it for you, I've learnt that much.

(Female, 45-64, West Kensington)

I think you just get used to the struggle, don't you? You just keep on plodding along month by month and just…

[Interviewer] That's very interesting. Yeah, does that get you down, then?

Oh yeah, definitely. It's something that's really that you just get used to and you just get on with it, just go to work every day and just plod along.

[Interviewer] What keeps you plodding along then, is it the feeling that it's gonna get better?

To be honest, well, some of it's gonna get better, isn't it?

I've always thought just carrying on and seeing what's round the next corner.
(Male, 25-29, Amlwch)

Another group of residents were deterred from moving by a range of factors including their age, not wanting the upheaval of moving, or the need to provide support and care for family members living locally.

People say: 'I'm surprised you're still there. Why don't you do something about it?". That's easy for you to say but I certainly wouldn't leave my dad so while he's there I'm not even going to think about it. There's no point.
(Female, 45-64, West Kensington)

Several residents in both Amlwch and West Kensington reported that they did not want to move from their neighbourhood and were happy living where they lived, often because of strong social ties:

I think I'm quite lucky, to be honest. I think I'm quite lucky, because there's people that live in buildings, one on top of the other, that don't even know each other. They come out of their flat and they don't know what's the name of their neighbour that just lives across the flat. So, I think I'm quite lucky.
(Female, 30-34, West Kensington)

Residents who did not want to move were aware of problems in their neighbourhoods, but felt that these were an everyday feature of life most places, so their area was 'no worse than anywhere else'.

It's a nice area West Kensington, Fulham, Gibbs Green. It's just a problem with teenagers everywhere. Wherever you go in London now there is drugs, I think. Everywhere you go it's a place which is quieter than the other one but this problem you can find them everywhere in London.
(Female, 35-44, West Kensington)

In a similar vein, a resident in the Gibbs Green estate noted:

Stuck in a council flat there are worse places in London, probably in the country, but certainly in London there are worse places to be put than round here. It is fairly accurate, lived here my whole life, rarely encountered racism, because you tend to relate racism to lower income areas more so because round here, even if you're relatively poor, it's nice enough, it's enough of a mix of rich and the poor that generally speaking the area's nice enough, and there's enough council tax and the council can afford to provide decent services and

all the rest of it, so. Even if you were on West Ken Estate I'm sure there are far worse.
(Male, 30-34, West Kensington)

One West Kensington resident did not want to leave the neighbourhood because she felt that she was unlikely to be affected by its problems because, as long-term resident of the area, she knew the local 'trouble-makers'. She reasoned that this might not be case if she moved to another area where she was not known.

If I'm honest, because I know this area and I know a lot of people in this area, I've seen a lot of people walking in this area at a night time than another area, because, just say I'm walking along the road and I see somebody, I more or less know them or they know xxx (the respondent's partner), do you know what I mean, people know each other. Whereas, if I'm somewhere else I feel more at risk because I don't know the people, so.
(Female, 25-29, West Kensington)

5.4 'Push-pull' Factors

In explaining the extent to which certain triggers may drive residential mobility, it is also important to recognise the complex interplay of 'push-pull' factors such as the quality of transport links, economic opportunity, the affordability of local housing, the quality of local schools and the aspiration to live with 'like minded' people. However, in both Amlwch and West Kensington, one factor was dominant: the desire to live in close proximity to friends and family.

Well, I've got a few family who live in Amlwch. I've got two sisters living on the estate itself, they bought their houses, they're further round the other side. So I quite like living here for that reason, and there's quite a few kids here that everybody looks out for, everybody's children, you know? So, yeah, I like that aspect of it.
(Female, 35-44, Amlwch)

Family links also 'pulled' some respondents back to Amlwch or West Kensington.

[Interviewer] So, basically, you were in Bangor, and you thought you'd like to come back here. What brought you back here?

I missed my family and stuff.

[Interviewer] So basically your immediate family and your broader family around here.

It's a bit lonely out there.
(Male, 25-29, Amlwch)

[Interviewer] What made you come back to London?

Missing home innit. Miss being in my own town. Miss this place, just missed home, had enough of going, getting no help or surviving by myself and not having family to lean on now and then, it does make a difference

[Interviewer] So you've got people around you here that can offer you support?

Support yeah, that's what I need, a little guidance really. Yeah I just wanted to come back home, sort my life out, start working, stop signing on the dole and that… My mum had cancer like so that was another reason.
(Male, 30-34, West Kensington)

Support from the family could take many forms including emotional support, financial support – a number of respondents reported that they borrowed money from family members – and child care. The influence of 'family' also had the effect of deterring some residents from moving away. This was certainly the case for one West Kensington resident who appeared keen to leave the area but was reluctant to do so because she felt she had to care for her younger siblings:

Yeah, definitely [would like to move]. That's more in the future, to be honest. I wouldn't mind if it was right now but like I said my brother and sister, they still need me and I'm the next female figure so they still need me, they're always here. Not yet, I mean you have to sacrifice certain things and that's what I did, I took a pay cut, I sacrificed, you have to do it because I know god forbid anything would have happened to me. My mum would have helped my partner with my kids, that's the kind of family we are, we're close knit so I don't need to 'my life could have been …' definitely it could have been made better but this is it and this is what I've chosen, we make choices in life and that's what I chose to do so I don't feel bad of making my choices or [what] 'I could have had.
(Female, 25-29, West Kensington)

The need to be close to friends was a common reason cited for not wanting to leave the area:

No no, I don't want to move from here. I'll tell you why I don't want to move. If you move the likes of me now at my age and everything else like that, and you sort of put me in some place, I'd be away from everywhere. You see, I … need me neighbours, I need me friends.
(Male, 65 or over, West Kensington)

As with family members, friends provided support in a number of different ways:

I have to say, around here you've got some that aren't from here, but some people have lived here for years and years and I've known them for years, and they're there if you needed them…. some of them, yeah. I could knock on somebody's door at three o'clock in the morning and they'd be fine about it… Well, people who live here, I've lived here for years, we find it fine, I can knock on my neighbour's door for a bit of milk, in the summer some of us sit out on the wall, and the children are playing, and we chat to each other, and we don't get that a lot in other estates. That is nice.
(Female, 35-44, Amlwch)

In Amlwch, for some residents it was important not only to live close to friends and family but to live in a place where there was good 'community spirit', and where everyone knew each other.

I don't know if it's the community, we've got a bit of a community going on here, and I like to know who lives next door and who's – and I know a lot of people that live round here, I know their families, their sisters, you know, I quite like the feel of that
(Female, 35-44, Amlwch)

I think so. If you've lived here all your life, you go into the shops, you go into the chip shop, everyone knows you by your first name and everything, but if there's a stranger, I suppose it'd be hard for them to integrate into the community… Yeah, community spirit. You've got a really good community spirit round here.
(Male, 25-29, Amlwch)

A number of other factors were evident. In West Kensington, the vitality and vibrancy of the area was seen as an attraction, along with its close proximity to the centre of London. In Amlwch, the rural setting of the town by the sea was a 'pull' factor for many.

Basically I wanted to live in the country cos I came back from the country a long time ago. I used to live in Colwyn Bay a long time ago and basically I wanted to get back to my roots basically, plus we wanted to live by the seaside because obviously to look at Amlwch I just love it because it's got interesting things, it's got interesting, you know, about the people, it's got like a long history about it, it's got a lot of history about the place which is quite, I'm in history. Plus the fact that it's near the sea because my mum and my husband's mum didn't get the chance to fulfil their ambitions so we've done that basically in memory.
(Female, 35-44, Amlwch)

There is clear evidence to suggest that mobility as a response to poverty is often largely *aspirational* and unlikely to be translated into *actual* mobility in the near future. Many of the residents who were dissatisfied with where they lived said they wanted to leave their neighbourhoods, but could not do so because they had insufficient financial resources. The response of others was not to want to move but in fact to stay put; for these respondents, the positive aspects of 'place' tempered their experience of living on a relatively low income, and living near family and friends was highly valued. Most residents thought that they were living 'ordinary' lives, no different to many others, and were not living in, or on the margins of, poverty.

5.5 Discussion

Ever since the semi-apocryphal injunction to the workless to 'get on their bikes' in the early 1980s, the links between residential mobility. poverty and economic opportunity have been central to policy and academic debates. The selection of an ostensibly 'mobile' and an 'immobile' area for the third paired comparison was designed to elicit differences in whether households held different views about mobility as a means of 'escape' from their present circumstances. In practice, the difference did not really hold up. Instead, one is struck more by the pressures to stay put – whether 'externally' generated, as a result of limited job and housing options elsewhere, or 'internally' generated, due to the desire to remain close to family and friends.

The impact of living in social housing has often been summoned by policymakers as one reason why households are reluctant to move on in search of improving their economic circumstances. But the tightness of the housing markets (and interviews were undertaken before the 'credit crunch' started to bite) in both places meant that 'immobility' extended across all tenures. In the case of Amlwch, the pressure on property prices in a rural area limited already scarce options imposed by the relative isolation of the town. In West Kensington pressures on the rented market and the operation of (supposedly) 'choice-based' forms of letting meant that decent housing conditions were seen as a priceless asset not to be readily cast aside.

