Change, Loss and Community:
Resident narratives of life on a social housing estate

by

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Contents

Abstract

This thesis explores the value and meaning of community for residents on a regenerated social housing estate in the North-West of England. 'Community' has continuing relevance in academic inquiry and application within social policy. It is frequently portrayed as a lost idyll that can be retrieved to counteract social decline; thus, an important means of examining social change. I contend that community is an interpretative concept; consequently, objective policy constructions of community should be challenged and explored. I further argue that social policy directed towards social housing communities has become detached from the resident experience. Therefore, this research will contribute to knowledge that seeks to understand social housing communities from a resident perspective.

Fourteen semi-structured interviews have been undertaken with a purposive sample of ten residents on a social housing estate in the North of England. The interviews were transcribed and analysed through a thematic, narrative approach.

The research found that community is frequently constructed through social and community places, to which residents ascribe value and importance. These places were vital for facilitating supportive social networks and central to resident power, autonomy, and ownership. The loss of community spaces was seen as contributing to a rise in anti-social behaviour and a decline in social interaction. Subsequently, residents became unable to construct belonging to where they live, affecting their well-being and ability to feel at 'home.'

The findings highlight the exclusion of residents from dialogues about their own homes as a consequence of entrenched meta-narratives about social housing and community. This study provides a counter-narrative that contributes to a growing body of research that prioritises the resident voice and challenges ineffective social policy.

Acknowledgements

This thesis is dedicated to, because of, and for the residents of Rookwood. In particular, I pay thanks to the residents that took part in the research; I hope that I did your story justice.

The study is in memorandum of Granville Heyes, who was the personification of all I feel is great about community.

This thesis would not have been possible without the continued support of Professor Anya Ahmed. My supervisor for nearly ten years, Anya, has been a constant source of inspiration in so many ways. I would also like to thank Doctor Mark Wilding for his supervision and sound advice, particularly in the 11th hour!

I pay particular thanks to my namesake and Grandmother, Eve Ogden. Grandma Og was always surrounded by narrative in her reading, writing, and telling (re-telling) of life stories. I also thank my family for their support and encouragement over the years to my mother, Vivienne Blezard, for introducing me to literature and the world of stories. To my father, Keith Blezard, for letting me know although I'm a dreamer, I'm not the only one. To my daughter Grace Hunt for being my source of light and laughter. Also, a special mention goes to Mary Quigg for providing childcare and support, the archetypal estate matriarch with 'community' in her bones.

Lastly - I have got this thesis over the line because of my two boys; my partner Chris Quigg and our son Francis Quigg. This one is for you boys; you are my 'home.'

"We had come home, and if home was not what we had expected, never mind, our need for belonging allowed us to ignore the obvious and to create real places or even illusory places, befitting our imagination."

(Angelou, 2010, p.214)

Chapter 1 - Introduction

1.1 Chapter Overview

Exploring the concept of 'community' has relevance in academic inquiry and understanding its application in social policy and practice (Ledwith & Springett, 2010). Community has long been proffered as a lost idyll that can be retrieved to counteract the impact of social decline (Ahmed, 2015). Academic and policy applications of community are often infused with nostalgia; thus, the 'lost community' has become Doxa in literature and policy (Alleyne, 2002). Within social housing policy, 'community' is frequently presented as the solution for the pinnacle of social decline: the sink estate. The thesis will demonstrate that policy constructions of community have become static, unchallenged, and removed from the lived experience of social housing residents (Slater, 2018). Thus, warranting further exploration of both the application and understanding of community in social housing policy.

Additionally, community is a concept that has a long history within UK social policy, particularly addressing social exclusion and delivering regeneration. It has also arguably been employed as a replacement for state involvement and welfare in the advent of neoliberal community policy (Craig et al., 2011). [1]The neoliberal application of community began to take form in the Thatcher administration, particularly in urban renewal policy (Wallace, 2016). There has been a resurgence of the concept in policy, originating in New Labour's propositions of 'sustainable' and 'balanced' communities (Cole & Goodchild, 2000). These later evolved as part of David Cameron's Conservative narratives of responsibility and "Broken Britain" (Crossley, 2017, p.22) and more recently with the gentrified regeneration of social housing estates (Minton, 2018). These applications of community often relate to responses to social change, predominantly as a remedy for social decline as part of regeneration policies (Jones & Evans, 2008). The thesis will present a more

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[1] *The thesis uses the following definition of neoliberal policy approaches:*
"…an articulation of state, market, and citizenship that harnesses the first to impose the stamp of the second onto the third." (Wacquant, 2012, p.71).

detailed exploration of what is meant by 'neoliberal' and its relevance to the research in Chapter 4.

This study seeks to examine resident constructions of community and belonging within the context of the lived experience of change and loss on a social housing estate. Therefore, research such as my own, offers an opportunity to understand social change and the policy pertaining to tackle such change from a localised perspective (Ahmed, 2010). The estate at the centre of this research, like so many, has been subject to a higher degree of change due to the impact of residualisation, globalisation and austerity (McKenzie, 2015). Research from a community standpoint enables the telling of the story of one estate to illuminate the micro impact of macro-level social change (Crow, 2002). This study supports research that suggests the additional significance of community within social housing neighbourhoods; as residents process and cope with higher levels of change (Cole & Goodchild, 2000; Forrest & Kearns, 2001; MacDonald et al., 2005). My findings will demonstrate that community can be valuable, useful, and important to residents. Hence, this thesis contributes to a growing body of knowledge that aims to understand the significance of 'home further,' community and belonging in social housing (Ali, 2021; Anderson et al., 2020; Rolfe & Garnham, 2020). Consequently, the research explores community, place, change and belonging against a backdrop of social change through a period of austerity.

Residents' ability to feel safe, at home and connected to their local neighbourhood is important to them and their choice to remain in an area (Preece, 2020). This has implications for sustainability and housing management of social housing neighbourhoods. Using both literature and my findings, the impact of feelings of safety and community on resident well-being will be explored (Yarker, 2019). I will demonstrate how positive community experiences are relevant and important to residents (Robertson et al., 2020). Furthermore, the thesis will establish the effects of living within "improper places" and the importance of resident safety in the creation of 'home' (Popay et al., 2003, p.68). Therefore, providing the opportunity to explore the impact of residualisation on resident constructions of belonging and community.

Despite the wealth of policy that seeks to "prescribe" community to social housing neighbourhoods (Taylor, 2004, p.208), this research will demonstrate the importance of resident autonomy. Residents, such as those interviewed within this study, create, control and own 'community' and consequently, it is not to be developed *for* residents. Therefore, it is essential to involve residents in the planning and development of social housing and associated services. Adopting a more inclusive approach could empower residents to create and shape 'community' for themselves (Munsie, 2016).

Understanding community from the resident standpoint is necessary to evaluate the human impact of social policy, welfare reform, and social change (Rogaly & Taylor, 2009). Therefore, this thesis will also outline how residents are often omitted from the decisions made about their communities (Tually et al., 2020). The findings of this study corroborate research that demonstrates the negative impact of a decline in community spaces and social interaction on working-class[2] neighbourhoods (Hickman, 2013; Oldenburg, 1999). Furthermore, it is revealed that excluding residents from critical decisions about community space and facilities contribute to much broader negative impacts on the overall neighbourhood (McKenzie, 2015; Wacquant et al., 2014). Policy can become distorted without adequate engagement with the key stakeholders that it affects (Park et al., 2014).

This thesis will outline how this exclusion has stemmed from a lack of resident narratives in policy, political spheres, and the media; hence this research will provide a counter-narrative through residents' narratives. Master narratives about social housing communities have been damaging to residents, primarily because of their connections to the classist power structures that control policy. The findings of this research evidence the value of involving residents in wider conversations about social housing policy and in continuing to present counter-

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[2] *The thesis draws on theoretical considerations of social class as structural power, relating to the production and distribution of resources and inequality (McKenzie, 2017; Skeggs, 2004; Tyler, 2015) this will be expanded upon in later chapters.*

narratives (Bamberg, 2004). Furthermore, I seek to demonstrate the need for standpoint research, alongside radical community development, approaches to foster policy and practise change in the social housing sector (Harding, 2015; Hodkinson, 2020).

This thesis will determine how the lack of a comprehensive appreciation of the concept of community has created fixed and negative constructions utilised in policy and political rhetoric (Alleyne, 2002; Imrie & Raco, 2003; Tait & Inch, 2016). The associated narratives have stigmatised and censored working-class social housing communities (Toynbee & Walker, 2015). The combination of fixed constructions of community, the exclusion of the resident voice and the stigmatisation of the social housing community has resulted in a gap in knowledge about the lived experience of community within social housing, especially concerning policy applications of community. Therefore, further exploration of what 'community' *is* and *does* within a social housing context is now called for. Consequently, my research aims to contribute to knowledge and theory about social housing communities to utilise this knowledge in new settings.

The chapter now progresses onto an introduction of the study area to locate the research and place it into context. I will use this to outline my research rationale by exploring the key themes and issues that form the foundations of my study. I will then specify the research aims and objectives. An outline of the overall thesis structure will conclude the chapter.

1.2 Study Context

The study focuses on the resident experiences of community on a social housing estate in the North-West of England; for the purpose of this study, it shall be named; Rookwood. The estate is situated in a town within North-West England with a population of approximately 13,000 people.

Initially, the town was a small mining community but became part of a slum clearance project for a nearby city. Between the 1940s and 1960s, over 18,000

people were re-homed in the local area across several new social housing estates (Anon, 2008). The Rookwood estate was the last and fifth social housing estate built by the Local Authority in the town in the early 1980s due to an increased need for social housing.

As part of the slum clearance project, the whole town was developed along with the social housing estates; initially, this included the construction of a shopping 'precinct' and brand-new amenities. This included the development of new shops, new schools, a library, GP surgeries, a post office, a medical clinic, and a community centre (Anon, 2013). Additionally, the area saw respectable employment levels, primarily due to the closure of the local mining pits (Anon, 2015). Further, employment at the local factory plant declined steadily until the factory then closed in 1992 (House of Commons, 1992). The area experienced a socio-economic decline from the 1990s onwards (Anon, 2005). The area has relatively high levels of socio-economic deprivation, and Rookwood is within the top 10% of deprivation (see Appendices 1,8 and 29-31). To reiterate, the town is an example of a working-class neighbourhood subject to social change; the relevance of class and its relationship to power and inequality will be explored later in the thesis.

The social housing in the area was initially owned and managed by the local Council, covering over 25,000 homes across the city. An Arm's Length Management Organisation (ALMO) was formed in the early 2000s to manage the stock. After a damning, one-star audit, residents voted to transfer their homes to a newly formed housing association (UK Housing, 2007). When the stock had transferred, a condition was placed on the vacant land on Rookwood that had once contained low rise flats. This was that affordable housing needed to be developed within ten years of the transfer. Therefore, in 2013 a three-phase development began to build family homes, bungalows, and an Extra care scheme on the vacant plots.

Within the methodology chapter, I explore my position with the research, and residents, in a reflexive account of the thesis. However, I wish to introduce my

relationship to the study area and some issues behind how I began formulating my research questions. In 2010 I took up a position as a Community Development Officer with a Northern social landlord, covering the estate's area. My first project was to work solely on Rookwood as part of a dedicated community project. This focused on targeted development activities due to the high levels of socio-economic deprivation and low levels of resident engagement on the estate. In my methodology chapter, I reflect more on my employment and its relationship with the research.

In 2012, my then employer, announced plans to regenerate the Rookwood estate by developing additional housing and an Extra care scheme on the open land with the development clause[3]. The focus of the regeneration seemed to be on the number and quality of the 'units' built rather than the overall neighbourhood. This made me recall research that critiques the role of the 'sustainable community' in regeneration (Imrie & Raco, 2003). I also became concerned that the resident voice was, yet again, lost in the consultation process. I felt that the resident's concerns about the development's impact on their community went unheard.

I considered how new residents would settle into such a well-established neighbourhood. What would the 'community' become, and what would this mean for the long-term sustainability of the new homes, the estate, and the community itself? I already had concerns about the overall impact of the withdrawal and closure of community services in the area. This, therefore, made me conscious of the added effect of more residents moving onto the estate at such a time. When the opportunity arose to begin a professional doctorate, I saw it as the ideal platform to explore and unpick the questions I had started to think about. I felt that through the narrative of Rookwood, I could examine the micro-level impact of the macro-level social change I had witnessed. At this time, I was encouraged by the work of Professor Graham Crow and my new PhD supervisor, Professor Anya Ahmed (Ahmed, 2010; 2011; Crow, 2000; 2002).

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[3] *Appendix 3 contains a representation of aerial photography that depicts the open land on the estate prior to the development*

I have since left my post as a Community Worker in the area but stayed in contact with the estate and residents through social media. I remained in the housing sector, taking up a position at Trafford Housing Trust as their Customer Insight Analyst. In 2017 I moved to a similar position at Progress Housing Group. Although now in an analytical role, my post is still resident-focused. My responsibility is to ensure that customer and resident opinions, ideas, and feedback are not only recognised by the Group but responded to and acted upon. Working directly with resident feedback has only strengthened my position to understand and prioritise the resident voice.

The focus of my thesis stems from my own personal and professional experiences; I reflect on this, and the impact on my research, in more depth in the reflexivity section within Chapter 5. I was, and am, interested in exploring what community means, is and does in the context of social housing; from the resident perspective. I sensed that it was necessary to examine the resident's experience and understanding of community. I also feel that there are opportunities to improve policy and practice by studying the lived experiences of community. My research began to take on additional relevance as other researchers, and housing practitioners raised their concerns about the lack of resident voices. Such concerns have been raised in the social housing sector through campaigns such as 'See the person'[4]. This relevance has only been strengthened by the tragedy of Grenfell and the subsequent 2018 green paper "A new deal for social housing". The paper outlines a vision that claims to; "*value and respect the voices of residents*" (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2018, p.10).

Having established the study context, I will now progress to outline the rationale for the study by exploring some key issues and themes the research seeks to explore.

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[4] *See The Person/Benefit to society is a collective of 26 housing organisations across the country that have commissioned research into the stereotyping of social housing residents, alongside a campaign to challenge the way the public think and tackle the stigma associated with social housing tenants -* http://benefittosociety.co.uk

1.3 Developing a Research Rationale

> *"Silenced. We fear those who speak about us, who do not speak to us and with us. We know what it is like to be silenced. We know that the forces that silence us, because they never want us to speak, differ from the forces that do speak, tell me your story."*
> (hooks[5], 2004, p.159)

The following sections will outline the key themes and issues that have informed and inspired the thesis. Additionally, the theory, policy, and socio-political issues that I have identified as relevant to my research will be explored. The gaps in knowledge and understanding that this research seeks to address will be highlighted. Via an exploration of key themes, the rationale of my study will be presented, which will demonstrate its usefulness and purpose in generating new knowledge.

The section explores why narrative is so relevant in research on social housing communities. It will be crucial to demonstrate how the meta-narratives[6] of social housing are damaging and stigmatising towards residents. This is important to establish, as these narratives can inform social policy. Additionally, these narratives de-humanise the social housing resident and, consequently, wider acceptance of oppressive practice. As a result of this discussion, the need for research that delivers counter-narratives from the resident standpoint will be outlined.

The chapter then introduces the usefulness of the community study in exploring social change and the impact of social policy in social housing neighbourhoods. I will outline how localised narratives examine the human impact and cost of social change and how this can be interpreted as a loss in social housing communities. It will be essential to examine why social change is often felt more keenly by social

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[5] *NB: bell hooks does not capitalise her name*
[6] *The thesis uses the term 'meta-narrative' to mean master or dominant narratives, under the following definition; "The term master narrative typically refers to pre-existent sociocultural forms of interpretation. They are meant to delineate and confine the local interpretation strategies and *agency constellations in individual subjects as well as in social institutions." (Bamberg, 2005, p.287)*

housing residents, highlighting the need to understand the change from their perspective. The chapter will evidence the high degree of change in social housing neighbourhoods and thus accompanying policy intended to tackle such change. Conversely, it will be demonstrated that this is rarely examined from the resident standpoint. The thesis will then introduce how residents are excluded from much dialogue about responding to change and loss in their communities, hence evidencing a further gap for my research to address.

The rationale concludes with an overview of the importance of resident autonomy and ownership in shaping their own communities and neighbourhoods. Again, attention will return to the dismissal of residents from both macro and micro-level responses to change. The discussion will then return to how meta-narratives of social housing and community have thus enabled policy and practice that is damaging to residents and ineffective and inappropriate. This will then demonstrate the role of resident narratives in shaping policy and practice and how my research seeks to contribute to this. The concepts of standpoint research and radical community practice will be introduced to outline the argument that more politically motivated research and practice are now required. By submitting a more critical and radical approach, the contributions of my research will be determined. Specifically, the thesis aims to propose recommendations for both policy and practice through critical research delivered from a resident standpoint.

First, I will examine the import of the narrative in dialogues about, with, and for social housing communities.

1.3.1 Narratives of social housing communities

> *"Dominant narratives and structures remain "ignorant" of life from marginalised perspectives – it means that social life isn't fully understood – it teaches us "not only about the lives of the oppressed, but also about the lives of their oppressor and thus about how nature and social relations in general worked"*
> (Harding, 2004a. p.5)

The importance and power of narratives are explored throughout the thesis, focusing on the impact of meta-narratives of community and social housing. The presentations of community within discourses of social decline often rely on romantic constructions of community. Such constructions are frequently suffused with nostalgia, framing community as a panacea to contemporary social decline (Ahmed, 2010; Williams, 1997). Traditional, wistful constructions of community have become "doxa" in both policy and literature and therefore need to be deconstructed and explored (Alleyne, 2002, p.607). This utopian community narrative has become especially prevalent concerning social housing policy. The 'sink estate' is often presented as the reverse of this idyll, the nadir of social decline (Jones, 2012; Tyler, 2013). In policy and political narratives, connections are often made between social housing estates, social decline, and 'community' (Tonkiss, 2005). There is little discussion regarding the lived experience relating to these concepts, particularly from the resident perspective. Cuming (2013) describes the British social housing estate as attracting media and political fascination but paradoxically is rarely examined in-depth, either in a journalistic or academic setting. Thus, my thesis will outline the importance of resident-led research and address this disparity by exploring the significance and meaning of community for residents through their narratives.

The 'sink estate' has been presented as a master narrative of the British social housing estate, depicted as the embodiment of social decline, ghettos of poverty, crime, and irresponsibility (Slater, 2018). The thesis will demonstrate that the profoundly entrenched sink estate narrative has evolved into an 'agnotology'[7], enabling it to be accepted as objective and factual (Slater, 2018, p.879). The research will outline how the master narratives of the 'lost community' and the 'sink estate' have become doxa in literature, policy, and broader cultural narratives (Alleyne, 2002; Tyler, 2013). The powerful intertwining of these concepts has facilitated the territorial stigmatisation of British social housing estates (Wacquant

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[7] *The concept of 'agnotology' was devised by science historian, Robert Proctor to describe the deliberate "cultural production of ignorance" that is intended to distract or dissuade away from certain facts or issues. Tom Slater applies the concept to how the use of the 'sink estate' narrative has directed both policy response and public attitudes to social housing communities (Proctor & Schiebinger, 2008 as cited in Slater, 2018).*

et al., 2014). This stigmatisation has facilitated the rise of increasingly damaging and oppressive neoliberal policy toward social housing residents (Mooney, 2009).

Furthermore, I seek to demonstrate that these narratives have been propagated to enable public acceptance of such policy (Toynbee & Walker, 2015). It will be essential to consider how the othering of the social housing resident has resulted in them being blamed for wider, structural issues (Worley, 2005). The notable absence of resident voices within policy, the media, and political spheres have facilitated class-based prejudice and exclusion (Valentine & Harris, 2014).

Therefore, my research will show that stigmatising depictions of social housing residents have been permitted due to a distinct lack of resident narratives. Thus, highlighting a significant gap in understanding the lived experience of the social housing community. It is important to question and explore narratives within policy and political spheres, to examine their purpose as a response to social change, rather than accepting them as factual and unbiased (Allen, 2009). The exclusion and dismissal of the resident narrative from dialogues about them have resulted in the disenfranchisement of the resident voice (McKenzie, 2017). Consequently, this research aims to develop a counter-narrative that can offer an alternative to those narratives currently accepted about social housing residents. This thesis argues that counter-narratives are a valuable means of unpicking and examining policy constructions of social housing communities.

Through my research and relevant theory, the social housing community will be presented as a case that evidences the value and importance of the counter-narrative (Andrews, 2004). Furthermore, my research will demonstrate the usefulness of examining the impact of national social policy by studying one community (Crow, 2000). The resident narratives of Rookwood will help my research illuminate the reality of social policy imbued with stigmatising master narratives of social housing. The study further demonstrates the need for research from a resident standpoint through the residents' stories. The thesis presents the case for standpoint research, not only to hear the resident voice but to drive socio-political change (Harding, 2004a). My findings will be discussed alongside a critical

appraisal of social policy, to clearly outline why such change is now necessary, particularly in social housing policy (Hodkinson, 2020).

Although I acknowledge that social housing estates have been the focus of comprehensive and significant community studies (e.g., Cole, 2013; McKenzie, 2015; Rogaly & Taylor, 2009;), it will be demonstrated that the meta-narratives about social housing still prevail, this has been shown through the tragedy of Grenfell, where resident voices were unheard and dismissed (Booth, 2021). Furthermore, in the aftermath of the disaster, residents were blamed and discredited, with the media returning to familiar stereotypes of residents (MacLeod, 2018). Resident-led representations of community often face significant challenges in gaining the same level of coverage as sensationalist media narratives (Alevizou et al., 2016). Therefore, this has resulted in a knowledge gap that explores the significance and meaning of community itself from a resident perspective. Consequently, my research seeks to utilise a biographical, narrative approach to provide a voice for resident-led constructions of community. This counter-narrative has been developed from a resident standpoint and aims to contribute to a growing body of knowledge that prioritises, platforms and recognises the resident experience (Ali, 2021; Denedo & Ejiogu, 2021; Hodkinson, 2020).

Due to the level of change directed at, and experienced by, social housing communities, I will continue to explore the role of research such as my own in examining social change.

1.3.2 Community, social class and change

Change is a recurring theme throughout the thesis, both in my theoretical exploration and with the resident experiences presented through the findings. A review of literature will evidence the role of the community study in exploring macro-level change through a micro-level setting (Savage, 2010). The study of specific neighbourhoods, such as my own, are used to understand the human experience of broader socio-political shifts in working-class communities (Coates & Silburn,1981; McKenzie, 2015; Rogaly & Taylor, 2009). Despite previous

critiques of the approach (Bell & Newby 1971; Crow, 2018; Crow & Allan, 1994), this thesis will evidence the continuing relevance of the community study in exploring social change and the position of sociological concepts (Ahmed, 2010; Crow, 2000).

A lineage of research has explored notions of 'community' within working-class areas, particularly within the 'Chicago School' (Crow, 2002). However traditional community studies have been criticised for presenting overly simplistic relationships with place, therefore it is suggested that this community study has the opportunity, and arguably a duty, to explore the more complex connections between 'community,' belonging and place (O'Reilly, 2013). Community study and theory have responded to critique through its development, partly by incorporating other disciplines, leading to a resurgence in the approach (Crow & Allan, 1994).

Nevertheless, the potential of the community study does not discount its complexity as a loaded concept; it remains a "contested term" (Crow & Allan, 1994, p.xv). The interpretative and complex nature of community can be an asset in examining social change and processes (Ahmed, 2015). Nonetheless, my research will adopt working definitions to clarify my interpretation and focus of the research. Therefore, the literature review will explore the history of the community study, particularly research that examines the concept alongside social change. I will consider definitions of territorial communities (Crow & Allan, 1994), as well as community interaction (Warren & Warren, 1977) and membership (Crow & Allan, 1994).

This thesis will demonstrate how social change is particularly relevant in my research due to its effect on social housing neighbourhoods (Pinoncely, 2016). An exploration of previous research will highlight the impact of post-industrial decline on social housing communities (Hickman, 2013). It will be established that such change is rarely explored from the resident viewpoint (McKenzie, 2012). Thus, evidencing the need for research such as my own to examine how the difference can be perceived fully and experienced as loss by residents, illuminating the human cost of social change. This examination will be important to discuss the impact of social policy and how this has contributed to the residualisation of British

social housing estates (Hills, 2007). The adverse effect of neoliberal approaches to social housing and community policy on residents' lives will also be explored (Hodkinson et al., 2013; Slater, 2018). More specifically, I use the story of one estate to evidence the real-world experience of social change and welfare reform (Crow, 2002).

The social change felt more keenly by social housing residents has therefore affected their experiences of both community and belonging (Ali, 2021). To help unpack this, a discussion of the 'third places' role in social housing and how social change has contributed to the loss of such places will be presented (Jeffres et al., 2009; Oldenburg, 1997). The research will demonstrate that community, social spaces, and social networks potentially hold more value in social housing communities (Hickman, 2013; Williams & Hipp, 2019). This will demonstrate the importance of understanding the value and usefulness that residents place on community spaces and what can be learnt from this. My findings, in particular, highlight that there is additional importance of community and belonging within social housing neighbourhoods (Forrest & Kearns, 2001),

An element of my research seeks to better understand how residents process and cope with social change. Additionally, how this change affects their constructions of community and belonging will also be considered. How residents may employ nostalgia to make sense of the social change around them will be explored (Ahmed, 2015). My research argues that although nostalgia may be prevalent in resident narratives of community, this does not mean that their experiences of loss and change should be discounted. This is a critical point to make in the context of welfare reform and neoliberal policy that has excluded and harmed social housing residents. Therefore, the positive aspects of nostalgia as a valuable means for residents to cope with and process social change will likewise be examined (Ahmed, 2015; Gustafson, 2014). Through this examination, the value of temporal belonging will be demonstrated, evidencing that residents can, and do, construct belonging to the same place across time (May & Muir, 2015).

Exploring how residents process and deal with social change is particularly relevant in social housing due to the impact of "housing in hard times" (Paton, 2013, p.83). My research seeks to evidence the result of a loss of community spaces in neighbourhoods experiencing high levels of social change and decline (Fitzgerald, 2016; Williams, 2019). The narratives of Rookwood will be employed to highlight the impact of crime and socio-economic deprivation through residents' constructions of community. I seek to evidence the unforgiving reality of crime and anti-social behaviour and its detrimental effects on residents' ability to belong (Paton, 2013).

Historically the community study has evidenced a lack of or deterioration of 'community' within urban populations and cities and a rise of individualism (Paddison, 2001). The research is a community study which explores the resident experience of change and loss to understand how it affects both resident belonging and social interaction with others. However, the research must resist the propagation of the working-class community's 'poor but happy' trope (Crow & Allan, 1994). The research seeks not to romanticise the working-class experience of community but to recognise the realities of living through 'hard times' and explore the impact on residents' lives (Bulmer, 1986). Definitions of 'imagined communities' and how residents use memory to create temporal belonging as a coping response to social change also hold relevance (Crow & Allan, 1994). How a community is 'defended' from outside threats during social change is crucial to understand. It will therefore be important to consider how nostalgia fits into collective identities to enable residents to establish who belongs and why as a means of self-preservation (Gottdiener et al. (2019))

Furthermore, despite the evidence to suggest the relevance of 'community' to social housing residents, the research will explore how the understanding of this concept is currently under-researched (Yarker, 2019). In part, it will be demonstrated that this is due to an under-representation of the resident narrative in social policy, media, and political spheres (Koch, 2018). Hence, I will outline the need for research such as my own and demonstrate its contribution to a growing body of knowledge exploring the value of community, belonging, and home for the

social housing resident (Ali, 2021; Preece, 2020; Yarker, 2019). Therefore, resident narratives will be used to explore the human and local impact of broader social change. A discussion of the consequences of excluding residents from processes, decisions, and policies that affect their homes will be presented. Therefore, appraising the value and importance of making a home on residents' well-being and thus the role of research from a resident perspective (Ali, 2021).

It will be argued that the exclusion of residents in key decision-making processes stems from the power structures associated with social class. Although a complete discussion of social class is beyond the scope of the thesis, it is crucial to consider how the research defines class and why this is both relevant and useful to the study. In its most simplistic form, the research adheres to the Weberian position of class as economic and cultural status, mainly through the concept of economic power exercised through social class (Hurst et al., 2016). However, it is suggested that the view of class as simply economic and cultural status can be overly simplistic in its definition (Jones, 1975). Therefore, the thesis explores the power structures of class and how social class then can be determined through resource and access. In particular, I will draw on theory exploring the uneven allocation of that power and resource, alongside examining who benefits from power structures (Skeggs, 1997; Skeggs, 2004; Tyler, 2015).

Due to the level of influence that social housing policy and practice have had on the social changes experienced by residents, it will be necessary for my research to consider and critique both. Hence, the study will briefly explore community construction within social housing policy and practice.

1.3.3 Community in social housing policy and practice

> *"The 'politics of voice' are still relevant. When we refer to the politics of voice, we are not just talking about who gets to speak, but also who gets listened to, authorised, publicised and most important, legitimated"*
> (Fraser & Taylor, 2020, p.7)

Despite the social housing estate prevalence in policy constructions of community, it will be demonstrated that such constructions often lack a full appreciation of the resident's lived experience. As I previously asserted, ideological interpretations of community have contributed to policy constructions of social housing that have been created without resident involvement.[8] Power imbalances have effectively excluded working-class narratives from such dialogue, devaluing the social housing community (Glucksberg, 2014). Thus, giving rise to fixed applications of 'community' within policy and practice constructed entirely from middle-class ideologies (Rogaly & Taylor, 2009). This has essentially detached 'community' from the lived resident experience and has enabled the emergence of increasingly stigmatising narratives of the social housing estate (Slater, 2016). Thus, this research seeks to further understand what community *is* by developing a critical understanding of the resident's experience of a social housing development. An aim of this study is to develop a standpoint narrative that can contribute to knowledge that informs and improves both housing policy and practice.

Within Chapter 4, a critique of the application of community in policy and practice will be presented. It will be highlighted that this is partly due to a selective utilisation of community theory, conducted without a comprehensive appreciation of the complexity and ambiguity of the concept (Wallace, 2010). I demonstrate how this has contributed to policy and practice constructions of community that are objective and homogeneous. The literature review will establish that the study of 'community' can prove complex and subjective, requiring a wide range of debate and discussion about its meaning and usefulness (Crow, 2018). It is argued that the widespread acceptance of standardised and nostalgic interpretations of community have hindered the development of a heterogeneous understanding of the concept (Alleyne, 2002). Thus, presenting an opportunity for this study to further the knowledge of the lived experiences of community. The research seeks

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[8] *The thesis utilises the following definition of resident involvement; "Resident involvement in social housing is about how tenants or others living nearby can influence a social landlord's activity' (Pawson et al., 2012, p.3). It is acknowledged that this is a broad, and indistinct, term that is utilised to refer to all tenant or resident participation, engagement, or empowerment (Preece, 2019).*

to do this by contributing to, and building upon, community theory and then applying this knowledge to new contexts.

Furthermore, it is argued that social housing residents are excluded from dialogue, practice, and policy directly about them (Glucksberg, 2014; McKenzie, 2015). Additionally, the absence of resident involvement and narratives has compromised the efficacy of social housing policy. Therefore, my research seeks to highlight that the increasing variance between the "ideal" of community and actual experiences of it has received minimal attention (Warr et al., 2017, p.150). My research aims to outline the importance of resident autonomy and ownership in the uses and constructions of community. A resident standpoint will help the thesis demonstrate that this indicates broader power structures affecting all social housing residents. The findings from this thesis will be presented, alongside existing theory, to illustrate the consequence of the territorial stigmatisation of social housing communities (Wacquant et al., 2014).

Approaches to tenant participation and involvement have previously garnered critiques of disingenuity and effectiveness (Hickman, 2006, Preece, 2019). Furthermore, residents' involvement in decision-making processes does not necessarily equate with influence (March, 2018). Thus, the study seeks to make recommendations for both social housing policy and practice with regard to improving how residents are involved in shaping service and provision. My research intends to present a critical appraisal of social housing policy and practice from the resident's perspective. Through this, the purpose of standpoint research and radical community practice in informing the social housing sector will be explored (Harding, 2015; Hodkinson, 2020).

This thesis will assert that community is an interpretative concept, and it is crucial for policy to recognise this and acknowledge lived experiences of community. Hence the research will highlight the importance of resident-led community studies. The community study can present counter-narratives, not just concerning

platforming unheard voices, but as a means of informing change through research (Harding, 2004a; Hodkinson, 2020). Consequently, the thesis seeks to develop new knowledge that can contribute to the development of more effective social policy and social housing practice.

Having concluded the introduction of the critical topics and themes that form the rationale for my research, I will now introduce the estate as the focus of this study and explore why it was chosen to place the research into context.

1.4 Research Aims and Objectives

The research explores community, place, change and belonging against a backdrop of social change through a period of austerity. The primary aim of this research is to explore the significance and meaning of community for residents on a regenerated social housing estate in the north-west of England. The study will achieve this aim through an interpretative epistemology that employs a biographical, narrative approach to understand residents' lived experiences in social housing communities. I seek to provide voice to social housing residents in the context of a new housing development through a community study to draw out counter-narratives; from a resident standpoint.

Particular attention will be paid to how the resident experience of community is constructed through; place, social networks and belonging. This will be achieved through my interpretation of both relevant literature and an analysis of my research findings. I argue that an interpretative, narrative approach is the most suitable methodology to achieve my research aims. My research will be presented as a narrative of the resident's narratives of community. My relationship with the residents and the research will also be considered; in terms of my influence on the study.

It is contended that social policy often connects social housing estates, social decline, and 'community.' Thus, a further aim is to; examine the significance of resident constructions of community when exploring the impact of social change and decline. Therefore, the macro-level changes to the social housing landscape

will be considered; through the micro lens of one neighbourhood's study. The research seeks to further knowledge of what community *is* and *does* by developing a critical understanding of the resident's experience of a social housing development. Ultimately, I aim for this study to inform and improve future practice and policy.

My final aim is to develop a thematic and resident-led narrative that will contribute to knowledge on community, social housing, and narrative analysis. I seek to further housing provider's understanding of resident experiences by contributing to, and building upon, theories of community. I then intend to apply this knowledge to new contexts.

In summary, as both a researcher and a housing professional, I wanted to develop research that explored the following questions:

1. What role, if any, does community play in residents' lives, what does it mean to them, and why?
2. How, if at all, does the resident lived experience of community differ from that depicted in social policy and what implications does this have for future policy?
3. What significance does community have in social housing estates, and what lessons can be learnt from the resident experience to improve social housing practice?
4. What is the lived experience of one social housing community against a backdrop of macro-level issues of socio-political change?

1.5 Thesis Structure

The following two chapters examine the definitions and uses of community by commencing with an analysis of literature relevant to my thesis. This begins with an initial exploration of the theories of community and specifically will discuss community in relation to; place, social networks, and belonging and the interplay between these three concepts.

In the second chapter, I engage with relevant literature, beginning by examining the role of place within 'community.' This then progresses to an exploration of the impact of geography on the experience and perception of social housing. The chapter continues with an initial examination of social network theory, unpacking the significance of social capital. Then continues by examining the role of bonding social capital, which I argue is frequently overlooked in contemporary applications of 'community.' The chapter will then consider literature that examines belonging in a community context. It will be contended that belonging is central to the experience of 'community' within a social housing neighbourhood, particularly in terms of inclusion and acceptance. Throughout my examination of theoretical considerations of community, the gap in knowledge of exploring the lived experience of community will be evidenced. I argue that this is particularly relevant within a social housing context, evidencing my research's basis and rationale.

The fourth chapter includes a critical appraisal of social policy approaches to community and will also develop a rationale for the study context through its critique of these approaches. It begins with a preliminary review of the use and function of 'community' in contemporary social policy. Particular attention will be paid to the interpretation of 'community' in relation to social housing policy due to its relevance to my research.

Chapter 4 will also include an exploration of nostalgia and its impact on policy constructions of idyllic communities, thus demonstrating the failure to consider the complexity of community in social policy fully. I contend that 'community' in policy has been constructed from specific ideological standpoints that are not always grounded in a comprehensive, real-world appreciation of the concept. The chapter will establish that the many policy applications of 'community' have become detached from lived experiences and will detail the adverse effects. This exploration will also evidence the gap in knowledge in understanding the lived experience of community within social policy. Furthermore, the gap in understanding the impact of such policy on social housing communities will be discussed.

My critique of policy constructions of community will evidence the rationale for my research, as I argue that 'community' can be a means to examine these broader social issues through the lens of one social housing neighbourhood. The research evidences that the resident narrative can effectively contribute to and further the understanding of 'community' within a social housing context. The chapter will demonstrate the importance of the resident narrative and my research. By contributing to a growing knowledge base, this study seeks to inform both social housing policy and practice.

Chapter 5 presents the process of conducting the research and relates this to my epistemology and my methodological approach. This chapter outlines my epistemological position as interpretivist and introduces my methodology, a biographical, narrative approach. The chapter will also explore my interpretations of narrative and narrative analysis. The research utilises a narrative approach to deconstruct the lived experience of community in a social housing setting. I will then place my research into context and discuss the sampling process of the participants. This chapter will also address ethical considerations and examine my relationship as a researcher with both the participants and the estate that are the focus of this research.

Chapters 6 and 7 will present the research findings as a thematic narrative, exploring the residents' experiences and constructions of community. These chapters will draw upon resident constructions of community through the themes established in my review of the literature, community as; place, social networks, and belonging.

Chapter 6 explores how residents construct community and belonging through places. The thematic narrative approach will examine how residents place value and importance in community spaces and the connections made between these spaces and; safety, childhood, and ownership. The chapter then explores the impact of change and loss on resident belonging. Therefore, examining how temporal belonging is constructed to past times and places to process change.

Then the chapter progresses onto an examination of the prevalence of nostalgia, childhood, safety, and autonomy due to their centrality to resident constructions of community.

Chapter 7 continues the findings to explore how residents construct community as social networks. This exploration will detail the importance of social networks within social housing communities and the factors that have altered interaction on the estate. The chapter will consider the impact of a decline in community space and crime on residents' social relationships. The chapter concludes by presenting an understanding of how reduced social interaction and increased crime have adversely affected resident constructions of home and belonging.

The eighth chapter will present a discussion of the findings. This discussion will draw upon the entire thesis, connecting the various theoretical and interpretative strands. I will demonstrate the study's contribution to knowledge by amalgamating the resident narratives with relevant literature and theory. The discussion also utilises the findings to present a critical appraisal of social policy pertaining to housing and community. The chapter will then outline recommendations for policy, research, and practice that have stemmed from the findings. I then conclude the thesis with a summary of the whole body of work and outline the primary contributions the thesis seeks to make in Chapter 9.

Chapter 2 – Reviewing the literature on community

2.1 Chapter Overview

The study of community has evolved across many research disciplines, including anthropology, sociology, and social policy. This has included different approaches to unpacking the variety of complex meanings and purposes of the concept (Crow, 2002). The versatility of the word community means that it has manifold interpretations and meanings, thus, presenting a complex concept to examine (Ahmed, 2015). I contend that community is unique and interpretative and can be problematic to define (Chavis & Pretty, 1999; Hillery, 1972). I also recognise that community is a layered concept that can be understood through various interpretations, many of which interrelate and overlap. Although this presents a challenge in terms of a comprehensive literature review, community will be explored by discussing the theory that holds relevance to my research.

The first chapter introduced the concept of community and discussed some of the relevant themes and issues the thesis seeks to explore. I also introduced the potential of the community study to examine social change (Crow, 2002). Additionally, I then outlined the relevance of this approach in researching social housing communities. In the following three chapters, I will build upon this by exploring the literature in more depth to evaluate its relevance to my research and detail community's continued significance. The literature review will explore the concept of community through interpretations of place, social networks, and belonging. The second chapter examines the constructions of community as place, the relevance of place to social housing communities, and belonging to place. The third chapter will explore community constructed through social networks and how belonging can be formed through connections to others. The literature review concludes with a chapter that appraises the use and application of community in social policy and how this pertains to social housing neighbourhoods.

This chapter, chapter 2, commences by examining the constructions and interpretations of community as a place. The historical context of how community is constructed, explored, and researched through location and place will be reviewed. The review will then proceed to a demonstration of the particular relevance of place in social housing communities. The chapter then explores the potential benefits of social and community spaces on constructions of community and belonging (Oldenburg, 1999; Oldenburg & Brissett,1982). The importance of these spaces will be considered in the context of social housing. This will include a discussion of the factors contributing to the loss of community space in working-class communities and the consequences (Hickman, 2013).

The chapter introduces the concept of belonging and considers literature that explores how belonging can be constructed through and to places. This is followed by examining the role of community and belonging in 'making' a home. The factors that may affect belonging over a prolonged period of time will also be explored, particularly concerning social change. This will include a discussion of the temporal aspects of belonging; how belonging can be constructed in relation to place across time. The chapter concludes with a review of the role of nostalgia in constructions of belonging and its significance for residents in processing social change.

2.2 Community as Place

2.2.1 Place-based community theory

> *"It is of course true that places with strong physical boundaries are a potent base for territorial communities."* (Crow & Allan, 1994, p. xiv)

A considerable proportion of early community theory emphasised the importance of a common location to bring people together and facilitate social interaction (Sjoberg, 1965; Sutton & Kolaja, 1960). Initially, research utilised geography as a context to examine representations of community (Kaufman, 1959). It has been

suggested that it is a location or place that enables shared experiences and fosters social networks, evolving into 'community' (Oldenburg, 1999). Traditionally, community theory has sought to unpack the concept by examining how it relates to places where people live (Crow & Allan, 1994). Consequently, community is often constructed through residential locations, areas that are connected to 'homes' (Willmot, 1986). The "territorial community" reflects the complex ways community can be tied to place and boundaries; however, this relationship is not simplistic (Crow & Allan, 1994, p. xvi). The definition of the territorial community holds relevance in exploring community and belonging within a residential estate. There has been a history of community studies that seek to explore the place-based community in working-class areas, notably beginning within the 'Chicago School'(Crow, 2002). It is not within the scope of this thesis to fully appraise the evolution of the community study. However, some of its lineages will be explored to draw out the themes relevant to my research. The research acknowledges the complexity of the concept of community and attempts to study it within a specific context, as opposed to within a particular definition. However, it will be relevant to examine theoretical understandings of community (Crow, 2021).

Several fundamental community studies have sought to "pin down in time and space" the impact of modern life on individuals by exploring a defined neighbourhood (Seeley et al., 1956, p.3, as cited in Ahmed, 2015, p.53). This was a prevalent ethnographic approach to community studies adopted in the 1950s/60s (Crow, 2002). Notable UK examples include Peter Willmott and Michael Young's 1957 study of Bethnal Green in East London and Ken Coates and Richard Silburn's 1970 study of the St Ann's estate in Nottingham. Peter Willmott and Michael Young's 1957 study of Bethnal Green researched how families and communities were affected by the migration to a newly built council estate in Essex (Young & Willmott, 1957). The re-study of Bethnal Green examined the impact of housing needs on racial diversity and tension in the area (Young et al., 2011). Housing and conditions were a prevalent part of the Coates and Silburn study of St. Ann's in Nottingham; Lisa McKenzie's work revisited the area to study life on the social housing estate that had been part of the slum clearance detailed in the original study (Coates & Silburn,1981; McKenzie, 2012; McKenzie, 2015).

However, the popularity of this approach declined after critique of these studies highlighted their tendency to present romanticised interpretations of working-class communities. Therefore, the research failed to fully appreciate all elements of the community experience (Crow & Allan, 1994). It has also been suggested that the contemporary community study has been "high jacked" by middle-class experiences of housing, belonging and place (Paton, 2013, p.85). Subsequently, paternalistic researchers and professionals "discover" community in working-class neighbourhoods (Schofield & Jones, 2019, p.173). Consequently, resulting in a gap in the genuine understanding of the working-class experience in the place-based community.

It is argued that the community study has been able to respond to critique through the development of both methodology and theory (Crow & Allan, 1994). A more recent example is the study of three Norwich social housing estates by Ben Rogaly and Becky Taylor. This sought to explore class, place and belonging in 2009, tracking personal histories from the original slum clearance to modern life on the estate. This more contemporary theorisation of community has argued that the proximity of individuals does not necessarily constitute a 'community' (Rogaly & Taylor, 2009). An argument which has gained strength in a post-industrial, modern society as easier migration and technology have enabled people to be more mobile (Marsh et al., 2007). Thus, suggesting that place-based community theory holds less relevance in contemporary Britain (IBID).

Furthermore, it has also been suggested that a place is merely a conduit that facilitates social ties; therefore, the significance of community lies in relationships, networks, and interactions (Butcher, 1993). Nonetheless, the wealth of study in this area demonstrates that constructions of community cannot be entirely divorced from the places in which relationships and networks occur. Thus, highlighting the enduring significance of place in understanding community (Crow & Allan, 1995). In short, face to face social interaction needs a location in which to occur and develop (Sherlock, 2002).

Although my research aims to adopt an interpretative methodology, place and location remain critical elements of the approach. This is because the study

focuses on the community experience of one neighbourhood. The method has relevance due to how residents have constructed community, and belonging, to and through locations. I, therefore, contend that place is highly relevant to any community study exploring social housing due to the pre-determined boundaries and topography that create defined neighbourhoods within estates. Understanding a place cannot be separated from how those places are "perceived and experienced" by those who reside there (Preece, 2020, p.840). Hence, the chapter now explores the relevance of placed-based community in social housing neighbourhoods.

2.2.2 The relevance of place in social housing communities

Place holds particular significance when exploring community in a social housing context. Firstly, most social housing estates' physical location will impact resident constructions of community due to the wide-ranging social change experienced across most estates. Secondly, social housing estates are usually designed as defined neighbourhoods, influencing how a placed-based community is constructed (Tonkiss, 2005). Lastly, place has additional relevance within social housing as its estates are often 'labelled' places (Slater, 2018). Therefore 'community' is often directed towards, and imposed upon, social housing residents through social policy (Rose, 1999). Consequently, such a policy often overlooks the residents' experience in the social housing community (Glucksberg, 2014). Hence, this research aims to present a resident-led narrative of community within social housing.

I begin by exploring the significance of the geographic location of social housing neighbourhoods to consider the contextual history of social housing. Then I will consider how this context relates to my research. The discussion will progress onto exploring place-based constructions of community within social housing and an introduction to the social housing community as a 'labelled place.' The final part of this section of the chapter concludes by exploring the significance of the third place in social housing communities.

Geography and placed based poverty are vital elements in understanding social housing communities (Crossley, 2017; Dorling, 2014; Malpass, 2005). This is primarily due to the residualisation of the British social housing estate (Hills, 2007). A brief consideration of the evolution of estates is essential here to understand why location is so significant in social housing communities. Many council estates were developed as slum clearance programmes to respond to poor housing conditions (Yelling, 2000). "New Towns" were created and built to provide sustainable communities, designed as localised hubs of; housing, employment, leisure, and social spaces (Jones & Evans, 2008, p. 147).

However, many of these estates have now become residualised due to a series of housing policy decisions, a lack of investment and the impact of a post-industrial landscape across working-class Britain (Tunstall & Pleace, 2018). Employment in these areas steadily decreased with the inevitable decline: closure of local shops, industry, and social spaces (McKenzie, 2015). Part of this decline has resulted in a loss of community spaces and amenities, removing the opportunity for residents to meet and interact (Hickman, 2013; Oldenburg, 1999). Social housing estates are viewed as the reverse of the original vision of 'slum clearance' programmes, a shift that warrants detailed research (Jones, 2010). The understanding of the long-term change seen in slum clearance communities is currently under-researched (Yelling, 2000). Therefore, my study seeks to contribute to knowledge about the residents' experience in these neighbourhoods.

As aforementioned Rookwood and the town it is situated in are examples of residualisation. Its primary employment sources of mining and manufacturing declined during the 1970s and 1980s. Rookwood is a localised example of socio-economic decline, and its history highlights the relevance of place when examining community in social housing. Social housing estates have experienced significant social change, and resident constructions of community are a means of unpacking such change.

I contend place is essential in examining this social change. Firstly, the social housing community is a means to view and understand the everyday impact of

widespread social change. Consequently, my research seeks to utilise Rookwood as a local lens to explore and understand the impact this social change has had on resident constructions of community. The study also aims to examine the role of these constructions in how residents understand, process, and cope with such change. As the resident perspective of this change is often excluded in dialogues about social housing (Valentine & Harris, 2014), this study seeks to address this gap by conducting research from a resident standpoint.

It is suggested that social landlords are well placed to respond to social change due to the high level of stock they own in residualised neighbourhoods (Rolfe & Garnham, 2020). Rookwood presented such an opportunity as it was subject to regeneration and development at the beginning of this study. Therefore, it is vital to consider how this regeneration impacted resident experiences in community. I suggest that the development afforded the social landlord an opportunity to improve the estate and include the residents in this process. The importance of involving residents in the development and regeneration of communities has been evidenced (Crow et al., 2019). However, residents are often excluded from this process (Symons, 2018).

Consequently, demonstrating the significance of understanding how development affects resident constructions of community from their perspective. The thesis will explore how the exclusion of residents from this process is likely to be systemic and connected to much broader power structures instead of the sole fault of one social landlord. The research will examine the resident's relationship with their landlord as part of their development experience and its impact on their constructions of community. However, the study seeks also to address broader issues of social change and its effects on place, belonging and community.

Arguably achieving a 'sense' of community should be a critical success factor of development; however, many social housing developments fail to fully evidence social sustainability (Oyebanj et al., 2017). The success of 'community' within social housing development could be determined by how it responds to the "needs of its residents" (Brodsky et al., 1999, p.660). However, residents can often be

omitted from the design and planning process; therefore, housing providers have a responsibility to help address this (Tually et al., 2020). This then highlights the importance of understanding how the built environment of neighbourhoods can affect community, from a resident standpoint (Amore et al., 2017).

Outside of development and regeneration, it is arguably both practical and effective for agencies such as housing providers and local authorities to define geographic boundaries to facilitate 'neighbourhood management' (Pinoncely, 2016; Power, 2004). It will be important to consider how these neighbourhood boundaries and definitions are intertwined with resident experiences of place and community within the research. Social housing estates such as Rookwood are often demarcated and perceived as a 'community.' Therefore, it is also relevant to consider how the layout and boundaries of estates can impact residents' experiences of community. Thus, I will now turn to explore place-based constructions of community within social housing neighbourhoods.

2.2.3 Social housing and place-based constructions of community

I suggest additional importance of place-based community within social housing neighbourhoods (Cole & Goodchild, 2000; Forrest & Kearns, 2001; MacDonald et al., 2005). Constructions of community can be created in connection to specific localities, such as a neighbourhood or housing estate (Tonkiss, 2005). This relates to my research which explores community within an estate ('Rookwood') defined as a specific neighbourhood[9]. This definition relates to the estate's geography and design and how it is referred to by both local agencies and residents alike. Such neighbourhood classifications are not necessarily organic creations of communities. Thus, highlighting the significance of understanding their role in shaping the resident construction and experience of community. However, although the estate, like many, has been built within pre-determined boundaries, it is also framed with existing borders that create a defined area[10]. Rookwood is

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[9] See Appendices 2 and 3 for the outline of the boundaries of Rookwood, used primarily by the Social Housing Provider but also by residents and other agencies to define the estate
[10] Appendix 3 details the natural and pre-existing boundaries that frame the estate

bordered by the 'loop line' on its west boundary, a disused railway line, playing fields along its northern and eastern sides and then the main road along its southern border. Therefore, it will be important to evaluate how these boundaries relate to the residents' experience of community in everyday life (Sampson, 2013).

The topography and built environment of an estate can also influence residential construction of community (French et al., 2014). Neighbourhood design can also impact a resident's well-being and feelings of security (Watson & Dannenberg, 2008). Elements of the built environment, such as residential density and neighbourhood quality, can affect how residents construct and experience community (French et al., 2014). This is especially relevant as the study explores constructions of community during the regeneration of the estate. Throughout the research, this regeneration changes the estate's layout, design, and features. Furthermore, the estate, and surrounding area, have seen significant social change due to welfare reform and austerity measures.

Consequently, Rookwood serves as a localised example of a social housing neighbourhood with reduced amenities and facilities due to socio-economic change (Pinoncely, 2016). Accordingly, the narrative of Rookwood can further our understanding of the impact of wider social change on everyday life (Crow 2000). Therefore, the study of one community illuminates the real-world effects of both austerity and social housing development. This is relevant in this context as the social change in and around Rookwood has altered, shaped, and removed community spaces.

Place has further relevance to this research as the social housing 'community' has become a labelled and othered place. Consequently, estates have become territorially stigmatised and dismissed within more comprehensive dialogues about social housing (Slater, 2018). The estate has become viewed as a collective (Crossley, 2017). Thus, dismissing the individual resident experience devalues the working-class community (Glucksberg, 2014). Working-class communities can then be driven out of more mainstream and ultimately 'valued' places (Sassen, 2014). To simplify this, the research utilises definitions of social class that frame it

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as a process of inequality and unequal distribution of resources (Tyler, 2015). So that working-class experience becomes "positioned by historical legacies" of power and, therefore, the lack of resource, capital, and opportunity (Skeggs, 1997). Social class as a resource and its connections to social capital, or lack thereof, will be explored further in the third chapter.

Here I feel it is appropriate to introduce the relevance of social class and how the thesis connects class, power and place in terms of the working-class experience of social housing. I draw upon work by Beverly Skeggs in terms of how social class is distinctly intertwined with power and resource and how this impacts the experience of working-class groups, primarily due to their lack of power (Skeggs, 1997; Skeggs, 2004). Weberian notions of class represented through occupation and status failed to fully encapsulate working-class experiences (Skeggs,1997) fully. Therefore, it is vital to acknowledge the differences between position, agency and identity and a person's ability to identify their own "place" (Skeggs, 1997, p.81). This draws on Bourdieu's theorisation that recognising your place is also about placing others; however, Bourdieu does not account for the resistance of this place or when an adjustment to this place cannot be made (Skeggs, 1997).

Consequently, resident identities can become stigmatised through place (Byrne et al., 2016, p.715). The research mentioned above by Beverly Skeggs prompted a revival in social class within sociology, regarding personal identity (Savage et al., 2001). Presenting class as less about how you identify but how you do *not* wish to identify (Skeggs, 1997). It is argued that this stems from a reluctance to identify as working-class due to the overwhelmingly negative narratives propagated about "the poor" and the blame attributed to them for social and moral decline (Tyler, 2015, p.497). The connections between 'working-class' and 'underclass' created from rhetoric originating in the Thatcher Administration, have motivated many to dissociate from being working-class (Skeggs, 1997).

This relates to my research as social housing residents are commonly viewed as low-income or working-class areas, much more likely to be subject to socio-economic inequalities (Cole & Goodchild, 2000; Pinoncely, 2016). By extension,

areas such as Rookwood are more likely to be subject to class-based interventions to solve 'their' working-class 'problems' (Amin, 2005; Warr et al., 2017). Therefore, it is essential to consider how the residents of Rookwood are positioned by their social class and how in turn do, they position themselves? This question aids the exploration of who has access to agency and power upon and over Rookwood. How does living within a working-class area impact residents' constructions of belonging, home and community? Furthermore, if working-class areas are subject to top-down community intervention, how intertwined is social - class with meta-narratives of social housing residents, and how is this realised through policy and practice.

In this context, community constructions of place face significant barriers to be recognised and heard over the negative narratives broadcast at a national level (Alevizou et al., 2016). Therefore, it is crucial to understand residents' relationships between place, community, and the estate, and I will begin to explore this in later chapters. The full impact of the stigmatisation of the social housing estate within social policy will be discussed in more detail in the fourth chapter. However, here it demonstrates the importance of place, in particular tainted places (Slater, 2018). Thus, highlighting the depiction of social housing communities in a negative light. Resident narratives have been largely dismissed (McKenzie, 2017). Consequently, this reveals a gap in the understanding of the resident experience of community, which this research seeks to address.

The 'community' has played a significant role in urban renewal and regeneration policy and projects, often directed at social housing neighbourhoods (Imrie & Raco, 2003; Wallace, 2016). The importance of place and neighbourhood in these terms will be examined in Chapter 4. However, the thesis seeks to establish that community, in both policy and practice, is utilised to control social housing residents (Bryson & Mowbray, 1981). 'Community' is imposed upon social housing residents, not based on their needs but on a middle-class view of what it should be (Rogaly & Taylor, 2009). As residents have been previously omitted from the development of their communities (Glucksberg, 2014), places that are important to them have been removed, lost, or changed (McKenzie, 2015). Due to the level of

social change seen in social housing, neighbourhoods' community spaces may hold more significance for residents (Bashir et al., 2011). There is a lack of understanding of the role of community space in social housing neighbourhoods (Hickman, 2013), something which this research aims to contribute towards. Due to the significance of social spaces in resident community constructions, I will now progress to an exploration of third places and their relevance to my research.

2.2.4 The third place and its role in social housing communities

> *"The third place is a generic designation for a great variety of public spaces that host the regular, voluntary, informal, and happily anticipated gatherings of individuals' and is a core setting of informal public life"*
> (Oldenburg, 1999, p.16)

'Third Places,' as termed by Oldenburg, are shared locations that help facilitate social interaction and develop relationships (Oldenburg, 1999). These spaces represent the critical interplay between place, belonging, and networks within communities (Oldenburg & Brissett, 1982). The "first" and "second" places are work and then home; the third places are spaces where people can "relax in good company" regularly (Oldenburg, 2001, p.2). It will be essential to consider the significance of third places upon resident constructions of community. Consequently, resident experiences of these places will be explored further in the findings and discussion. Here I seek to appraise relevant literature that explores the role of 'third places' in constructions of community, particularly within social housing.

A third place is not necessarily any social space but encompasses certain features that give meaning and value to the people who use them (Oldenburg, 1999). Thus, indicating the organic nature of the third place. These informal social spaces are usually within a locality that enables people to meet up and help form a "grassroots community." (Goodchild, 2008, p 234). Ideally, the third place should be easily accessible, comfortable, and welcoming, enabling conversation and interaction (Goosen & Cilliers, 2020).

There is a wealth of research evaluating the benefits of third places concerning community (Hickman, 2013; Oldenburg, 2001). Oldenburg (1997, pp 7-8) details a wide range of benefits such as; social cohesion, reducing isolation, building empathetic relationships and supportive networks. Third places can play an essential role in developing social capital and creating a 'sense of community (Littman, 2021). Research has found that residents only need to feel that they have access to third places within their local area to increase their sense of community and general wellbeing (Jeffres et al., 2009). A complete appraisal of all the research reviewing the benefits of third places is beyond the scope of this research. Nevertheless, I will consider how such spaces might benefit social housing communities.

Third spaces serve both a "functional" and a "symbolic" role, contributing to the "health and vibrancy" of a local area (Hickman, 2013, p.233). Spaces that facilitate social interaction have been found to have an important social and practical function within lower-income and working-class communities (Bashir et al., 2011). Third places are more likely to create social interaction and cohesion in working-class communities (Hickman, 2013: Williams & Hipp, 2019).

Although third places are not the only solution to socio-economic deprivation, they are valued spaces that "serve an important social function" in low-income neighbourhoods (Hickman, 2013, p.233). Research into experiences of social housing in London found that local spaces and amenities were utilised to develop relationships with others (Ali, 2021). Without third places, life becomes a "shuttle" that negatively impacts mental well-being and quality of life (Oldenburg, 1997, p.7). For social housing, residents' supportive relationships can mitigate the consequences of living within low-income neighbourhoods (Ali, 2021).

Residents can often view the loss or removal of such spaces as a symbol of community deterioration (Goodchild, 2008). In times of economic decline, the amount of budget and resource dedicated to creating and maintaining third spaces is likely to decrease. This is often without consultation with residents, demonstrating how working-class communities can be excluded from decisions

about their neighbourhoods (Skeggs,1997). It is argued that the significance of third places in working-class communities is often "understated" (Finlay et al., 2019, p.1).

Despite the level of interest and research into third places, the original theory was initially untested in terms of research findings (Goodchild, 2008). Some researchers have also suggested that Oldenburg's work holds less relevance today due to online replacements for the third place and digital interaction (Wright, 2012). However, research indicates that despite a rise in online exchanges, many people still wish to meet in real-world settings (Jeffres et al., 2009). This is particularly relevant following the Covid-19 pandemic (Veeroja & Foliente, 2021). Therefore, many communities still value third places, and a growing body of research seeks to explore their role in modern society (Finlay et al., 2019; Goosen & Cilliers, 2020). This study aims to add to this research by exploring the importance of the third place in social housing communities.

It must also be acknowledged that third places are not a panacea for community-related issues (Finlay et al., 2019). This is partly because they are not always positive and inclusive spaces (Hickman, 2013). However, the expanding inquiry into the potential positives of third places highlights the need for more research-informed policy and practice. This would enable communities to capitalise on the positive benefits deriving from accessible third spaces (Finlay et al., 2019). Since Oldenburg's initial conception of the third place, research has added more depth to the theory, exploring the importance and role of third places in our lives (Goosen & Cilliers, 2020). The research into the health and social benefits of third places now stresses the need for improved joint working approaches between planners, housing providers, and public health bodies (Lane et al., 2020). Third places have the potential to play a significant role in "place-making," assisting in the reclamation and improvement of public spaces (Goosen & Cilliers, 2020, p.843).

Several studies have also evidenced the importance of third places for older residents who are less likely to rely on digital networks and technology (Goodchild, 2008). Fong et al. (2021) found that third spaces can help create positive social

identities and facilitate neighbourhood participation. This was found to have reduced social isolation and improved well-being for older residents (IBID). Research has found that belonging, a sense of community, social interaction and neighbourhood involvement were essential to older residents, particularly within local third spaces (Veerola, 2018). Research into creating "age-friendly communities" suggests that planners need to factor in creating and maintaining third places when designing neighbourhoods (Lee & Tan, 2019, p. 1). This highlights the enduring relevance of the third place and the need for further research in the area (Finlay et al., 2019). Hence, my study explores the significance of the third place in social housing communities.

Social housing residents are often overlooked in policy and practice pertaining to their communities (Skeggs, 1997); they have little influence over community spaces in their neighbourhoods. Third, spaces have been significantly reduced in low-income neighbourhoods (McKenzie, 2015). This is despite evidence to suggest that third places have particular significance in these neighbourhoods (Goosen & Cilliers, 2020). Therefore, it is likely that the loss of the third place has been "understated," thus warranting further inquiry (Finlay et al., 2019, p.1). Consequently, my research seeks to contribute to this disparity in knowledge by exploring the value of the third place in low-income neighbourhoods (Bashir et al., 2011). A critique of traditional community studies is that the relationship between community and place is over-simplified (O'Reilly, 2013); therefore, this research seeks to unpack the connections between place, community and belonging.

Recent research has emphasised the role and importance of third spaces in social housing (Ali, 2021), warranting continued inquiry in this area. Third, shared and social spaces have an essential role to play in how residents connect and belong to their neighbourhoods and homes (Goosen & Cilliers, 2020). Such research stresses the ongoing and present-day significance of third places in social housing communities. Therefore, outlining the need for continued research into the role of third places in residents' lives. Consequently, this thesis seeks to contribute to a growing body of community studies that aims to work alongside and for social housing residents (Ali, 2021; Hodkinson, 2020; Symons, 2018; Tually et al., 2020).

2.3 Belonging to Place

2.3.1 Introducing the concept of belonging

> *"A sense of belonging is a core part of what makes us human."*
> (Allen et al., 2021, p.96).

Belonging to a place can be challenging to unravel, similar to the concept of community, as it is complex with manifold meanings and interpretations (Antonsich, 2010; Wright, 2014). Belonging can be constructed as part of a person's national identity, membership to a group or other collective, and personal identity and family (Hothi & Cordes, 2010). Consequently, belonging can be associated with; identity, place, gender, class, and ethnicity (Anthias, 2013). It can also be expressed as an emotion that can be tangible, intangible, fluid, and changeable (Youkhana, 2015). Belonging can be connected to feeling "at home," concerned with a particular place or location (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p.197). I contend that belonging is an interpretative concept; however, exploration of this concept is still required for my research (Mee & Wright, 2009). Therefore, I seek to examine interpretations of belonging in terms of; place and social networks due to their relevance to this study. I will also explore the influence of nostalgia upon belonging, particularly in a temporal sense. The impact on resident narratives of belonging will also be discussed. First, I will address how belonging can be experienced and constructed through place.

2.3.2 Using third spaces to construct social networks

> "*Space and place are not mere backgrounds to daily life and to the health and welfare concerns of residents; rather, they shape the spatial practices of community life in interaction with residents' uses.*"
> (Hicks & Lewis, 2019, p.819).

Social housing residents are often researched regarding social exclusion and marginalisation, but it is crucial to examine inclusion and belonging in social housing. This facilitates an understanding of how residents can; "make a place in

the world" (Mee, 2009, p.843). This has relevance as social housing estates are defined as places that exclude residents (Robinson, 2013). It will be important to explore how the existing and new residents interact with each other and the wider community in my research. Humans often avoid connecting with those different from 'us' (Preece, 2020). This highlights the importance of places where people can come together, the 'third spaces' (Oldenburg & Brissett, 1982). Communities need to utilise those spaces to encourage interaction and develop cooperation and cohesiveness (Sennett, 2012). Such places and shared experiences enable residents to focus on what they have in common rather than a fixation on difference (Anthias, 2013).

I do not intend to thoroughly reiterate the discussion of third places covered in the previous section; however, I wanted to highlight the role of third places in the development of social networks. As the estate is subject to regeneration, third places can play an essential function in connecting existing and incoming residents, as the aforementioned social networks can often create vital supportive structures within social housing communities (Forrest & Kearns, 2001). These networks often play a crucial role in how residents navigate life within working-class neighbourhoods (Macdonald et al., 2005). This is particularly in this research due to the levels of crime and anti-social behaviour on the estate.

I have previously evidenced the importance of third places in working-class and social housing communities. (Bashir et al., 2011, Hickman, 2013). In my introduction and the previous chapter, I outlined how the socio-economic decline in many working-class communities has impacted the quantity, quality, and accessibility of third places (McKenzie, 2015). Therefore, my research seeks to question if a lack of such places inevitably affects residents' capacity to meet, engage, and interact. Due to the level of change in the estate as the focus of the research, both in terms of migration and place, it is important to evaluate the role of third places on interaction. It is argued that there is a role for agencies, such as housing providers, to contribute to practice that enables communities to access third places, despite (and because of) socio-economic decline (Hicks & Lewis, 2019). This is particularly important due to the negative impact of a lack of

community spaces and social interaction on residents' health, well-being, and quality of life (Finlay et al., 2019; Hickman, 2013; Oldenburg, 1999).

Research has suggested that local spaces and amenities assist social housing residents in forming relationships with others (Ali, 2021). Meeting places, social spaces, and community venues facilitate interaction and cohesiveness, which has been found to be more prevalent in lower-income areas (Williams & Hipp, 2019). Fong et al. (2021) found that third spaces can help create positive social identities. Additionally, these spaces can also; facilitate neighbourhood participation, improve resident well-being, and reduce isolation (IBID). It is argued that residents need a physical location, a public space of their own to meet others and help construct belonging to where they live (Goosen & Cilliers, 2020).

I now progress to explore the impact of social interaction and networks on belonging, inclusion, and exclusion.

2.3.3 Belonging to place

Constructing a sense of residential belonging has been linked to positive outcomes for neighbourhoods and individuals (Bailey et al., 2012). It could be argued that belonging to place bears less significance in a post globalised world with greater mobility; however, many people can, and do, settle in a particular area (IBID). A sense of belonging can be interwoven with feelings of home, our memories, and familiarities (Mee, 2009). Being able to feel at home can provide; "comfort in place" (Savage et al., 2005, p.8). However, place and home are "emotional" constructs (Madgin & Lesh, 2021, p.3). The complexities of understanding 'home' and 'belonging' lies in their familiarity, with each of us feeling we intrinsically 'know' what both mean (Duyvendak, 2011). Nonetheless, belonging, residence, and home are not always organically and straightforwardly aligned; thus, I wish to explore this within my research.

When examined from a Bourdieu's perspective, there is a balance between habitus[11] and field; this can create feelings of comfort and "home" (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, p.128). This balance has been interpreted as establishing an equilibrium between how suitable you feel where you live is; when measured against your social status, position, and identity (Savage et al., 2005). This "elective belonging" assumes a degree of choice in where to live and where is home (Savage et al., 2005, p.29). However, working-class residents often have little choice or say in where they live, particularly those in social housing (Jeffery, 2018; Paton, 2013). Furthermore, belonging is subjective and personal, and consequently, places are better understood by those that live there (de-Jong et al., 2021). Therefore, my research explores housing, home, and belonging from a resident perspective.

Research has found that working-class residents can construct belonging whilst still experiencing conflict between habitus and field (Popay et al., 2003). Consequently, presenting a critique of the theory of elective belonging. Where residents cannot elicit free choice over their home, a compromise may have to be reached. This "negotiated settlement" reflects a balance between where residents live and where they would prefer to live (Popay et al., 2003, p.67). This is highly significant for social housing residents who are often allocated their homes through needs-based assessment, minimising personal choice (Tunstall & Pleace, 2018). Consequently, presenting a gap in the extant literature regarding the understanding of working-class belonging, particularly in the context of social housing.