The idea of moving out of the area is seen by most respondents as a distant prospect or a 'pipedream', that would only be prompted by an extraordinary turn of

events coming, as it were, from nowhere – such as winning the lottery. For many it is not an option that is being anxiously sought, as the perception of their neighbourhood as 'normal' (in the context of the sharply contrasting environments of London and Anglesey) means that 'escape from place' does not figure prominently in their motivations or ambitions. Indeed, several respondents in both places had returned 'home' after a brief excursion 'outside', usually with renewed enthusiasm for its distinctive qualities as a place.

6. The Ties That Bind?

6.1 Introduction

The three previous chapters examined the six case studies in terms of projected contrasts around the themes of connectivity, diversity and mobility. This reflected the rationale for the selection of the specific neighbourhoods and helped to ensure that a range of neighbourhood contexts would be included in the research programme. We will reflect in the Conclusion on the extent to which expectations of differences between the binary pairings was borne out in practice. In this chapter we look across the six neighbourhoods to identify two issues that emerged from the foregoing analysis. First, we consider the extent and nature of neighbourhood attachment according to the individual accounts we were given by the respondents. This takes up the theme of Chapter 5, which found that most respondents in Amlwch and West Kensington either wanted to stay out or move only a short distance within their neighbourhood: was this simply based on a rational appraisal of their relatively weak bargaining position in the housing market, or were more 'positive' motivations to stay in the area at play? Second, it follows up on the discussion of social networks in Wensley Fold and West Marsh in Chapter 4, by examining in the other neighbourhoods how social networks and public 'space' might influence neighbourhood attachment and the propensity to stay put or leave.

6.2 The Ubiquity of 'Family'

Family Networks and Support

The accounts provided across all six neighbourhoods underlined the extent to which family networks of sociability, care or financial and material support, whether reciprocal or not, permeated the daily lives of most respondents. The elasticity of what constitutes 'family' was also evident and the potential diversity and range of these networks, across generations, marriages, remarriages and partnerships is perhaps most elaborately expressed in the first interview extract below. The further examples illustrate other, rather more straightforward arrangements that straddled generations and relationships. The contribution of grandparents in particular was significant for many of the younger respondents we interviewed and not just those with young children.

> *I must admit yeah I do (prefer Cleethorpes to Grimsby) because if I've got nothing to do, I'm bored out my head, I can either go to visit me mam, me cousin. I've got choices. Even me ex sister in law I still go round there and we're still mates, me and her, we used to fight like cat and dog cos she used to go out with me dad you see and we used to fight like cat and dog, we never got on at all but now we're like that.... so like I say I've got a pool match tonight, next week, I can go to me ex sister in law's, have a quick cup of tea and that and then go to the club cos it's like round the corner from the club. There's still that connection between me and her you see so… and of course she's had two kids to me dad so I've got two half brothers to me sister in law….I would class her as me sister in law cos me dad was going out with her and they was close to getting married then things didn't go according to plan and she had two kids to me dad, so I've got two half brothers. My family is complicated. It's like when I was living in XXXX me dad was married to a Yorkie so I've got two half*

brothers, two half sisters on the Yorkie side then two half brothers in Grimsby
then I've got a proper brother then I've got another half sister in Cleethorpes,
it's mad. And then I've got a step dad and a proper dad as well cos me mam,
she's remarried now so it gets complicated.
(Male, 35-44. West Marsh)

The strength of local family ties was especially marked in Amlwch, Hillside and West Marsh, which had more settled communities, and among the south Asian community in Wensley Fold. The response below was typical of many respondents from these areas.

[Interviewer] And what about your mum, is she from here as well?

Yeah

[Interviewer] She's always lived here as well kind of thing

Yeah

[Interviewer] And what about your other family and stuff, uncles or aunt

They all live on this estate as well.

[Interviewer] So basically the whole family's on this estate?

Yeah
(Male, 16-24, Hillside)

There were countless examples across the case studies of different forms of support being provided by family members, both within the locality, and across further distances. The extent to which welfare and childcare support rely on informal systems of care has been well documented (Ungerson, 1987; Duncan and Edwards, 1999; Dey, 2006) but the widespread reliance on extended family support is nevertheless a striking feature of the accounts given in each of the six neighbourhoods. The following responses indicate how the web of family relations binds its members together, whether simply due to proximity, or in the second case, providing an emotional focal point – a point the respondent was trying to reconstruct as the emotional loss of her mother was followed by the physical loss of her home during the redevelopment of the North Huyton estate.

Well I lived in the road, me mum lived in the road, me brother in the road, me
sister lived in the road, we all lived in the same road for years so it was very
important to stay with our family and we're all living right near each other
now….your family's your life isn't it, your family's everything. I couldn't
comprehend moving away from them and starting life somewhere else, even if
it was just a neighbouring area, neighbouring estate, I would never like to move
away from that because we've always had that tight close knit family link, that's
really important to us… it's just knowing that they're there isn't it? It's just
knowing where they are and that and you can look out for each other.
(Female, 35-44, Hillside)

Yeah (I see my family often). When me mum, she got cancer and she died and
me dad was bad afterwards and he died about a year later, and we all used to
congregate in me mum's house because I always thinks your mum's house is
the place where everyone comes, it's never empty, and used to have little
parties and drinks and that, keep all the family together. And of course I found

out it was coming down which was sad like, and there's no base now which is sad now, so you sort of make your own base with the one who's the nearest, like that's our Maureen, our Angela, and even our Sharon cos she lives in Kirby but we all still get together.
(Female, 45-64, Hillside)

Lest it be considered that the close proximity of family members was universally seen as a positive attribute, there were some dissenting voices, and references to the potential claustrophobic impact of having too many family members living nearby.

I wouldn't have the atmosphere that I have here (if I lived somewhere else). I don't think I'd have… I mean family and I won't have all that and I don't think I would be too happy to move, I'm quite happy with where I live, I wouldn't want to move in a different town. Bolton there's too many of our family, relations over there so I wouldn't want to move in(to) Bolton because then I'll have every day people coming in and out of my house and I won't have the time to myself and the kids so I'm quite happy with where I am.
(Female, 30-34, Wensley Fold)

Informal Care, Practical and Financial support

There were myriad arrangements for providing care for other family members – including one respondent who lived with her mother and had an eight year old daughter. Neither of the adults went outside except for limited visits to the shops but her son, who had learning difficulties, travelled 100 miles during his holidays to help them with the gardening. In other cases, regular child care, or help with practical tasks was offered by family members living nearby and sometimes reciprocated. Again, intergenerational arrangements for care and support were familiar features in accounts in all six areas.

[Interviewer] Do you still have links with people on XXX Street?

Yeah you see them, cos my father lives there, I make my dad lunch and dinner, provide it for them cos they're quite old and I have a disabled brother living there so I go back and it's like going back in time, it's nice to catch up, it's good.

[Interviewer] So who else lives with you here?

My four daughters and my husband.[Interviewer] And do your four children go to school? Yeah the younger one started nursery, she's in her first year, she'll start primary in September.

[Interviewer] And your three older daughters?

One's actually leaving school this summer and going to college and two of them are there

[Interviewer] And what about your husband and yourself?

He works long hours, flexible long hours and I'm just a housewife really.

[Interviewer] Looking after the kids and the home?

Well I've got my dad, my brother over there.......

[Interviewer] So you've got a lot of responsibilities?

I have. Been like that a couple of years now.
(Female 35-44, Wensley Fold)

The response below illustrates the extent to which both emotional and material help for family members can be closely intertwined, especially when stepping in following a setback or misfortune. These responsibilities are taken on as a 'natural' response, constrained by time but rarely offered on any conditional or judgmental basis. It is 'just what you do' when others fall on hard times, for whatever reason.

Having a job basically (makes it easier to get by). It's a different story if you've got no employment. The things that make things harder basically, not a lot, get me daughter moaning sometimes I'll go 'have a tenner there, that's you done' ... I thought you're supposed to be going to college, getting everything sorted and she had a little girl and I thought 'here we go'. Luckily she's got her feet on the ground but she's still only young, I'd prefer her not to have a baby that young and do a bit of summat for herself first but that's kids isn't it, you can't control them….she should have been at university but she fell in with, not the wrong crowd, but she got diverted with friends and such and bingo then a baby so you've got to, haven't you. Bought her a laptop so she can do Open University but it's up to her….I want me daughter to get her feet back on, get her head round........when you've got a 19 year old daughter, she's 19 in March, with an 8 month old baby, you've got to keep looking out for them you know.
(Male, 45-64, West Marsh)

A recurrent feature of reciprocal forms of support was that it helped people through a crisis point in their finances, often due to unexpected demands on very stretched budgets – a cushion that was not otherwise available to them. For most respondents across the neighbourhoods, family members were the first port of call, rather than using more formal avenues.

In the long term I would like to move… my uncle actually owns this property and I rent it off him, him and my parents did it between them and they knew that it would only be a short term thing till I got back on my feet, they knew it was a case of it's not where I want to be but I haven't got anything at the moment….Yeah, it was my brother's property and my aunty and uncle and my mum and dad, they between them bought it, it's all rented properly so he is my landlord. It is official, terrible when your brother's your landlord and he comes and visit you and your house.. so they basically said to me cos I was living on XXX Road and they said 'if we bought your brother's property would you want to live there?' Because it was better area and obviously I had a little 'un so that's how I ended up here.
(Female, 30-34, West Marsh)

If I run out of money I've pretty much got everything in the house that I need and if I do need anything else then my mum's always at hand.
(Female ,30-34, Oxgangs)

As the following encounter illustrates, the importance of financial support from family members, often given in kind or on an irregular basis, was crucial when things got tough, or became tougher,

Family is important, if you need someone if you're in a bad state and don't have money and you need to pay the bill you can ask, I always do that if I don't have any, go to my sister 'can you give me a tenner and I'll give you it back' she doesn't mind giving it cos it's family, so that helps… if I don't have my

brother in law, go to work, have to pay for taxis as well, cos he doesn't take money he just drops you off… (he) just takes me free.
(Female, 16-25, Wensley Fold)

The interviews provided ample evidence of the wide range of support given by family members and this took different forms: help with shopping, transport, decorating or, in the case below, translation.