The stigma of the tainted place then extends to how social class is incorporated into identity; the stigmatisation of working-class areas leads to 'spoiled identities' (Reay, 1998). The drive to be viewed as 'respectable' and 'ordinary can create a dis-identification with working-class status (Savage, 2000; Reay, 1998). Therefore, the dominance of the stigmatising narratives about the working -class de-values both working-class identities and spaces (Skeggs, 1997). Hence explaining the

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[11] *Habitus represents our behaviour and actions, whereas the field is the arena in which those behaviours are carried out (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, p.128).*

desire to belong to a social group representing an ordinary mid-ground (Savage, 2000). The relevance of class and place in terms of belonging will be explored; it will be important to consider what happens when residents resist the tainted place in which they live (Skeggs, 1997). Do residents become trapped in place and by their own positioning of themselves and others, neither displaced nor moving on, due to the lack of agency and choice afforded to working-class social housing residents (McKenzie, 2017).

More recent research into working-class belonging found that a lack of mobility and choice results in working-class residents experiencing "un-elective" belonging (Jeffery, 2018, p.258). There is a shortage of research that seeks to explore the impact of change within working-class communities and how this then affects resident belonging (Von Malotki, 2015). It can be challenging for social housing residents to construct belonging to where they live (Mee, 2009). This is, therefore, something I seek to explore through my research. Consequently, I contend that "elective belonging" does not adequately encapsulate the resident experience of belonging (Savage et al., 2005, p.29). This therefore presents a limitation within the current research that this thesis seeks to address by exploring belonging in social housing from a resident standpoint.

Despite the range of research into belonging, a more comprehensive understanding of how residents construct belonging through social change is required (Yarker, 2019). This understanding would assist in a better appreciation of resident experiences of community, place, and home, enabling further interpretation of how residents process social change. Consequently, revealing what impact this change has upon their constructions of both community and belonging. Thus, I will now discuss what factors may enable or hinder a sense of belonging in a social housing neighbourhood, particularly through periods of change.

2.3.4 Belonging through change and time

"First, community studies have the capability of 'placing' sociological arguments. Secondly, community studies have the capacity to illustrate the meaning of macro-level trends for people's everyday lives."
(Crow 2000, p.173)

The community study can examine issues on a national scale by exploring one particular neighbourhood (Savage, 2010). This approach can enable the grounding of sociological thought by exploring the effects of social change in a given place (Crow, 2000). Several notable studies have explored socio-economic shifts at a micro-level by examining one specific neighbourhood or community (Coates & Silburn, 1981; McKenzie, 2015; Rogaly & Taylor, 2009; Young & Willmott, 1957). For many of these studies, housing and belonging to place have formed a key role, particularly for those exploring working-class areas. These studies evidence the connections between community experience, belonging, and place and the complexity of separating these concepts (Crow & Allen, 1995).

Research has recently sought to understand belonging through "housing in hard times" following welfare reform (Paton, 2013, p.84). Paton argues that working-class belonging has largely been ignored in research but can be meaningful in navigating such 'hard times' (IBID). This, therefore, highlights the need to explore everyday experiences to understand social change within working-class communities. Often working-class interpretations of place and community are absent from narratives about them (Chamlee-Wright & Storr, 2011). A growing body of research seeks to better understand resident narratives of community and the social housing estate (Byrne et al., 2016; Jones et al., 2013). These studies have researched broader social change through the everyday lives in working-class neighbourhoods. This study seeks to replicate a similar approach to contribute to emerging knowledge about belonging and community on social housing estates. I argue that my research has a valid contribution to make through a critical narrative created from a resident standpoint.

I contend that place-based constructions of community and belonging are not static concepts but processes that change with time and experience (Leaney, 2020). Within this research, it will be essential to explore the changes on the estate and how this has impacted resident constructions of belonging and community. I seek to evaluate their personal experiences against the broader socio-economic factors affecting all social housing communities (Crow, 2002). As residents reflect on the decline of social spaces and amenities, they may use nostalgic narratives of loss to understand and process social change (Ahmed, 2015). Nostalgia can be fundamental to constructing belonging to place, and positive memories of a past place can enable residents to form current attachments (Garrow, 2021). Older and longer-term residents can use memories to "attach meaning" to places (Lewis, 2014, p.12). Therefore, constructing belonging to where they live, but to a past version, highlighting places' "historical context" (IBID). Here the thesis will draw upon the definition of the "imagined community" (Crow & Allan, 1994, p.xvii) to explore temporal and nostalgic constructions of community in resident accounts.

Some research has suggested that feelings of nostalgia are more prevalent in working-class constructions of belonging and community, as social change is interpreted as a loss of 'community' (Savage, 2008). Research has previously suggested that working-class residents can fear change in their neighbourhoods, as it is viewed as something that endangers specific ways of life (Blokland, 2004; Gustafson, 2014). This may be due to limited resources and capital ties, which may reduce the social mobility of residents (Gustafson, 2014). Nostalgia can then be utilised when belonging is threatened by or through social change. Residents can use memories of when "we" were all "the same" as a means of processing change (Blokland, 2004, p.127).

However, I argue that viewing working-class nostalgia simply as a rejection of change positions it as narrow and negative. This then discounts its benefits on residents' lives and the community overall (Ramsden, 2016). Nostalgia can contribute to positive constructions of belonging, and there is emerging research that examines the benefits and usefulness of the concept (May, 2017). Nostalgic

narratives can help working-class communities define and understand their identity, particularly in times of social change (Ramsden, 2016). The "images of a stable past" can help working-class residents construct belonging to a place that is seen to have changed or declined (Lewis, 2014, p. 6). There is arguably a lack of research that seeks to understand the lived experiences of nostalgia (Dickinson & Erben, 2006). Hence, more inquiry is now required to examine how the experience of socio-economic change impacts constructions of belonging and nostalgia (May, 2017).

The narration of nostalgic community stories and accounts can be a positive experience; for both residents and researchers (Ramsden, 2016). Remembering and nostalgia can provide comfort, security, and safety in times of change (Ahmed, 2015). Therefore, this can enable "belonging from afar" (May, 2017, p.411). It can be difficult, even painful, to recount a sense of belonging from the past. However, nostalgia can also enable positive memories of belonging that can be "pleasurable and worthwhile" (Dickinson & Erben, 2006, p.242). Consequently, resident narratives can allow the construction of belonging to place and further understanding of that place (Green, 2000). Within my research, nostalgia plays a vital role in how residents narrate their own experiences and construct belonging to the estate.

Whilst nostalgia may assist working-class communities in understanding and processing social change, it can still contribute to an overly romanticised depiction of working-class belonging (Green, 2000). This inaccuracy does not discount the significance of nostalgia within resident narratives of belonging and community. However, nostalgia can have a seductive capacity for participants and researchers alike. Researchers evaluating resident narratives of belonging over time; "cannot but be struck by the power of popular nostalgia for old ways of neighbourhood life" (Savage, 2008, p.151). Within my research, I will need to recognise nostalgia and acknowledge its capability to present romanticised, imagined communities in constructions of belonging (Ramsden, 2016). Residents may often yearn for a community of the past, seeking to belong to a past place that was perceived as

more cohesive (Jones et al., 2013). Therefore, the recollections of such memories can be complex and emotive when intertwined with nostalgia (Corcoran, 2002).

Residents in working-class areas may perceive a change in their neighbourhood as a loss or decline and then find "comfort" in looking back upon more positive times (Yarker, 2019, p. 544). However, this does not mean that they naively recollect without a level of "critical distance" (IBID). In the vein of Stephanie Lawler, this research seeks to neither "defend nor to decry nostalgia" (Lawler, 2014, p.3). However, I aim to further understanding on how nostalgia is utilised in constructions of community and belonging. Thus, my research will contribute to the gap in knowledge about the power of nostalgia within narratives and the importance of "lost places" (Gregory & Chambers, 2021, p.60). The research also explores how class positioning can generate disidentification with place and class (Skeggs, 1997).

It is argued that current research into nostalgia is particularly relevant, especially the positive elements that help create belonging and emotional attachments. Amidst Covid-19 new inquiry has demonstrated how nostalgia could be a crucial part of how society copes with; "isolation, fear and a general loss of freedom" (Gammon & Ramshaw, 2020, p.1). It will be important to understand how imagined communities and nostalgia can be used to create distance between self and negative perceptions of class, driven by a desire to be viewed as "ordinary" (Savage, 2001)

Reminiscence continues to be a common way of processing social change and has been employed as a political and media narrative during times of austerity (Hatherley, 2016). Similar narratives have continued through Brexit and Covid-19 as both a distraction and a way to cope with change (Cohen, 2021; Gross, 2021). Arguably we are "creating our own future nostalgia," and we will look back upon the "sense of community" created during the global pandemic (Gammon & Ramshaw, 2020, p.1). Therefore, highlighting the continued presence of nostalgia in a variety of narratives. Thus, warranting a need for further understanding of the role of nostalgia in our lives, which this study aims to contribute towards.

Having concluded my review of place-based constructions of community and belonging, the following chapter will discuss the significance of social networks, interaction, and social capital.

Chapter 3 - Community as Networks

3.1 Chapter Overview

I will explore how community and belonging can be constructed through relationships and interactions with others within this chapter. In particular, I will focus on examining the role of social networks within social housing, and the significance interaction can have for residents. The chapter outlines that social networks can be central to resident constructions of community. For this chapter, a helpful working definition of the societal aspect of community is taken from a study of American neighbourhoods by Walker and Walker in 1977. This research constructed the social elements of community as; identity and shared values, interactions, social ties and links to wider networks (Walker & Walker, 1977). Therefore, this chapter examines community through social interaction, bonds, and social capital.

The chapter begins with exploring research that evidences the value of social networks when coping with and processing social change (Cole & Goodchild, 2000). Throughout this exploration, the chapter will demonstrate the additional importance of social networks in areas of high deprivation (Forrest & Kearns, 2001). The significance of the third place in facilitating and developing social interaction and relationships will also be determined. Thus, the outcomes of a decline in third spaces will be explored, particularly regarding the impact on social interaction (Hickman, 2013). It will also be important to introduce and consider theories of social capital due to their prominence in policy directed towards social housing communities. The value of bonding capital will be explored due to its potential usefulness to social housing residents. The chapter will examine the classist and subjective nature of policy applications of social capital. It will be emphasised how the working-class perspective of social capital has been dismissed, disregarding the significance of bonding social capital (Crisp, 2013). Therefore, I will evidence the value of bonding capital in working-class constructions of belonging and community (Aldrich & Meyer, 2015).

The chapter will then consider how belonging can be constructed 'to' others and through social networks. Thus, it is essential to examine the concepts of social exclusion and inclusion and their relation to social networks. The chapter will conclude by exploring the factors that can negatively impact social networks in social housing communities.

3.2 Constructing community through social networks

After examining the role of place in community, it is important to consider the significance of social networks in constructions of community. Whilst a location can bring people together, this can prompt social interaction and enable relationships to develop (Sutton & Kolaja,1960). Then through interaction and networks, a sense of belonging to a place or community can evolve (Gilchrist, 2002). This demonstrates how place, networks, and belonging can be intertwined within community constructions. This section will examine the role of social networks within working-class communities, the significance of social capital, and how belonging can be constructed through networks. As with previous interpretations of community, the social network can be complex to define; therefore, the concepts discussed in this chapter may overlap with those previously examined.

The term social network originates in a community study of a Norwegian fishing neighbourhood in 1954 by social anthropologist, John Barnes. Barnes described; "a network of ties of kinship, friendship and neighbourhood" that can represent the broad relationships that create a 'community' (Barnes, 1954, p.44). This, however, may also feature smaller "clusters" of more connected, closer groups (IBID). Friendships and social ties often form an essential part of people's lives and identities (Allan, 1998). A sense of community can thus be constructed through a networked sociality (Wittel, 2001). Individuals can then form collective memberships that are strongly connected to developing their identity (Somerville, 2011). The creation of social networks with neighbours can provide important support systems (Fischer, 1982). These systems and interactions can often be based on shared values and codes of behaviour (Somerville, 2011). Humans tend

to seek out the familiar and connect ourselves with those we can identify with and see ourselves within (Crow, 2018). This can encourage individuals to collaborate and prescribe to normative behaviour patterns (Bourdieu, 1990a). These norms and values can then provide familiarity, safety, and inclusivity in constructions of community. Those who sit outside those norms and values can be excluded from the network; therefore, I will explore exclusion later in the chapter. The following section will now explore social networks in working-class communities.

3.3 Social networks in working-Class communities

The working-class community is commonly depicted in social research as both tight-knit and well-bonded (Crow & Allan, 1994). Assumptions that working-class communities are well-connected may be inaccurate, reflecting the influence of nostalgia within the understanding of 'community' (Crow, 2018). Contemporary social networks may form more practical, everyday functions (Corcoran, 2008), and these may not reflect a stereotypical, romanticised, working-class community (Atkinson & Kintrea, 2000).

The more pragmatic networks found in contemporary social housing communities are often presented as weaker than those associated with traditional working-class life (Bailey et al., 2012). This shift is framed as a moral and social decline rather than an organic change and hence presented as evidence of 'broken Britain' (Hancock & Mooney, 2013). Social housing residents are often at the centre of such debates about moral decline and are assumed to be more anti-social in their behaviour (Denedo & Ejiogu, 2021). This is reflected in the increase in social policy to respond to such behaviour (Cheshire & Buglar, 2016). I argue that large scale assumptions are made about social housing communities without an adequate understanding of the residents' lived experiences (Alleyne, 2002; Tyler, 2013). Therefore, research is required to better understand the social networks and interactions within social housing estates (Mee, 2009). Hence, within this section, I seek to explore social networks about social housing neighbourhoods and their impact on resident experiences of community.

Social networks within social housing communities have the capacity to evolve into compassionate relationships which can offer care and support (Mee, 2009). Furthermore, social networks are of "significant benefit" to resident's quality of life and well-being (Rolfe & Garnham, 2020, p.105). Such networks arguably have heightened importance in working-class neighbourhoods, as they can negate the stress of living through change or socio-economic decline (Cockerham et al., 2017). In areas of decline, residents may often be comforted by networks where they can belong to others "like them" (Preece, 2020, p. 834). This familiarity helps create "emotional communities," constructing belonging to those with the same values as ourselves (Plamper, 2010, p.252).

As I discussed in the previous section, the history and geography of social housing estates can leave residents both physically remote and socially excluded. Research into networks within social housing estates has found that residents can be socially isolated with smaller internal social networks than in other tenures (Atkinson & Kintrea, 2000). Working-class communities are often believed to have stronger internal bonds but fewer ties to wider social networks (Granovetter, 1973). With these strongly connected but inward-facing bonds, working-class communities are often presented as possessing the 'wrong' type of social capital (Milbourne, 2010). Thus, only generating connections within existing networks and reducing social mobility, creating "networks of poverty" (6,1997b, p.10). These assertions have formed the basis of a wide range of social policy to address and develop social capital in working-class areas. An examination of the use of social capital in policy is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4. I will now progress to exploring theories of social capital and how they relate to social networks in social housing communities.

3.4 Social Capital in working-Class communities

Social networks form a crucial element of social capital theory, and the two concepts are strongly interrelated (Forrest & Kearns, 2001). Social capital is prevalent within both contemporary research and social policy relating to community, but the idea of social capital is not necessarily a new one. In 1835

Alexis de Tocqueville noted that American involvement in civic and state issues facilitated connections across diverse social groups (Foster et al., 2003). Emile Durkheim's 1915 exploration of Marxist distinctions between individualism and collective action highlighted the importance of social networks and interaction (Portes, 1998). In 1916 Louis Hanifan described the concept of social capital as;

> "*Good will, fellowship, mutual sympathy, and social intercourse among a group of individuals and families who make up a social unit*"
> (Hanifan, 1916 as cited in Aldrich & Meyer, 2015, p. 256).

A prominent advocate of the theory is Robert Putnam; Putnam argues that social capital is the cornerstone of any active and positive community, which he links to a wide range of socio-economic benefits (Putnam, 2000). Through his observation of Italian community organisations, Putnam advocated for "civic communities" that place value in "solidarity, civic participation and integrity" (Putnam, 1993, p.3). An absence of these values is framed as a deterioration of civic responsibility and the traditional community, which lead to moral and social decline (Putnam, 1995). Thus, community and social capital restoration are central to Putnam's approach to improving areas in decline. Social capital is connected to a wide range of socio-economic benefits for residents and communities (Putnam, 2000). Therefore, this has made it an attractive concept for policymakers tackling urban renewal.

Pierre Bourdieu (1985) defined the concept as the potential benefits and outcomes derived from social networks, particularly their reach. Bourdieu divides these resources into what is now more commonly referred to as bonding and bridging social capital (Bourdieu, 1985). Bonding capital is developed within closely related social networks and is primarily used for social support (Foster et al., 2003). Bridging social capital forms through wider social networks that enable socio-economic mobility and progression (Aldrich & Meyer, 2015). Consequently, as the range and diversity of the network increase, its members' opportunities and social mobility improve (Portes, 1998).

Putnam proposed a distinction between 'bridging' and 'bonding' capital, defining bonding capital as connections between; "people who are like one another in important respects" whilst bridging networks link "people who are unlike one another" (Putnam & Goss, 2002, p.11). In more simple terms, concerning social housing residents, bonding capital is more likely to be within 'the estate,' whilst bridging capital reaches beyond the estate. However, this highlights the cultural inequality of the working class, who tend to have capital that only has value within their communities (McKenzie, 2017). Hence a lack of bridging capital can leave the working-class trapped in place, emphasising the re-production of class as a power structure (Skeggs, 1997). In more unsophisticated terms, bridging capital can represent 'getting out' whilst bonding capital can symbolise 'getting by' (Skeggs, 1997, McKenzie, 2017).

Whilst a body of evidence advocates the benefits of social capital, it is not without critique (Flint & Kearns, 2006; Putzel, 1997; Taylor, 2011). This criticism is because connections between social capital and positive outcomes are made without considering broader issues (Navarro, 2002). This results in a theory that lacks a full appreciation of more general economic and political factors (Muntaner et al., 2002; Wakefield & Poland, 2005). The theory assumes that everyone can fulfil their potential, regardless of their socio-economic situation (Loury, 1977). This places theoretical distance between the current use of social capital and Bourdieu's earlier definitions, which presented a more complex and contextual understanding of the concept (Fine, 2010).

Much of the focus of work in addressing poor social networks and a lack of social capital is centred on areas with high concentrations of social housing (Flint & Kearns, 2006). Social housing estates and poorer neighbourhoods are often positioned as having the "wrong kinds of network" (6, 1997b, p.11) that hinder employment prospects and life chances. It is argued that policy to improve social networks within social housing estates relies on the assumption that social housing residents exacerbate conditions of poverty (Everingham, 2003). This is based on the belief that residents are connected to narrow social networks that

propagate "inward-looking and negative social norms" (Atkinson & Kintrea, 2000, p.93). It is suggested that this approach does not fully appreciate the broader global issues that come into play in poorer and deprived communities. Supportive relationships may be more prevalent in working-class communities, where they can be utilised as a coping mechanism in times of social decline (Cole, & Goodchild, 2000).

In terms of social capital, its value is often framed as "outside of the local" and translates into narratives about getting on and getting out of working-class areas (Skeggs, 1997, p.82). Working-class capital is often attributed to have "little worth" outside of working-class communities (McKenzie, 2017, p.9). Subsequently, class positioning is framed in terms of access to resources and the opportunities afforded to particular social groups (Skeggs, 1997). Consequently, viewing social capital in terms of social class highlights the capacity of resources, and therefore power, to improve an individual's socioeconomic position (Hurst et al., 2016). Thus, working-class social capital is coded as social mobility, often interpreted as being able to leave particular neighbourhoods (Skeggs, 1997).

In the past working-class communities often saw residents living in closer proximity with strong, closely formed networks and deep family bonds (Young & Willmott, 2013). In times of higher employment, networks in working-class areas widened to transgress both home and work settings (Rogaly & Taylor, 2009). Depictions of working-class networks are portrayed as achieving a "shared solidarity" in the face of adversity, especially when living through social change or poverty (Crow, 2018, p.3). It is argued that previous studies of working-class communities have been romanticised and thus failed to fully explore the social networks within them (Crow, 2018). As discussed in the last chapter, communities with close ties high in bonding capital can give way to exclusion, as "territoriality provides a source of power" (Paddison, 2001, p.201). This highlights the negative capability of community to exclude and create distinctions between 'insiders' and 'outsiders' (Billington et al., 1998, Crow et al., 2001).

Furthermore, the close, supportive relationships within well-bonded communities may have been replaced with more practical networks of "limited liability" (Corcoran, 2008, p. 279). More pragmatic networks may develop over shorter periods (Sherlock, 2002). It will be essential to explore the different types of networks in my research, mainly due to the migration of incoming residents within the community in question.

A more sophisticated understanding of networks in social housing communities is now required. This understanding must not simply pigeonhole residents as "busybodies or nobodies" (Crow et al., 2001, p.128). Instead, research should recognise the complexity of social networks and social capital in disadvantaged communities (Matthews & Besemer, 2015). There is a need for social housing to provide a balance between personal space and community to ensure residents can achieve a level of both cohesiveness and privacy (Hicks & Lewis, 2019). Therefore, my study seeks to contribute to research that develops a more nuanced understanding by exploring the impact of socio-economic factors that affect everyday working-class life (Edmondson, 2003).

Research highlights the positive benefits of the support structures formed through bonding capital (Aldrich & Meyer, 2015; Cole & Goodchild, 2000; MacDonald et al., 2005). Networks within working-class communities can often form part of important supportive social structures that enable residents to process the reality of living in deprived conditions (Forrest & Kearns, 2001). Evidence suggests that these networks can create strong social ties and positive relationships based on trust and solidarity (Cole & Goodchild, 2000). Supportive networks can play an important role in navigating life within deprived neighbourhoods (MacDonald et al., 2005). This emphasises the role of bonding capital in working-class residents' lives and how it can contribute to constructions of home and belonging and provide day-to-day support (Cockerham et al., 2017). Even "simple exchanges" with neighbours can help residents construct feelings of home and belonging (Yarker, 2019, p.540), demonstrating the power of friendly, everyday interactions (Preece, 2020).

Conceivably the downside of a strongly connected, working-class community; is the capacity of increased levels of interaction to create more opportunities for conflict and tension (Cheshire & Buglar, 2016). As aforementioned, communities often arise from shared values and norms (Somerville, 2011). However, collective norms are not necessarily congruent with civic responsibility; James Putzel (1997) used the example of criminal gangs to illustrate this point. Furthermore, people tend to seek out the familiar and mix with those like themselves (Allan, 1998). This can enable inclusive and supportive communities, but it can also exclude and 'other' those who sit outside that familiarity (Suttles, 1972). My research seeks to explore the impact of social interaction when living in "unknown places" as a "lack of connections" can harm residents (Preece, 2020, p.837). Therefore, this study explores the importance of social connections and networks for residents, particularly those new to Rookwood.

I now wish to re-visit the role of place in constructions of community to examine how, if, and what spaces play a role in social interaction within resident experiences of community.

3.5 Social networks, belonging and inclusion

The concepts of belonging and community are commonly framed positively and associated with many beneficial elements (Turner, 2014). However, as previously discussed, both are deeply complex concepts, and it is vital to evaluate their possible deleterious factors (Derounian, 2011). The capacity of community to foster collectiveness can also, in turn, create exclusion (Suttles, 1972). Within a residential context, this can separate residents into those, who belong, and those who do not (Billington et al., 1998). Belonging to a community may nurture feelings of support and security, but conversely, those outside that community may feel excluded and marginalised (Bulmer, 1986). It will be necessary for my research to explore the interplay between belonging, exclusion, and division within social networks. This is due to the incoming migration of new residents during the estate's development which is at the centre of my study.

Within a neighbourhood, a community can form when a group of people adapt their behaviour according to collective constraints and social systems (Bourdieu, 1990). To enable identification with a place, you need to be located "in" that place; therefore, the more *inside* you are in the place, the stronger your identification with it (Relph, 1976, p.9). Thus, belonging can become acclimatised within a community and only becomes a focus when threatened (Yuval-Davis, 2006). This could occur when new or different residents move into an area. Often, we reject and shun that which is different that we cannot identify with (Young et al., 2011). This is relevant to my research due to the increase of new residents in the area and the subsequent change in the estate's diversity.

Consequently, the original social ties and cohesiveness that create a strongly bonded community can evolve into tension or conflict (Urry, 2001). What may initially present as a well-connected, cohesive community may be inaccessible and hostile to outsiders (Fukuyama, 1995.). Collective, nostalgic belonging can create and define social boundaries, distinguishing an 'us and them' dichotomy of insiders and outsiders (Blokland, 2004). This, therefore, highlights the impossibility of a wholly cohesive community; the very nature of sharing space can generate conflict and discord. Hence, community can foster division between those within the social codes and those who are not, instead of one idealistic, harmonious collective (Paddison, 2001). 'Insider' and 'outsider' distinctions have relevance to my research due to the changes that sharply increased the number and diversity of residents in a relatively brief period. Residential belonging can be threatened by change or incoming residents, which can divide residents into; "us" who do belong, and "them" who do not (Billington et al., 1998, p.171). Longer-term residents may feel they can claim "roots" in their community, thus evidencing their long-term insider status (Crow et al., 2001, p. 34-36). This status and territory can be threatened by incoming residents, making existing residents feel protective; "this is my community," creating divisions and tension (Crow et al., 2001, p. 34-36).

Traditionally the community study has sought to demonstrate a lack of, or reduction of, 'community' in the wake of globalisation (Paddison, 2001). This theme of loss in community theory is not new, stemming from Tonnies

Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft and continues in more contemporary research. An example is a community study by Talja Blokland (2004) that explored nostalgic constructions of belonging in a working-class neighbourhood in Rotterdam. Despite many resident memories contradicting recorded facts, the community of the past was recalled as well-bonded. Thus, cohesiveness was seen to have been eroded and threatened through immigration. Residents felt the change resulted in; "The end of community as "we" knew it" (Blokland, 2004, p.133). This will be relevant to explore within my research due to the level of changes in the estate. It will be necessary to question if the incoming residents and changes impact the interaction on the estate. I want to explore if incoming residents seem "out of place in an otherwise shared commons" (Amin, 2013, p.4). The research will examine how their outsider status impacts their ability to connect with other residents. Will they adapt to "justify their right to belong"? (Amin, 2013, p.6).

Recurring themes of loss, belonging, and division within community studies underscore the challenge of achieving cohesion; a place can be a container for so many identities and social codes (Paddison, 2001). Definitions of division within community theory have relevance when exploring working-class belonging, particularly as some research has revealed a reluctance to belong to working-class identities (Skeggs, 1997). The complexity of living within a tainted place, not wishing to be seen to belong to a place imbued with stigma and blame (Tyler, 2015). The definition of territorial community highlights that the 'territory' of place is not without possession or power (Paddison, 2001). The ability to exclude, inhibit another's belonging through the othering of those around you; to distance your own identity from taint (Skeggs, 1997). Therefore, the collectiveness of a community has the potential to be formed through a defensive response to the threat of outsiders (Gottdiener et al., 2019).

Constructions of community and belonging are not necessarily, centred on divisions and the distinctions between insiders and outsiders are not always definite and clear (Crow et al., 2001). Constructions of community can shift and alter, never achieving a "final meaning" (Albrow, 1997, p.5 as cited in; Crow et al., 2001, p.31. Some research has found that communities may be divided through

change, but divisions can erode and settle, and the neighbourhood becomes more cohesive (Savage, 2008). This will be important to consider throughout my thesis due to the levels of change experienced by residents, both internal and external to the neighbourhood. As both existing and new residents process the changes that have impacted the estate, it will be essential to understand how that affects their ability to belong to the area.

Length of tenure has been found to positively impact belonging, with longer-term residents feeling more connected to an area (Lewicka, 2011). However, the lived experience of community is more complex than an insider/outsider dichotomy and is affected by a wide range of factors (Crow et al., 2001). This will be an essential element to examine through the resident narratives, especially as several participants have resided on the estate for over 15 years. It will also be interesting to compare these narratives alongside the experiences of new and incoming residents. Consequently, my research can contribute contextual insight relating to the reality of mixed neighbourhoods, especially within a social housing setting.

Interpreting belonging exclusively through insider and outsider divisions has received criticism (Crow et al., 2001). Feeling "at home" is nuanced and affected by other influences, such as how residents understand and why they live in a particular place (Savage et al., 2005, p.29). However, belonging can create boundaries, and indeed divisions, within neighbourhoods, but it is argued belonging can be harnessed to help break down those boundaries (Anthias, 2013). Despite its complexity and contention, the insider and outsider distinction often remain relevant to lived experiences of community (Crow et al., 2001). Outsiders, or those who are viewed differently, have been, and are, subject to marginalisation (Elias & Scotson, 1994).

3.6 Living in "improper places" the impact of crime on social networks

Belonging can be part of what makes us feel safe and "at home" (Yuval Davis, 2006, p.197). Therefore, crime and anti-social behaviour can de-stabilise feelings of safety and security. I wish to consider the impact of crime upon resident

constructions of belonging due to the elevated levels of crime deprivation in the area of focus. Crime and anti-social behaviour adversely affect belonging and can cause residents to withdraw socially to cope (Brodsky et al.,1999). This withdrawal can be the effect of living in high crime areas, which may negatively impact residents' well-being and, in time, influence their decision to leave a place (Popay et al., 2003). Whilst longer-term residents may use family or existing networks to cope, newer residents lack the same social systems and thus often turn to community activity (Crow et al., 2001). Within Rookwood, this community activity and the potential for developing networks have declined along with the third places that once hosted such activity, cutting off support for both old and new residents.

In the second round of interviews, resident accounts of a rise in youth-related crime and disorder are confirmed by both police and news reports. This rise resulted in Greater Manchester Police imposing a dispersal order on the estate in 2015 and making youth nuisance a policing priority for the estate in 2017[12]. Two days before the dispersal order, a shooting was reported adjacent to the estate: one of a series of shootings within the area (Rodgers, 2015b). In 2017 the garage and local shop on the edge of the estate was subject to its third arson attack after being ram raided by a van (Cox & Day, 2017). Therefore, it will be essential to examine the impact this has had on resident constructions of belonging and community and consider the adverse effect upon residents living in "improper places" (Popay et al., 2003, p.68). This is particularly significant as the estate is subject to high socio-economic and crime deprivation (See Appendices 1 and 8).

An exploration of Australian social housing found that care and belonging play an essential role in residents becoming active members of their community (Mee, 2009). Residents may feel that crime is a decline of care and responsibility, as other residents are seen as not taking care or being "careless" (Mee, 2009, p. 851). Consequently, residents may construct belonging through caring interactions

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[12] *All the streets on the estate were subject to a 48-hour Dispersal Order which enabled officers to temporarily remove any person aged 10 and over for a short period who was seen to be; "contributing, or is likely to contribute, to anti-social behaviour, crime or disorder in the area". The order was in place until 20th September 2015. The boundary map can be found in Appendix 7. The Summer 2017 policing priorities can be found in Appendix 23.*

with their neighbours or a community group. Within the same study, residents also discussed the social landlord's role and responsibility in responding to and controlling crime and anti-social behaviour. Residents can see registered social providers to have a "duty of care" to provide "proper places" to live, free from crime and disorder (Mee, 2009, p. 852). This underlines the significance of social norms within belonging to place, as those who commit crimes or engage in anti-social behaviour may be viewed as external to the general norms of the estate and, therefore, outsiders.

Crime and disorder are frequently connected to social housing residents in more expansive narratives about 'sink estates' (Slater, 2018). In a ruling by the Court of Appeal, Lord Justice Tuckey stated that social housing residents "must be expected to tolerate" higher levels of anti-social behaviour (Koch, 2018, p.221). However, social residents have the right to seek "solace" via the creation of belonging to their own homes and local neighbourhoods (Ali, 2021, p.88). Living in fear can adversely impact residents' mental health and well-being, highlighting the responsibility of housing providers to support residents in coping with crime and anti-social behaviour (Holding et al., 2020). This contrasts with the "politics of lawfare" that shifts the blame for anti-social behaviour onto residents, supported by entrenched and damaging narratives of social housing residents (Koch, 2018, p.221). This emphasises the importance of safety on social residents' construction of belonging and their right to create a home (Ali, 2021).

Crime and anti-social behaviour can play a role in constructing social networks. Those who are viewed as "acceptable" are adopted into the network, whereas those seen as "unacceptable" are not (Ahmed, 2012, p.105). This division can place distance between residents and create smaller and more exclusive networks (IBID). Those who commit the crime on Rookwood would then be viewed as unacceptable, with residents seeking out more positive and caring interactions with those perceived as "friendly" or "helpful" (Fossey et al., 2020, p.6). Consequently, those who do not conform to the "unspoken rules" of the estate could be excluded (Ahmed, 2012, p.109).

Experiencing "housing incivilities" such as living in fear of crime has been connected to a decrease in place-based attachment (Brown et al., 2003, p.160). A lack of sense of security and experience of crime can create negative perceptions of an area and impact residents' well-being (Rolfe & Garnham, 2020). This is not to say that crime and anti-social behaviour will always reduce resident belonging and attachment (Hothi & Cordes, 2010). Therefore, it will be important in my research to consider how these impact resident constructions of belonging over time. The rise in crime was reported shortly after the development, contributing to a sharp increase in family properties on the estate. This was within a period of welfare reform and austerity that impacted support services in the region, particularly in health and youth services (Fitzgerald, 2016; Williams, 2019). This may have contributed to the rise in youth-related crime and nuisance. The impact of austerity is likely to have adversely affected youth justice and support for children and young people in areas of social exclusion (Yates, 2012). Due to the rise in crime within the local area, it has been important to consider the lived experience and its impact on services in my findings. Here this community study provides an opportunity to explore feelings of being "trapped in place" to examine the residents' sense of loss and its impact on their belonging (Pain, 2019, pp. 8-9).,

When residents feel unsafe and isolated from others, this can increase stress levels and negatively impact their mental health (Fossey et al., 2020). This demonstrates the "transformative" potential of neighbourhood effects to affect residents' mental health (IBID, p.11). Belonging can be constructed by developing a sense of confidence, often created through safety, security, and familiarity (Yarker, 2019). The importance of the human need to belong has arguably been emphasised during the Covid-19 pandemic (Lim et al., 2021). However, the motivation to connect with others and places can be affected by negative experiences (Brodsky et al., 1999). This may include actual experiences of crime or fear of crime (Brown et al., 2003). Belonging and feeling at home is a central part of being human; it is integral to our health and behaviour (Allen et al., 2021).