[Interviewer] Do you do a lot for your nan then?

Yeah I help out, she doesn't speak English.

[Interviewer] Where is she from?

We're Columbian so she speaks Spanish.

[Interviewer] So she struggles a little bit?

Yeah

[Interviewer] Do you go there every day?

Yeah

[Interviewer] What sort of things do you do for her?

Well right now she's got the decorators in so it was just mainly to stay there with her, she's all right and if they need something when they ask her she won't understand, letters that she'll get through she won't be able to read or understand, to help her with the shopping as well.
Female, 16-24, West Kensington)

Family and Mobility

We were interested to examine the relationship between family connections and the propensity for residential mobility, to extend our analysis of diversity and social networks to the other four areas as well. In her study of the lives of children in disadvantaged areas, Power (2007) refers to families as the 'social anchors' of the neighbourhood. Many of the accounts in our research elided 'home', 'neighbourhood' and 'family' and the social and emotional links and forms of practical support were important as reasons to stay put. For these respondents, family was 'embedded' in their conceptions of their neighbourhood as 'home' and so moving elsewhere would almost be equivalent to cutting family ties – ties that would be impossible to replace. Even imagining such a prospect would have been difficult for some of the respondents most steeped in the locality as a base for family contact.

I was (living) with my mum and dad (before I moved to this flat)…I've been in this area …..about 15 years, possibly longer than that actually because we have stayed in Comington Mains as well, which is about 5, 10 minutes away and we moved there in '86 so in the general area… I wanted to stay in this area because I'd lived in this kind of area and I wanted to be somewhere that I knew, because I was moving into a house with a baby and I needed to be beside people I knew and my mum and dad were close, I didn't want to move away to somewhere that I didn't know.
(Male. 25-29, Oxgangs)

As for reasons, let's put it this way: if my dad wasn't here and somebody said 'would you move out?' yes I would but I wouldn't at the moment because I'm the only one that looks after him. I've got older brothers, one lives in Northampton, my sister lives in Greenford. And it's always been me and, although I'm the baby, I looked after my mum when she was ill and then I look after my dad and I won't go anywhere until he goes. I'd love to move over nearer my daughter but I can't do that and leave my dad.
Female, 45-64, West Kensington)

In many cases, compromises had to be struck between adult members of the household if the pull of family responsibilities on one affected the plans or aspirations of their partner, as the two responses below illustrate:

[Interviewer] So does he want to move out of town?

He wanted to at one time but now he doesn't, that was three years ago when he mentioned it and he's quite happy with it now because he says 'what you do I'm quite pleased to live by you' cos I have done cos my mum's last words were 'look after your brothers and sisters' and I couldn't part that because they're all here.

[Interviewer] In the local area?

Yeah it's just one sister that's moved into Bolton, that's not far, that's only half an hour distance so I don't mind that as well. But since my mum's passed away all my family's gone against us and things like that because my dad remarried and they weren't too happy, well what my dad does has got nothing to do with them. He's got to look for his future, we can't keep paddling along with my dad all the time.

[Interviewer] So do you have responsibilities towards your brothers and sisters?

Yeah because I've got a mentally handicapped brother which is older than myself and my mum's last words were 'watch him' basically, more than any of my other brothers and sisters because he's uncapable of doing what he could do, but he was diagnosed with a wrong TB injected, he was given the wrong jab so it made him mentally handicapped which he wouldn't be he would be a normal child.
Female, 30-34, Wensley Fold)

One respondent crystallised in her account how the pressures to remain in the neighbourhood can build up from a succession of setbacks in the family and how this tends to be accepted as a responsibility, even if an unwelcome one, rather than resented as an undue imposition or constraint.

Oh god, I don't think I could live outside London, not too far outside London. How my life would be different, erm… I would change it to be honest with you. Not to say we want to spend the rest of our days out here because we don't but we do wanna move. I don't think, like I say to you, I think things have worked out (like this) for a reason, because my mum passed, at the time my younger brother was 6 and I've got a sister who was 8 at the time so I think it worked out. There's a reason why I'm here; my dad's here and my partner's sister, she just passed away two years ago, leaving behind four boys. Do you know Garsdale Terrace?... She lived right there (Garsdale Terrace) so we had so much help with N, we barely had him on the weekends, I couldn't even get my son, my dad would have him, my mum would have him and he would go over

> *there so it's a bonus. I don't think my life would be… I wouldn't want to change it.*
> *(Female, 30-34, West Kensington)*

The strength of family ties among many of the south Asian residents in Wensley Fold is discussed in Chapter 4, and this had clearly governed the thinking of one younger respondent who had the opportunity to leave once he got a place at university but decided to study nearby instead, due to his perception of family and cultural expectations.

> *[Interviewer] And do most of your friends live in this area?*
>
> *Yeah I've got friends, well the guy next door [in other interview] his son is my best mate, they only live two blocks away from me and I've got cousins who live round there as well. We're all more or less the same age so we all engage… we were brought up together, we went to school together, we've got to high school together and we're at university together.*
>
> *[Interviewer] So your cousin's at university as well?*
>
> *Yeah he's studying computing. We'll see what happens further on.*
>
> *[Interviewer] And when you chose Preston (for university) did you know that you wanted to stay at home and travel?*
>
> *That's one of the reasons I chose Preston because I didn't want to move away from home, in that one sense I'm homesick and plus it was a reassurance to my family as well that I wouldn't go on a bad path, wouldn't start drinking because in my religion it says we're not allowed to drink, not allowed to take drugs and things like that. Not that every religion, the laws as well in this country, and my parents didn't want that and just to reassure my parents as well I did it.*
> *(Male 16-24 Wensley Fold)*

Returning 'home'

In several cases, respondents had returned 'home', often for mixed emotional and financial motives. The respondent below was a man living with his wife and two children in Wensley Fold, who had taken a job in Bedford but then returned to Blackburn.

> *I wanted to go down south really...(if) just down to me, my personal life, there was a lot more opportunity down there and what brought me back really is my family, I've got family ties here otherwise I would have stayed down there.......I'm from a big family, I'm one of seven so all my brothers and sisters really, all my extended family are around this area*
> *(Male, 30-34, Wensley Fold)*

One of the respondents from Amlwch had moved to get a job in Bangor (seventeen miles away) but then returned, and his explanation of why he came back to Amlwch showed again mixed motivations in evidence.

> *It (Bangor) was okay, yeh. But saying that, I missed being round here so I moved back. You get the benefits of working over there (Bangor) but you've got your family round here, haven't you?...I missed my family and stuff…..It's a bit lonely out there (Bangor)… Yeh, I was renting. I was struggling over there*

as well, for money…..I've got good friends, and a good family who will always help me out, you know?.. I'm in debt, I owe my friends thousands.
(Male, 25-29, Amlwch)

For the respondent below, a neighbour had returned to the North Huyton estate despite having taken a step up the housing ladder by moving to Knowsley village. The interviewer asked whether many residents had family living nearby, and the response carried a wider message about the potential problems in leaving 'home' behind in order to improve one's circumstances.

> *Yes, they (my family) do (live on the estate). One lady had moved out to Knowsley Village and her family still lived on this estate, now Knowsley Village is considered very desirable, especially if you get a bungalow in Knowsley Village, that's seen to be everybody's aim in life is to finish up in a bungalow in Knowsley Village. This particular lady hated it and couldn't wait to get back on this estate to be near her family, so she sacrificed the ultimate desirable tenancy to get back here, which just goes to (show).*
> *(Female 45-64 Hillside)*

For several respondents, an important element in coming back home was to find space and time that was otherwise denied to them, to take stock and try to build up their life again. The experiences of those 'returning home' are of particular interest because the circumstances reveal the multi-textured nature of financial, emotional and social 'ties', which renders the 'rational actor' model of mobility rather one-dimensional as a mode of explanation. Although the extent to which respondents had members of the extended family living in the locality varied across the six neighbourhoods, the centrality of 'family' to their daily lives was present everywhere. The same was not true, however, of the extent of local social networks, which varied considerably by neighbourhood, and this aspect is examined next.

6.3 Variations in Local Social Networks

If 'family' was a 'constant' in many of our respondents' lives, the function of local social networks could be considered as a 'variable'. Chapter 4 explored the differences between the loose knit, dispersed ties in West Marsh and the close knit networks in Wensley Fold. Place differentiation was more pronounced on this dimension than in the other two themes of 'connectedness' and 'mobility'. Did these differences extend to the other four neighbourhoods as well? It was indeed possible to distinguish quite different dynamics at work in each area.