Identity formation can also play a role in constructions of belonging, particularly in high crime areas, as residents seek to separate themselves from a "spoiled identity" of place (Allen et al., 2007, p.239.). Therefore, if other residents are perceived as "rough", other residents may disassociate from them (Preece, 2020, p.335). Here belonging may be constructed by forming an identity that seeks to separate from a negative, anti-social, 'other' (Lawler, 2015). Often humans seek out those who are familiar, looking to create 'emotional communities' with those with the same values as ourselves (Plamper, 2010). This can create insider and outsider distinctions within social networks as residents seek to connect with "people like us" (Ahmed, 2012, p.102). This is arguably relevant to my study, as new and existing residents have no opportunity to connect amidst a backdrop of increasing levels of crime.

The exploration of social networks, instead of individual relationships, can help provide a more in-depth understanding of a neighbourhood (Crow & Allan, 1994). An examination of broader social networks enables connections between the "personal and informal," thus exploring the lived experience of social change (Crow & Allan, 1994, p.181). I, therefore, contend that the study of social networks and belonging results in a deeper comprehension of the consequences of socio-economic shifts. In this instance, resident experiences of Rookwood can contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the human impact of austerity policy alongside high crime within working-class communities.

Research has found that community constructions are subjective and thus unique to each neighbourhood (Brodsky et al., 1999). Consequently, the relationship between broader socio-political factors and residents' belonging should be explored (Preece, 2020). It is argued that a more in-depth understanding of the residents' experience of social change can help improve social policy designed to tackle such change.

This chapter has addressed how community and belonging can be constructed through social networks. Therefore, I will now examine the application and use of community in social policy, political dialogue, and the media.

Chapter 4 – Community in Policy and Practice

4.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter examines the uses and applications of community within social policy, mainly focusing on contemporary policy related to social housing.

Social policy can often lack a full appreciation of the lived experience of community, particularly within the context of social housing. I contend that this leads to static and homogeneous constructions of community that remain unchallenged and unexplored (Alleyne, 2002). The chapter will demonstrate that the British government relies upon positivistic constructions of community imbued with nostalgia (Ahmed, 2010). These can then shape both social housing policy and practice. Furthermore, I will outline that these constructions have contributed to stereotypical depictions and understanding of social housing communities. The chapter will then argue that these stereotypes have evolved into meta-narratives of the 'sink estate' and the 'lost community' that have become doxa within both policy and political rhetoric (Ahmed, 2010; Slater, 2018). The acceptance and application of these meta-narratives has facilitated a policy programme that has significantly diminished UK social housing stock. Furthermore, this has then censured the resident voice. This argument then enables me to demonstrate the need for social policy to incorporate counter-narratives and resident accounts of constructions of community from their perspective.

I will begin with an overview of constructions of community within contemporary social policy.

4.2 Constructions of community within social policy

> "*The notion of a tight-knit affective community is notoriously alluring to modern western man; we tend to associate it with an idea past, and to see in its restoration a focus for our hopes for a better society.*"
> (Black, 1984, p.1 as cited in Taylor, 2011, p.66).

Although this chapter primarily examines policy from the New Labour period onwards, it is crucial to understand the origins of neoliberal policy applications to community. In the 1980s and early 1990s, "property-led regeneration" became popular and involved the neoliberal principles of private development (Imrie & Raco, 2003, p.3). The Thatcher and Regan administrations drove this withdrawal of state involvement and planning (Taylor-Gooby & Leruth, 2018). From the early 1990s, neighbourhood renewal policies designed to address social decline have placed 'community' at the centre of their approach (Wallace, 2016). These approaches strove to deliver communities that were both 'sustainable' and 'self-governing' through the rollback and reorganisation of state involvement (Flint & Kearns, 2006).

The administrations of Thatcher into New Labour have been viewed as a period of increased neoliberalist social policy (Tyler, 2015). Therefore, before exploring the political capital of community in contemporary social policy, it will be helpful to examine what is meant by 'neoliberal' and what relevance this has to the research. The thesis uses the following definition of neoliberal policy approaches:

> "*…an articulation of state, market, and citizenship that harnesses the first to impose the stamp of the second onto the third.*"
> (Wacquant, 2012, p.71).

The neoliberal shift in British politics began with the Thatcher administration in the late 1970s, then built upon by New Labour and the "aggressively re-charged" austerity policy of 2010 onwards (Hodkinson, 2020, p.28). The neoliberal theories of Friedrich Hayek and Milton Friedman directed policy responses that adopted capitalist and free-market approaches to justify reducing state involvement

(Rogowski, 2018). This approach prioritised profit and financial gain over public interest and has arguably dominated social policy from 1979 onwards (Hodkinson, 2020). The neoliberal ideology is built upon narratives of dependency, working-class unionised power and disorder (Rogowski, 2018); such narratives are arguably represented through the 'sink estate', which I will explore later in the chapter. It is contended that the neoliberal "agenda" has been most aggressively pursued through housing policy and that Grenfell has exposed the "much deeper neoliberal fault line" in UK social housing policy (Hodkinson, 2020, p.5).

The New Labour administration saw a particular renaissance of the community placed at the epicentre of a wide range of social policies designed to tackle social decline (Fine, 2010; Imrie & Raco, 2003). 'Community' was central to New Labour's neoliberal "ideology" and placed distance between itself and its working-class roots (Levitas, 2000, p.189). Community during this period can be framed as the "ideological handmaiden" to neoliberalism due to the values it evokes and the political capital it enables to achieve policy goals (Paddison, 2001, p.194). The New Labour propositions of 'sustainable,' 'balanced' and 'mixed' communities were centred on improving working-class areas. This was achieved by introducing more affluent residents, highlighting which sections of society the approach gave credence to (Jones & Evans, 2008). The New Labour period has explicitly been chosen as a focal point for this chapter. This is due to a neoliberal approach that has dramatically affected social housing in the UK (Hodkinson et al., 2013). However, it is acknowledged that the impact of neoliberal policy on social housing communities originates within the Thatcher administration (IBID). However, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to explore policy from that period onwards. Nevertheless, an overview of the relevant policy within Thatcher's government, and its impact on social housing communities, will be explored later in the chapter.

Community is also central to the New Labour concept of 'active citizenship,' the role and responsibility of the 'community' to come together and care for itself and its citizens (Raco, 2005, p.325). The transfer of responsibility from government to citizens is an example of community currency, enabling a withdrawal of the state (Levitas, 2000). Amin (2005, p. 615) refers to this process as the "localization of

the social", where the traditional responsibilities of the state begin to be immersed into local communities. It is argued that social policy approaches to community regeneration have become progressively "neo-liberalised" and market driven (Raco, 2005, p.324). They are facilitated through an application of 'community' that is constructed from dominant perspectives (Alleyne, 2002). The community active citizens are expected to uphold belonging to a particular set of middle-class expectations and values, despite being prescribed to working-class neighbourhoods (Bauman, 2001). The idealised, closely-knit working-class community's collective values are favoured in policy, but only when they support policy aims and political power (Levitas, 2000). Hence, 'community' can be utilised as political currency, amalgamating class, power and agency to impose a particular set of "normative" values upon working-class neighbourhoods (Padison, 2001, p.195). Therefore, highlighting the power and the political advantage of utilising and "naming" community (Levitas, 2000, p.165).

The neoliberal philosophy to apply community as a means of renewal and regeneration continued into the Coalition and subsequent Conservative governments. This was achieved through Localism, Big Society, and The Estate Regeneration Programme (Tait & Inch, 2016). Although not always explicitly referenced, as in New Labour policy, similar ideological applications of community were continually directed towards the same neighbourhoods (Tait & Inch, 2016). Arguably within the Conservative approach, 'community' has been deployed in more aggressive terms as it has facilitated the demolition and gentrification of the 'sink estate' (Minton, 2018). Much of neoliberal policy relating to 'community' is paradoxical, simultaneously framed as both the problem and the solution of contemporary social and moral decline (Rose, 2001). I contend that the social housing estate is framed as the 'problem' community. This is then juxtaposed against a positivistic, nostalgic depiction of the middle-class community as the 'solution.' I further argue the lived experiences of working-class communities and the context in which they are situated is far more complex. I also argue that many contemporary community studies explore the residents' experience of gentrification. In contrast, this research offers an opportunity to contribute in terms

of exploring being "trapped in place" (Pain, 2019, p.14). Therefore, my research seeks to explore and examine the complexity of lived experiences of community.

I will now progress to an examination of policy constructions of community as both the problem, and the solution.

4.3 Community as the problem: Sink estates and decline

> "*There is a history of imaginary geographies which cast minorities, 'imperfect' people and a list of others who are seen to pose a threat to the dominate group in society as polluting bodies or folk devils who are then located 'elsewhere.'*
> (Sibley, 2007, p.49)

Central to neoliberal neighbourhood responses to social decline is the concept of the 'problem,' 'hard to let,' or 'sink estate' (Slater, 2018). These terms have been used to such a degree that social housing estates and neighbourhoods in decline have become synonymous (Cole & Goodchild, 2000). Here the word 'community' in social policy is frequently used to identify neighbourhoods in deprived areas, to signify their otherness and difference (Tonkiss, 2005). The assumption is that the root of social decline within such neighbourhoods is a 'loss' of community, weak social networks, and a lack of social cohesion (Taylor, 2004).

Firstly, it is essential to consider some of the histories of the social housing estate. Post-war Britain focused on building new homes in large scale slum clearance programmes (Yelling, 2000, Malpass, 2003). As I have already established, many of the 'new towns' built within this period were significantly impacted by a post-industrial socio-economic decline (Hills, 2007). The neoliberal approach to housing policy, instigated in the Thatcher era, has created long-term disinvestment in social housing (Hodkinson et al., 2013). Possibly the most notable is the Right to Buy policy, which signified a shift in social housing becoming a "safety net" for those in the most need (Malpass & Murie, 1999, p.174)

However, the legacy and impact of that policy are often relatively ignored, along with the broader causes of decline. These have been discounted to focus on more individualistic and local factors (Amin, 2005). This approach dismisses the longitudinal, socio-economic concerns that have seen geographical inequality rise since the 1980s (Dorling et al., 2007). Consequently, this has caused specific neighbourhoods to be labelled as "problematic" or "troubled" (Crossley, 2017, p.4.) This categorisation of negative places affects how 'community' is applied to, and interpreted about, those places (Warr et al., 2017). Therefore, in this context 'community' can be "thrown back" at working-class neighbourhoods, seen as both the downfall and the saviour of their socio-economic decline (Amin, 2005, p.612).

The negative way social housing estates have been framed has affected how 'community' is applied to them through social policy, often through development or regeneration initiatives. Many regeneration attempts seek to replicate contemporary slum-clearance approaches. This is despite the critique of the original programmes, which dispersed and fragmented working-class communities (Tunstall & Lowe, 2012). The socio-economic impact of slum clearance is not fully known and appreciated (Yelling, 2000). Nevertheless, much regeneration of social housing communities seeks to demolish them; to begin again; to "unmake" the British social housing estate:

> "*Unmaking' council estates is also about remaking council estate tenants – in a fantasy mould of the suburban middle-classes – without of course the material intent to achieve such a radical makeover.*"
> (Mooney, 2008, p.15)

Therefore, concerning social housing, the 'community' is positioned as both the cause of estate decline and proffered as its redeemer, the very means by which that decline can be reversed (Rose, 2001). Moreover, the social housing estate is often pivotal to depictions of social decay and are framed as 'communities' that need both intervention and support (Tyler, 2013). The suggestion is that social housing estates have failed and are used to answer wider public concerns about moral and social deterioration (Edwards, 2004). These social policy and political rhetoric messages are part of meta-narratives of the social housing estate,

supported by media depictions (Crossley, 2017; Slater, 2018). The use of which has increased since New Labour came to power in 1997 (Slater, 2018)[13].

In 1997, closely after his successful election campaign, Tony Blair chose a social housing estate in which to address the nation; The Aylesbury Estate in South London (Slater, 2018). This location was purposely symbolic of an estate with a poor reputation and high levels of deprivation. The message was powerful as Blair talked of an "underclass" being held back by "fatalism, and not just poverty" (Crossley, 2017, pp 48-50). The term "sink estate" had been utilised well before this point, but its usage in print media increased rapidly after Blair's speech at Aylesbury (Slater, 2018, p.883). It saw another rapid increase in 2016 when David Cameron referred to "so-called sink estates" in his speech to launch the Estate Regeneration Programme in early 2016. In the speech, Cameron referred to social housing communities as suffering "severe social segregation" with "gangs, ghettos and anti-social behaviour" (Cameron, 2016, para. 5).

Beginning with Blair's Aylesbury speech and ending with Cameron's promises to 'remove' and 'replace' social housing (Cameron, 2016), the sink estate has been presented as the antipode of the policy construction of the community ideal. Policy attempts to achieve these ideals have ranged from enabling more mixed tenure within social housing communities (Cole & Goodchild 2000); to the recommendation for demolition and gentrification of estates (Minton, 2018; Slater, 2018). The messages delivered through social policy and political rhetoric have been strongly supported by the media, enabling the territorial stigmatisation of the social housing estate and its residents (Crossley, 2017; McKenzie, 2015: Slater, 2018). Political, policy, and media discourses are littered with the negative labelling of the social housing estate; categorised as a "national embarrassment" with "weaker" communities that are "beyond recovery" (Knight & McLeod, 2014, p 7-50[14]). I argue that meta-narratives about social housing have enabled policy that adversely affects social housing residents. The message has been unequivocal;

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[13] *Please see Appendix 12 regarding the increased use of the term "sink estate" in major UK newspapers in the period 1986-2017, reproduced from (Slater, 2018, p.883)*
[14] *This was within a 2014 centre-right Policy Exchange report regarding possible solutions to tackle deprivation within British social housing estates*

the social housing estate is central to the problem, and particular types of 'community' are central to the solution:

> "*The 'sink estate,' it is argued, is the semantic battering ram in the ideological assault on social housing, deflecting attention away from social housing not only as urgent necessity during a serious crisis of affordability, but as incubator of community, solidarity, shelter and home.*"
> (Slater, 2018, p.877)

I contend that not only have the stigmatising meta-narratives of social housing communities permitted public approval for harmful and censuring policy but that this was its original intended function (Toynbee & Walker, 2015). Social housing communities' negative and inflammatory representations are viewed as an "act of oppression," further aggravating and replicating social inequality (Mooney, 2009, p.437). This forms part of the broader neoliberal objective of the continued privatisation of UK social housing from 1979 to the present day (Hodkinson et al., 2013).

Constructed through fear, blame and stigma, a meta-narrative has emerged that presents the sink estate as a tainted place[15] responsible for its decline (Slater, 2018). It is argued that this is part of a much wider neoliberalist agenda that is "driven by a particular class project" (Hodkinson et al., 2013, p.3). That project has an increasing focus on homeownership, privatisation, and gentrification. This urban renewal approach seeks to reduce social housing in the UK significantly (Hodkinson et al., 2013; Lees, 2008; Macleod & Johnstone, 2012). Here power and affluence have been used to exclude the narratives and voices of social housing residents and to "drive the political agenda" (Somerville, 2005, p.123).

Through neoliberal applications of community, blame is associated with those who are 'different' and social policy has employed language that has normalised prejudice and rejection of difference (Worley, 2005). Thus, the stigmatisation of social housing has enabled increasingly damaging and punitive policy as acts of

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[15] *I use the term tainted in direct reference to Wacquants concept of how low-income communities can become "spatially tainted" by stigmatising narratives about them, as detailed in (Crossley, 2017 p.5 and Wacquant et al., 2014).*

'symbolic violence' against the social housing resident (Crossley, 2017). It is argued that it is not only the resident voice that has become marginalised and dismissed. Furthermore, those within research and academia, who seek to challenge neoliberal narratives of community and housing, are similarly disregarded (Hodkinson et al., 2013). I, therefore, contend that research has a role and an obligation to challenge and unpack the narratives utilised within policy; to examine their purpose and impact (Allen, 2009). However, it is suggested that the discipline of housing research has lost its ability to critically appraise policy, warranting a "desperate need of critical revision" (Hodkinson et al., 2013, p.5).

This combined lack of challenge, critique and voice has allowed static and narrow interpretations of community to be applied in policy, resulting in rigid and "under-theorised" notions of community (Alleyne, 2002, p.622). The lack of critical appraisal and a genuine appreciation of the lived experience of social housing communities have resulted in "policy-driven evidence" (Bryson & Mowbray, 2005, p.92). This has enabled the prevalence of nostalgic constructions of community to be presented as a panacea to the morally bereft 'sink estate.' The ultimate consequence of this powerful combination of nostalgia, stigma, blame, and power is that of the Grenfell tragedy. Grenfell is one of the worst fire disasters the UK has seen (Shildrick, 2018). Which arguably has uncovered both the "absolute political contempt" of and the "protracted disinvestment" of British social housing (Tyler & Slater, 2018, p.376).

Grenfell serves as a terrible indictment of the unchallenged nature of the meta-narratives of community and social housing. I contend that social policy has failed to account for social housing communities' lived experiences and realities. This has ultimately dehumanised social housing residents, separating them from their truths (McKenzie, 2017). This has contributed to essentialist and overly nostalgic constructions of community within social policy (Ahmed, 2010). Furthermore, these constructions have compromised the efficacy of policy and significantly damaged the communities that the policies sought to regenerate. This underpins the importance and role of the counter-narrative and its capacity to challenge dominant narratives (Andrews, 2004). I now restate my assertion that a more

thorough understanding of the lived experience of social housing could expand and improve social policy. This understanding would then contribute to a more in-depth examination of the micro-level impact of macro-level social change. I seek to utilise my research to examine the effect of more comprehensive social change on a local level (Crow, 2000).

Furthermore, residents face difficulties being heard over popular stereotypical and sensationalist media narratives *(*Alevizou et al., 2013). Therefore, I intend to develop a narrative that can offer a counter to those currently accepted about social housing. This narrative will critically appraise policy constructions of the social housing community.

I will now continue to explore policy applications of community concerning policy solutions to socio-economic decline and its associated consequences.

4.4 Community as the solution: Ideals and nostalgia

> *"Neighbourhoods become equated with (spatially defined) 'communities' and the actual processes of 'community' are identified as both the causes of neighbourhood decline and the mechanisms through which sustainable regeneration will be delivered."*
> (Flint & Kearns, 2006, p.32)

The reclamation of the lost, idyllic communities of the past is an enduring notion and one that has dominated policy relating to social decline for some time. Thus, the loss of the 'traditional' community is something to be both dreaded and lamented (Bell & Newby, 1971). 'Community' within social policy is usually about attempts to recover a "paradise lost" (Bauman, 2001, p.3). Consequently, this loss has come to symbolise moral and social decline, accompanied by a perception that society has somehow lost its way:

> *"The basic recognition of the mutuality of duty and reciprocity of respect on which civil society depends appeared lost. It evoked the sense that the moral fabric of community was unravelling."*
> (Tony Blair, 2002, para. 7)

The social policy formed around this idea seeks to do precisely that; to reclaim the lost community of the past as an antidote to contemporary social decline (Jones & Evans, 2008). This approach is then "prescribed" to poor neighbourhoods (Taylor, 2004, p.208). The retrieval of a lost community to stave off the moral deterioration of modern society is not a newfound approach (Taylor, 2011). Although idealistic and traditional, the nostalgic yearning for idyllic community life endures today (Warr et al., 2017). The ideals of a romanticised community are still sought after in current social policy (Fine, 2010). Despite the influence of nostalgia, this leads to a search for an imagined, lost community (Boym, 2007).

The nostalgic construction of community has continued through successive governments, more recently through notions such as 'Big Society' and localism. These ideas themselves are influenced by fictional concepts of the romanticised, rural village community (Tait & Inch, 2016). As previously asserted, nostalgia is common within political narratives, as is the concept of seeking to restore "lost values" through policy (Gaston & Hilhorst, 2018, p.31). 'Community' is a concept often presented in sentimental and positive terms, despite its multifaceted and rich truths, never "unfavourably" (Williams, 1985, p.76). Such an overly optimistic application of community within policy can fail to appreciate its capacity to encapsulate tension and exclusion as much as cohesion and support (Taylor, 2004).

Homogeneous interpretations of community have evolved into an accepted policy response to the decline commonly associated with social housing (Tyler, 2013). Sentimental representations of a past community are not reflective of either the realities of community or contemporary society's lived experiences (Taylor, 2011). Nostalgia can be mobilised as a political tool for responding to social decline (Davis, 1977; Hatherley, 2016). Arguably this is an attempt to reclaim values from a lost past (Gaston & Hilhorst, 2018). This is not the only barrier to the efficacy of community utilised within policy; it is also frequently imbued with values and traditions from specific viewpoints, namely the middle-class (Rogaly & Taylor, 2009). This then frames and utilises community from a dominant and elitist

perspective (Alleyne, 2002), which is then imposed *upon*, rather than *with*, poor and deprived neighbourhoods (Taylor, 2004).

Nostalgic constructions of community have been utilised, discussed, and applied so consistently over a sustained period that it has become "doxa" in policy application and research (Alleyne, 2002, p.607). Therefore, prompting a need to explore and examine the concept from different perspectives. The harmful elements of community are primarily overlooked in policy applications in favour of a "communitarian heaven" (Taylor, 2004, p. 206). The complex and contradictory nature of 'community' has been largely ignored, primarily due to the "ideological dominance of neoliberalism" (Warr et al., 2017, p.162).

Historically 'Old' Labour policy encouraged strong communities within social housing estates and sought to enable support systems among residents. However, neoliberal approaches viewed these communities as closed and inward-looking, which only served to enforce entrenched poverty (Cole & Goodchild, 2000). Policy began from the early 2000s onwards to rebuild social networks within 'deprived' areas. Such approaches were based on the notion that deficits in social capital originate in poverty (Everingham, 2003). Policy responses were built on the belief that community within low-income neighbourhoods is defective. Thus, more effective types of 'community'' are then employed to address this perceived deficit to improve social mobility (Warr et al., 2017).

The influence of Antony Gidden's work 'The Third Way' can be found in New Labours' policy responses to social exclusion and mobility (McKenzie, 2017). Additionally, the application of Robert Putnam's theory of social capital can be seen in New Labour community policy (Lees, 2003). This new 'third way' was designed to propagate the concept of community self-help, that social networks and capital can be utilised to improve personal opportunities and prospects (McKenzie, 2017). The allure of the transformational possibilities of 'community' has resulted in close links between Putnam's theory and UK neighbourhood renewal policy (Flint & Kearns, 2006). It is assumed that social exclusion and

disadvantage within working-class areas are further exacerbated by limited and inward-facing social networks (Atkinson & Kintrea, 2000).

Despite its popularity in policy formation and political discussion, social capital, particularly Putnam's theory, has been widely critiqued and disputed (Fine, 2001; Fine, 2010; Taylor, 2011; Warr, 2005;). It is argued that the application of social capital theory in British politics, rather than the theory itself, prompts critique (Ferragina & Arriigoni, 2017). The social capital utilised in policy has become ambiguous in its definition and application (Forrest & Kearns, 1999). This application had resulted in a diluted and insubstantial version of social capital (Fine, 2010). Despite attempts through both the 'Third Way' and 'Big Society' to harness social capital to foster civic responsibility, Big Society's decline represents the decrease of social capital dialogue in British politics (Ferragina & Arriigoni, 2017).

The neoliberal view of community and social capital presents an individualised view of responsibility and citizenship, placing little weight on structural causes of socio-economic issues (Cochrane, 2003). Community becomes a catch-all phrase, used freely, and uninhibited as a "substitute for society" (Levitas, 2000, p.192). To address the lack of the 'correct type' of social capital in working-class areas, the 'correct' type of community can be deployed; the collective community is therefore presented as a solution (Cochrane, 2003). The over-focus on individualism through neoliberal policy has ignored the evidence that such approaches have contributed to inequality (Rogowski, 2018). Therefore, it is essential to consider who benefits from neoliberalism and the disparity that it produces (Tyler, 2015). Neoliberalism attributes blame to working-class groups, framing social exclusion as an individual deficit in capital instead of acknowledging the impact of structural inequalities (McKenzie, 2017).

It is also suggested that other viable policy options have been dismissed in favour of individualistic solutions to social mobility (Amin, 2005). As explored in the previous chapter, social networks and capital within social housing neighbourhoods, are more complex than the dichotomous presentation utilised in policy (Matthews & Besemer, 2015). Research also reflects the benefits of the

supportive nature of strong bonds within working-class neighbourhoods (Aldrich & Meyer, 2015; Cole & Goodchild, 2000; MacDonald et al., 2005). This is particularly evident in terms of support networks in working-class communities (Crisp, 2013). This is in addition to discovering more pragmatic and surface-level ties that can form in contemporary working-class communities (Corcoran, 2008; Sherlock, 2002). Furthermore, the social capital often referred to within social policy neglects to appreciate its capacity to exclude and oppress (Taylor, 2004). Thus, much evidence suggests that community policy based on social capital has failed to appreciate the lived experience (Crisp, 2013).

Despite attempts to improve social capital and mobility, scant research demonstrates that different types of residents engage socially (Bridge & Butler, 2011). By extension, there is insufficient research to demonstrate that bridging social capital improves social mobility (Atkinson & Kintrea, 2000; Cole & Goodchild, 2000). Previous inquiry has indicated that attempts to advance housing conditions have "failed to sustainably alter the geography of poverty" (Orford et al., 2002, p.34). Arguably both policy and research have been unable to fully define what makes a community stable; therefore, future enquiry should seek to involve residents in this process (Newton et al., 2012). Consequently, my research is conducted from a resident standpoint.

This research proposes that localised housing management has a more significant role in ensuring social engagement and cohesion. This could be achieved by providing social spaces that enable and encourage interaction (Fincher & Iveson, 2008). Arguably social landlords have both a duty and an opportunity to balance a resident's housing need against their potential contribution to the community (McDermont, 2004). However, attempts to create 'mixed' and 'balanced' communities can be viewed as a policy vehicle facilitating social engineering (Bolt et al., 2008). This appears to be increasingly so within the Estate Regeneration projects in London, which have resulted in the large-scale demolition of social housing estates and displacement of residents (Minton, 2018).

Therefore, in summary, much of the application of community has been prescribed as a solution for social housing neighbourhoods. However, this appears to have been done without appreciating broader socio-political concerns or the resident perspective. Consequently, my research seeks to contribute to the debate regarding policy applications in community. I will achieve this by delivering a critical narrative of community in social housing that considers both the resident standpoint and broader structural issues.

An additional critique of sustainable community policy is that it relies upon the neoliberal concept of the active citizen, with the ultimate aim of promoting homeownership (Raco, 2005). Despite this critique, urban renewal, regeneration, and housing re-development are regularly employed to revitalise low-income communities (Flint & Kearns, 2006). Therefore, I will now explore the role of the 'active citizen' within policy applications of 'community' and how this relates to themes of responsibility and individualism.

4.5 Community, responsible citizens, and localism

"*Anti-social tenants and their anti-social landlords can make life hell for their community. Families have a right to be housed. But they have no right to terrorise those around them.*"
(Tony Blair, 2002, para .26.)

An evaluation of community must be located within the context of the broader social processes in which it operates (Touraine & Macey, 2000). There is little evidence that policy applications of community have fully considered more general socio-economic issues (Muntaner et al., 2002; Wakefield & Poland, 2005). The decline of community and loss of social capital is often attributed to individual and cultural issues, although they can also be traced back to wider social and economic factors (Gilchrist, 2007). A social exclusion approach adopts a broader recognition of contextual and structural influences associated with poverty (Cole & Goodchild, 2000). However, policy has shifted from a social exclusion perspective to a more localised approach; therefore, "the social has come to be redefined as community" (Amin, 2005, p.612).

Effective social exclusion policy should place poverty into context to help both understand and tackle broader issues (Warr et al., 2017). It is argued that neoliberal applications of community have put more focus on individual responsibilities. A key element of neoliberal community policy is "active citizenship." (Raco, 2005, p.325). This is when responsible residents are directly involved in the "long term stewardship of their community" (IBID). Here neoliberal policy utilises community to regulate the individual through collective responsibility (Wallace, 2016). The neighbourhood becomes where this collective responsibility can be realised through mutual values and norms (Amin, 2002). This approach is also arguably designed to decrease dependency on state intervention and support (Raco, 2005).

Issues of responsibility and citizenship are also reflected in community policy designed to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour (Flint & Nixon, 2005). The 2006 'Respect Action Plan' embodied this, concentrating on respect and civility to tackle bad behaviour (Wallace, 2016, p.28). By focussing on individuals' morals, values, and behaviours, community can be separated into; active citizens who uphold those values and individuals who disobey them (Wallace, 2016). Social housing residents are often framed as those who "act outside these collective values," evidenced by the rise of policy to tackle anti-social tenants (Cheshire & Buglar, 2016). Such policy led to both the "problematization" and "criminalisation" of anti-social behaviour (Squires, 2006, p.144). Social housing residents are presented as the counterparts to the active citizen; irresponsible, reckless, and part of the "underclass" referred to in Tony Blair's Aylesbury speech (Blair, 1997 para. 7).

Adopting an 'underclass 'approach to tackling socio-economic decline shifts the responsibility onto the individual and utilises the community to govern (Cole & Goodchild, 2000). This community application employs specific norms and values designed to propagate and maintain elitist positions of power (Somerville, 2005). In this context, it is contended that policy applications of community are a means of "re-socialising the poor" (Gillies & Edwards, 2006, p.43). Community in this manner becomes based primarily on middle-class values (Rogaly & Taylor, 2009).

Such values continued under the localism agenda, promoting communities of "sameness" (Gedalof, 2018, p.117). Judgements are made about the moral condition of specific neighbourhoods and their capacity to regenerate and regulate themselves against particular ethical codes (Amin, 2005).

Several critics of neoliberal applications of community contend that active citizenship aims to reduce dependency on state intervention (Raco, 2005, p.327). Community policy can be viewed as part of a neoliberal rollback of the state that began in the 1970s, particularly concerning social housing (Dodson, 2006). The 'active' in active citizenship refers to being economically active (Raco, 2005). Consequently, those in housing need and those who reside in social housing are depicted as less capable and less active citizens due to their economic status. Accordingly, social housing neighbourhoods assume accountability and blame for their communities' socio-economic decline. This, therefore, places; "an enormous responsibility on those considered to be excluded to resolve their own problems" (Cameron, 2006, p.397).

4.6 Meta-narratives of community in social policy

As I introduced in the first chapter, community and social housing meta-narratives have profoundly influenced policy and practice directed at social housing residents. Before exploring meta-narratives of and about social housing communities, I will examine how I seek to understand and use this term.

Social housing communities' representation has become static, unchallenged, and entrenched (Slater, 2018). These meta-narratives have enabled stereotypical depictions of the social housing resident to become accepted as truth (Kearns et al., 2013). As I have already established, the 'community' presented in social policy has also become fixed and unopposed, evolving into its own meta-narrative (Flint & Kearns, 2006; Tonkiss, 2005). The combination of these two powerful and political meta-narratives has inflicted "social and structural harm" through neoliberal social policy (White, 2017, p.13).

Excluded groups such as social housing residents are overlooked, dismissed, and blamed; therefore, facing a significant challenge to be heard over neoliberal meta-narratives (Hall, 2011). The lack of resident narratives is a primary basis for this research, so this section seeks to explore the meta-narratives of social housing communities in more depth. A consideration of how these narratives are utilised within social policy will be conducted alongside an exploration of the impact this has on residents. This will help determine the need for research such as my own and what it seeks to achieve through the presentation of resident narratives.

Neoliberal applications of 'community have sought to transfer power, and ultimately the responsibility, from the state to enable; "self-governing communities" (Wallace, 2016, p.25). The autonomy of individuals to take responsibility for their own lives, which sees a shift from government to governance, can be defined by Foucault's theory of 'governmentality' (Somerville, 2005, p.118). Community groups, individuals, and volunteers are given far more responsibility to assist in the governance of local areas; through the vehicle of 'community' (Herbert, 2005). The measure of the success of such approaches is based upon the positive connotations of what 'community' entails. This was the hallmark of New Labours 'third way,' which sought to balance social inclusion, efficiency, and 'community' (Wallace, 2016).

Through responsible citizenship and community applications, the roll-back of the state continued into the Coalition government with the promise to utilise localism to fix "Broken Britain" (Crossley, 2017, p.22). 'Big Society' was seen as the ideal antidote to Labour's "big government" approach, further decentralising state involvement (Tait & Inch, 2016, p.175). "Big Government" was designed to replace collective, individual responsibility, and civic duty (Findlay-King et al., 2018, p.158). 'Big Society' and 'Localism,' whilst presented as returning power to neighbourhoods, have been critiqued as political camouflage for several cuts to services (Tait & Inch, 2016). Research suggests that volunteers do not have the capacity or the resources to adequately fill the gaps left by austerity measures (Findlay-King et al., 2018). Therefore, revealing the diversion of risk to government through devolvement of responsibility (Gibson, 2015). It is suggested that there is

a clear role for voluntary organisations within communities, but this should be to supplement services rather than replace them (Segalov, 2019).

Critics of neoliberalism have suggested that the roll-back of state services and intervention is neither an economic necessity nor the empowerment of citizens. It is contended that this is part of a wider agenda that justifies attacks on the working-class, therefore maintaining the power of the ruling classes (Radice, 2002). I argue that meta-narratives of community and social housing have been used as part of this agenda to enable policy to reduce and undermine social housing in the UK (Heslop & Ormerod, 2020). The attempts at depoliticisation through concepts such as Big Society reveal the political capital in the application of 'community' within social policy (Gibson, 2015). This has arguably continued through austerity policies that have targeted neoliberal approaches toward working-class areas, waging "devastation" (MacLeod & Jones, 2018, p.111).

Within this chapter, I have demonstrated that the application and use of 'community' in social policy fails to; appreciate the complexity of the concept (Taylor, 2004). Furthermore, policy has become distanced from the lived experience of the neighbourhoods it seeks to regenerate (Crisp, 2013). The dominance of neoliberal constructions of community in policy has led to the complicated and paradoxical elements of the concept being overlooked (Warr et al., 2017). This is partly due to the lack of involvement with residents, often the targets of neighbourhood-based policy (Glucksberg, 2014). This has enabled policy to employ narrow constructions of community created from particular ideological viewpoints and specific morals (Amin, 2005). Thus, resulting in the rejection and dismissal of difference within community policy (Gedalof, 2018).