There were similar responses from two Amlwch respondents, shown below, in that the close knit nature of the area was equated with a tolerance, or an *absence of judgement* about behaviour that was not assumed to be the case elsewhere. The first respondent, who had suffered from health problems in the past, valued this aspect, while the second respondent also referred to community rules that might be at variance with those in the 'outside world'.

> *I don't know (whether living in a place like Amlwch makes things "easier" or "harder"). I think because of the history of this place they're a lot more used to eccentricities of people and a lot more tolerant. I kind of know if I'm living in a place where it's going to be a problem, you just learn the people that you need to be around and the people that you don't need to be around and the environment that you can survive in and the environment that you can't and it's, if things get too much I can just storm off into the countryside and march along until… it's kind of a lot easier here to cope with the highs and the lows and it doesn't matter, nobody judges you, not in Amlwch, I have lived in other places*

where they've been foul, burnt me at the stake perhaps, but here it's just great for that kind of thing.

But Amlwch has a lot of, when they built the school here, Wylfa was kicking off, Rio Tinto so there were a lot of English people who have stayed and Welsh people so we all grew up together and we all know each other and it's kind of… and older people know you, remember you from before and 'oh yeah you were always a bit odd' and it's like, but that's ok. We've got a couple of alcoholics, you see one of them when they're walking past, and everybody looks after him because he does get into some states, but because we grew up with him, we went to school with him, if I saw him fall in the street I would take him home and reciprocated the other way, if he was in a fit state and I was in a state mentally he would just pat me on the head and gently shepherd me home. So there's that kind of thing; but you know you can mix or not mix here, people don't really mind, you can be whatever you want to be really.
(Female, 45-64, Amlwch)

We have our own little rules and our own community…I think we do, I think, like, crime, it's a lot more tolerated round here, say if you're fiddling your tax or something like that. It's just, people do to get by, you know. Maybe in other communities it wouldn't be, but you could be a criminal round here and just be accepted in the community, you know?
(Male 25-29, Amlwch)

The close knit nature of the community in Amlwch did not, however, mean that there was a unified view or the absence of social or cultural divisions, any more than it did in Wensley Fold: for an 'us' to thrive, there also needed to be a 'them'. Amlwch town is divided into three distinct geographical areas, and loyalties tended to be directed to one of these neighbourhoods rather than the town as whole, as the first response below illustrates. Second, divisions between incomers and locals were noted, and this was overlaid with differences between Welsh speakers and non- Welsh speakers.

[Interviewer] Can you say a bit more about that, people say 'I belong here' but what makes you feel like that?

Well you see being Welsh, especially Welsh speaking we feel we are the ethnic group now in Wales. I have a daughter in Holland and they have more or less the same problem as us, not just as Welsh British and all that, with immigrants, asylum seekers, but the difference there is, where they're going to pull down the (unclear...) as the people are dying or getting moved to old people's homes they're bringing young people in and some of them are immigrants, but I noticed their children speak Dutch, unfortunately when they come here they don't speak Welsh so it's the language that's getting killed.

[Interviewer] So it's being eroded over time?

Yeah only for the schools here that teach Welsh, it's compulsory, most Welsh schools now are compulsory Welsh teaching but unfortunately in some of them they don't have enough. I feel a little bit superior really because I've got two languages and I'm conversing with you, although I might have an accent but my English is practically as good as yours, so I'm proud of that and that's what I tell my grandchildren and nephews and nieces, 'you should be proud of speaking Welsh, you've got two languages, other people have only got one'.
(Male. 65 or over, Amlwch)

The divisions between incomers and the indigenous population in Amlwch was also, according to one relatively recent in-migrant, overlaid with age differences as younger people increasingly thought of leaving the town, because of the lack of jobs and other amenities for them.

Yeah I feel strongly for it, but again I think that's because I've seen a change in my, my family, that you think it's only happened because we've managed to move here, been accepted by the community and that's what's made us better if you like, better ourselves from moving here

[Interviewer] Do you think other people in Amlwch have a loyalty to it?

Yeah I think again it's a generation thing. I don't think some of the youngsters feel as strong about it, and some of the outsiders feel it. I think you've got to move here with an open mind and try and get involved with the community and make the effort. If you don't I think you can feel a little bit out on a limb.

[Interviewer] So it's a two way kind of thing?

Yeah you've got to sort of work to get the best out of it really.

[Interviewer] So you're aware that other people don't share a loyalty to Amlwch?

Yeah I think you definitely see those that are for and those that are against.
(Female, 30-34, Amlwch)

While in Amlwch reference was made to the degree to which the close-knit nature of social networks apparently encouraged a toleration of others' foibles, in Knowsley a similar kind of tight community was also equated with residents feeling less 'exposed' and at risk of harm. Everyone living locally was seen as familiar, and hence 'safe'. The response below exemplifies a familiar refrain among Knowsley respondents - the elision between 'friends' and 'family', partly recognising the dense web of cross-cutting links between members of long established extended families in the neighbourhood over several generations.

It's like a big family on the estate, everyone comes together, everyone knows each other, there's no-one like, no-one hates each other or nothing…I know everyone really, yeah.
(Male, 16-24, Hillside)

Other responses testified to lifelong attachments to others and to the neighbourhood that had been built up: it was 'home' and that said it all.

It's home, it's home. I've rented out........ but I don't know, I want to go travelling as well but it's always going to be home, Hillside's always going to be me home.

[Interviewer] I just wonder why you think of it so personally like that, is it because of family or is it the place?

No I don't know, I haven't got a clue, I've grew up here since I was a baby so I know everyone so… it's just somewhere you can come back and get a welcoming smile.
(Female, 16-24, Hillside)

Both Amlwch and Hillside were however threatened by the steady erosion of social networks in the area – in Amlwch as younger people left the town to find employment

or study at college and university, and in Knowsley as a result of the neighbourhood redevelopment programme and demolition of properties that housed many households who formed the core of the 'original' community. This erosion of social networks was also mirrored in the physical transformation of their areas – the reduction in local shops, amenities and their own social spaces as the social realm diminished. This contrasted with the experience of Wensley Fold, for example, which was well served by local community centres and cafes, as a sign of the reinvigoration of the area over the past ten years or so.

> *There are very few shops in Amlwch so I have to leave to buy clothes and things like that. There used to be five butchers and a lot of other little shops for different things, bakers a veg. shop but they've been shut down and replaced by Chinese restaurants, Indian restaurants; I don't know how they survive in such a small place. It's sad that there are no more little shops and cafes because there aren't enough places to socialise now.*
> *(Female, 65 or over, Amlwch)*

> *We don't have a cinema, we've got to go to Holyhead for a cinema, there's very little for the kids to do, they seem to be rather short changed so they tend to move away when they're old enough to do so, I think that's a shame, but again that's a thing you get in small communities isn't it, children feel restricted so they clear off to some big city.*
> *(Male, 45-64, Amlwch)*

The Amlwch respondent below had wanted to move out of the town, but felt he was unlikely to persuade his partner, a "local" resident, to do so despite the lack of local facilities:

> *Because, well, I could say to Martin that I know he wouldn't – just leave, right, and we did get a house in Stoke, but I could guarantee you he wouldn't like the place. I know he wouldn't like the place, but it'd be more interesting than here. I could say, right, come on, we'll go there, Martin. We'll go and look in C&A or we'll go and have a look in next door, Greenwoods....or go in a museum, see all the pottery, a pottery museum. But here you've got nothing. I mean, I can understand why Martin goes out, I really do now. He'll tell you himself, but I can understand why he goes out, because I've seen. You can sit here and watch – all you do is watch TV, and it is like this, twiddling your thumbs. You've got nothing to do, you know what I mean?*
> *(Male, 35-44, Amlwch)*

While the loss of amenities in rural towns has been a perennial feature of policy debate, the loss of community 'ownership' of shops and amenities in urban neighbourhoods, especially the more peripheral areas, has not figured as strongly, though the recent interest in 'place making' (Communities and Local Government, 2008) may be an opportunity to revisit these issues. The Hillside respondent below was speaking inside one of the few amenities left on that part of the estate over which they felt they had a sense of ownership – the 'Hillywood' community centre:

> *There's nothing on 'ere no more, there's only this, most of the families have moved off, there's only this place left, and the shop but that's it. We have big green fields and the like but that's about it.*
> *(Male, 16-24, Hillside)*

The social networks in Oxgangs were less fixed than in Amlwch or Hillside, and here the advantages of living in the neighbourhood were expressed less in terms of the positive attributes of social networks than as the *absence* of threats of 'trouble'

compared to some other council estates in the city. Oxgangs was seen as more sociable than more affluent areas nearby ('*I think that at least here people know each other*') but the quietness of the neighbourhood, rather than its vitality, was seen as its positive attribute. In assessing their own neighbourhoods, they mentioned other localities as reference points:

> *I think compared to other areas on a par with Oxgangs, like you know your Muirhouse, these kind of areas, I think this area, it's not, I was going to say as bad as those areas, but it's not on the same level. I mean you can go out and walk about at night without worrying about somebody going to mug you or try and attack you. It's one of the quieter areas and I mean if, like myself, and you know many people around here, it's not a problem to walk around and it's clean, it's tidy, it's not the most glamorous area but it's clean and tidy.*
> *(Female, 25-29, Oxgangs)*

> *If I moved away from this area I'd miss] my friends, knowing everywhere … Just feel comfortable, if I for instance stayed in Niddrie or Wester Hailes I don't know my way around. I don't know people; yes, I can learn all of that, I can find my way around but I'm comfortable here… like being here, somebody stops me and asks me for directions I can point them to virtually anywhere there is and I just feel, a lot of my friends, just along the road there's a park and then it's up to Buxton if you come through Buxton you've got to walk through this park to get to this side, and the options being either come through the park, go through the woods or take the big long way round, I'll just come through the park. And that's at night time and that and people are like 'I would nae walk through there' and it's like 'why no?' I don't' feel scared walking around in this area. Some of the areas I would and I'd rather not. I'm comfortable, I know people round here, every other street kind of thing I know somebody so I'm always [safe].*
> *(Female, 35-44, Oxgangs)*

Finally, residents in West Kensington had a distinctly more instrumental, less 'affective' view about their neighbourhood than in the other case study areas. We have seen that family ties remained important here, as elsewhere, but social networks were looser and more transient and there was a weaker sense of a distinctive 'place' which came across in responses to a question about area loyalty.

> *Certainly quite proud of it and quite loyal to it, and I guess the acid test is if anyone's slagging it off would you defend it, and I probably would. I'm less loyal to it now than I was, which is odd. You would expect to be less loyal to it earlier on but I probably have been more loyal to it, I think I'm less loyal to it now. Maybe that's because I'm looking to the future and where would I go, what would I do, and what would I be looking for in the next place. And some of the things I'll be looking for in the next place are things I know I wouldn't get around here, a bit more residential, a bit more families, less transient, less kids lurking around.*
> *(Male, 30-34, West Kensington)*

> *I only live here, I'm not a part of West Ken, I just live here, and I will live anywhere, so I don't really think I'm loyal to anywhere really… it's probably still I haven't found where I wanna be, because I'm happy here but I'm not a hundred per cent settled because I know I do want to move and I do wanna live somewhere else, so maybe that's why.*
> *(Female, 25-29, West Kensington)*

The last response makes reference to moving on in the future. Actual rates of mobility in West Kensington were relatively low, due in part to the tightness of the

housing market, but many respondents had an expectation of future mobility that was largely absent from places such as West Marsh or Hillside. Because the intention to move was present, less commitment to the particular neighbourhood was made, and for many of the respondents, their working lives were spent in other parts of London.

> *[Interviewer] Would you say you have a sense of loyalty to it? A little. Not a lot but a little.*
>
> *[Interviewer] Ok, what makes you say a little?*
>
> *I would like to belong here but I wouldn't, I'm saying a little because I don't want to belong to a certain place because I'm gonna move, I'm gonna start university and I'm going to be moving anyway.*
> *(Female, 16-24, Oxgangs)*

Respondents had a more geographically restricted sense of neighbourhood than in the other case study areas, referring to their block, or their street as a zone for social contact. Although the geographical boundaries of the neighbourhood were easy to delineate, it was rarely seen as a cohesive area by residents. It may have been different when the estate was first developed, as one longer standing resident noted the move away from more collectivised activities locally:

> *[Interviewer] Is there a sense of community spirit?*
>
> *I don't know really, I just do my daily thing, getting up for work, going out, but I don't think there's a lot of community spirit like there was when I was a kid like, you used to have West Kensington and it was like a community thing with a bar and a pool table. That was all right, that was for the adults and the kids, younger kids, the older kids had the adventure playground behind it so*
>
> *[Interviewer] So you'd get together?*
>
> *We all used to know, there was some people would try to make a change but what was it, I think it was one of the first raids in London on a crack house and it was in this estate.*
> *Male, 30-34, West Kensington)*

The sense of a residential life lived indoors, or lived elsewhere, came across as a strong theme in the West Kensington interviews (although it should be noted that the sample also contained a higher proportion in paid employment than in the other areas). The 'public face' of the neighbourhood, such a part of the daily lives of most Hillside or Amlwch residents, had only been shown once in recent memory, and this was the result of a disaster, when a large house fire started. This event was enough to change the perceptions of at least one resident about the nature of the neighbourhood in which they lived.

> *[Interviewer] The only thing was the fire and when the whole estate was out.*
>
> *Did you feel a sense of community spirit and were people concerned about others?*
>
> *A sense of community only in the sense that there are other people living here and I'm finally seeing some of them and seeing that there was a range of people, for example I had no idea that there are some fairly young people living a few days doors away from us and then I saw the family two doors to the other side from us. But then on the other hand I was quite surprised that, I mean I detected the smoke quite early on, went outside, there were quite a few people*

out there and the fire brigade came, so on the other hand I was quite surprised how long it took some people to actually come out of their houses, although there was smoke everywhere and a huge noise, so I was quite surprised that it took quite a few doors to open and people coming… on the other hand I was thinking maybe people still want to keep to themselves and don't want to get involved.

[Interviewer] Were you quite surprised in terms of, you say you saw the young people, was it quite diverse, the community that came out?

Yeah because I saw families and then I saw people that I assumed to be in a similar situation to mine like you would have a young man and a young woman and another young man and young woman so it's probably a shared house, maybe two couples living together rather than a family then I would see families and then I would see a mother and a daughter and their dog. Obviously I'm just making assumptions, single parents maybe or young professionals or…

[Interviewer] But actually that one event opened your eyes to the whole community around here that perhaps you wouldn't have known existed?

Exactly yeah.

[Interviewer] You didn't know the diversity of people around you?

Yeah I think the whole thing, I suppose there's a bit of a stigma of people living in council estates and certain ideas about people who live in council estates so it's kind of nice to see that it's not a certain type of people here, like I don't know, single mothers with 10 kids or something, I also saw middle aged professional couple coming back from work with their briefcases, obviously again assuming about what they do in life and they're on this estate.
(Female, 16-24, West Kensington)

The overall indications from this comparison of the four case study areas is that the extent, strength and prominence of local social networks will vary considerably, and is shaped especially by the specific historical narrative that underpins the communities. Both Hillside and Amlwch sprung up as a result of particular instances (a common nineteenth century mining heritage for Amlwch, and a distinctive planning policy for residential settlement in peripheral estates in Merseyside for Hillside). As a result many members of these communities have grown up together through the generations – although both communities have been facing a steady attrition of their social and family networks in the past twenty years. A continuous exodus of younger people in Amlwch was being replaced by incoming families, especially from the Merseyside area, seeking affordable coastal homes in North Wales. In Hillside, the major redevelopment of the North Huyton estate as part of the NDC programme is dislodging some established family networks and the newcomers are being drawn into the 'entry level' private housing developments being constructed to replace much of the social housing. However, this process has now paused, as some of these new developments have recently been suspended due to the economic downturn.

In Oxgangs, the social networks are more dispersed and the sense of community is defined as much by the absence of negative attributes associated with neighbourhoods elsewhere in the city than any positive references to social bonding. Respondents in West Kensington tended to take a more instrumental view of settlement, no doubt shaped by its London location and the more diverse composition of the locality (in terms of household type, income and wealth and

ethnicity). While there is a core of longstanding residents, others have simply ended up in West Kensington and stayed for longer than they initially anticipated as a result of deepening constraints on their housing options – constraints that have now probably tightened due to the deteriorating economic circumstances now facing them.

6.4   Summary

The perceptions and experiences of the respondents covered in this chapter provide something of a corrective to some of the airy pronouncements about the growth of 'broken families' and 'broken communities'. This is hardly the first research study to note the increasingly variegated nature of family relationships and the manner in which family responsibilities are understood and carried out – but the idea that the family has lessened in significance from some assumed golden age is hardly supported by the narratives given by respondents in each of the case study areas. The strength of local social networks, by contrast, is much more place dependent – and this cannot be gauged by simply reading off the different household attributes of each area. It is necessary to dig beneath this, to examine the social geographies of the neighbourhood and how they are represented in respondents' perceptions of 'their area'; and to understand the different trajectories of neighbourhood change they are undergoing, whether as a conscious result of area-based interventions or as the inevitable consequence of wider economic and social forces.

In some cases social ties have been strengthened by a sense of common cultural identity; in others they are eroding as former communities weaken in the face of continued economic fragility; in a third group, the ties have never been too strong a feature of the daily lives of many of its residents. All this makes the prognostications about the extent of local social capital, the strength of the community and the degree of atomisation or isolation in relatively deprived localities difficult to gauge in the abstract as a guide for policy. Neighbourhood level interventions in relatively deprived communities need to be attuned to differences in local social dynamics, rather than just running ahead with a series of assumptions - whether positive or negative, romanticised or pragmatic - about how far the households in these areas are part of a wider local social web, or out there on their own. The salience of 'neighbourhood' to the lives of these residents will differ from one locality to the next as a result, and we continue with this theme in the Conclusion.

7. Conclusion

This report has provided an initial account of the views, experiences and perceptions of 180 residents living in six relatively deprived neighbourhoods across Britain in early 2008. It has attempted to ensure that the voices of these respondents come across and in subsequent research papers we will be reflecting further on the messages this may send in terms of the assumptions behind policies towards area-based regeneration, tackling household poverty, providing welfare support and enhancing labour market participation. This report has focused on the salience of 'place' in the responses of these residents in different neighbourhood contexts. How far does their sense of attachment and belonging to a neighbourhood vary? How far are family and social networks neighbourhood-based, or do they extend more widely? What is the impact of neighbourhood attachment on the propensity to move elsewhere, to seek new opportunities, especially in terms of jobs or training? In subsequent reports it is hoped to examine other questions such as household budgeting practices, access to employment, personal identity, social wealth and individualisation, and 'resilience' and recurrent poverty.