I support the notion that both policy and research have acknowledged 'community' as uncontested, resulting in a lack of examination and critique of the concept (Alleyne, 2002). Currently, it is argued that policy only accepts and validates communities of "sameness" (Gedalof, 2018, P.169). Therefore, research should challenge and examine the narratives employed within social policy to determine

their efficacy in tackling social change (Allen, 2009). Similarly, the social housing estate narratives have also become 'doxa;' the sink estate has become the accepted depiction of the contemporary social housing neighbourhood (Slater, 2018). The entrenched images and narratives of the sink estate have created an "agnotology" of knowledge and perception of social housing (Slater, 2018, p.879). The British social housing estate has become a focus for a morbid fascination, but not one that permeates through the lurid to warrant genuine investigation and understanding (Cuming, 2013). Representations of social housing communities are overwhelmingly sensationalist and often inaccurate (Kearns et al., 2013).

Consequently, depicting residents through damming, class caricatures (Wray, 2006). Portrayals of the 'chav' (Jones, 2012) and similar representations of the working-class have presented certain sections of society as both culturally and morally inferior (Lawler, 2005; Skeggs, 2005). These narratives have given way to a new class-based prejudice that demonises and excludes social housing residents (Valentine & Harris, 2014).

Within the last section, I seek to discuss the consequences of the stigma arising from the meta-narratives of community and social housing, both upon social housing communities themselves and society as a whole.

4.7 The territorial stigmatisation of the social housing community

Within the final sections of this chapter, I have drawn on work relating to territorial stigmatisation (Crossely, 2017; Sibley, 2002), meta-narratives[16] (Bamberg 2004; Bamberg & Andrews, 2004) and agnotology (Alleyne 2002, Slater 2018). The aim of this section is to demonstrate the symbolic violence committed against the social housing estate that has sought to demonise residents (McKenzie, 2015; Tyler, 2013) and radically alter the landscape of British social housing (Crossley, 2017; Mooney, 2011; Slater, 2018).

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[16] *I understand meta or master narratives to be those that tell a wider story or plot and primarily uphold dominant and hegemonous values and ideals (Bamberg, 2004).*

In contrast to the idealised community, the sink estate meta-narrative plays into concerns about the decline in contemporary society that creates a "moral panic" (McKenzie, 2012, p.467). I argue here that the social housing resident has become a modern "folk devil" as described by Stanley Cohen:

> "A condition, episode, person or group or persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests; its nature is presented in a stylized and stereotypical fashion by the mass media."
> (Cohen, 2002, p.46)

I will now progress to understanding how meta-narratives of community have been utilised to shift the responsibility of socio-economic decline onto individual neighbourhoods. The stereotypes and caricatures of social housing have enabled residents to be "vandalised by the media" (Power & Tunstall, 1995, p.62). Sensationalist depictions of the social housing resident play into undercurrents of disgust and shame (Tyler, 2013). The emotional aversion to the sink estate is connected to the fear and othering of difference (Sibley, 2002). The sink estate is discussed and portrayed through disembodied, othered narratives (McKenzie, 2015). Sink estates are framed as a social problem separate from normalised society, affecting leaving residents (Carr & Cowan, 2015, p.81).

Neo-liberalism has "weaponised" stigmatising meta-narratives to foster acceptance of policy that seeks to both blame and "punish" the vulnerable (Scambler, 2018, p.777). The dominance of the meta-narrative enables it to become "normalised" and "naturalised" (Bamberg, 2004, p.86). Therefore, evidencing how sink estate narratives go unchallenged, despite counter truths about social housing (Robinson, 2013). Once the social housing estate is successfully othered and separated from the mainstream, it enables the social housing resident to be depicted as the cause of their own decline;

> "In short, as is so often the case in our society; the victims had been cast as the culprits" (Marshall, 1992, p.136)

There has been minimal opportunity for residents to discuss the impact of the residualisation that has impacted their communities (Jones et al., 2012). It is contended that this is partly to maintain and protect the dominant and ruling classes (Somerville, 2005). The meta-narrative; "constrains and delineates the agency of subjects" through the use of prevailing and hegemonic ideologies (Bamberg, 2004, p.360)[17]. The limited power and resources afforded to the social housing resident mean they cannot counter or challenge the meta-narratives about them, demonstrating the "dominant and powerful" nature of the meta-narrative (Bamberg, 2004, p.361).

The absence of the resident voice within dialogues about social housing communities has enabled stigmatising narratives' emergence and eventual dominance (McKenzie, 2017). It is argued that class-based power structures have been used to exclude the narratives and voices of social housing residents that may have presented a challenge to neoliberal policy (Glucksberg, 2014). This has permitted policy success that has effectively blamed working-class communities for declining (Tyler, 2015). It is contended that recent welfare reform and community policy can be viewed as a form of "class revenge" on the working-class (Smith, 2009, p.3). Furthermore, it is argued that both the British media and government have become increasingly elitist, detached from the general public amidst growing inequality in the UK (Dorling, 2015).

Othering enables a distance between particular social groups and the rest of society by making value judgements about their lifestyles (Valentine & Harris, 2014). Earlier discussions have evidenced the utilisation of value judgements and morality in dialogue about working-class communities (Cheshire & Buglar, 2016; Taylor, 2004; Tonkiss, 2005). The process of othering is not simply the exclusion of certain groups but results in a de-socialisation of values such as compassion, understanding and care (Valentine & Harris, 2014). This further evidences the point made in the previous section about the political currency drawn from neoliberal narratives of working-class communities.

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[17] *It is noted that the meta-narrative may not always uphold dominant and hegemonic ideas, (Bamberg, 2004) but in the case of the social housing 'community' I argue that they do.*

Stigmatising narratives have enabled social class to be "emotionally mediated" (Tyler, 2008, p.2) through emotions such as disgust and shame. Kearns et al. (2013) argue that stigma is not something that involves the social housing residents; it is something that they fall prey to. Class is a "loaded moral signifier" (Savage et al., 2001, p.889); the stigmatisation of the working-class leads to a dis-identification, a desire to be seen and feel respectable (Reay, 1998). Therefore, not only have the stigmatising narratives of working-class communities framed them as a 'problem' to be solved but has tainted the association with working-class status and places (McKenzie, 2017; Skeggs, 1997). Again, this returns to the power of the meta-narrative to de-value particular groups or places to enable elitist power structures to be reinforced (Somerville, 2005).

As previously discussed in terms of neoliberal policy applications of social capital and community, policy has become separated from the broader socio-economic factors contributing to continued poverty and inequality (McKenzie, 2017). It is argued that this is due to the structures of power and influence that meta-narratives are connected to (Riessman, 2008). Within this chapter, I have demonstrated the connections between social class, stigma and structures of power. Through a discussion of this connections, I have evidence how political currency can be enabled through meta-narratives of social housing residents. Additionally, I have demonstrated the significant lack of the resident narrative in a wide range of dialogues and policies and the consequences. Therefore, my research will incorporate and hear the resident voice by creating a critical counter-narrative from a resident standpoint.

The following chapter will now outline my epistemology and analytical approach. I will establish a case for the use of a thematic, narrative approach through standpoint methodology.

Chapter 5 – Methodology

5.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines my epistemological position and examines how and why I seek to understand community through an interpretive approach. I will introduce my methodology as a thematic, narrative approach and explore how this relates to my research. The chapter then continues with a discussion of narrative ways of 'knowing' and an examination of how this applies to my research focus. I then progress to presenting my methods and reviewing my sampling process and ethical considerations. The chapter closes with a reflexive exploration of how I locate both my position and 'self' within the research.

My research adopts a qualitative, interpretivist approach, and I have collected my data through semi-structured interviews. These interviews are treated as resident narratives analysed through a thematic narrative approach. My research presents a co-constructed narrative that is an interpretation of resident narratives alongside relevant theory and contextual information. My findings are also presented as a counter-narrative from a resident standpoint. This is to offer alternate truths to those found within dominant meta-narratives of and about social housing communities.

5.2 My Epistemological Position

I contended that community is a complex and personal concept within my literature review. My worldview fits others (Ahmed, 2015; Etherington, 2011; Riessman, 2008) who posit that life is an individual and subjective experience that cannot be reduced into a single 'truth'. I recognise that there may be multiple truths, but these are constructed or co-constructed in numerous ways (Skeggs, 1997). The research has consequently engaged a qualitative approach to enable a subjective exploration of the lived experience of community (Silverman, 2010). I chose to adopt an interpretivist approach to facilitate exploring and discussing the lived experience (Personal Narratives Group, 1989a).

Although my position is primarily interpretivist, I acknowledge that it has post-modernist and feminist influences. These influences stem from my aims to understand power issues and explore fresh perspectives of society and self (Denzin et al., 2004). Furthermore, I recognise the role of power and autonomy upon the resident voice, which I contend is marginalised and stigmatised. I identify with standpoint feminism and seek to use my research to derive "critical insight" from the hearing of oppressed voices (Harding, 2004a, p.9). Hence, I attempt to use my research as a means for residents to speak their subjective truths (Personal Narratives Group, 1989c). Although I do not identify as wholly post-modernist, I present my position as located between interpretivist and postmodern on the epistemological continuum but positioned closer to interpretivism. Having introduced my epistemological position, I will now expand upon how I relate it to my theoretical approach.

5.3 Relating my theoretical approach to my epistemology

I have adopted a thematic, narrative approach to understanding the resident experience of community from an interpretivist position. My interpretation of narrative, and the one I apply within the context of my research, is taken from an explanation by Catherine Kohler Riessman;

> *"The term narrative in the human sciences can refer to text at several levels that overlap: stories told by research participants (which are themselves interpretative); interpretive accounts developed by an investigator based on interviews."*
> (Riessman, 2008, p.6)

I contend that reality is a social construct, and each person experiences and interprets life in their way, through their own beliefs and values (Etherington, 2011). My research approach contends that knowledge is "socially situated" (Harding, 2004a, p.7). Thus, life is reconciled through our conditions, experiences, and language and the interpretative nature of life is interwoven through this (Brockmeier & Meretoja, 2014). Furthermore, I see the resident narratives within

my research as interpretative in nature. Consequently, my own construction and presentation of those narratives are, by extension, also an interpretation. I contend that through interpretation, reinterpretation, and reflection, meaning can be elicited from narratives (Bamberg, 2012).

Therefore, I am interested in exploring the re-telling and, consequently, the re-creation of the lived experience through narratives (Polkinghorne, 1995). I adopted a narrative approach to enable the research to "hear" how residents experience community (Etherington, 2011, p.13). As a researcher, this concept of 'hearing' allows me to explore the meaning residents attribute to community by unpacking their values, beliefs, and identity. The overall narrative is not intended to represent all resident narratives, as they are multi-fold. However, the narrative is presented to draw knowledge and insight from the residents' standpoint, using their perspectives to illuminate broader social structures (Harding, 2004a). The research adopts a similar approach to naturalistic inquiry as observing and interpreting a particular group of people within a specific context (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

I have previously stated that I recognise the post-modernist and feminist influences on my research and approach. These elements underpin my aim to challenge and critique policy constructions and applications of 'community' through the creation of counter-narratives (Etherington, 2011). I recognise the role of power and autonomy within narratives, particularly for marginalised and minority groups (Personal Narratives Group, 1989c). I acknowledge the importance and significance of the re-construction, deconstruction, and challenge of accepted narratives (Riessman, 2008). Drawing on standpoint theory and methodology, my research critiques marginalised voices' "systematic ignorance." It presents narratives from oppressed groups to further our understanding of social life (Harding, 2004a, p.5). Therefore, I have constructed counter-narratives from everyday lived experiences as a means of "doing being critical" (Bamberg, 2004, p.361). My research does this by presenting and exploring alternative truths (Personal Narratives Group, 1989c). I will discuss how my approach relates to counter and master narratives later in this chapter.

Now that I have outlined my epistemological position and how this relates to my approach, the next section will introduce my methodology. Then the chapter continues to explore narrative and narrative analysis in more detail.

5.4 Qualitative research methodologies

> *"Understanding, then, has a special status in qualitative research since it refers both to the conditions of knowledge and the outcome of the process."*
> (Aspers & Corte, 2019, p.153)

A researcher must seek out and employ the most appropriate and suitable methods for their research, not simply opt for what is familiar or uncomplicated (Silverman, 2010). Qualitative approaches enable a deeper understanding of human life, delving into the 'why' of the social world (Polkinghorne, 2005). I contend that qualitative methodology focuses on the voice and experience of the research participant and enables a more subjective exploration of human behaviour (Silverman, 2010). Furthermore, qualitative research is well placed to deliver collaborative critical inquiry with marginalised groups; to further understand social change and injustice (Fraser & Taylor, 2020). As my research seeks to explore and provide a conduit for the resident voice, a qualitative approach is the most suitable for achieving my research aims. I intend to qualify this claim in the following section.

Qualitative methods are often the alternative in research, the less precise substitute to quantitative approaches (Sandelowski, 2008). I suggest it is unhelpful to set qualitative and quantitative methods against each other. This dichotomous view can undermine the worth and value of qualitative methods and their appropriateness for research topics (O'Connor & Netting, 2005). Discussing research approaches through a bipartisan perspective reduces them to a binary concept. Furthermore, it is argued that qualitative research should not be judged on the same criteria as quantitative research but on its own terms (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Qualitative research is underestimated for its strength and applicability for exploring human experience (Sandelowski, 2008). Qualitative methods have received a high degree of critique on the grounds of objectivity, primarily because "value-free objectivity" has been presented as the foundation of "good research" (Harding, 2015, p. 1). However, the context in which research is conducted does, and should, have a bearing on the knowledge that is derived from it (Haraway, 1988). It is highly improbable for any knowledge not to have a broader socio-political context; thus, all research is value-laden (Harding, 2004a). Therefore, I suggest that the traditional views of objectivity dismiss essential knowledge, in the name of rigour and replicability (Harding, 2004b). Consequently, I suggest that the strengths of a qualitative approach lie in its subjective ability to explore the complexity and richness of the lived experience, which I will examine briefly.

Qualitative research helps expand theory and develop a fuller understanding of social phenomena (O'Connor & Netting, 2005). Utilising this approach, theory can evolve from research; rather than dictating it (Bryman, 2008). However, knowledge does not simply occur and "exist independently;" it is explored and interpreted through inquiry (May, 2001, p.30). There is a human desire to seek out familiarity and comfort; even in the pursuit of knowledge, as we; "desire for everything to be the same" (Silverman, 2013, p.18). Consequently, qualitative research should incorporate critical thinking to challenge what is accepted as 'known' and understand why this is so (Alleyne, 2002). Hence "one –dimensional approaches to research" cannot, and will not, help us explain and understand society and life (May, 2001, p.31). Here a qualitative approach can help explore the complexity of everyday life (Personal Narrative Group, 1989c).

Qualitative methodology permits the researcher to be "close" to the research subject, which furthers understanding through richer data (Aspers & Cortes, 2019, p.139). This more in-depth data then assists the researcher in exploring complex issues, placing them within wider political and social contexts (Fraser & Taylor, 2020). The length of time spent with the participants and the researcher allowed me to gather richer data to give credibility to my approach through the "prolonged engagement" with the participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 301). My research

does not seek to present replicable or wholly representative results but rather to "develop a theoretical argument" (Riessman, 2008, p.55). However, this does not mean that the research is without any transferability and the critical narrative approach provides contextual data for other research to make comparisons against (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this vein, qualitative research has had a significant impact, both in a political and historical sense (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

A thematic, qualitative approach such as my own may receive critique on the assumption that it presents descriptive and, therefore, lower quality data (Braun & Clark, 2020). However, I use qualitative research not to simply identify patterns of themes in the data but to create a critical paradigm through interpretation (Aspers & Corte, 2019). Here I draw on critical approaches that use qualitative research to examine social change in political settings and to challenge those wider contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Fraser & Taylor, 2020). A standpoint perspective highlights qualitative research from the viewpoint of the oppressed; here in my study, the social housing resident provides "critical insight" (Harding, 2004a, p.7). Hearing marginalised voices can help critique social injustices (Fraser & Taylor, 2020). However, it is not only the marginalised viewpoint that qualitative research can offer but also insight into other groups and broader social and power structures (Harding, 2004a). As meta-narratives remain "ignorant" of life from specific perspectives, thus, without critical qualitative research, social life is not fully understood (Harding, 2004a, p.3).

Using past theory and my research, it is apparent that there is much to be learned from exploring everyday life (Silverman, 2013). My research explores everyday life to examine; community, social change, and social housing. In this instance, a qualitative, interpretivist approach is appropriate for generating a deeper understanding of a community undergoing change. Qualitative methods help researchers find the "remarkable in the mundane world" (Silverman, 2013, p.4), enabling the appreciation of the complexity and depth of the lived experience.

Many communities such as the estate at the focus of the research are often examined through statistical and quantitative data alone. Sources such as the

Multiple Indices of Deprivation may yield a wide range of valuable data that assists in understanding social change. However, an over-reliance on a singular data source can create an 'ecological fallacy' (Fieldhouse & Tye,1996). This fallacy leads to broad assumptions derived from one generalised type of information, which I contend can be limiting. Therefore, this study seeks to gather a deeper level of data on a much more localised scale; to draw out a richer understanding of one community undergoing social change. However, the research has drawn upon sources that can provide "contextual validation" about broader socio-economic issues relevant to the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.305). As previously referenced in earlier chapters, crime data, Indices of Deprivation data and planning documentation have been used to position the research and triangulate my interpretations against contextual information.

A qualitative approach is employed within my research to enable the researcher to generate knowledge about the lived experience of broader social phenomena (Ahmed 2015). This approach then positions social change into "everyday life" by interpreting that life (Riessman, 2008, p.59). Similarly, a critical, qualitative approach adopted using standpoint methodology facilitates understanding social change through a resident perspective. Furthermore, this enables my research to provide its own "critical insight" about wider socio-political issues (Harding, 2004a, p.7).

As my research includes narratives both as the subject of the study and within my analysis, it is vital to explore the concept. Furthermore, it is crucial to examine narrative 'knowing' and how I interpret the narrative in terms of my research. Hence, I will expand upon narrative in the next section.

5.5 Defining narrative

> *"Human beings are storytellers, and human lives are stories to be told."*
> (McAdams, 2008, p. 243).

'Narrative' is a concept that can be interpreted in multiple ways, often used interchangeably with "story" (Riessman, 2008, p.3). Storytelling is arguably an essential and enduring part of human life, dating from 1500 BC (Bamberg, 2012, p.82.). The universal appeal and widespread use of stories highlight the human "impulse to narrate" (White, 1980, p.5). It is important to distinguish between story and narrative, which I explore further below. However, telling stories is a means for humans to make sense of life, to construct meaning and understanding, as a form of "telos" (Riessman, 2008, p.55). Stories and storytelling can take varying forms; with the narrative playing a significant role in human life and society;

> *"…it is present at all times, in all places, in all societies; indeed, narrative starts with the very history of mankind."*
> (Barthes & Duisit, 1975, p.237).

I recognise stories as a vital instrument in gathering and sharing knowledge, and a means through which we can make sense of life (Sandelowski, 1991). Stories can be employed to understand and explore the lived experience, both within academic research and literature (Savin-Baden & Niekerk, 2007). Storytelling can be an essential form of expression related to the construction of identity and 'self' (Blokland, 2004).

However, I contend that narrative goes beyond simply telling stories; it involves exploring what is told, why, when, and how all form part of the narrative (Polkinghorne, 1995; Riessman, 2008). Not all conversations and forms of text will automatically be narrative. The interpretation and organisation of that text help elicit meaning, therefore distinguishing between "story and narrative" (Riessman, 2008, p.6). Narrative analysis may originate from the "storied nature embedded in human experience," but the meaning drawn from that story enables narrative construction (Goodson & Gill, 2011, p.22). This is not as simplistic as it sounds, and the researcher needs to pay "focused attention" to the interpretation and reading of the narrative to ensure a comprehensive understanding (Riesman, 2008).

The origins of contemporary narrative analysis can be traced to studies within the 'Chicago School' (Riessman, 2008). The approach utilised narratives to explore everyday community life (Crow & Allen, 1994). Although biographical accounts, stories, and ethnography were examined and researched before the 1960s, narrative analysis emerged as a distinct approach. The 1980s witnessed significant and notable narrative researchers such as Donald Polkinghorne and Jerome Bruner (Hyvärinen, 2016). Bruner, in particular, drew attention to the narrative to elicit meaning and understanding from life accounts (Bamberg, 2012). During the 1980s, narrative analysis began to develop further and chiefly progressed through feminist research and theory, notably through the Personal Narratives Group (Personal Narratives Group 1986; Riessman, 2008). It has evolved into an emerging research area that increasingly employs narrative and hermeneutic approaches to understand and explore the lived experience. This development has been referred to as the "narrative turn" (Goodson & Gill, 2011, p.17). The 'narrative turn' has seen narrative approaches evolve from the literary sphere into other research areas to draw knowledge and meaning from stories and life accounts (Brockmeier & Meretoja, 2014). This has resulted in a growth of narrative approaches across a wide range of academic disciplines (Riessman, 2008.).

The narrative approach can be described as 'intercultural research' as it draws from and works across various research disciplines and academic fields (Trahar, 2009). Narrative analysis encompasses a broad range of research approaches utilised across different schools of thought. It is influenced by; "phenomenology, hermeneutics, symbolic interactionism, feminists, and cultural criticism" (Sandelowski, 1991, p.161). As a research approach, narrative has developed across varying disciplines to evolve into a rich and diverse means of expression (Brockmeier & Meretoja; 2014; Riessman, 2008). Defining narrative analysis can be problematic due to the range of methods and approaches it can cover; narrative analysis, narrative research, or narrative inquiry (Bamberg, 2012). Further complexity arises from the fact that narrative can also be both the subject of research and the methods utilised within research (Bamberg, 2012). However, to create a helpful description for my study, I use Riessman's (2008) explanation

that; narrative analysis generally relates to a wide range of methods that enable the interpretation of stories or texts.

Narrative analysis surpasses the telling or re-telling of accounts; it is an interpretative exploration of the story's construction and context (Trahar, 2009). A researcher needs to examine who constructs the narrative, why and how, alongside any "cultural discourses" it is situated against (Riessman & Speedy, 2007, p.429). It is arguably important to draw on relevant theoretical and contextual knowledge within a narrative approach, providing a degree of validation for qualitative methods (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Such knowledge can place the narrative into context and enable a critical appraisal of the narrative and the context (Trahar, 2009). An interpretative approach is arguably a central element of narrative analysis. Interpretation, reinterpretation, and contemplation are part of how meaning can be drawn from narratives (Bamberg, 2012). The "interpretive turn" within the approach highlights the progression to a more in-depth understanding and exploration, reflecting a divergence away from positivist methodology in social sciences (Riessman, 2008, p.17). Analysis of the narrative involves a "re-presenting" of the story that needs to reflect the truth of the narrator, to express their experience in all its complexity and "messiness" (Etherington, 2011, p.9). This may also include the challenge and deconstruction of "truth claims" within those narratives and other juxtaposing narratives (Riessman, 2008, p.9).

The complexity and contested nature of narrative do not mean it is an unsuitable means to examine the lived experience. Its interpretative nature is crucial for why it is the most appropriate method for this research. Narrative analysis of lived experience can further assist in an understanding of the culture and identity of people or groups. This can then enable the exploration of values and beliefs connected to that experience (Etherington, 2011). Narrative 'knowing' is developed and constructed by telling our own life stories. The meaning that arises from these stories helps us understand and examine human life and the lived experience (Bruner, 1987). Therefore, narratives are constructions that are "socially situated" (Etherington, 2011, p. 7). This approach can then value the complexity, difference,

and depth of lived experiences (Polkinghorne, 1995). Data gathering and analysis is a process that comes together; the research and the participant are both involved in constructing meaning from the narrative (Etherington, 2011). I adopted this co-constructive approach in my examination of resident narratives of community. I used this to explore the lived experience of community within social housing. I now progress to discussing adopting a narrative approach within the context of my research focus.

5.6 Narrative in the context of my research

> *"How does this individual with whom I am speaking reflect wider social and historical changes that form the context of his or her life? I am convinced that if I can listen carefully enough, there is much to learn from every story that one might gather."*
> (Andrews, 2007, p.491)

I contend that an interpretivist narrative approach assists in generating a deeper exploration of a community undergoing change. A narrative approach can develop an understanding that is "grounded in the particular" and enables the exploration of resident constructions of community (Riessman, 2008, p.11). Individual and personal narratives can provide an insightful and rich examination of everyday life (Personal Narratives Group, 1989c). Individuals can "make sense" of life and change through their own stories or narratives (Riessman, 2008, p.10). In my research context, I am principally interested in how residents make sense of social change through their constructions of community. Here my narrative approach draws on standpoint theory that advocates the value of gaining the perspective of marginalised groups (Harding, 2004). This methodology has much to offer to understand more expansive social systems and change (Smith, 2004). Therefore, narrative can enable the exploration of complex social constructs such as community.

Narrative can uncover meaning about the narrator's identity and belonging (Yuval-Davis, 2006). This has resonance with my research aims, as I explore interpretations of community through belonging. Temporality and the re-telling of

our past can impact the meaning drawn from narratives (Riessman, 2008). Temporal meaning is essential within my research as many residents' recount memories of the estate. Thus, constructing their belonging through the remembrance of place within a different time (May, 2010). Narrators elect to reflect and re-tell stories from specific times and places (Riessman, 2008).

Nonetheless, it is often only in this recounting that we can understand the events and attribute meaning to them (Polkinghorne, 1995). However, both memory and nostalgia can impact both the re-telling of accounts and the meaning attached to them (Trahar, 2009). Consequently, in analysis, it is crucial to understand how the narrative can "revise" and "modify" the past, possibly attributing new meaning or interpretation in the re-telling (Bochner, 2016, p. 203). We can construct a narrative from the past, but it may not be about the past (Trahar, 2009). When narratives are reconstructed from memory, the why, the which, the how and the when are important as these accounts evolve into "re-presentations" of our lives (Etherington, 2011, p.4). The accounts re-told by the narrator have been deemed as significant and are consequently structured with a particular meaning (Riessman, 2008).

Narrative analysis can enable an in-depth exploration of individual lived experiences to further understand broader social issues (Goodson & Gill, 2011). Arguably, constructing more diverse interpretations of narratives can provide a more comprehensive understanding of society (Personal Narratives Group, 1989c). I question "whose lives" have been previously focussed on within research and consequently presented as normative (Personal Narratives Group, 1989c, p.3). Previously "folk history" has been dismissed in research and political dialogue (Harding, 2004a, p.3). However, an insight into power structures can be gained by exploring the lives and stories of oppressed groups (Smith, 2004). In previous chapters, I have demonstrated that negative narratives are how certain groups are othered and controlled (Hill-Collins, 2004). Dominant narratives are separated from those that are different and marginalised;

> *"Androcentric, economically advantaged, racist, Eurocentric, and heterosexist conceptual frameworks ensured systematic ignorance and error about not only the lives of the oppressed, but also about the lives of their oppressor and thus about how nature and social relations in general worked."*
> (Harding, 2004a, p.5).

As I have previously outlined in earlier chapters, I believe that the particular constructions of community that have been applied in both policy and research are created from specific ideologies (Alleyne, 2002). Marginalised narratives have been "blocked" by more dominant cultures and voices (Harding, 2004, p.3). I contend that many social housing residents have not been able to proclaim their stories and that this research is "about letting their voice be heard" (Ross & Green, 2011, p.112). I utilise a narrative approach to enable the "broadcasting" of narratives that would otherwise be omitted or censured within broader socio-political processes or structures (Goodson & Gill, 2011, p.20). Here, my research uses residents' "folk history" to create their own ways of knowing, hearing their truths, and capturing the resident story (Harding, 2004a, p.3). Furthermore, these narratives then reveal knowledge about how life within such structures is experienced. I will return to this later in the chapter, but first, I will introduce my methodology.

5.7 My methodology: A thematic narrative approach

I have adopted a thematic, narrative methodology from a resident standpoint. Within this section, I explore both elements of this approach and present a case for the suitability of a blended methodology. I have been influenced by similar research that has combined narrative and thematic techniques to explore the lived experience (Ross & Green, 2011; Floersch et al., 2010; Shukla et al., 2014). Standpoint theory and methodologies have also inspired the prioritisation of the resident's voice and perspectives (Harding, 2004a; Hill-Collins, 2004). My process is especially guided by the practicalities of a thematic, narrative approach through the work of Catherine Kohler Riessman (2008). There is a recognition of the difficulties of presenting a narrative from a resident standpoint without actually being a resident myself, which is explored further in my reflexivity. This is also why

standpoint theory influences my approach, but I cannot lay claim to fully achieving a standpoint position.

In earlier versions of my analysis, I had adopted a three-stage thematic approach, which involved; In Vivo Coding[18], Pattern Coding and Thematic Analysis (Saldaña, 2010). Upon reflection, the consequence of this approach was a "fragmented" presentation of the resident experience (Riessman, 2008, p.12). Thus, I re-considered my analytical approach and recognised the importance of being able to construct a more cohesive narrative flow for my research. I wanted my research to avoid a method that could "depersonalize and decontextualize the stories from the participant" (Maple & Edwards, 2010, p.35). Consequently, I combine narrative and thematic analysis to establish broad themes across all of my research. This is utilised alongside exploring individual experiences and an interpretation of contextual information.

Thematic analysis is regarded as one of the most conventional approaches to qualitative research (Floersch et al., 2010). It can offer flexibility that enables the researcher to recognise and explore key themes and patterns. This can then provide an overall interpretation of the research (Braun & Clarke, 2006). A researcher can identify broad commonalities and themes that arise across a whole body of research (Shukla et al., 2014). Adopting a thematic approach alone can overlook individual experiences due to its wide-ranging lens (Maple & Edwards, 2010). Although thematic analysis is a methodology in its own right, it can often accompany other approaches (Shukla et al., 2014). Therefore, it is commonly utilised alongside narrative analysis (Riessman, 2008). A blended approach can help create a methodology that can draw on the benefits of the complementary elements of thematic and narrative techniques (Ross & Green, 2011; Floersch et al., 2010; Shukla et al., 2014).

Narrative analysis offers a deeper focus on individual and personal accounts than a thematic approach, thus providing a richer understanding (Braun & Clarke,

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[18] *In-Vivo coding is an inductive coding technique for thematic analysis and is separate from the* Qualitative Data Analysis *Software NVivo*

2006). This form of analysis also enables the researcher to interpret the account by exploring its construction and context (Riessman, 2008). It is common with a narrative approach to interweave theory and literature into the construction of the narrative (Floersch et al., 2010). The researcher can explore the broader socio-cultural background in which the narrative is situated (Ahmed, 2010). Thus, elucidating the; "intersection of biography, history and society" (Riessman, 2002, p.697). This has enabled me to interpret resident narratives alongside contextual information and literature (Etherington, 2011). Although the resident standpoint is a vital influence on the study, I have aimed to "study up" and incorporate what I interpret as the resident's standpoint from their narratives (Harding, 2004a, p.6). This approach facilitates the delivery of a critical paradigm by considering theory and contextual issues (Harding, 2004a). Contextual information assists in triangulating my interpretations of the resident standpoint, which is crucial as I am not a resident myself (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Consequently, by combining thematic and narrative analysis, I can explore the "general and particular" across my research (Shukla et al., 2014, p.12). Such an approach seeks to illuminate sociological concepts and position them in "everyday life" by interpreting lived experiences (Riessman, 2008, p.59). I build upon the existing social theory by exploring and understanding everyday life on a social housing estate. The research constructs a narrative through interpretations of resident accounts. This narrative aims to create new knowledge and "alternative truths" about the resident experience of community (Personal Narratives Group, 1989b p.264).

I selected a thematic narrative approach because the thematic element enables overarching themes to be identified from the residents' lived experiences. The narrative element allows the depth and richness of each resident's story to be explored (Maple & Edwards, 2010). By employing a thematic approach and assuming that all the residents' experiences can be grouped, I could have overlooked essential elements of individual narratives. Hence, I combined both techniques to explore patterns and account for any "variation in meanings for individuals" (Riessman, 2008, p.90). By adopting a thematic narrative approach, I

have enabled interpretation across the whole narrative without fragmenting each resident's story (Riessman, 2008). Therefore, I contend that my approach delivers research that keeps the resident voice intact.

5.8 Constructing a counter-narrative

> *"Personal narratives of non-dominant social groups…are often particularly effective sources of counterhegemonic insight because they expose the viewpoint embedded in dominant ideology as particularist rather than universal and because they reveal the reality of a life that defies or contradicts the rules."*
> (Personal Narratives Group, 1989c, p.7)

In the previous chapter, I outlined evidence regarding the utilisation of stigmatising narratives of social housing communities. These narratives have enabled widespread acceptance of harmful and oppressive policies (Mooney, 2009; Toynbee & Walker, 2015). I recognise that individuals and groups, and governments can construct narratives as a powerful means of representing "preferred" elements of identity (Riesman, 2008, p.7). Narratives are political and connected to power systems and structures (Riessman, 2008). Formalised and traditional structures of knowledge have constrained the exploration of alternative truths (Harding, 2004). Therefore, this has arguably devalued the importance of stories of the lived experience (Harding, 2015; Personal Narratives Group, 1989b).

Narratives can be employed to "argue, justify, persuade, engage, entertain and even mislead an audience" (Riessman, 2008, p.8). I contest that this has been the case within master narratives of social housing (Slater, 2018). The 'sink estate' concept has been used to facilitate the territorial stigmatisation of social housing residents (Wacquant et al., 2014). Positions of power have been utilised to present narratives of social housing that have re-focused blame and are thus misleading (Riessman, 2008). The overall narrative delivered through this research is critical and political, enabling its contribution to knowledge that could inform social change (Harding, 2015; Hodkinson, 2020).

Master narratives in powerful, political contexts can limit individual autonomy (Bamberg, 2004). It can be challenging for those outside of master narratives to articulate their truth, thus reflecting "the dominance and power" of master narratives (Bamberg, 2004, p.361). Therefore, I recognise the power of the counter-narrative to "unmask claims that form the basis of domination" by exploring alternative lived experiences (Personal Narratives Group, 1989c, p.7). I concur that research and researchers should engage in the critical challenge and that countering master narratives should be readily incorporated into our daily lives (Bamberg, 2004). Hence, I have explored residents' lives through their own counter stories. Resident accounts are then combined with my interpretation to present a counter-narrative of social housing. I believe that differing and counter resident narratives can enable a richer and better understanding of the lived experience of social housing.