The research design postulated three themes to guide case study selection and inform the initial analysis of interview material. The first theme focused on the extent of connectivity between different social and economic groups: whether the close proximity of low income and more affluent households had an impact on the development of shared values, informal socialising, and perceptions of the locality. Would the experience of living cheek by jowl with more affluent neighbours increase a sense of resentment or lower self-esteem among lower income residents? Would the reputation of the neighbourhood situated in the midst of wider socio-economic deprivation be seen more negatively by its residents than in a pocket of deprivation nearby affluent areas?

The comparison of the two case study neighbourhoods, Oxgangs and Hillside, did not support either of these assertions. Residents did not attribute different forms of behaviour or values to more affluent households, whether they were near neighbours or more geographically distant. The material differences were acknowledged, but this did not generate a sense of difference or 'deficit' in terms of norms or expectations. As a result, the research respondents did not seek to emulate their more affluent counterparts. Where there was sharing of local facilities, most obviously in the attendance of children at the local primary school in Oxgangs, parallel rather than 'mixed' social networks were noted.

The difference made by the more mixed social and economic environment of Edinburgh, compared to Knowsley, was manifest in Oxgangs respondents using finer calibrations of status and place; this tends to be undertaken through positive comparison with other perceived lower status neighbourhoods elsewhere in the city. The qualities of Oxgangs were therefore expressed comparatively in terms of the relative *lack* of certain negative or threatening aspects of neighbourhood life assumed to be present in unpopular areas elsewhere. Hillside residents did not have similar calibrations of place. They felt that their area was 'just ordinary', like everywhere else and as a result did not aspire to move for anything other than practical reasons, rather than in terms of 'getting on'.

In policy terms the evidence suggests some caution is needed in ascribing too many expectations to the development of 'mixed communities' in terms of its impact on the behaviour, values and horizons of the less affluent households. They are unlikely to view such changes in their neighbourhood in terms of developing more positive role models for them, or their children, or as a chance for an inside word on job chances or whatever. To them the neighbourhood is 'lived space' rather than a signifier of social or economic status. Of course, there may be other reasons for propagating more socially and economically mixed communities (such as improving the quality of local services and neighbourhood outcomes, or raising property values), but the behavioural impacts are likely to be very limited and as indicative of policymakers' distance from daily life on these neighbourhoods as the concerns and goals of the households themselves.

The second theme concerned the impact of diversity on views and perceptions of residents in an ethnically homogenous area, West Marsh, and a more diverse neighbourhood, Wensley Fold. This enabled an assessment to be made whether diversity tended to produce more potential for tension or conflict between different groups in the locality or whether it constrained the development of local social and support networks. In fact, although West Marsh was more homogenous on the basis of ethnicity, it was also more marked by divisions according to age, with middle-aged and elderly residents shrinking from inhabiting public space in the area due to concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime. Social networks here were more fragile than in Wensley Fold, where there were strong and immediate friendship and family ties within the South Asian and, to a lesser extent, the White communities. These networks provided resources and support to help members of the community to get by and the social space in the neighbourhood had been reinvigorated as a result of both the pattern of in-migration and a regeneration programme. Relationships across the two communities were also perceived to have improved in the past ten years, as a result of a general 'settling down' and the positive impact of a property refurbishment programme.

The comparison suggests that population attributes of difference and sameness can only be a taken as a loose guide for the nature of local social networks. The pattern of in- and out-migration, the quality of public spaces, the existence of settled or contested zones within the neighbourhood - these factors can all play a more important part, on the basis of our evidence. Lately, there have been renewed concerns that social cohesion in more deprived neighbourhoods might be threatened as a result of the economic downturn and worsening job prospects. It has been suggested that there is a potential risk of increased tensions between different ethnic groups or between established communities and economic in-migrants. However, the implications for growing tensions between different *age* groups might prove to be even more ominous in the light of findings from these interviews, especially if, as a result of worsening employment opportunities for school leavers and those on training courses, many members of these groups will stay put, and stay workless, in their neighbourhoods.

The third theme concerned attitudes and intentions in terms of residential mobility, drawing a contrast between two areas with different rates of population turnover, and between a relatively isolated settlement, Amlwch, and a more geographically 'connected' neighbourhood, in West Kensington. However, on the basis of the two samples of residents in this study, the past rate of residential turnover proved to be a poor guide to actual differences in mobility. Mobility opportunities were seen as limited in both areas, albeit for different reasons - as a result of predominantly economic factors in West Kensington, such as limited job and housing options elsewhere, or due to more 'social' reasons in Amlwch, notably the desire to remain close to family and friends. The difference is that in West Kensington the possibility of moving out to improve one's life chances is kept within a suite of options for many

respondents, when (or if?) economic prospects improve. In Amlwch, on the other hand, moving out is just not considered as a possibility by many of those we interviewed - whether due to the sheer familiarity of a lifetime spent in the town, the fact that one would need to move some distance to improve labour market prospects or due to the multiple obligations, responsibilities and relationships that would need to be set aside if one moved. In both cases, but especially in Amlwch, several respondents had returned 'home' after a period away, often for a mixture of financial and social reasons.

These experiences and attitudes among the sample of residents in each of the six neighbourhoods suggest that one needs to be cautious in relying too much on the attributes of the population in order to assess the strength of attachment to neighbourhood: It is necessary to dig beneath the surface. Social networks were, for example, more pronounced among the relatively recent residents on Wensley Fold than the longer standing residents in West Marsh; respondents felt 'trapped' in both the London case study and in the isolated town. Both the area that was a pocket of deprivation amid wider affluence and the area within an equally deprived district were seen as equally 'ordinary' by those who lived there. What did seem to count more was the pattern of residential settlement over time and the degree of turbulence or stability created as a result, the proportion of younger people in areas where the public realm was eroding, and the extent to which the wider neighbourhood was a self-contained or a more 'porous' geographical entity for those who lived there. The historical narrative of the area, and the collective experiences that narrative comprises, acts as a key signifier of current social and community dynamics.
The analysis of the interviews also began to look beyond the three binary pairings selected on the basis of the themes, and looked across to attitudes and experiences in all six neighbourhoods.   While the extent to which respondents had family members living nearby varied considerably, the importance of those networks was evident in each of the case study areas in giving or receiving providing emotional, material or caring support. The qualities which emerged from the discussions were the relative unconditionality of the relationships compared to other aspects of the respondents' lives, and the relative flexibility with which financial support in particular could be provided (and repaid). The notions of 'family', 'home' and 'locality' were often closely intertwined, and accepted as 'givens' rather than seen as constraints which must somehow be shaken off if necessary to improve one's financial prospects or escape from stigma.

If family networks emerged as an important in each area, albeit with a different accent, the strength and locale of social networks, on the other hand, varied considerably. Locally based friends and family members were seen in very similar terms in the more isolated or long established communities, while respondents elsewhere seemed to have established more geographically dispersed and functionally separate relationships. In one case study, however, West Marsh, the relative isolation of the area had not been counterbalanced by strong local ties, or at least not any more. The drip-feed effect of relative long-term economic weakness had taken its toll. Social networks were more fragile and more fractured, and several respondents said they felt isolated or 'exposed' as a result.

How do the views, aspirations and experiences of the people we have interviewed in this study cast light on some of the research and policy debates outlined in the opening chapters? In terms of the 'spectrum of agency' we noted earlier, there was indeed a considerable distance between some of the 'rational actor', goal oriented assumptions that have become scripted into policies under the rubric of personalisation, choice and responsibilisation and the everyday experiences recorded here.   Respondents often spoke about shared norms and values, of

developing and maintaining reciprocal arrangements, often of a complex nature, and of being steeped in local cultural and social traditions.

The idea of place as a discrete signifies of status or source of stigma, as a stepping stone en route to another destination, or as a functional necessity because of proximity to the workplace – these qualities are not really recognised as impinging on the lives of some of our respondents. Some residents had made attempts to leave, but returned, and for many others such a prospect was simply not on their radar. This view was not held to the same extent across the neighbourhoods. Local social and family networks were prominent in Hillside and Amlwch, but in both cases they were eroding as some members moved out – to find work in Amlwch or a result of a major redevelopment programme in Hillside. The networks among the south Asian community in Wensley Fold were stronger and underpinned by shared cultural norms. In West Kensington and, to a lesser extent, Oxgangs, by contrast, respondents tended to take a more 'instrumental' approach to living in the neighbourhood and they kept alive the possibility of moving out in the future if circumstances changed.

In terms of reflections on the salience of 'place' in the daily lives of the respondents in this study and the extent of any 'neighbourhood effect' on their current situation and future opportunities, it is instructive to return to the suite of explanations that have been advanced to explain how place can affect personal health and well-being. It was suggested in the Introduction that much of the discussion in the urban studies literature on the impact of place on neighbourhood attachment and neighbourhood effects had relied on *compositional* explanations. They have looked at the attributes of the population (or groups within the population) in question and how they change over time, if possible controlling for the 'moving escalator effect' as some households move out and others move in. One might supplement this approach with *contextual* explanations which focus more on opportunity structures and the degree of social and physical connectedness of neighbourhoods to opportunities elsewhere. The degree of isolation or connection did prove to be an important discriminating factor in explaining how the six communities had developed differently over time and other areas. The selection of the case studies for this study relied, also, on bringing together a combination of compositional and contextual factors.