It is not that I aim to discount narratives that corroborate or align with dominant or master narratives. However, I acknowledge the power and stigma attached to those dominant narratives, thus, highlighting the need to unpack them. The research is influenced by standpoint approaches to critique positions of power and enable the hearing and telling of untold stories from those previously marginalised (Harding, 2004a). I recognise that narratives and life stories' constructed nature can make them "notably unstable" (Bruner, 2004, p.694). Consequently, narratives are pre-disposed and affected by our socio-cultural position (Harding, 2004). I do not seek to present resident narratives as 'truth' nor as a complete representation of the resident experience of community. Instead, they are presented as a careful interpretation of particular types of truth (Personal Narratives Group, 1989b). I argue that the current master narratives of the social housing estate depict only one version of its truth. This singular narrative can mislead society about the lived experience of the social housing resident. I contend that negative narratives have dehumanised and controlled marginalised groups, such as social housing residents (Hill-Collins, 2004). For this very reason, it is vital to explore how and why people use narrative and stories to explain and re-explain their lives. Thus, this enables an understanding of the context in which they are told, despite their

complexity (Bruner, 2004). Consequently, it facilitates an appreciation and examination of "alternative truths" (Personal Narratives Group, 1989b, p.264).

5.9 Methods and Data Collection

This study collected the data through audio-recorded, semi-structured interviews with residents on the estate in question. These interviews were conducted face to face in a place of the residents' choice; on all but one occasion, this was in the residents' own home[19]. I chose to interview residents within a personal setting to enable a more immersive research approach that would yield more detailed and in-depth data (Fraser & Taylor, 2020). Initially, there would be three phases of interviews across the whole research lifespan. The first round occurred with existing residents before the development commenced. A second took place with both existing and new residents shortly after the development was completed. The third and final round was planned for 2019, two years after the development was fully completed. I had difficulty contacting the incoming residents despite making several attempts. Subsequently, none of the incoming residents introduced in the second round responded to my requests for a follow-up interview. I also had several existing residents cancel or postpone their interviews, and then my health deferred any further interviewing[20]. Therefore, I was unable to interview all the residents at this time and planned to return to interviewing in 2020. Unfortunately, the pandemic and my own personal circumstances prevented this from occurring. Only one respondent was interviewed within the third round. Due to the complications of face-to-face interviewing during lockdowns and being faced with clear deadlines, a decision was made to cease interviewing in 2020.

The interviews span five years to allow a biographical approach. This was designed to fully explore the impact of change on the community within a

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[19] *One early interview was conducted in a local café as this is the location the resident chose; I did not actively suggest this or similar locations to other residents as I wanted to ensure a higher degree of privacy and anonymity, so all subsequent interviews were conducted in places that afforded more privacy.*
[20] *I was unwell in 2019 due to a protracted fertility treatment and subsequent pregnancy, my son was then born in lockdown with his own health difficulties. Consequently, I was unable to continue interviewing in 2020.*

neighbourhood. Furthermore, when exploring biographical life experiences and social change, it can be beneficial to construct narratives over time through multiple conversations (Riessman, 2008). It is argued that the trust built over this long-term approach enables researchers to immerse themselves in the subject to provide more naturalistic inquiry and richer data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The qualitative interview is a commonly utilised tool within research to understand and explore everyday life (Kvale, 1996). Conversations are a fundamental way many of us share, discuss, and understand human life and experiences (Fylan, 2005). I approached the semi-structured interview to facilitate meaningful conversations with residents. Interviews, particularly semi-structured ones, are commonly utilised in narrative research as they complement the approach (Riessman, 2008). This interview approach can enable the researcher to provide direction and focus and give the participant flexibility in responding (Edwards & Holland, 2013).

I used an interview guide of prompt questions[21] to remind me of the key topics I wanted to cover in each interview. I used this as a guide in all interviews, rather than a formal structure, to enable a natural flow and explore the resident narratives' paths (Edwards & Holland, 2013). I acknowledge my active part in the interview process. However, my main priority was hearing the resident's voice, so 'I gave up control' to let the residents lead the interview (Riessman, 2008, p.25). I recognised that the nature of qualitative interviews often makes them "difficult and messy" (Gunaratnam, 2003, p.104). I did not seek to "fix" the messiness within my approach; instead, I have acknowledged and valued "the complexity and richness that comes with the mess" (IBID). I also recognised that interviews do not provide "innocent windows into participants' interiors" as they sit within broader socio-cultural contexts (Bamberg, 2004, p.365).

Consequently, I have considered more comprehensive information within my interpretations to help provide a degree of "contextual validation" (Lincoln & Guba,

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1985, p.305). I did not regard the messiness and complexity of interview data as a barrier. Instead, I viewed the potential inconsistencies and contradictions in interviews as part of the process. Consequently, this complexity enables meaning to be drawn from participants' narratives and possibly their own identities (Bamberg, 2004, p.365). I will detail my approach to analysing my interview data later in the chapter.

5.10 Sampling and access

An essential part of any research process, especially in a narrative context, is the researcher's transparency concerning data collection (Trahar, 2009). The chosen location for my research has already been outlined within my research rationale. Furthermore, this was expanded upon in my exploration of community as place in Chapter 2. However, I will briefly summarise the choice here; I was interested in examining resident experiences of community in a social housing setting, specifically in neighbourhoods undergoing change. The estate at the centre of my research was subject to the development of new properties.

Additionally, the estate was situated within a region that has endured much socio-economic change. Consequently, I saw it as a suitable place to conduct my research and examine the impact of macro-level changes. This is mainly because I had witnessed the effects of these changes on a micro level. I was also familiar with the area and had developed a relationship with several residents through my employment. This enabled me to access a suitable sample of potential respondents as a researcher.

I adopted a purposive sampling strategy, particularly in the first round of interviews. The original residents were approached due to my relationship with them as a Community Development Officer. I built upon the trust I had established within that role to enable residents to feel comfortable participating in the research. Community research can require time to develop the confidence to facilitate more frank dialogue (Crow, 2000, p.181). I was able to take the opportunity that I had worked in the community for some time. Therefore, I had built up trust to enable

residents to talk openly, and the longitudinal approach further developed those relationships and trust (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This trust is essential in Rookwood, where I had found a general suspicion or mistrust of agencies that came to work on the estate. There was also an element of convenience to my sample, as I already had access to residents through my work in the local area. However, I utilised my knowledge and purposive sampling to reach out to residents who had the potential to help me explore the concepts being examined within my research (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994).

When approaching incoming residents, I did not have the same level of access or relationship as with existing residents. I had not had time to develop these relationships as I ceased working in that area during the research lifespan. Hence, I initially attempted random sampling by sending out an invitation to participate in the research to every newly built property and several social media posts. I had an established social media page that I used to communicate with residents as part of a Community Development Officer position. I posted on local pages and on my profile on Facebook to inform residents about the study and how they could take part.[22] I encountered difficulties in recruiting new residents for the study at first. I believe this is due to the lack of relationships with new residents and the importance of trust in community research. Therefore, the sampling became a combination of voluntary response and snowball sampling. I relied on my existing networks on the estate; residents who already knew me verified my authenticity and trustworthiness to potential participants. As part of this process, an existing participant created a Facebook post and tagged other residents, she felt might like to participate. I then approached these residents through direct messaging with an invite to take part.[23] I accompanied the social media campaign with a targeted mailshot to all the new properties on the estate with an information sheet and letter explaining my research. Residents came forward both through social media and in response to the letter. [24]

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[22] *Please see Appendix 15 for examples of social media posts used to inform and recruit participants.*
[23] *Please see Appendix 16 for a copy of this message sent via Facebook.*
[24] *Please see Appendix 17 for a copy of the letter and information sheet sent to all incoming/new residents as part of a mailshot.*

Due to the nature of the sampling, some possible limitations should be acknowledged. Although the first sampling round was intended to be purposive, it should be recognised that there was an element of convenience to this approach as these residents were already known to me. This makes it more likely that these residents were community-focused and had a relatively positive relationship with my employer, their social landlord. Furthermore, my position of employment and association with not just the social landlord but other agencies and structures of authority may well have been a reason for some residents not to take part. Also, my ethical approach did not cover the interviewing of people under 18 years of age, so, therefore, it must be noted that the sample does not wholly cover the youth experience of the estate.

A total of ten residents were interviewed over two rounds of interviews; only one resident was interviewed three times. Five existing residents were interviewed before the development started in the first round. In the second round, I returned just as the development was completed. At this time, I re-interviewed three of the five existing residents and four residents now living in the new properties and an additional original resident. One of the original residents withdrew after the first round as they moved away from the estate. A second resident could not participate in the second round due to ill health and had, sadly, passed away by the planned third round. The interviews ranged in length; they were approximately 20-30 minutes in the first round. In later rounds, the length increased and ranged from 30 minutes to 2 hours, mostly around 45-60minutes. All the interviews have been transcribed verbatim; in the first round, I transcribed myself, and in the subsequent rounds, I received support for the interviews to be transcribed professionally[25]. All quotes and excerpts are also presented verbatim to preserve the resident voice. All bar one interview was conducted in the residents' home, no issues arose from this, and as I discussed earlier, I feel that this enabled residents to feel more comfortable.

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[25] *I received support through the Disabled Student Allowance grant for professional transcription following as assessment of my disabilities and needs.*

I struggled to re-establish contact with the incoming residents for the proposed third round, as previously outlined. Then the third round had to be cancelled due to the impact of Covid-19. I refer to the resident's using pseudonyms for anonymity and confidentiality throughout my research. I have provided some background information about each resident in the following table:

Figure One: Resident participant details

Pseudonym	Resident Type	Gender	Length of residence[26]	Total Interviews
Brian	Existing	Male	3 years	1
Mary	Existing	Female	20 years	2
Maggie	Existing	Female	17 years	2
Cliff	Existing	Male	30 years	1
Liz	Existing	Female	30 years	3
Shauna	Existing	Female	11 years	1
Frances	New	Female	4 years	1
Emma	New	Female	2 years	1
Helen	New	Female	3 years	1
Susan	Returning	Female	3 years	1

I do not intend the group of participants to be representative of either Rookwood or social housing overall. As previously stated, the research is a means of exploring macro-level issues on a micro-scale (Crow, 2000). The approach provides "conceptual inferences" rather than wide-scale generalizability in the traditional academic sense (Riessman, 2008, p.13).

When considering saturation, I am aware that the relatively small sample size may be regarded as a study limitation. However, I did not only consider sample size when evaluating my sample and the quality of data collected. I suggest that the concept of saturation is complex and, at times, problematic to apply in qualitative

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[26] *Length of residence at time of first interview.*

research (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Instead, I have found the concept of information power a more suitable means to judge my sample (Malterud et al., 2016). This approach means I reflected upon the depth and richness of the data gathered and how this corresponds to the research scope's aims and limits (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Therefore, I approached saturation when I had gathered the appropriate amount of data instead of the number of participants within the sample.

5.11 Ethical Considerations: Ethics, consent, and confidentiality

I have followed the ethical guidelines of the British Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) as outlined in Silverman (2010, pp 154-178). As part of my ethical approach, I have considered the impact of the research on residents' lives and acted to minimise any negative impact. This has included ensuring all residents understand and provide fully informed consent before proceeding. I also sought to ensure that I could assure all the residents' anonymity and the confidentiality of their details and data throughout the research. Consequently, complete transcriptions of the interviews are not included in the appendices to ensure participant confidentiality.

All residents were provided with an information form and consent form before their interviews. I gave each resident time to read and reflect upon both and verbally explain some of the critical issues they raised. All residents were informed of their ability to stop the interviews and their right to withdraw themselves and their data at any point during the study. All residents were also given a choice to have copies of their transcripts, which some have chosen to do. This process was completed at every interview to ensure ongoing and continued consent.[27]

It is important to consider the impact of the research on the participants' lives, and I recognised that being employed by the residents' landlord could have raised some ethical issues. I acknowledged that through the research, some residents might have divulged details or opinions that they may not have ordinarily revealed

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[27] *A copy of the information sheet and the consent form can be found in Appendices 18 and 19 respectfully.*

to their landlord. I have been mindful of the potential power imbalance between social residents and landlords and the landlord's role in constraining alternative discourses expressed in residents' views (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001). I have previously acknowledged the difficulties residents face in expressing their opinions and voicing their experiences, therefore I implemented measures to protect their anonymity.

It is crucial to question and understand my relationship as a researcher with the resident and their landlord (Skeggs, 1997). I was cautious to ensure resident confidentiality and anonymity and distinguish my role as a researcher as separate, as far as practicable, from my position with their landlord. Therefore, even though some residents stated they were not concerned about remaining anonymous, I have retained the anonymity of all residents throughout the research. I agreed not to disclose any information to the landlord that may place any residents' tenancy at risk unless a serious safeguarding issue was revealed. No safeguarding issues were divulged or discussed, so there was no conflict of interest in disclosing sensitive information to the social landlord.

5.12 Data analysis

> *"Understanding is accomplished when the elements are integrated in an iterative process."*
> (Aspers & Corte, 2019, p.153)

My approach to data analysis has evolved as my own experience developed throughout the research. Additionally, it was essential to find the 'right 'fit' for my own data. As previously stated, I initially employed a structured, line by line coding approach to my analysis. This resulted in fragmented data from which I could not construct a cohesive narrative. I needed to re-think my analytical approach and find a means to explore and present the residents' narratives in a more holistic sense. An approach that enabled meaning to be drawn whilst "preserving its order and depth" (Riessman, 2008, p.74).

Whilst re-designing my approach, I first considered a thematic, structural framework inspired by Anya Ahmed's work on women's migration narratives (Ahmed, 2010; 2015). I was drawn to this approach due to the focus on plot and time in Ahmed's work; the temporal elements corresponded with my research. However, my knowledge of structural analysis and plot typologies was minimal. I outlined that a large amount of research and learning would need to enable such an approach, which was a luxury not afforded within my timescales. Consequently, I had to adopt an appropriate strategy for the data, but it was also a practical option. Thus, I re-evaluated my approach to analysis and elected for a thematic, narrative approach; without a structured coding framework. I researched other studies that have utilised both thematic and narrative analysis. Therefore, I have been influenced by that work when designing my research methods (Floersch et al., 2010; Fraser & Taylor, 2020; Riessman, 2008; Shukla et al., 2014).

As a first-time researcher, the pragmatic element of thematic narrative analysis appealed to me. I recognise the benefits of such an approach and the knowledge and meaning that can be drawn from it (Riessman, 2008). As I have asserted throughout the thesis, I wanted my research to go beyond a resident story and challenge and critique the contexts that the story sits within. Consequently, standpoint methodologies' critical and political aspects have shaped how I approach my analysis and present my data. I have drawn on the work of Sandra Harding, who proposed standpoint feminism not only as a theory but as a methodological approach (Harding, 2004a; Harding 2004b; Harding, 2015). Although standpoint approaches influence me, I am mindful of being aware of my own position and do not assume to place myself within a resident standpoint per se (Skeggs, 1997). My research not only draws out themes from the data but creates knowledge through a critical appraisal of my findings and theory (Fraser & Taylor, 2020). Sandra Harding best summarises the political aspect of my analysis:

> "We need not – indeed, must not – choose between "good politics" and "good science" standpoint theorists argued, for the former can produce the latter."
> (Harding, 2004a, p.6).

I have come to view my approach to analysis as a critical, thematic narrative, similar to that adopted by others exploring marginalised voices (Fraser & Taylor, 2020). The narrative analysis does not simply present themes drawn only from resident voices but also places those themes into context. My analytical approach included juxtaposing my research and relevant theory alongside a critical inquiry into broader socio-political contexts (Harding, 2004a; Fraser & Taylor, 2020).

I began the process by conducting face-to-face interviews in resident homes. This setting was chosen for practical reasons and as the location was central to the subject matter. Also, rather than conduct interviews using technology, I elected for a more "collaborative" approach via face-to-face interviewing to collect more detailed data (Fraser & Taylor, 2020, p,15). It is also why I decided to cease interviewing amidst the complications around the pandemic rather than fall back on technological means.

I began by engaging with the interviews themselves by re-listening to the audio recordings and reading the written transcriptions. From these initial readings, I formed broad, preliminary themes across the data set (Shukla et al., 2014). This helped me to start organising and understanding the interviews and resident experiences. I explored the 'what' of the resident accounts and narratives to construct thematic categories. Within the initial stages of analysis, I examined each participant's narrative to gain a sense of their own unique experiences and their 'story' (Riessman, 2008). In those first phases of analysis, I explored what was said in each interview instead of why or how. This was an important starting point for me, as it is the resident voice and experience that the research recognises and prioritises. This process was to focus on the biography and "self" of each resident (Riessman, 2008, p.58). This is the very core of my research; to hear and understand the resident narrative. I also decided to theme each interview individually and separately rather than treat all the interviews as one piece of data. I did this to avoid the fracturing of data I had previously experienced in my coding approach. I treated each resident interview as its own narrative to keep "the story" of each resident "intact" (Riessman, 2008, p.53).

I then re-visited the transcripts alongside my notes and preliminary themes to begin comparing narratives. I may have elected a different analytical approach had there not been such similarities across the resident narratives. Here I considered a case study approach, but the clear commonalities across the data meant that it could be brought together. This process assists in delivering a degree of research consistency by returning to the data to reflect and re-visit my interpretations, which provides an additional level of dependability to the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The data evolved into the emerging story of Rookwood for those residents at that time; Rookwood's own Telos. Across the resident narratives there became clear themes centred around; place, social networks, and belonging.

My approach to the final stages of analysis and presentation of the overall narrative is not too dissimilar to a grounded theory approach. I have engaged the resident narrative with relevant theory and literature (Floersch et al., 2010). I have realised that there cannot be a fully replicable or wholly consistent approach to narrative analysis, as each subject is unique and should be analysed as such (Braun & Clark, 2020). In designing my own approach to analysis, I found no clear definition of either thematic or narrative analysis (Floersch et al., 2010). I feel that this is appropriate in terms of my epistemological viewpoint and the interpretive nature of the research. However, I found some previous research helpful in approaching the analysis. Riessman (2008) cites the work of Williams (1984) on health narratives as an exemplar. This work re-produces segments or excerpts from interviews interwoven within a written report. Williams then presents this alongside his interpretations, drawn from his findings. This is also juxtaposed with previous research from which he draws new knowledge, similar to how I have approached my own findings.

In Williams' work, the participants' speech was altered slightly as it was perceived as "messy" (Riessman, 2008, p.58). This was not an approach I adopted; I felt my research should be highly sensitive to resident voices and note how their voices have been previously censored and altered. I did not want either myself or the research to place unnecessary distance or interpretation between the resident

voice and the final narrative. Thus, all excerpts and quotes taken from resident narratives are verbatim, including pauses, disfluencies, slang, and colloquialisms. Hence, as I have previously asserted, I acknowledge the "messiness"' of the data and see that as inherent to its value (Gunaratnam, 2003, p.104). I contend that this messiness produces "rich data" required to examine complex issues against political and social contexts (Fraser & Taylor, 2020, p.11). Because of the political nature of presenting counter-narratives and the socio-political contexts of social housing research, I have utilised standpoint feminist approaches. I utilise this as a theoretical perspective and a methodological approach to my analysis (Harding, 2004a).

As I have drawn from several other approaches and theories, this demonstrates the truly interpretive nature of research such as my own. There is no one way to present a thematic narrative, and "methodological mash-ups" can be utilised where they can be warranted and defended (Braun and Clark, 2020, p.337). As previously stated, my analysis is not wholly comparable with what would be viewed as a traditional grounded theory approach. However, I draw meaning from resident narratives through my own interpretation, alongside theory and contextual information (Etherington, 2011). Therefore, after the initial and case-based examination of the resident narratives, I returned to the data to re-explore the initial primary themes. These are broadly represented as community constructed through; place, networks, and belonging. At this point, I re-visited the literature relating to those themes and began re-reading and re-analysing the transcripts. This process was intended to place the resident narrative into context by exploring the socio-cultural environment that the narrative is situated in and is influenced by (Riessman, 2008).

At this point, I worked between literature, theory, and a re-visitation of the analysis to draw out my own interpretation of the juxtaposition of both. I explored how the narrative and themes were interrelated across different interviews and participants. This enabled me to construct both cross-case and within-case meaning (Shukla et al., 2014). This approach enabled my research to move between the 'individual' and the 'particular' to construct an interpretative narrative (Riessman, 2008)

generated from the resident accounts, theory, and literature. The final analysis was formed under the following themes:

Place: How residents construct community through place, particularly shared and communal spaces and the value attached to these spaces. When there is a lack of adequate space to construct community in the present, past places were utilised. Particular value was attributed to places that bring families together and enable safe spaces for children, especially those owned and shaped by residents themselves. Additionally, a lack of such spaces was seen to contribute to a rise in crime.

Social Networks: Supportive networks of family, friends and neighbours formed part of resident constructions of community. This ranged from everyday sociality, communal relationships, and stronger, long-term, bonded support networks. Place was an important conduit for social interaction; space to 'come together' was an essential element of positive constructions of community. Thus, a lack of community spaces and social withdrawal due to fear of crime led to a decrease in all kinds of social interaction.

Belonging: This theme represents the interplay of the networks and place in residents' constructions. It demonstrated the importance of belonging to somewhere, or someone, in claiming a 'home.' Making and feeling at home was an important part of resident well-being and identity. However, a lack of resident autonomy, a decline in community spaces, and a rise in crime meant residents struggled to belong to the estate or make a home there.

My analytical approach has created knowledge that can provide insight from the lived experience to further understanding of sociological thought (Riessman, 2008). In this way, I have constructed a counter-narrative that creates new knowledge and possibly "alternative truths" about the resident experience of community (Personal Narratives Group, 1989b, p.264). In the process, I immersed myself; in both the interviews and the relevant literature to tell the story of each

resident. Therefore, developing a hermeneutic narrative to extract meaning and place it into context (Ross & Green, 2011).

5.13 Reflexivity

> *"... when voices as isolated and innocent moments of experience organise our research texts, there is often a subtle slide toward romantic, uncritical, and uneven handling, and a stable refusal, by researchers, to explicate our own stances and relations with these voices."*
> (Fine, 1994, p.22)

Arguably a key element of the narrative process is the researcher's ability to be both transparent and reflexive. This is particularly important for practitioner-researchers, as their professional experience may be relevant to the narrative. The reflexive elements of narrative and hermeneutic approaches have appealed to me and enabled me to make sense of research I was already connected to and involved in. Within narrative techniques, the ability to explore the 'self' within and as part of the research process (Goodson & Gill, 2011) complimented my research approach. This also related to how I tried to make sense of my relationship with the research and residents. I have also used reflexivity to examine my credibility and understand if my interpretations are defensible (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Without a research team to triangulate against, I have to be my own auditor, which has complications hence the importance of a reflexive approach.

I acknowledge that this research is not about me, but my 'self' and identity are a part of the research process and a small part of Rookwood itself. For over five years, I worked on and around the estate, the first nine months exclusively on Rookwood. Within the research rationale in the first chapter, I wrote about myself and my connection to the estate, its residents, and, therefore, the research. I have done so to place the study and its aims into context and reflexively examine my position within the research. This helps me understand my influence and bias, both conscious and unconscious. Whilst I acknowledge the ability to be reflexive is important within an interpretivist approach. It can also be problematic and complex

to truly understand what elements of our 'self,' personal motives, and intentions we incorporate into research (Bruner, 2004).

I do not seek to attempt to understand myself and where I am located within my research, to place myself at the centre of the study and make this my story. However, I still need to be aware of how interview and narrative research can be "complex and problematic" (Trahar, 2009, p.6). For example, I have always considered myself to have come from a working-class background. I felt this gave me a connection and authenticity whilst employed in working-class areas. However, I have become more aware of my class, position, and power throughout the research. Despite my assertions about my background, my employment on the estate and my role as a researcher bring a position of power and privilege. This has affected my interview style as I struggle with this power imbalance. This was particularly so with residents who knew me the least, so they viewed me more as an 'official researcher' rather than an individual. I am also aware of my own "agenda" within interviews, which can mean I miss opportunities for residents to take the interview down different paths (Riessman, 2008, p.33). Throughout my research, I have become more self-aware and have sought to continually improve my interviewing, therefore coming to view it as a co-constructed process (Riessman, 2008).

However, I do not assume that by being reflexive, I somehow absolve my own "power, privilege and perspective" (Skeggs, 2002, p.360). I seek to understand my position to incorporate critical reflection on myself as a researcher and my research process (Braun & Clarke, 2022), which I feel is particularly important when influenced by standpoint approaches. Although my relationships with the residents enable a more naturalistic approach, I cannot lay claim to their place (Skeggs, 1997). It is crucial that I can examine my voice and its context and position and understand how this affects the narrative I construct. (Trahar, 2009). I am trying to achieve a balance between "being" reflexive and "doing" reflexivity (Skeggs, 2002, p.349). I strive for an equilibrium between professionalism as a researcher and enabling natural conversations. I recognise a risk of turning

residents I have developed relationships with into 'participants[28]' and objectifying them through the research process (Skeggs, 2002). This was particularly important to my research as social housing residents are often othered and objectified.

Although I acknowledge the importance of reflexivity, I also wish to be mindful that I do not prioritise my voice and diminish the resident voice. This is especially relevant in social housing research, as resident voices have already been marginalized within society. I do not claim to "find" or uncover the resident narratives; as a researcher, I participate in their construction (Riessman, 2008, p.21). The relevant theory, reflection, and policy must be interwoven within the narrative. This enables the whole story to be told and the narrative to be applied within practice. However, I also need to be continually aware and transparent about my own influence, aims, values, and meaning. Again, it is important to reiterate that although I draw on standpoint theory and methods, I am not and have never been a social housing resident. The position of what I "know" and have "known" stems from traditional forms of agency and knowledge, which must be resisted so that the research does not simply reproduce "the norm" (Skeggs, 1997, p.19). Therefore, although I cannot "hear" from a position I have never occupied, I attempt to research outside the norm of who is conventionally heard (IBID). The resident standpoint has been ignored and "dismissed as merely anecdotal" (Hodkinson, 2021) and therefore enabled policy that has disproportionally affected residents (Pain, 2019). Furthermore, much research that has sought out resident standpoints has focused on displacement and gentrification. This position of Rookwood offers a unique opportunity to explore the standpoint of being "trapped in place" (Pain, 2019, p.10).

It is also important to acknowledge my position as a practitioner-researcher who is disabled and initially thought achieving a doctorate was unattainable, highlighting my motivation. The concept of practitioner research can be complex to define and position due to its connection with professional development (Brooker &

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[28] *Therefore, I have chosen to primarily refer to those involved as 'residents' as opposed to 'participants'*

Macpherson, 1999). This can influence the research through other meanings and the researcher's motivation. The context in which the research is taking place and its reasons are important to consider. However, it is recognised that it can be complex and problematic to balance being a practitioner-researcher. Again, this highlights the need for a continual approach to being reflexive and critical. This can then help me position myself within the research and place my own voice and motivation into context (Brooker & Macpherson, 1999). As part of this process, I have kept a reflexive journal throughout the research to help enable my own reflection and awareness.

5.14 Positioning myself within the research

After starting my career in criminal justice, in early 2009, I transitioned to working in the housing sector as a Homelessness and Housing Advice Officer. I soon realised the depth of the social policy and law surrounding housing and started a postgraduate course in Housing Practice at Salford University. Before this, my understanding of social policy, housing, and related issues was minimal; I had some interest in politics and had begun to develop a limited but liberal position. However, at this point, my understanding was unsophisticated, and I was naïve to the level of inequality and social injustice in the UK. Although from a working-class background, I had a comparatively privileged upbringing and had experienced the world from my own white, middle-class, and relatively homogeneous viewpoint. Working as a serving Police Officer, I slowly began to develop the ability to reflect on my world position critically. I began to feel my career choice was not synonymous with my evolving political and ethical position.

My work in the criminal justice sector opened my understanding to the possibility that all life was not as fair and as balanced as I had experienced myself. However, naively, I had joined the police to help others and somehow make a positive contribution but had found that the role positioned me in a place where I could not do so. Therefore, I decided to move into the housing sector. However, my work as a local authority Homelessness Officer still made me feel like I was somehow pitted against people I thought I should be helping. I perceived my role as

gatekeeping resources that were not mine to gatekeep, and I became more aware of the class and power structures at play. After I started my studies in housing practice, I was able to expand my understanding and political awareness; I had a nagging feeling that I was somehow on the 'wrong side.' So keen to make a more positive contribution, in May 2010, I took up a new position as a Community Development Officer for a Social Housing Provider in the North-West of England.

I became responsible for the planning, managing, and delivering of community development projects across ten neighbourhoods in my new role. My first project was a dedicated community development project to be delivered on a neighbourhood known locally as the Rookwood estate. The partnership was aimed at working with both residents and local partners to improve the 'sustainability' of the estate. This was to be achieved by tackling the impact of the high levels of socio-economic deprivation in the area. I felt this was my opportunity to 'make a difference' unpretentiously but naively.

The estate had been chosen for the partnership since it was within the top 10% of the most deprived areas in the country and had low levels of resident engagement[29]. The terms in which it was described to me were unflattering at best; it was depicted as a 'sink estate' (Slater, 2018). Through my studies, I had now become aware of the impact of the residualisation of social housing stock (Hills, 2007) but had never fully considered the reality of this. I had witnessed first-hand the effect of deprivation working as a Police Officer. However, I had never genuinely appreciated the human reality of residualisation nor thought to position myself within resident experiences of this. My first time on the estate was a sunny morning shortly after starting my role, and I was presented with a different image than that portrayed to me. It seemed to be a quiet and tidy estate with large patches of open green space and lots of family homes, although I did not encounter any residents on that first visit.

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[29] *According to the 2007 Indices of Multiple Deprivation, see Appendix 1*

Rookwood residents had seen the estate subject to numerous renewal attempts by various interchangeable agencies and were sceptical of my presence on the estate. Rookwood remained somewhat closed to me for some time. Henceforth, I started to organise events and projects and decided to deliver a regular newsletter in person, on foot, to over two hundred and forty homes. Over time I built up residents' trust and began to form relationships with several of them. What struck me greatly was that my experience counteracted what was written about the estate. What stood out most was a powerful sense of what I perceived to be community. It was unlike any sense of community I had encountered before in many complex ways. The positivity and resilience I experienced were not reflected in what was documented about the estate or in how it was depicted to me by others. I became starkly aware of the absence of resident voices and experience in social housing narratives, both within and outside the sector.

The Rookwood estate was my first true lesson in how the realities of a neighbourhood can be in stark contrast to how it is perceived and depicted by those who do not live there. I was now much more aware of the power imbalances that exclude residents from dialogue about themselves and devalue the social housing community (Glucksberg, 2014; Skeggs, 1997). I began to try and locate myself more in the resident experience of; being spoken *about* and *of*, but not *to* or *with*. At the same time, I developed a much richer awareness of the broader socio-political factors that were intrinsically connected to the residualisation of social housing. Around this time, my employer introduced a rating system to determine the management of its neighbourhoods. This system was a deficit-based approach, and Rookwood was placed on the lowest rating; bronze.

I started to reflect on what community *was* and how it seemed to have multiple meanings and interpretations for different people. I regularly saw the concept applied in social housing policy and practice, but it was often at odds with the residents' lived experiences. Consequently, I could see 'community' was often framed from certain ideological viewpoints (Rogaly & Taylor, 2009). At times, the policy and reality seemed to be opposed, and I began to have doubts about the efficacy of policy interpretations of community. At this time, I had been invited to

teach a BSc Family and Community course at Edge Hill. I had begun exploring community development theory and was attracted to asset-based, community-led approaches advocated by practitioners such as Margaret Ledwith and Marilyn Taylor. I became concerned about the dichotomy of the bottom-up approaches I advocated in lectures to the top-down projects I was expected to deliver in practice. Upon reflection, I am minded to recall Michael Lipsky's 'Street Level Bureaucracy' theory and the everyday reality of delivering social policy on the ground (Lipsky, 2010).

At the same time, there was a sharp rise in negative representations and narratives of social housing estates and residents in both political rhetoric and the media. I then became interested in work exploring the impact of such representations (Jones, 2012; McKenzie, 2012; Tyler, 2013). These narratives were at odds with my own experiences with social housing communities and residents. I identified with research that challenged the effectiveness of social policy directed at 'deprived' communities, which further impacted the power imbalance I witnessed daily. I was particularly interested in the work of Lisa McKenzie and Imogen Tyler and, latterly, Stephen Crossley and Tom Slater (Crossley, 2017; McKenzie, 2012, 2013, 2015; Tyler, 2008, 2013, Tyler & Slater, 2018; Slater, 2018).

I worked during the coalition government's welfare reforms and witnessed the devastating impact on service provision, residents, and neighbourhoods. My work moved away from community development to reactive measures as a direct response to the consequences of welfare reform. This included running a food bank and delivering a clothing poverty project. I witnessed many other community projects and services diminish and was troubled about the outcome of this for residents. I became profoundly concerned about both the overall impact of damaging policy and stigmatising narratives on estates like Rookwood all over the country. I was also troubled by the censure of the resident experience; I felt that their voice was lost, and unheard as working-class voices so often are (Glucksberg, 2014).

My relationship with the residents is essential to consider its influence and impact on the research. To some degree, I identify with the concept of an "outsider within" as I have some level of insider status to the estate, but I do not fully belong there (Hill-Collins, 2004, p.103). My work on the estate permitted me to develop a relationship with the residents; this was generally a positive relationship and enabled a trust that facilitated interviews with the existing residents. However, as I have identified earlier, I was employed by the resident's landlord, which raises issues due to my connection to wider power structures. Furthermore, during the research, I stopped working in the area, so I was an outsider to new residents who moved in after this point. I, therefore, concur with the argument that a researcher can occupy both insider and outsider status (Ahmed, 2010). I recognise that this also may be why I have been able to maintain relationships with existing residents, relying on the trust and reciprocity built over time. However, I think this is somewhat lacking with the newer residents and possibly why I struggled to reach them for second interviews. Initially, I was more uncomfortable with my 'outsider' status with residents I did not have a pre-existing relationship. I was more confident being the 'outsider within' community worker than the 'outsider' researcher. On reflection, this distance assisted me in achieving engagement that developed participant trust but without becoming overly immersed on a personal level (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). However, on reflection, I feel that the existing residents were very open and honest with me, leading me to reflect that an outsider may be easier to confide in (Hills-Collins, 2004).

There is no doubt that I was immersed and invested in the research, I worked in the area for over five years, and my thesis process has taken nearly ten years. My research started from my political position and a genuine concern for the future of Rookwood. I have reflected upon my own bias and whether this puts the objectivity of my research into question. It is something that I have struggled with in terms of my epistemology and research rationale. However, later in my research journey, I identified with other researchers seeking to contribute to political and social change through their research (Hall, 2013; Harding, 2015; Hodkinson, 2020; McKenzie, 2015). The aim has been to produce research that maintains integrity in its methods, approach, and the data collated whilst satisfying my aspiration to

contribute to social and political change. I return to Sandra Harding's point of striking a balance between "good politics" and "good science," seeking to achieve; "political engagement, rather than dispassionate neutrality" (Harding, 2004a, p.6). I feel that research such as my own has a responsibility and power to offer critical thought and challenge through narrative (hooks, 2004).

Chapter 5 has outlined my epistemological position as interpretivist and introduced methodology as a thematic, narrative approach that will present my findings through a critical counter-narrative from a resident standpoint. Having outlined my epistemological position and methodology, I will now progress to presenting my findings in the following two chapters. The thesis will then conclude with a discussion of the findings and their meaning.

Chapter 6 - Community as place: "It was a big community"

Within the following two chapters, I present the findings from my research. This aims to present a narrative of resident constructions of community through the methodological approach outlined in the previous chapter. I explore my findings in relation to the three main themes of community constructed as: place, social networks and belonging. This will include an examination of the interchange between all three themes. The findings concerning place are presented as a narrative of the resident's experience of community through social and community spaces. The importance and impact of these spaces are further examined through critical inquiry alongside the resident narratives. I will return to social networks and interaction in the following chapter.

6.1 Place, social space, and community

Within the second chapter, I established how community can be constructed through place and the particular significance of place in social housing

neighbourhoods (Clarke & Monk, 2011; Hills, 2007). As determined in earlier chapters, Rookwood embodies the widespread residualisation of the British social housing estate. This is due, in part, to the high levels of socio-economic deprivation in the area (Anon Council, 2015). The estate represents a localised example of a neighbourhood that has undergone social change, particularly due to the impact of austerity across the North-West (Fitzgerald, 2016; Williams, 2019).

A consequence of residualisation and austerity has meant that many social housing neighbourhoods are left with diminished local amenities and facilities (Pinoncely, 2016). Community and social spaces arguably play a significant role in lower-income neighbourhoods (Bashir et al., 2011). However, the socio-economic decline has reduced these spaces (Hickman, 2013). Exploring resident constructions of community through social spaces reveals the everyday reality of living within areas that have endured significant social decline. Through resident narratives, the research illuminates the importance of 'third places' in constructions and experiences of community (Oldenburg, 1999). In particular, the findings demonstrate the impact of the loss of these spaces (Hickman, 2013; Oldenburg, 1999).

As I have previously established in earlier chapters, several community spaces and venues on the estate have been lost or diminished.[30] The reduction of social spaces also represents the decline of resident ownership and control over the local area. Residents were unable to influence the development, thus unable to affect the changes it brought to the estate. This change and loss starkly exemplify the lack of resident autonomy and power over their own homes and neighbourhoods. The change and loss experienced on the estate were translated as a community decline. Therefore, some of the residents utilised nostalgia to process these shifts. Both existing and incoming residents discussed the changes and connected this and its negative impact on the estate. This was particularly so

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[30] *Appendix 3 depicts green spaces pre and post-development, Appendix 10 depicts the original play areas, and Appendix 6 depicts a similar space once the play equipment was removed.*

in terms of crime and anti-social behaviour. The social change also meant residents found it difficult to construct belonging to the present-day estate. Instead, temporal belonging was utilised to enable the construction of 'home' to different times and places.

I will begin the presentation of my findings by exploring how community is constructed through social and community space.

6.1.2 "Nothing to make a community."
Constructing community through third spaces

The places that most residents used to construct community through were, or have been, within the estate itself and, therefore, in easy proximity. This was particularly so for existing residents who could recall a time with a broader range of community spaces that they regularly and easily accessed. These spaces had been central to how existing residents constructed both community and belonging. Residents placed importance on secure and local places for children. Proximity was of particular significance as this meant that children could be easily monitored within the estate's boundaries. All the existing residents reflected within their narratives about the loss of green spaces on the estate due to the development. Residents felt that these spaces provided an essential, safe space for local children to play within the confines of the estate. Brian discussed the impact on the estate following the loss of these spaces:

> **Brian:** *"It's just a pity that you know Rookwood, the one thing that they're lacking is erm….and that they will lack now is just some protection area if you know what I mean, some play area or sommat like that where we can put the kids."*

Brian felt that the estate was "lacking" due to the absence of spaces for children to play within the estate. It was important to Brian that these spaces were contained within the estate, as it would offer; "protection." Brian continues within his

narrative to discount the suitability of the "four fields,"[31] which are situated outside the estate's security. This highlights the importance and value many residents place on social space situated within, not close to, the estate boundaries (Goosen & Cilliers, 2020). Brian's narrative reflected how this was built into constructions of community:

> **Brian**: *"The four fields are too far…I wouldn't let my eight-year-old over the four fields, I wouldn't let me twelve-year-old over the four fields because of the men…and women that hang about there, you know."*

Both Mary and Cliff echoed the sentiment expressed by Brian regarding the protection and supervision of local children. This demonstrates that a collective form of security was central to what made the estate a community for existing residents. Defining the identity of Rookwood as; a safe place for families to live. This highlights residents' desire to "protect" their children from external risks, such as crime (Brodsky et al., 1999, p.660). There is a continued theme of retaining childhood innocence and protecting children throughout the resident narratives, which I will return to several times.

> **Cliff**: *"There is no place for the kids to play…. where we can keep an eye on them; there's fields at the back, but you can't let little un's go on the field without keeping an eye on them."*

> **Mary:** *"Who is going to send their kids up on the back fields to go and play?"*

Some of the background to these fears were due to reports of crime on the 'loop line[32]' that surrounds the estate. These reports included adults drinking alcohol and multiple accounts of indecent exposure at the rear of the school whilst children

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[31] *The Four Fields are the four playing fields, labelled "Rookwood Playing Fields" on the aerial map found in Appendix 7 and Appendix 20, they are separated from the estate by the loopline a walkway lined with trees and shrubs.*

[32] *The 'loopline' is a walkway on the old mining railway line that is at the rear of the estates northern and eastern boundary. It is down an embankment, which was at the time, poorly lit and prone to incidences of anti-social behaviour and viewed locally as untidy and unsafe, see Appendix 22..*

were present. All the existing residents seemed to associate safety and positivity with the open green spaces on the estate before the development. Constructions of community by the existing residents, particularly positive ones, were often made to a Rookwood of the recent past. Brian reflected that community spaces have the capacity to bring families together, in addition to ensuring safe places for children within the estate:

> **Brian**: "*It brings a lot of togetherness; it brings a lot of…. erm…like a lot of looking out an' you know.*"

Feeling "familiar" and "safe" was part of how residents could connect to the estate. This was not confined to personal feelings of security but also through the perception that all residents and children were safe within the estate. Security can form a central part of how residents construct belonging through safety and familiarity (Yarker, 2019). Safety was also important in creating the wider identity of the estate as being a safe place for families to live. It was important for the residents to dissociate themselves and where they lived to avoid being perceived as unsafe or attached to criminality. Therefore, protecting the identity of both the residents and that of the estate (Preece, 2020).

Being able to feel safe and familiar is a re-visited theme later, as these feelings shifted alongside the change to the estate's design and occupancy. External forces represented a threat to the community within the estate, and the change that outside influences brought was commonly expressed as a loss. The residents rarely discussed change on the estate as a positive concept. The 'original' design and feel of the estate, and the spaces it offered, were seen as integral to a community. In this instance, the resident experience confirms that neighbourhood design and topography can contribute to feelings of safety and security (Watson & Dannenberg, 2008). Thus, highlighting the impact that the built environment of an estate can have on resident constructions of community (French et al., 2014).

As established within the previous section, many existing residents felt that the original amenities and design of the estate provided the 'right' spaces for families

and children."[33] Several long-term residents discussed its implications on their changing experiences and interpretations of community on the estate, which I now wish to explore. This exploration seeks to represent the interaction between resident "biography and history" to enhance understanding of broader social phenomena (Crow, 2000, p.179).

As third places were central to how residents construct and experience community, a decline in such spaces were consequently viewed as a decline in community (Goodchild, 2008). Many of the residents referred to these places with language associated with loss, using terms such as; "lacking," "gone," "lost," and "nothing." The resident narratives reflect the significance of the third place in building community (Oldenburg, 1999). Without these spaces, the residents felt that they were, therefore, unable to 'make' a community together:

> **Susan**: "*Yeah, there is just nothing to make a community a community, you know, there is no resources.*"

As evidenced in my findings, the term "nothing" was frequently employed across the residents' narratives. It was utilised concerning all community elements to indicate a deficit of; community spaces, a sense of community, and community spirit. This stark loss, felt so keenly by residents and so strongly connected to their sense of community, reveals third places' significance and importance in working-class neighbourhoods (Hickman, 2003). This is compared to a previous Rookwood, which many existing residents felt had sufficient community space, further highlighting their sense of loss. It also reflects the usefulness of temporal belonging and memory in helping residents define what community *is* and *does*. As aforementioned, the loss was often felt the most in terms of spaces and provision for families and children. Many residents felt that the young people and children on the estate had suffered the most due to the absence of community spaces and amenities. Thus, resulting in wider consequences felt by the entire

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[33] *In the estates history it has previously had a shop (Appendix 33 and 34), open green spaces (Appendix 3), two play areas (Appendix 10) a play barn (Appendix 32), a community shop (Appendix 28) and a community and education centre (Appendix 25, 26 and 27) within its boundaries.*

estate, which will be expanded upon in the next section. I will now continue to examine resident connections between community spaces, local young people, and anti-social behaviour.

6.1.3 "Nothing for the kids."
Community spaces, safety and youth nuisance and crime.

There were apparent consequences resulting from the decline of community that went beyond a lack of suitable social spaces for many residents. Several existing and incoming residents connected the deficit of community spaces and facilities and the rise in anti-social behaviour and crime. This then, in turn, affected resident belonging and interaction. The resident experiences highlight the impact of the decline of community spaces amidst a backdrop of cuts to service provision (Fitzgerald, 2016; Williams, 2019). The resident accounts of the rise of youth crime and nuisance on the estate are confirmed by local crime figures[34]. Additionally, their accounts highlight the national impact of welfare reform on youth justice and support services (Yates, 2012).

The scale and size of the development had reduced the social spaces where children previously used to play. Here the findings highlight the importance of community space in low-income areas and the increased significance to residents (Bashir et al., 2011). The absence of community space was also coupled with a rise in family properties on the estate, increasing the number of children and young people living in the area. The development can also be viewed as supporting the local community with the provision of family homes. Nevertheless, the development has had an impact on shared spaces, as Maggie described:

> **Maggie:** *"Well, again, it's going back to the building work since that's happened; I really don't like it. There's too many people on the estate, just*

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[34] *See Appendix 7 for details of the dispersal order imposed by Greater Manchester police and Appendix 8 for the crime deprivation for the area around the estate. Appendix 23 details the police priorities for the area at the time of the second-round interviews as "ASB and "youths causing annoyance" on the Rookwood estate.*

houses everywhere now there's nowhere for the kids to play like it's…I don't like it at all, but we will get used to it; well, we'll have to."

As established in the previous section, concerns around children and spaces on the estate were raised in terms of a lack of safe spaces to play. Demonstrating the need for social housing development to balance between the provision of affordable homes and community spaces. Several of the residents discussed their apprehension about the safety of children on the estate due to an absence of play areas:

> **Susan**: "*There is no pavement there, so they walk straight out of their drives onto the road. So, the kids just automatically walk out of their drives and onto the road, which I don't think was thought through when they built the houses, but building houses for families, they should have put something for families as well, a park or something, but I think that would be one of the main things they could do, is somewhere for the kids to play.*"

The dismissal of resident concerns about the design of the estate highlights that 'community' cannot be shaped in isolation of residents. Signifying the importance of involving residents in neighbourhood development and planning, notably if they have previously been excluded from this process (Glucksberg, 2014).

Themes of children, play, and safety continue throughout the resident narratives and were central to resident constructions of community. Due to a loss of "protected" spaces, children became excluded from places they once played within. This was viewed as the trigger for the first incidences of crime and nuisance associated with the loss of social space, as the children trespassed to access those places:

> **Mary:** *"Everything's stopped, so now there's nothing there in the community for the kids, for the parents' anything, so it's just like living on an estate where there's all this work going on, and the kids have got nothing to*

do. The kids are getting in trouble; they are climbing onto where they're working; it's like a danger zone."

Children gaining access to the building site posed a tangible health and safety issue during the development[35]. It is suggested that these incidences were created by the deficit of third spaces on the estate, places previously freely utilised by local children. Barriers created to prevent access to these spaces were breached by children trying to reclaim them. Thus, highlighting the importance of play in children's lives (Ginsburg, 2007). In addition to this, several residents also discussed an increase in children playing in unsuitable locations, such as in the street. This then caused complaints from residents and warning letters being issued by the local housing provider as Mary discusses:

> **Mary:** *"The only thing on the estate now the kids play football on the street, doesn't bother me but bothers some people, but they don't realise that there isn't anywhere for 'em and so like everybody's getting letters 'cause the kids are playing football and stuff like that, but it's finding somewhere to go. The kids they'd love, the young lads and girls somewhere like the MUGA where they could go on and play it, would be so good. We'd love it, and I think because it would belong to them, or they was allowed to use it, they would look after it instead, like now sneaking on it just to go and play football. So just mainly for the kids on the estate and for people to get together more, that's all we need – it's not a lot to ask for give us a wooden hut."*

Prior to the development, funding was acquired to develop natural play on the estate following consultation regarding resident priorities[36]. Play areas were also reviewed in the development consultation and even depicted within the imagery used, but nothing was formally agreed upon. Subsequently, no play areas or

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[35] *Concerns about children's safety led to safety sessions being delivered at the school and the creation of safety posters made by children at Rookwood Academy that were displayed on the site's hoardings (Bardlsey, 2013a; 2013b).*

[36] *A proposed natural play area was developed with building contractors Forrest with community investment funding shortly before the development commenced. This was a way of incorporating play areas into the estate without formal play equipment, which are bound to set play restrictions and maintenance. This would have been achieved through landscaping and non-traditional play such as mounds of grass, boulders, and logs etc. The space was then required for the housing development, so was not completed.*

spaces were built as part of the development. Mary summarised several of the resident's feelings about continued requests for suitable play and community facilities by stating, "*that's all we need – it's not a lot to ask for.*" As Mary reflected in her narrative, she felt it was important for the estate's children to have something that belonged to them that they were "allowed" to use. Mary believed that local children could take ownership and responsibility for a space that was their own, that they could "look after." Mary then contrasted this with the trespass that occurred due to children "sneaking" into restricted areas.

Reflections that there is "nothing" or "nowhere" for local children were common throughout several residents' accounts. Residents had expressed very strongly the need for space and provision for local young people. However, during the development, this was primarily overlooked, ultimately contributing to a rise in crime. It is possible this rise may have been reduced, or even prevented, had residents been involved in the design. Earlier engagement of residents in the development process could have highlighted this need. Therefore, emphasising the requirement of understanding and developing places with residents. Arguably a local neighbourhood is best understood by those who "value" it (de Jong et al., 2021, p.65).

It was strongly felt that the lack of adequate social space contributed to increasingly anti-social behaviour by the estate's children. This behaviour was described as beginning with playing in inappropriate places, which quickly escalated into the "vandalism" that Cliff referenced within his narrative. Maggie explained this through an incident that had occurred at a neighbouring property:

> **Maggie***: "Well, the main one is, there is nowhere for the kids to play, which is obviously, which has caused problems on the street…and the, they are using the front of her house as like you know, the goal post. She said she has had her windows smashed, she has had her fence broken, and *** **** told her it is her responsibility, she has got to fix it herself, she is 73…I do feel sorry for her."*

It is crucial here to acknowledge some of the voices of Rookwood that go unheard, particularly the young people of the estate. There are assumptions about the connection between young people, a lack of provision and criminality. The causes for that crime and the young people's perspectives go unheard as it is beyond the capacity of this research.

By the second round of interviews, the problems intensified into more widespread anti-social behaviour and crime. This was so much so that every resident interview, in the second round, detailed incidences of crime or nuisance on the estate. Incoming residents Frances and Helen had both been victims of crime since moving onto the estate, as well as existing residents Shauna and Mary. The anti-social behaviour on the estate, the residents reported had intensified into more serious crime, such as burglary:

> **Frances:** *"His shed got broken into last week and took all his work tools and apparently, the girl, and he said, the girl opposite him, which was on the other end of me, she had her shed broken into, same again, last week, but the Police actually said there has been fourteen shed break-ins around here, but like, this is second time now it's been the shed, and it doesn't matter how secure you are making it, they are just getting in."*

Within the second round of interviews, Maggie, Frances, Mary, Helen, Liz, Emma, and Shauna used the term "gang" to describe the youths who congregated and gathered on the estate. Post-development, the estate was also trying to cope with an increased number of teenagers and children. This is compounded in estates such as Rookwood that are already in areas of high socio-economic deprivation, further affected by austerity (Rolfe & Garnham, 2020). Helen reflected on an incident that occurred within her first 12 months on the estate:

> **Helen***: "It is scary, to begin with… In the first year, I have been kicked in the head by one of the the local, the local kids around the area. The they all surrounded me one night when I went out to actually ask them to move away. Because of the green there, they seem to congregate round there, so*

I was the first person to actually get an injunction out on someone in this, in this area and apparently, there was a few of 'em. You don't see it now; I think it's worked. I had to get an injunction out on this lad plus all the friends. We were actually friends with my next-door neighbour, so they didn't actually come near the area because we were frightened that my car was going to get, my car has been egged, there's, there's been scraps going on, you have got motorbikes going up and down all the time, as I say there is big gangs of people that, and they are just knocking around all the time so, it can be quite scary."

Fear from and of crime, was also a common experience across the resident narratives. Several residents discussed the impact of large numbers of children and young people living on the estate with little social space, community events, or youth provision. Again, indicating that the residents were well placed to direct decisions about community and youth provision in the area (Bowles & Gintis, 2000). Some residents felt that the design and layout of the estate should incorporate social or play spaces specifically designed for children and young people:

> **Susan: "***I suppose they have put all this money into the estate, building the houses, but they have not thought of the consequences of where what they are going to do when they are on the estate. There is nothing, and so you know yourself, you have got a teenage lad, a lot of parents might not be able to control their kids, you know. Well, they can't stop them going out, so they have gone out, and you know, it's hard for some people, but then the resources, there is nothing for them to do, you know."*

Within Liz's narrative, the issues of crime and anti-social behaviour were explored from a different perspective. Liz's son had become involved in several incidences of nuisance and anti-social behaviour over a protracted period. Liz's accounts of this time present a complex and detailed narrative that cannot fully be explored in depth here. Within her recounting of her experiences of trying to support and control her son, Liz reflected on the impact of the decline of spaces and provision

for young people in the area. This echoed concerns expressed by other residents about the connection between this provision and youth crime. Liz discussed a youth project that ran for a period on the estate but was withdrawn due to funding. Liz felt that this abrupt style of ending a project "breaks trust" with the young people it had previously supported.

> **Liz:** "*And it breaks a trust as well, though, because the next person that comes along is getting a harder job because it is going to be like, no, because you are just going to go and leave like the others do or what are they in it for?*"

Liz's narrative reflects the damaging impact of living in high crime areas, subject to wider social decline (Popay et al., 2003). This is reiterated by incoming resident Emma, who thought that a lack of facilities and engagement for young people creates boredom. Emma felt that this inevitably contributes to anti-social and criminal behaviour:

> **Emma**: "*You know, catch 'em, come on, let's get out there and get some stuff going on and you know, people moan, and I've even moaned about some of the feral kids, we call them, but they are bored. They have got nothing to do, so they are going to smash things up and ruin the bus stop and, you know, that kind of thing. There is nothing for them at all, and I feel, I do feel sorry for them in that sense, you know.*"

Emma's use of the word "feral" represents feelings echoed throughout the resident narratives about how local youths were viewed as dangerous and out of control. However, like many other residents, Emma believed that intervention could reverse such behaviour and that young people were not wholly responsible for this. Instead, it was felt that the rise in youth crime was a consequence of the local environment. I contend that this mirrors the continued themes of childhood, innocence, and safety that run through the residents' narratives. It also clearly highlights the implications of excluding resident priorities and concerns in neighbourhood management and design (Munsie, 2016).

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Several of the residents reflected that it was not simply a lack of suitable places on the estate that contributed to a rise in youth-related crime and nuisance. The impacts stemming from a broader lack of provision for both parents and children were also discussed. Susan expressed similar ideas to Emma and Liz in addressing the perceived lack of support. Concern was raised for the young males on the estate, who were seen as vulnerable in terms of offending:

> **Susan***: "If they did sommert for older lads like fixing bikes and you know, doing like little carpentry things, life skills, you know. I think that would be good for the lads on the estate anyway because there's nothing for them either, and that is why obviously, they get up to mischief and that."*

Within her narrative, Liz returned to the criminalisation of young people; she voiced concerns that a lack of support and opportunities led to involvement with the criminal justice system. Liz's narrative demonstrates the impact of austerity, and the social decline has had a detrimental effect on the support and provision for young people (Yates, 2012). In Liz's experience, this is because many agencies rely on addressing crime at a later point rather than focusing on prevention:

> **Liz***: "It is awful then because these kids have been brought into that; they have got no choice because even the authorities are pushing them towards it as well. It is easier for them to say, just let them do it, then then the prison service will take over. It's not; it doesn't work like that."*

Liz's narrative serves as a stark warning of the consequences of a lack of provision within low-income neighbourhoods. Although her reference to prison may sound extreme, it is not inaccurate. The town has extremely high levels of socio-economic deprivation; the estate itself is within the top 10% in terms of education and crime deprivation.[37] Again, here Rookwood presents an opportunity to examine the real-life impact of social change on residents' lives. The estate

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[37] *See Appendix 29, 39 and 31 for up-to-date crime and education, skills and training deprivation data which shows the area in the top 10% of crime deprivation for the UK.*

reveals the effects of social policy and change on families, residents, and communities (McKenzie, 2015). The consequences of this are realised through a reduction of; provision, facilities, and spaces in neighbourhoods already subject to high levels of socio-economic deprivation (Bashir et al., 2011, Hickman, 2013).

In the same way that change is seen as something external and imposed on the estate, so to, is the blame for the criminality and anti-social behaviour that occurs within the estate. The recurring themes of nostalgic childhood almost protect young people's identity, their responsibility for their actions somehow absolved by their innocence. Nonetheless, the claims regarding the lack of provision and support for young people are prevalent in several of the resident's accounts. This returns to Mary's point about the kids having "nowhere" of their own. This highlights the lack of resident ownership and control in terms of the latest changes and layout of the estate. It is clear from the resident narratives the importance placed on open and community space; however, the residents lack power over their environment. Thus, I will now examine the impact of community spaces and resident autonomy in more detail.

6.1.4 "They took the community away from us."

Resident autonomy, control, and choice

The community spaces did not simply represent safe places for children to play and residents to interact. They also signify the informal ownership and control that residents felt over 'their' estate and, by extension ', 'their' community. The development and loss of those spaces represented a loss of control over the resident's environment. Therefore, the development happened *to* them, yet *without* them. The disruption of the development and the interference from external forces contributed to a lack of third and social spaces. Furthermore, it created a decline in residents' autonomy, inhibiting their influence over where they lived. This is representative of the structural power imbalances that many social housing residents experience when attempting to reclaim their own communities (Symons, 2018).

The power struggles faced by residents were exemplified in a section of Mary's narrative where she discussed reduced access to the community hall at the school. The school had an extension built called the 'Kaleidoscope Centre;' this was funded through a bid that proposed educational and community use. Mary had access to and use of this space in exchange for volunteering as a key-holder. It was highly valued and well-used within the estate[38]. This enabled residents such as Mary to access the hall for community use, which involved holiday clubs and sessions for local sports and leisure clubs.

> **Mary:** *"Because at one time we used to use the school as a community hall, erm, and we used to, and all the kids on the estate used to come in on the schools' holidays erm used to do all sorts in there but now because it's become a…. a…. academy… Because there was, like, big grass verges we used to go on there an' play games in the holidays erm we used to like. I used the school we had all people coming in to do different things with the kids. We even had somebody coming in from the places that used to take kids out on certain nights of the week just like, now there's nothing."*

The local primary school became an academy just before the development commenced in the September term of 2012. This was following some protest and concern raised by the local community (Anon, 2012). When the school transferred over to an academy, the decision was made to cease community use of both the hall and the MUGA (Multi-Use Games Area). Therefore, part of the 'Kaleidoscope Centre' was converted into classrooms, apparently contradicting the original funding agreement[39]. Mary's informal key-holder relationship was also ended, and a local group she ran were no longer permitted access to the hall. Mary discussed how she felt misled about the community access and ownership of those spaces:

> **Mary**: *"We always thought that the MUGA on the school was made for the community, erm, but it wasn't, so none of the kids on the estate can go on*

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[38] *See Appendices 25, 26 and 27 for confirmation of the intended community use of the '********* Centre'*
[39] *Following a Freedom of Information request to Sports England, this decision seemingly contradicts the original intended use of the building outlined in the funding application, which was agreed to last until 2022 see Appendices 26 and 27..*

*there, as it's not open on certain hours for them to go on like. That's what
we were led to believe at the beginning, so even the kids they'd love, the
young lads and girls somewhere like the MUGA where they could go on
and play, it would be so good."*

The timing of the school's decision to stop community access to their facilities
occurred concurrently with the development. Consequently, the estate lost both its
indoor and outdoor community spaces simultaneously. Mary felt anger that a
community resource had been taken away and reflected how despite being "*built
for the community*," "*none of the kids on the estate can go on.*" At this time, there
were tensions between community members and the school about their lack of
access to the Kaleidoscope Centre. Such changes on the estate represent an
overall lack of control that the residents had over their local environment.

Mary viewed the centre as a community resource that belonged to and with the
local community. The closure of the hall without consultation with the community
again reflects issues of power and control, symbolised in Mary's choice of the
word "allowed." This demonstrated the community's struggle for autonomy with
local agencies in positions of power. It also evidences how 'community' can be
utilised to control and hold power over residents (Tait & Inch, 2016). Mary
continued within her narrative to describe how she attempted to challenge the
school over the decision:

Mary*: "There is nothing; you have to go out of your way to take the kids
somewhere, the younger kids. There is nothing whatsoever for them; I think
by doing that with that because I did have an argument over it, I said that
was built for the community. They got the funding for that, and then they
was trying to say no, the school got the funding for it, it belongs to them, no
it doesn't, it belongs to the community, because that is why it was named by
the community and so, the community do things in there, and they do
nothing now."*

The terms Mary used, such as; "argument" and latterly "fight," demonstrated her strong feelings about the closure of the centre, not simply as a lost resource but also the injustice of the action. Additionally, this represents the level of exclusion and dismissal encountered by residents, even with compelling evidence to support the continued need for a community facility[40]. Other residents' recollections supported this. Susan, an incoming resident, who lived on the estate previously, reflected Mary's sentiment that the facilities were initially funded and designed for community use:

> **Susan**: *"Well, it used to be a community school, didn't it? They used to put; I don't think they do anything at the school no more."*

For Mary, the loss of the Kaleidoscope Centre and other social spaces within the estate heralded a definite decline. This marked a turning point when community itself ceased to exist for Mary. Her narrative clearly expressed the importance of not only the space but that it was part of and belonged to the community. Without this space, Mary felt frustrated and disappointed:

> **Mary:** *"I remember years ago when they took the, we used to have a club on here and things, but that was took away and then, but then we got it all going at the school and brought it all back and since they took the community away from us, the community rooms and everything has just gone to pot. It is just like nobody; they promised that, because that was one of the reasons and all, we could get to know the new people in the community group in the school, we could do groups and invite them over and all stuff like that, but it got took off us. So, nothing come of it, even though we, we did fight to try and get it, to keep it."*

This excerpt from Mary's narrative reflected many residents' expectations that one community space should have been exchanged for another as part of the

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[40] *See Appendix 25, 26 and 27 that outlines the need for a community facility on the estate, which was built with Sports England funding. This was primarily based on a lack of existing facilities and the Indices of Deprivation for the area, both of which remain in a highly similar position today.*

development. Here Mary used the term "promise" to reference the perception that local agencies had assured residents that community provision would be catered for within the new development.[41]. Mary continued to reflect on how she approached the contractors building the development to help replace the lost community space:

> **Mary:** *"I said, and I even asked 'em, why can't you build us? When they were building, I asked them to, could you not give us one of your cabins that you put all your rubbish in just to use in the school holiday, so they can come in there and draw or they can play music and things like that, no. No, we are not insured for that. Well, there has got to be something that you can give us; yeah, they give the school a telly, but nothing for the community. So, we have got nought. It has just made it worse, so we don't do nothing."*

A lack of recognition for the importance of community spaces and failed promises on the part of the contractor and social landlord reflect the power imbalance between agencies and the residents. The dismissal of resident concerns and priorities reflects wider issues of social landlords' unwillingness to devolve power to local communities, even when pertaining to 'involve' residents (Hickman, 2006).

When discussing the initial consultation meetings for the development that she attended, Liz also reflected on what community spaces she felt were "promised":

> **Liz:** "*Well, the ones that they promised in the first place when it first went ahead, I sat in the meeting and listened to them say that that's what they were going to focus on, on community, on play areas, on, on [er] activities for the kids, and groups, and there has never been one single thing, not a single thing.*"

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[41] *As aforementioned informal imagery that depicted open green space and informal play spaces were included in the initial consultation proposals at resident meetings. Additionally, a local contractor also committed funding towards informal play, but no such spaces were included in the formalised plans or the final development.*

In several of the residents' narratives, particularly Mary, Maggie, and Liz, agencies outside the estate were referred to as "they." Almost without exception, "they" were discussed discouragingly as a harmful external presence that brought negative influence or change. "They" dismiss residents' concerns, "they" do things to, as opposed to with, the local community. I contend that this reflects the division residents felt between themselves and local agencies, and I also assert that this represented the power imbalance between them. As "they" held power and resources to make decisions about the community, but without the community.

In several references, "they" referred to the residents' Social Landlord. Although official consultation and engagement exercises were conducted pre-development, resident concerns were overlooked. Thus, reflecting that 'resident involvement' does not always indicate actual resident influence and power (Marsh, 2018). Both Mary and Liz described attempts by residents to assert themselves but were then thwarted by "they." Here Rookwood is a local example that exemplifies the national issue of residents being disenfranchised within their own communities (McKenzie, 2017), a theme I will return to in Chapter 8. It is argued that agencies utilise resident engagement to retain and reassert their power over local communities (Bradley, 2013; Flint, 2003). The consequences of the loss of community spaces, and thus the 'community' itself, indicate that a fresh perspective on more effective structures of resident involvement is required (Preece, 2019). A new approach should enable residents to claim and re-claim social spaces in their communities (Goosen & Cilliers, 2020).

In summary, the third places on the estate are viewed as spaces that residents feel cannot be made *for* the community by outside agencies. Instead, these spaces should be formed *with* and *by* the community (Brodsky et al., 1999). Therefore, this could create places with a practical purpose and facilitate resident ownership. The lack of power and control experienced by residents on Rookwood is reflective of the much broader issues of a lack of residents' autonomy on a macro-level.

Although 'they' could be attributed to much wider power structures and forces than one social landlord, for the residents, their landlord was the most visible and influential in terms of their own neighbourhood. However, these incidences reflected the lack of power afforded to residents, although residents tended to experience and feel this on a more localised level.

As the chapter has now explored the impact of the change and loss of community spaces on residents' constructions of community. The narrative explores the effects of this loss upon resident constructions of belonging and of making a home within the estate.

6.2. Belonging to place

Within my literature review, I explored the concept of belonging and feelings of "home" connected to place (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p.197). In my earlier chapters, I examined research that had identified the complexities of belonging in working-class communities and the impact social change could have on this (Paton, 2013). I also identified the potential of studies such as my own to exemplify and illuminate the realities of wider social change in individual neighbourhoods (Crow, 2000).

Change within the resident narrative was often synonymous with some loss, in this context, usually a loss of community. The absence of community was often translated into a resident's inability to belong to the current Rookwood. This resulted from the estate failing to offer the qualities of 'community' the residents were looking for. Therefore, residents constructed belonging to past communities to create feelings of comfort and help process this loss (Ahmed, 2015). Residents can (and did) experience belonging to different places or times (May, 2017). For example, many existing residents created a sense of belonging to a past Rookwood.

Similarly, incoming residents found it difficult to attach belonging to Rookwood and often expressed feelings of belonging to other places and memories (Ramsden, 2016). The negative experiences of Rookwood in the present focused resident

belonging on more positive memories. I contend that this emphasises the resident capacity for temporal belonging and its role in processing social change (Ahmed, 2015; May, 2017).

6.2.1 "More of a community here when we was kids."

Belonging to past communities, nostalgia, and change

Themes of childhood, play, and past recollections were prevalent in several residents' narratives. This helped them form memories of a 'better' and more cohesive community, reflecting their longing for a past community (Ahmed, 2015). Residents often referred to the recent past utilising memories of their children or grandchildren. It was also common for residents to recall when they or their children could play safely within the estate's boundaries. Several residents continued to reminisce about childhood, on and off the estate. Residents used this to compare how their memories of community differed from their experiences of community within the present tense.

Several residents referred to past childhoods and used nostalgia to construct happier and safer memories of the estate. Arguably residents utilised nostalgia to cope with a sense of belonging that was diminished by the changes around them (Blokland, 2004). For the existing residents, the changes to the estate threatened feelings of safety and family; therefore, many residents sought comfort in memory:

> **Brian**: *"I think that's the only thing that's lacking on this estate now is what, what we once had, you know? Like I say, it will just be interesting now in the er couple of years to come how and see what happens, because it was a small estate and you've built more houses on a small estate."*

Brian's statement perfectly encapsulates how several residents felt about the estate; what is missing is simply "*what we once had.*" This sentiment expressed the frustration that the desired type of community felt so achievable in the recent past but was now wholly lost to residents. This highlights the influence of nostalgia

within the residents' constructions of community. The residents focused on what community 'used to be' through the recurring themes of loss and change. Several residents expressed a desire for a past community, harnessing their own memories to reconstruct a "lost past" (Ahmed, 2015, p.164). This exemplifies how nostalgia can be utilised within working-class neighbourhoods to process high levels of change (Blokland, 2004; Gustafson, 2014). The vagueness of this memory also highlights a broad assumption that the past provided something better, an uncritical reflection of what community 'was.'

Several existing residents harnessed temporal belonging through memories of the estate, where they could rely on more positive and safer community constructions. Due to the degree of change, it is argued some residents were better able to construct belonging to a past place rather than where they lived at that time (May & Muir, 2015). These memories often referred to social gatherings, family-based activities, and play within the social spaces on the estate:

> **Susan**: *"That was, that must have been, that were 30 year ago when we first came on here, so I suppose things were different now, I think, to how they are now. I don't know; it was just like all the mums knew each other, you know, everyone knew each other. Like in the summer, we would go all on the fields and play rounders and things like that, you know, there was a good sense of community then."*

Likewise, incoming residents utilised memories to construct positive images of community and belonging, which they failed to connect to Rookwood in the present tense.