It is possible to pursue this distinction further and suggest that, in regeneration policy terms, some initiatives have been derived from a compositional framework (in which areas are selected by dint of their population attributes and then interventions introduced in order to improve outcomes). In other cases, policy emphasis has been based on the spatial 'reconnection' of neighbourhoods to areas of relatively greater prosperity, or socially reconnecting communities through community development or building up resources of 'bridging' social capital. Both of these approaches ostensibly view the neighbourhood from the outside looking in.

An approach based more on the accounts of those who live there, on the inside looking out, can be taken up through developing *collective* explanations of local variations, emphasising the distinctive socio-cultural and historical features of the communities in question. This approach involves the interweaving of individual biography and local history, through examining patterns of change, and the impact of any major periods of disruption, discontinuity or transformation, and considers the way the physical aspects of place embody individual and collective histories. All this might give a different reading on what matters to residents, what is seen as valuable about their area and what needs to be preserved and what changed. In terms of a slightly different vocabulary, it can be expressed as being concerned with the 'use value' rather than the 'exchange value' of place.

This approach is certainly a much less precise way of differentiating place than comparing scores on a deprivation index, but it may help to capture better the

different motivations, priorities and concerns of residents in more deprived neighbourhoods, and their preparedness to face up to new social or economic pressures. In particular, by concentrating on process of change over time, it may provide an insight into the response of existing residents to those newly arriving in the locality – whether the result of economic in-migration, social housing allocation priorities, mixed community masterplans or other neighbourhood regeneration imperatives.

Finally one should note that this report has focused on one broad aspect of the interviews with the 180 respondents in this study – how the neighbourhood permeates the experiences and perceptions of residents and how family and social networks are bounded by the neighbourhood level. Future reports by the research team will cover in more detail household practices, personal identities and self-esteem. Furthermore, this is the initial snapshot of these residents and the neighbourhoods they live in. The two subsequent phases of interviews will reveal how their circumstances and the circumstances of their neighbourhoods change, and will give rise to a consideration of how the different trajectories of these neighbourhoods might best be captured. In terms of factors that may have made a difference during the research period, the neighbourhood impact of the economic downturn will undoubtedly be one to explore further. One thing at least is certain. The number of challenging neighbourhoods, like the six localities included in this report, is unlikely to diminish in the dark economic times ahead.

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Appendix 1: Case Study Selection

Poverty, Place and Diversity: Blackburn and North East Lincolnshire:

The case study selection was designed to support such analysis, allowing the experiences of diverse groups in distinct places to be explored. It also aimed to facilitate the comparative analysis of the experiences of people with shared identities living in divergent places.

Under this theme a long list of local authorities were initially selected, and then one was chosen that was deemed 'diverse' and a very homogenous local authority selected on contrast. The following method was used:

- calculating for all English local authorities entropy scores for *tenure* (three group: owner occupation, social renting and private renting) and *ethnicity* (two group: white and non-white)

- Z-standardising and combining to create a 'diversity index' for each LA

- selecting only those local authorities in most deprived quartile of an index that combines a LAs standardised average score on the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004 and the LAs standardised Local Concentration Index.

Because most inner London boroughs have a distinctive and more diverse profile, non-London Local authorities were assessed separately. This provided two separate lists: one of the twenty 20 LAs with the highest 'diversity index' scores (10 most diverse in both London and non-London) (Table 1) and the 10 LAs with the lowest 'diversity index' scores (Table 2). Blackburn with Darwen and North East Lincolnshire were selected from this list as a 'diverse' and 'non-diverse' local authority respectively.

Table 1: 'Diverse' Local Authorities (London and Non-London)

LA	Region	ONS LA classification	DEFRA Classification	Rank Diversity Index	Tenure Entropy Index	Ethnicity Entropy Index	Combined Deprivation Index	IMD 2004 Score	Local Concentration
Lambeth	London	London Cosmo.	Major Urban	1	5	7	37	23	82
Newham	London	London Cosmo.	Major Urban	2	7	6	11	11	60
Haringey	London	London Cosmo.	Major Urban	3	6	14	15	13	46
Westminster	London	London Centre	Major Urban	4	1	20	35	39	19
Camden	London	London Centre	Major Urban	5	2	19	23	19	55
Tower Hamlets	London	London Centre	Major Urban	6	16	1	4	4	22
Hackney	London	London Cosmo.	Major Urban	7	14	5	5	5	47
Brent	London	London Cosmo.	Major Urban	8	20	2	88	81	87
Southwark	London	London Cosmo.	Major Urban	9	23	8	27	17	83
Lewisham	London	London Cosmo.	Major Urban	10	19	15	87	57	138
Leicester	East Midlands	Centres with Industry	Large Urban	15	29	11	28	31	29
Manchester	North West	Centres with Industry	Major Urban	17	8	34	2	2	3
Birmingham	West Midlands	Centres with Industry	Major Urban	22	36	17	14	15	15
Nottingham	East Midlands	Centres with Industry	Large Urban	23	15	39	6	7.5	9
Wolverhampton	West Midlands	Centres with Industry	Major Urban	26	42	26	38	35	45
Sandwell	West Midlands	Centres with Industry	Major Urban	30	46	33	19	16	52
Blackburn with Darwen	North West	Centres with Industry	Other Urban	38	114	28	31	34	25
Bradford	Yorkshire & H	Centres with Industry	Major Urban	39	132	30	24	30	11
Newcastle upon Tyne	North East	Regional Centres	Major Urban	40	26	82	16	20	5
Liverpool	North West	Regional Centres	Major Urban	41	21	99	1	1	2

Rank of 1 - Most/Highest
Maximum rank: 354 - Least/lowest

Table 2: 'Least Diverse' Local Authorities

LA	Region	ONS LA classification	DEFRA Classification	Rank Diversity Index	Tenure Entropy Index	Ethnicity Entropy Index	Combined Deprivation Index	IMD 2004 Score	Local Concentration
Barrow-in-Furness	North West	Industrial H'ands	Other Urban	300	254	339	26	29	16
Ashfield	East Midlands	Man. Towns	Other Urban	237	192	303	71	66	86
Sefton	North West	Industrial H'ands	Major Urban	230	204	241	67	78	42
Wigan	North West	Man. Towns	Major Urban	224	179	273	49	53	48
Derwentside	North East	Industrial H'ands	Rural-80	222	142	349	72	62	98
Wirral	North West	Industrial H'ands	Large Urban	203	170	225	42	48	8
Redcar & Cleveland	North East	Industrial H'ands	Large Urban	202	138	306	41	44	14
NE Lincolnshire	Yorkshire & H	Man. Towns	Other Urban	197	150	256	46	52	31
St. Helens	North West	Industrial H'ands	Major Urban	196	136	289	34	36	27
Sedgefield	North East	Industrial H'ands	Rural-50	190	106	346	69	55	100

Rank of 1 - Most/Highest

Maximum rank: 354 - Least/lowest

Poverty, Connectivity and Cohesion: Knowsley

Under the theme of poverty, connectivity and cohesion, a local authority was to be selected to represent 'deprivation in the midst of wider deprivation'. The selection method was as follows:

- Z-standardise and combine a local authority's average score on the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004 and the Local Concentration Index. This index highlights deprived LAs that have the most deprived local concentrations.

Table 3 displays the 10 LAs that score highest under this measure. Knowsley was selected from this list..

Table 3: 'Deprivation in the midst of wider deprivation

LA	Region	ONS LA classification	DEFRA Classification	Rank Combined Deprivation Index	IMD 2004 Score	Local Concentration	Extent Score
Liverpool	North West	Regional Centres	Major Urban	1	1	2	0.71
Manchester	North West	Centres with Industry	Major Urban	2	2	3	0.72
Knowsley	North West	Industrial H'lands	Major Urban	3	3	1	0.64
Tower Hamlets	London	London Centre	Major Urban	4	4	22	0.8
Hackney	London	London Cosmo.	Major Urban	5	5	47	0.83
Nottingham	East Midlands	Centres with Industry	Large Urban	6	7.5	9	0.63
Islington	London	London Centre	Major Urban	7	6	44	0.75
Hull	Yorkshire & H	Industrial H'lands	Large Urban	8	9	6	0.57
Easington	North East	Industrial H'lands	Rural-50	9	7.5	28	0.68
Middlesbrough	North East	Industrial H'lands	Large Urban	10	10	4	0.57

Rank of 1 - Most/Highest

Maximum rank: 354 - Least/lowest

Poverty and Mobility: Hammersmith and Fulham

Hammersmith and Fulham was selected as an urban 'high churn' area, to contrast with Amlwch (see below). The long list was derived from LAs in the most deprived quartile of an index that combines a LAs standardised average score on the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004 and the LAs standardised Local Concentration Index. From this only LAs classified by DEFRA as: Major Urban, Large Urban or Other Urban were chosen. The percentage inflow and percentage outflow from the 2001 Census were added together to denote 'churn'.

Table 4 lists the five LAs inside and the five Urban LAs outside London with highest combined inflow and outflow rate. Many LAs in the table 4 tend to be those with large student populations.

Table 4: Urban and High Churn Local Authorities

| LA | Region | ONS LA classification | DEFRA Classification | Per cent | | Rank | | | |
				In-flow	Out-flow	Diversity Index	Combined Deprivation Index	IMD 2004 Score	Local Concentration
Westminster	London	London Centre	Major Urban	15.7	11.2	4	35	39	19
H'smith & Fulham	London	London Centre	Major Urban	13.0	10.8	12	83	65	115
Camden	London	London Centre	Major Urban	13.2	10.5	5	23	19	55
Islington	London	London Centre	Major Urban	11.0	10.1	13	7	6	44
Norwich	East of England	Regional Centres	Other Urban	8.2	6.4	47	70	61	90
Nottingham	East Midlands	Centres with Industry	Large Urban	8.0	6.2	23	6	7.5	9
Manchester	North West	Centres with Industry	Major Urban	7.7	6.0	17	2	2	3
Lincoln	East Midlands	Regional Centres	Other Urban	7.0	5.8	80	65	72	59
Brighton & Hove	South East	Regional Centres	Large Urban	7.2	5.1	57	82	83	74

Rank of 1 - Most/Highest

Maximum rank: 354 - Least/lowest

Poverty, Connectivity and Cohesion: Oxgangs, Edinburgh

The selection method for the case study based in Scotland was

- to compute for all 32 Scottish Local authorities their average rank on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 2006 and a Local Concentration Index (see definitions below)
- subtract the Local Concentration Index from the average rank on the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2006.

Glasgow was excluded from the analysis – partly because of a concurrent major longitudinal study being co-ordinated by the Centre for Population Health at the University of Glasgow (the 'Gowell' project) and partly because most exercises that scope the scale and intensity of deprivation in Scotland are inevitably dominated by Glasgow. Table 5 presents for each local authority the difference between their average rank on SIMD 2006 and their Local Concentration score i.e. those areas with pockets of deprivation far worse than the average for the district as a whole. From this list Edinburgh emerges as the most appropriate local authority for selection. Edinburgh has the greatest difference between the average rank of the most deprived data zones that contain exactly 10% of the LA population and the average rank for all data zones.

**Table 5: Scottish Local Authorities; Difference and Deprivation (top 15 LAs)**

| LA | LA average IMD Rank | | Local Concentration | | Difference IMD rank and Local concentration | | |
| | Average rank | Rank | Average rank | Rank | Difference in average rank | | Difference rank |
	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(A-B)	Rank	(B-D)
Edinburgh, City of	4161	29	371	8	3790	1	21
East Renfrewshire	4965	32	1202	24	3764	2	8
East Dunbartonshire	4682	31	1369	25	3313	3	6
Aberdeen City	3844	22	595	13	3250	4	9
Stirling	3923	25	752	16	3170	5	9
Perth & Kinross	4119	28	1198	23	2922	6	5
Renfrewshire	3166	11	389	9	2777	7	2
South Ayrshire	3331	14	583	12	2748	8	2
Fife	3338	15	629	14	2708	9	1
South Lanarkshire	3113	10	412	11	2701	10	-1
Angus	3702	21	1054	22	2648	11	-1
Aberdeenshire	4457	30	1881	30	2576	12	0
Falkirk	3217	12	663	15	2554	13	-3
Midlothian	3507	19	966	21	2541	14	-2
Dumfries & Galloway	3420	17	886	17	2534	15	0

Source: SIMD and calculations

Neighbourhoods within Edinburgh

The thematic map below (Figure 1) shows how Edinburgh data zones perform on the SIMD 2006. Red indicates a data zone is in the bottom thirty per cent of deprived data zones in Scotland. Data zones in the top five percent are coloured dark blue, with those listed in the best 30 per cent to five per cent coloured light blue.

Figure 1
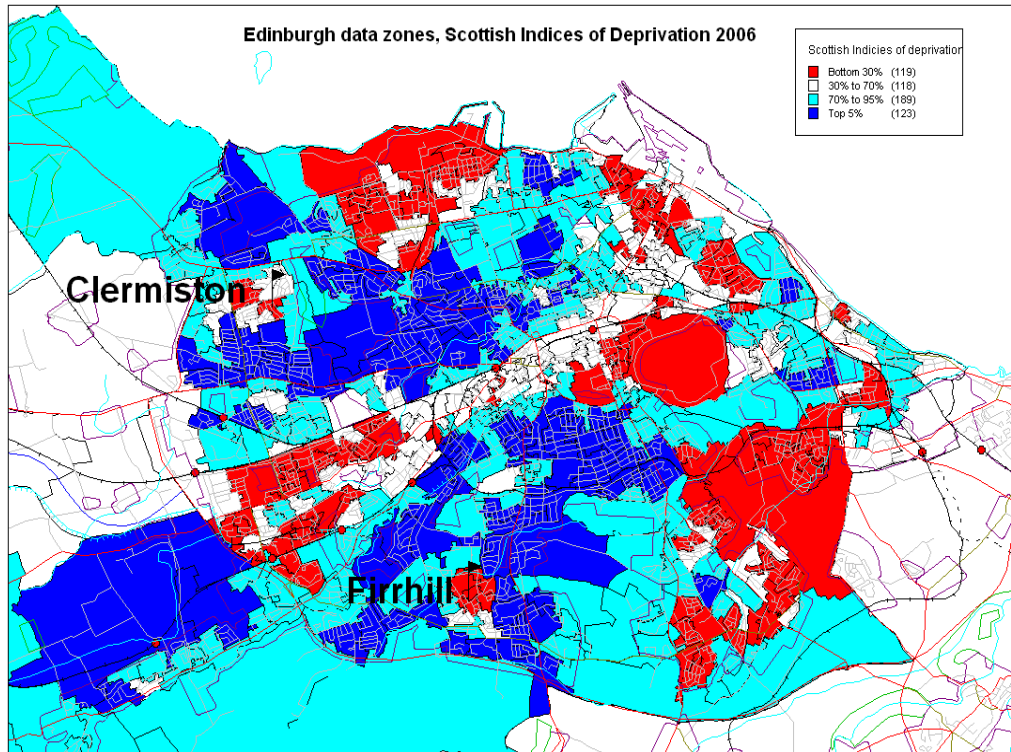
From inspection of this map - Clermiston (in the west of Edinburgh) and Firrhill/Oxgangs (in the south) emerged as the two case study neighbourhoods that might represent a 'pocket' of deprivation in the face of wider affluence (i.e. 'red' surrounded by 'blue'). Following visits to the area and discussions with local authority officers, Oxgangs (the name used locally, rather than Firrhill) was selected. The juxtaposition of wealth and apparent poverty can be seen within a few metres along one main road (when Oxgangs Avenue turns into Greenbank Crescent).

Poverty and Immobility: Amlwch

Amlwch was selected as a town in Wales that was relatively geographically isolated with a low degree of population churn.

The selection method used was to:

- Z-standardise: the access to services component of Welsh IMD 2005, Welsh IMD 2005 score, population turnover 2003-04 from mid-year estimates (at MSOA level) and average travel to work distance for the 2001 census

- sum access to services, population turnover and travel to work

- sort on this sum for 30% most deprived LSOAs on WIMD 2005 only.

Table 6 presents the 25 lower level super output areas that score highest on the measure above. From this list Amlwch Port (Isle of Anglesey) was selected as the case study as it scored most highly on the composite measure and is a relatively isolated town.

Table 6: Low Turnover and Relative Isolation: Neighbourhoods in Wales

LSOA	Z-Scores				
	Access to services (WIMD 2005)	WIMD 2005	Pop. Turnover	Travel to work	Isolation/Turn over Index (sum without IMD)
Amlwch Port	0.30	0.37	0.81	2.48	3.59
Talysarn	1.03	0.50	0.79	1.58	3.41
Bryngwran	1.23	0.46	0.55	1.41	3.19
Cwm-twrch	0.47	0.37	1.20	1.11	2.77
Llangyndeyrn 1	1.39	0.64	0.48	0.87	2.73
Garnant	0.93	0.39	0.60	1.14	2.67
Llanybydder 2	1.00	0.35	0.33	1.05	2.38
Glynneath 1	0.31	1.12	1.18	0.88	2.37
Trimsaran 2	0.95	0.80	0.58	0.82	2.35
Maesteg West 3	0.92	0.64	0.55	0.85	2.31
Milford: Hubberston 2	0.06	0.91	0.77	1.46	2.30
Glanamman 2	0.43	0.70	0.60	1.24	2.27
Onllwyn	0.78	0.90	0.74	0.71	2.23
Kingsland	-0.14	0.54	1.07	1.27	2.21
Lower Brynamman	0.13	0.54	0.58	1.45	2.16
Milford: West	0.05	1.02	0.77	1.30	2.12
Pontardawe 1	0.69	0.39	0.67	0.71	2.07
Vaynor 1	1.20	0.86	0.56	0.19	1.96
Blaengwrach	0.39	0.38	1.18	0.34	1.91
Hengoed (Carmarthenshire) 2	0.72	0.66	0.11	1.02	1.85
Blackmill 1	0.53	1.45	0.77	0.53	1.83
Saron 1	0.75	0.45	0.33	0.74	1.83
Glanamman 1	0.56	0.73	0.60	0.67	1.82
Aberteifi/Cardigan – Teifi	0.53	1.30	0.65	0.60	1.78
Bedlinog 1	0.58	1.48	0.86	0.16	1.61

Source: (1) Welsh Index of Deprivation 2005, (2) Mid year population estimates, (3) 2001 Census