> **Frances:** *"I have had like four houses. Like the one before that everybody was like, worked together…If you needed anything, there were always somebody there, and we all worked together. It was like, it was like one old lady she had lived on the street for forty-odd years, and she was going moving into a flat, because her husband had died, and we had a big street*

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party. I got all the street, you know, and we had a big street party, and it
was really nice, but it was like everybody was there for one another."

Through the recollection of past communities, several incoming residents used these memories to contrast against their current experiences. The juxtaposition of positive memories of community and the present-day Rookwood enabled residents to reflect upon why they could not connect to the estate. It also assisted residents in being able to highlight what it was they felt was lacking in the present. I suggest that this demonstrated the usefulness of nostalgia and temporal belonging for residents in understanding, processing, and coping with change. The positive feelings towards the past Rookwood were strong; however, despite a documented spike in youth crime towards the end of the research, the socio-economic landscape of the neighbourhood had similarities throughout the study. The estate had been in the top 10% of socio-economic deprivation for some time before the research and throughout its duration. This uncritical recollection of Rookwood stresses the positive capacity of nostalgia for residents (Ramsden, 2016). Therefore, the findings draw attention to the need for additional research to understand nostalgia's constructive and beneficial elements (Ahmed; 2015, May, 2017; Ramsden, 2016).

An example of this can be found within Helen's narrative. Helen returned to a previous sense of belonging to encapsulate what she felt *is* community, again using memory to recall a safer childhood. Helen had been subject to crime and violence on the estate and used nostalgia to enable her to construct belonging to a past community. It was within this past she felt that neighbours could be trusted and relied upon, in direct comparison to her recent experience:

> **Helen**: *"Where I lived when I was growing up from the age of, from the age*
> *of about eleven, the street that I lived on, it was only a small street, so it*
> *was five houses one side, a few houses more on the other, that was more*
> *of a community. Everyone looked out for each other, there wasn't an official*
> *neighbourhood watch, but you definitely knew if, and your neighbours*
> *looked out for each other. Your neighbours would watch your house if you*

went away, you could actually probably leave your front door open, and one of your neighbours would close it. Here, don't see any of that, there might be for other people around here because you see your next-door neighbour going around and speaking to them, but for me, there's… I can't get involved with this community."

Helen's narrative highlights the role of nostalgia and temporal belonging in living with crime and anti-social behaviour (Popay et al., 2003), which will be explored in more detail in the subsequent chapter. Here Helen's recollections emphasise the role of memories in constructing past belonging to address a lack of belonging within her current circumstances. Therefore "images of a stable past" can help residents to construct belonging when living in a place that has been seen to have changed or declined (Lewis, 2014, p. 6).

Several residents utilised memory and nostalgia to construct belonging and recall an ideal, lost community. However, this was not necessarily without an awareness of this process and a recognition of how an ideal community may not be possible in current times (Yarker, 2019). Liz and Susan demonstrated an awareness of nostalgia upon their recollections. This was an acknowledgement of how social change impacted their memories and thus shaped community in the present day. Liz recalled her own experiences of childhood and community when she described what activities she felt the children on the estate would benefit from:

> **Liz**: *"I think, I think yeah I do actually I think something for the kids yeah when we was younger, we had erm a playscheme kinda style thing and it was on, it was 'ont banking's[42]. Wouldn't be allowed now if it was a big metal hut it was massive, but it was nothing; it was scruffy; it was terrible - just like a man and woman who ran it for years and years and years. I went every day, after school every day, at the weekend every day, all the six-week holidays. They didn't get paid, and there was no funding; there was*

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[42] *The 'Bankings' is a local term for the sloped land on the loopline round the estate boundary that is former mining railway land see Appendix 22. Liz is referring to the play equipment and play barn that used to be situated at that location, see Appendices 10 and 32.*

nothing like that because we had to, we'd go on walks, we'd do this. You wouldn't get away with it now for the likes of you…your…for all what's involved in something like that, they'd have to be CRB'd, things like that."

Although Liz brought up the memory to help describe the activities she felt local children would benefit from, she recognised that "*you wouldn't get away with it now.*" She reflected that a lack of funding, overall suitability, and CRB checks would prevent what she experienced. However, she used the memory to help capture the feeling and sense of community she was trying to re-create in the present day.

When Susan recalled her childhood and previous estate experiences, she also reflected on memories of her lost past and ideal community. Nevertheless, this demonstrated some awareness of her nostalgia by reflecting:

> **Susan**: *"But I don't know whether that's coz I was eleven then as well, so I was a child living on the estate… I just think it's because. I don't know whether it then coz I never thought of it as me being an older person. I was a kid on the estate, you know, and then when I come back the second time, I was a young mum, sort of thing, I had just had my two younger daughters."*

Susan and Liz's consideration here indicates a degree of critical reflection within their memories; they both contemplate whether the change on Rookwood is part of broader changes due to their age and shifts in society. However, it is acknowledged that this is uncommon throughout the rest of the residents' narratives, who often romanticise past community experiences without this degree of reflection.

Despite the recurrence of nostalgia within resident recollections, there was a consensus that there had been a shift in all aspects of community on the estate, particularly in the sense of community, spaces and activities that brought people together. Several residents reflected that they had been aware of more activities

and events both on the estate and in the local area, in the recent past. However, it was noted that these had declined at a similar time to the development. I will now turn to how residents recognised this change within their narratives and how it impacted their ability to belong to the estate.

6.2.2 "Because it's all changed."
Processing and dealing with social change

As established in the previous section, past belonging and nostalgia were employed to process the changes in the area. The estate has been subject to a degree of shift throughout the research. Firstly, the estate underwent a significant physical change as the development had increased the number and type of properties. Secondly, the estate experienced a loss of community and social spaces. This was set against the landscape of much broader socio-economic change across the local area. Additionally exacerbated during the research due to austerity measures that had further reduced community provision, support, and amenities.

The language of change and loss was shared within the residents' narratives, especially long-term residents who had witnessed several waves of transition on the estate:

> **Maggie:** *"It's a hard question innit' because it's changed so much last couple of years."*

Initially, as the development first started, the change was primarily interpreted as a consequence of the new properties and incoming residents:

> **Maggie***: "Well, with all't building an' that and all't people on and er, because there was like a nice community thing, and everybody knew everybody else, but all that's changed now ant it with everybody moving in."*

Over time the change was not solely attributed to the incoming residents; the second round of interviews identified the impact of a loss of community spaces and activities. Existing residents recalled times and spaces with more community activity, which was central to how community was constructed:

> **Shauna**: *"Because the council did quite a lot in the holidays. Used to have like egg hunts and stuff like that, you know, at Easter and stuff. Now you don't hear of anything anymore."*

Several of the existing residents did not just express concern that community activities had declined but that they had stopped altogether with a sudden halt to community life:

> **Liz**: *"In fact, I can tell you there's no, there's no, no community things, nothing, well unless I've, we've not been invited to any, but there is nothing at all, you know, like there used to be. Nothing at all."*

This decline is represented in Liz's language of "nothing," which she used several times in this extract to emphasise the abrupt end of community provision on the estate. As Shauna highlighted, agencies that had previously helped organise activities had ceased to do so, withdrawing from the residents.

This is not just the experience of long-term residents; it seems that activity had declined shortly after the development was completed. Incoming residents also recalled noting a decline in community activity since moving in. Frances reflected on a decline in communication with the social landlord about community engagement:

> **Frances**: *"When I first moved in, like, ****** were sending texts to your phone all the time, you know, they were sending texts all the time like saying, there was like, dads groups going on…At some church at the bottom, they was having a bingo thing at some church, computer classes,*

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you were getting texts like that, you know, what I mean, but it kind of like,
they have weaned off."

Here the role of a Social Landlord is highlighted, particularly in areas experiencing social change and decline. It focuses on the "social" element of the landlord and their role in enabling residents to construct community and belonging to where they live (Anderson et al., 2020, p.1). Previous theory and the resident accounts have highlighted the importance of resident autonomy. Nevertheless, community spaces had been diminished to the degree that residents felt that there was "nothing" and "nowhere." In these circumstances, arguably, a social landlord has a pivotal role in supporting and enabling residents to improve community space (Tually et al., 2020). This raises a complex issue, the role of the social housing landlord in improving neighbourhood well-being is unclear (Rolfe & Garnham, 2020). The housing sector has received critique for treating its residents as easy to dismiss (Muir & McMahon, 2015). However, a social landlord is only one actor in much wider structural inequalities, the social change in the area can neither be attributed to nor solved by the landlord. For residents, however, they are likely to be the most accessible and visible in terms of providing support but also as a source of blame. It highlights both the "duty of care" of a social landlord (Mee, 2009, p.852) and the challenges and complexities of housing providers in areas subject to social decline.

Therefore, although several residents utilised nostalgia to re-create lost communities, it does not discount that the residents lived through change on the estate. Previously some theory has sought to represent nostalgia as a working-class inability to process change or embrace progression (Byrne, 2007). Nostalgia has previously been presented as a "malady" with damaging effects on well-being (Routledge et al., 2013, p.810). However, it is argued that the phenomenon of nostalgia is as complex as community or belonging. Thus, the concept may incorporate both negative and positive elements, requiring further exploration (Bonnett & Alexander, 2013).

It is also argued that the social change experienced on Rookwood hindered the residents' ability to create positive constructions of community in the present. This highlights the usefulness of temporal belonging for residents. Consequently, nostalgia becomes a means to find comfort and safety in past belonging (Ahmed, 2015). It may be that nostalgia is associated with feelings of loneliness or triggered by negative experiences. However, a growing body of research suggests that nostalgia can create positive psychological outcomes (Routledge et al., 2013). The findings also clearly evidence the combined impact of social change and negative community experiences upon residential belonging:

> **Mary:** *"Because it has all changed it, it is the like the community is split and nobody talks to anybody… And it's, there is just nothing, there is nothing at all, no communication, no community spirit, which was good on here at one time, that has all gone, nobody talks to anybody."*

Some of the residents reflected that this change was not necessarily unique to the estate but was representative of wider social change experienced in all areas:

> **Susan**: *"Yeah, yeah, it has actually, maybe it's as I have got older then, the times have changed, you know*

This echoes some of the research purposes to explore broader social change through the narratives of Rookwood. Although there was some degree of recognition of a wider social change in some of the residents' narratives, there was still a strong feeling that this change had created a decline in community within the estate. The feeling that "*it was definitely more of a community*" in the past:

> **Liz**: *"It was, years and years ago going back, it was more of a community then, everybody helped each other and things like that. Now I don't think it's community what's changed things like that. I think it's society itself, you know erm…. but I do think it was definitely more of a community here when we was kids."*

It was felt that much of this change had shifted into negative community experiences, which resulted in the residents' inability to construct belonging to the estate. The residents' narratives demonstrate the importance of community and belonging to a resident's ability to construct and create a 'home' (Ali, 2021). It also highlights that where someone lives and where they feel at home are not mutually exclusive. This is something which I explore further both in the next section and in the preceding chapter.

Additionally, it raises the issue that "elective belonging" does not adequately appraise belonging in social housing areas (Savage et al., 2005, p.29). The findings demonstrate the distinct lack of choice for residents in where they live and remain (Tunstall & Pleace, 2018). Therefore, belonging becomes a process that seeks to achieve an equilibrium between; where residents live and where they would prefer to live (Popay et al., 2003). It also makes a case for further inquiry and understanding into belonging in social housing communities (Ali, 2021; Yarker, 2019).

6.2.3 "People just lost heart with the place."

Loss and fractured belonging

As previously established earlier in the chapter, the residents believed that the loss of community spaces alongside a reduction in resident autonomy contributed to; a decline in community and a rise in crime. This left residents unable to construct belonging to the estate, utilising memory to create comfort and safety during times of change. Resident belonging became fractured, and the estate was associated with feelings of loss and decline. The overwhelming negative experiences of the estate started to lead to feelings of apathy, creating a sense that the whole estate was deteriorating. Therefore, it became challenging for the residents to be able to make a 'home' within the estate.

This feeling of despondency and total loss is effectively summarised within Mary's narrative:

> **Mary**: "*They have took everything…. and everything has just gone to pot.*"

This brief statement encapsulates the essence of the resident sentiment about the shifts on the estate. Firstly, this change was outside the resident's power and control, made by others who do not understand or appreciate the community's needs and wishes. Secondly, it captures the level of impact upon residents' lives, that 'everything' has been taken with significant consequences. A decline in community, a reduction in interaction and support, a lack of ownership, and a rise in crime contribute to the resident's inability to call the estate 'home.'

Again, this highlights the lack of choice residents exercise over where they live, suggesting further research now needs to review how this power affects belonging in social housing communities. Furthermore, the dislocation of the residents belonging demonstrates the exponential effects of community on residents' lives. What originated in dismissing the residents' desires for a community space has resulted in adverse neighbourhood effects. These have impacted crime levels, residents' well-being and belonging (Rolfe & Garnham, 2020). The long-term implications of this have yet to be realised. However, the change throughout the research reflects the wide-ranging impacts of a decline in community and belonging for residents (Oldenburg, 1997). The dismissal of residents' concerns on Rookwood is twofold, once at a local level where resident concerns about community spaces were overlooked. Secondly, this is then combined with the broader, structural exclusion of all social housing residents that enabled such practice in the first place.

As established in the previous section, residents felt that they had witnessed a decline in activities on the estate. Furthermore, the contributions of 'they' were often described as unfavourable, highlighting the importance of community amenities and facilities and the adverse outcomes deriving from their loss (Veeroja & Foliente, 2021). Additionally, the decline of involvement is not just limited to community activities; several residents felt they had experienced an actual decrease in all types of provision in the local area:

> **Mary**: *"So nothing gets done, there's supposed to be, when you had the walking Policemen and all that lot, you never see any on here. So, nobody has got any faith in, in anything on here anymore…. Very rare you see a Policeman on here."*

Therefore, illuminating the impact of social change at a localised, community-level (Crow, 2002). In this instance, this is the impact of reducing amenities and facilities on social housing communities (McKenzie, 2015). This is particularly significant to residents as many detailed their experiences living with crime and anti-social behaviour. In addition to living through austerity measures, this is amidst a wider landscape of socio-economic change (Rolfe & Garnham, 2020). The residents' narratives described a decline in support at a time when they would have expected more provision:

> **Frances**: *"No, we have had nothing, nothing since they won't have come out then…Oh, the Police said to me like, they will be sending a letter out in the post, now the insurance people said, once you have got this letter out, you write it down, you get in touch with us, but honestly it is like nearly a week now and still not heard nothing. So, I have rung the Police back today, and they went, oh yeah, we closed the case straight away; it will take about a week or two before you get your form. So, it is like, no, they have not really been bothered doing anything. Oh yeah, you see 'um flying up and down here, but not, you don't see your community bobbies, well you used to do at one time."*

As several residents had experienced crime and lived in fear of further crime, a more supportive relationship with agencies such as the Police could have positively impacted the estate. The residents' experiences reveal that whatever provision was in place fell short of many of their expectations about the service delivery they felt they needed. Reflective of how living with "housing incivilities" can impact upon resident belonging (Brown et al., 2003, p.260).

The residents highlighted a gap between their expectations and delivery, particularly in key agencies, such as their social landlord. Many of the residents were asked what contribution they felt the local social landlord should be making at this point. Several residents felt that more could be done to improve the estate and the community. This reflects the outcome of a neoliberal attempt to promote "self-government" whilst enabling a further rollback of the state (Meade & Shaw, 2016, p.39). Mary and Maggie felt strongly about this; they both stated that there was a significant gap in the provision at present:

> **Mary:** *"Making a community place, getting the community back together rather than disappearing…No, just ****** need to get off their backsides and start doing something for the community instead of just taking money off us. It's true, isn't it? Get the jobs done that they are supposed to do, come, and clean up. What do they get paid for? That's what people complain about because they are paying all this for the bin men, the Police, whatever else they are paying for, and it's not being done. You don't see the Police about, you don't see them cleaning the estate, you don't, even when you reported stuff like I say, that's been over a month, like six weeks ago, and the rubbish is all still there in the ginnels. So why don't they come and do?"*

The language Mary used here, such as "disappearing," highlighted the feeling that the estate had been abandoned. This reflects the opinion that the residents had been left to deal with the consequences of change post-development. However, it should be noted that the breadth and depth of that change and its solutions are well beyond the remit and scope of a social landlord. However, for the residents of Rookwood, the social landlord was seen as the primary instigator of this change; their perceptions of social change were therefore localised.

Residents felt this change was created on the estate outside their own will and control (Symons, 2018). Even the general appearance of the estate and essential services, such as rubbish removal, were described as waning, creating a sense of deterioration. It also signified the realities of living in an area in decline and the impact that this had on; residents' lives, their feelings about the estate, and their motivation:

Maggie: *"It all just keeps falling apart, yeah…Nothing, nothing, no…Nothing. Not a thing, no. The only things I have seen is whatever is posted, you know, on the Rookwood page on Facebook, but that is it; nobody has mentioned anything, so it has gone really quiet…. I think people have just given up, just lost heart, you know, it's, and just want out, that's it really."*

The decline of community provision, the lack of enabling spaces, and the rise of crime and negative experiences created feelings of apathy for the estate. Residents felt disconnected from others and less supported by their neighbours. An outcome of this insecurity and detachment was a general withdrawal from the wider community (Leviten-Reid et al., 2020). Liz made the distinction from feeling part of a collective community to feeling removed from other residents:

Liz: *"Because I knew everybody on this estate…all them people who, who we still talk to, but some of them lived round there, some of them lived over here, so you knew everybody and everybody kids, and all I ...... still talk to you, now even with social media, live on all different parts to the estate and never see each other, everybody. It's like, it's like every street to its own now."*

Incoming residents had previously expressed this sense of individualism and lack of trust, especially those that have directly experienced crime. The dissociation from the estate and other residents hindered positive connections. These experiences began to foster feelings of isolation and loneliness, a consequence of a lack of belonging (Lim et al., 2021). The way this affected residents, their well-being and their fractured sense of belonging highlights the human need to belong and to connect with others (Allen et al., 2021). For all the existing residents, the estate that was once home had ceased to be, and they expressed precise desires to leave:

> **Mary**: "*Them that has lived on here years wanting to get off and move away when they shouldn't have to.*"

For incoming residents, the lack of opportunity to connect to either places or people meant they had never had a chance to create a home on the estate. They could not even fall back on past belonging to the estate, thus creating a distinct dissociation with the community. This had resulted in incoming residents failing to construct belonging to Rookwood and contributed to their aspirations to leave:

> **Frances**: "*I, I thought it were okay at first and then like, as time has gone by, I am, I am very aware I don't want to be here, to be honest, I don't like it.*"

The comment; "*I don't like it,*" may also indicate that some of Frances's dissociation was not simply to a lack of established networks but her feeling that she lacked similar values and capital as other residents. The dissociation may then be centred around her wishing to dissociate her own identity with her negative perception of the estate. Therefore, Frances's lack of belonging does not simply stem from not being accepted but also not *wanting* to be accepted; "*I am very aware I don't want to be here.*"

The full impact of not being able to construct a home where you currently live will be explored in more depth in the forthcoming chapters. However, for the residents, their experiences meant that they had all voiced their wishes to live elsewhere by the end of the research. This has implications for the community's long-term sustainability and arguably a situation created through living in such challenging circumstances (Popay et al., 2003). It raises a question about how a lack of investment into communities such as Rookwood can contribute to the ongoing, wider residualisation of all social housing stock (Boughton, 2018). What happens to communities when residents feel they cannot remain there:

> **Helen:** "*They're warm, they're tidy, tidy little houses, the house, if you could actually plonk this house somewhere else, it would be quite nice for, to live in and I would do something with it then.*"

Helen's point here evidenced that belonging can be separate from the house she lived in but more associated with where the house is located. The lack of belonging expressed across all the residents' narratives starkly highlights that a house is not automatically a home (Ali, 2021; Popay et al., 2003). It further demonstrates the influence and importance of community in residents' lives, more so through times of change and socio-economic decline (Hickman, 2013; Oldenburg, 1997). It also highlights the lack of understanding about the role of belonging in social housing and the longer-term impacts of living somewhere where you feel you do not or cannot belong.

6.3 Chapter Summary

In conclusion, the knowledge that has emerged from this chapter is that; many residents experienced and constructed community through social and community space (Oldenburg, 1999). Residents also felt that this lack of community space and provision had contributed to a rise in crime and anti-social behaviour in and around the estate. A reduction in interaction, and an increase in crime, had impacted residents' feelings of belonging and community construction, with several of the residents not being able to connect feelings of 'home' or safety to the estate (Brown et al., 2003; Rolfe & Garnham, 2020). Exploring the resident narratives issues of; nostalgia, ownership, power, and control also played a crucial factor in how residents experienced and constructed community.

It was also found that a lack of these spaces, combined with reduced service provision, had lessened the opportunity for residents to interact and form social networks. Therefore, the following chapter explores how resident constructions of community and belonging relate to social interaction.

Chapter 7 - Community as social networks: "Getting along with each other"

This chapter explores how residents construct community as and through social networks. Consideration will be given to the importance of interaction with others and the factors that have reduced social contact on the estate. It will also be important to discuss the impact this has then had on the residents' ability to construct belonging. This chapter also seeks to understand the importance of building support networks over time; and the role of third places as a channel for this. The discussion concludes with an exploration of how; a lack of social interaction, and a rise in crime, had affected resident belonging and construction of a home.

7.1 Resident constructions of social networks

In Chapter 2, I explored the importance of place to enable social interaction (Oldenburg, 1999; Oldenburg & Brissett, 1982). I also previously established the significance of social networks within working-class communities in providing supportive social systems. These networks can help residents navigate the difficulties of living in areas of socio-economic deprivation (Forrest & Kearns, 2001; MacDonald et al., 2005). These networks can evolve into close relationships that enable trust and cohesion in working-class neighbourhoods (Cole & Goodchild, 2000). My findings demonstrated the importance of third places in forming and developing social networks (Sherlock, 2002). A lack of social spaces on and close to the estate significantly reduced the opportunities residents once had to; socialise, interact, and for children to play.

As the thesis has previously asserted, social networks can be an important means of how residents construct community and navigate life in low-income areas (Cole & Goodchild, 2000; MacDonald et al., 2005). This is particularly relevant on estates such as Rookwood, where resident narratives reveal the impact of living with; fewer amenities, community spaces, and a rise in crime (Cheshire & Buglar,

2016). Therefore, this underpins why social networks may have more value in lower-income areas. The research also emphasises the role of community spaces and networks in tackling other issues within social housing, such as anti-social behaviour and well-being.

I will now begin by examining the importance of social networks and the role of time in developing supportive social structures.

7.1.1 "**Knowing everybody around you.**"

Developing supportive networks over time

Many existing residents constructed community through places where people meet and come together. However, they also constructed community through the interaction and relationships with other residents (Allan, 1998). Mary described within her interview what community meant to her and detailed the importance of collective sociality in feeling part of the community:

> **Mary**: *"It means the people around you all getting together, working together, erm, knowing everybody around you."*

"Knowing" people was part of how several existing residents constructed community through social relationships. Hence, being known and knowing others was central to forming and maintaining social networks. Mary, Maggie, and Brian reflected on being "known" and "knowing" others. This highlights the importance of social networks that provide supportive relationships, particularly in areas subject to social change (Rolfe & Garnham, 2020). Knowing may also be a means of framing who is inside and outside the estate and its collective values and norms. Then being 'known' represents shared values and codes of behaviour (Somerville, 2011). Consequently, positive feelings of connection may come from 'knowing' "people like us" (Ahmed, 2012, p.102). Thus, providing a sense of belonging through self-validation.

'Knowing' other residents also contributed to feelings of safety and comfort, as I explored in the previous chapter. This, in turn, influenced constructions of both community and belonging. This reflects the importance for residents to identify with other residents to connect with others who are similar and familiar (Ahmed, 2015; Preece, 2020). Furthermore, echoing the themes of safety and security discussed in the previous chapter. There was a sense of security in the 'known' as residents became well acquainted with one another, enabling the estate to feel like a safe space:

> **Liz**: *"Because I've always lived there, it's a bit easier, you know, because I sort of know everybody…I don't think there's a best thing...I just think it makes you a bit safer…you know what I mean?"*

The value attributed to relationships with other residents was not simply centred on familiarity and comfort. Several of the residents could recount examples of caring, close relationships. This demonstrates the positive benefits of support structures formed through bonding capital and their usefulness in social housing neighbourhoods (Cole & Goodchild, 2000; MacDonald et al., 2005). The bonds between some residents had developed into networks that were found to be compassionate, providing security in another sense:

> **Brian** *"I like the people, I really do like the people, because we do look out for our own on here. Its….and if you've got a problem, then you can approach people over it, you know what I mean?"*

In this excerpt, Brian did not just talk about 'knowing' other residents but 'liking' them and placed worth on the support and reliability of his neighbours. For some existing residents, it was felt that these supportive relationships developed naturally in the long term. Close ties have been found to mature over time in working-class communities; however, bonds can be created between "insiders" (Crow & Allan, 1994, p.7). Therefore, the consequence of living near others over a period can be the creation of supportive networks:

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> **Mary:** *"Makes your life easier, you know, because like my neighbours have been there….not as long as me but nearly a….but for ten years, so we've all grown a bond with each other….Yeah, we have had a couple that have come and gone, but you know, on the street but the majority on our row we are all…..they've been there over seven years or ten years, so everybody gets on with everybody."*

These well-established bonds could also welcome incoming residents to offer support and accept new residents into the community. This contrasts with the view that working-class networks can be "inward looking" (Atkinson & Kintrea, 2000, p.93). Thus, demonstrating the importance of supportive relationships for incoming residents settling into a community (Cole, & Goodchild, 2000). As Brian[43] had already established within his narrative, part of what made the estate a community for him was "the people." Brian expanded on this by describing how he felt he had been accepted into the community and existing social networks:

> **Brian***: "Err, I think it was always together, even before I came on the estate, erm a lot of people, a few people are related to a few people on here, so you know that's gotta,' that's gotta' a big part of it. Woman round the corner, she's lived on here thirty-odd years erm (Mary). I think she's lived on here all her life, you know, everyone knows Mary, and everyone speaks to Mary, you know. I think she's the main backbone of the, of, of everything, 'cause everyone sees Mary for everything, you know what I mean? That was already here."*

Here Brian spoke about Mary and her role, portraying her as central to his acceptance on the estate and her position as the "backbone" of the community. Mary's key role is something I return to later, but it demonstrates the function of certain community members as "connectors" in developing bonding social capital (Taylor 2004, p.213). These members can then be pivotal in developing bonding social capital within the estate (Granovetter, 1973) and arguably bridging social

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[43] *At the time of this interview Brian had been residing on the estate for approximately 3 years.*

capital too, which I return to later in the chapter. Brian continued to describe the positives of moving onto an estate with a strong supportive social network and how this had benefited him, enabling him to feel part of the community:

> **Brian***: "I don't know. You just sorta' adapt to that because it just makes that easier, if you know what I mean? Less stressful, and I think where the community came together, it's got a lot to do with the the older residents here you know where they've, they've, they've done that. They've, they've erm…everyone looks out for everyone's kids, and if one of the kids has been out of order, you just go to the parents, parents sort it out, you know what I mean? I think, and, and I think the community spirit comes from the older residents that have been on here for years."*

Brian described how the existing social network reduced the "stress" of moving into a new area and created a "community spirit," indicating the inclusive capacity of community. If Brian felt accepted, this indicates there may be residents who were not accepted, which would separate Rookwood into "us" and "them" (Billington et al., 1998, p.171). This could have been pivotal to the success of the integration of incoming residents. Brian refers to "*you just sorta' adapt*" in reference to fitting into existing networks within the estate. Again, this relates to achieving collective community through shared norms and values by being inside accepted behaviour codes. Brian had connected with longer-term residents with established networks, reflecting their insider status and possibly the ability to 'accept' incomers like Brian. Nonetheless, by the time the development was completed, many of the resources and spaces that the existing network had relied upon had been lost. The impact of this loss will be explored in more detail in the next section.

At the first interviews, Cliff and Mary had both lived on the estate for 30 years and 20 years, respectively. From their narratives, that of other residents, and my own working experience, they both appeared central to the estate's support networks. They were both often pivotal in organising events and supporting other residents. Cliff also placed importance on more informal interactions from a "friendly

distance" (Ahmed, 2012, p.102). As he termed, Cliff saw these everyday exchanges as part of being a "good neighbour." This casual interaction and more bonded social ties were central to how Mary and Cliff experienced and constructed community.

Being 'known' and being part of the community through multiple relationships was also central to Cliff's community constructions. He likened his home to a "café" where various family members, friends, and workers from local agencies called in:

> **Cliff**: *"We had a house full last night…Yeah, yeah, the community's bobbies they come in, ***** come in, XXXX come in, the knitting club come in, erm oh yeah X comes in nearly every other night."*

I argue that Cliff's home organically evolved into a third place for the estate, the type of informal social space that helps form a "grassroots community" (Goodchild, 2008, p.234). As well as a large extended family, it was also important to him that the estate remained a safe place for all children. He felt that part of his responsibility as a "good neighbour" was to ensure all children were watched over:

> **Cliff:** *"No, err, I'm called the lollipop man…Coz I give all the kid lollies…when they behave…I buy two bags a week."*

This again returns to the importance of the estate identity as both 'family friendly' and safe. Cliff's narrative details that he and his wife had been active participants in the local area throughout his life, often volunteering and running community groups and activities. Their age and health had not stopped their community involvement, with both still engaged in several local groups:

> **Cliff**: *"Yeah, well I'm, I go to the gardening and then on a Friday they have a keep…. A ****** club. They go out for out for walks and things like that, which I can't do 'cause I am in the X, so I just nip in now and again, but the gardening club on a Thursday, then they have the café on a Tuesday."*

Similarly, Mary had been highly active on the estate, organising activities for children and running a community group. These activities enabled Mary and Cliff to be 'known' by so many residents and create a pillar from which wider networks developed. Mary and Cliff were "public characters" found at the centre of social networks, caring for others and bringing them together (Oldenburg, 1997, p.8). Both Mary and Cliff evidenced the impact of time on developing strong social networks on the estate and the role of certain residents in being instigators and facilitators of activity and socialisation. They acted as "catalysts" who developed bridging and bonding social capital, enabling and empowering other residents to collaborate (Taylor, 2004, p.213). The role of these residents was central to how community was constructed on the estate and were vital to the supportive networks that had been formed over time, resulting in close bonds. This is reflective of how traditional working-class communities are often represented; living together with strong and supportive networks (Young & Willmott, 2013):

> **Mary:** *"We all get on together an…just that, we all get on together, and we are like family on that street."*

Both Mary and Cliff connected with residents of different ages, uniting people and linking them to activities and groups outside the estate, possibly creating both bridging and bonding capital. This arguably developed bridging social capital by forming wider social networks beyond Rookwood (Aldrich & Meyer, 2015). It is worth noting that Mary had withdrawn from social activities by the final round of interviews due to a lack of venue space, and Cliff had sadly passed away. Although a wide range of factors impacted the reduced social interaction on the estate, the loss of Mary and Cliff as centrally involved residents had likely contributed to this. Their presence, and their use of third places, created more diverse social networks through bridging social capital (Portes, 1998). Therefore, decreasing the scope and potential of the networks on the estate once their role was diminished. There is an implication that due to their established insider status and their ability to connect with those both inside and outside of the estate, the loss of Cliff, Mary and Brian may have diminished the bridging capital within the

estate. This poses the question does this then contribute to more inward-looking capital as the development progresses.

For many residents, the relationships developed went beyond being neighbourly, maturing into significant and close ties with those around them. Mary describes that these relationships then became; "like family." Thus, demonstrating the importance of supportive and caring networks in the construction of community (Cockerham et al., 2017). For some residents, this means the most important networks and relationships were centred around actual family members:

> **Liz**: *"No, the fact that I've got such a big family on there is a different situation because we have me mum next door. Me mum then I have I have a sister who's not gone, and so they do live facing me, and I have me nana, so I am next to all me family. So that sort of, I think…. that road where I live now, they all live there, so that sort of is like a community in itself."*

Liz described how she constructed community within kin relationships enabled by living in proximity to several family members through a "parochial network[44]" (Cattell, 2004, p.150). Both Mary and Maggie also described the importance of living close to family and their significance on the estate's networks (Rogaly & Taylor, 2009). In reflecting on what makes community Mary detailed the role of close relationships in her constructions of community; living near to family and friends was central to this:

> **Mary**: *"If I moved, if I moved away from here, I know for a fact that they will follow because they need me as much as I need them. So, like family and close friends, like I made a lot of friends on here."*

Moving closer to family was also a deciding factor for incoming resident Frances to take a property on the estate, and she cited this as her primary motivation. Thus,

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[44] *Parochial networks are small, often primarily comprised of extended family members (Cattell, 2004)*

highlighting the influence and importance of family networks and positive relationships that are based on trust and solidarity (Cole & Goodchild, 2000):

> **Frances**: *"It's, just, I only moved over here because my daughter lived over here, so, and I didn't like it where I were to be quite, that was rife in drugs, so I just wanted to get out… They like the house; they like the fact that their sister lives over, next, next, like in next street."*

Like Mary, Frances used "they" to refer to her wider family, specifically her children. Frances described her children's preferences for remaining on the estate, which conflicted with her own. This, therefore, reveals her personal motivations as a mother in her decision to stay on the estate.

Moving into an area with family members living in proximity enables residents to bring with them existing, familiar, and trusted relationships that can offer social interaction and support (Young & Willmott, 2013). However, several of the new residents did not have existing family or friends in the area, so had sought to build relationships with other residents:

> **Helen**: *"He's a tough guy next door, he is, but I do get on with him quite well, so yeah, fine, fine with him, and this is a new couple next door here, he is an American, and I think he works late quite a bit. We very rarely chat to each other, it's just a quick hello, but yeah, the neighbours are lovely, really nice."*

> **Emma**: *"I don't have any family, but I have got friends. My neighbours are fabulous; they are a young couple next door; I think they are really good role models because they are a young couple with a child. And then got Sri Lankan family next door, they are nice. And then there is a lady on the end. And, and, when I have gone out and spoken to people, they are people that probably would like to volunteer and get involved in stuff if there was stuff going on."*

Both Emma and Helen described their neighbours as "nice" and " lovely" in favourable terms but indicated that these relationships were surface level. This distinguishes their interactions with the close ties the existing residents have described. The exchange was little more than a "quick hello," as Helen stated. Emma indicated that some residents might want to be more involved, but she was prevented by a lack of opportunities within her account. Emma and Helen's narratives emphasised the contrast between existing residents' networks with incoming residents' social relationships. The former creates more well-established networks through close ties to family and friends. These relationships developed over time and helped create support structures that could offer security and familiarity that help navigate life on a social housing estate (MacDonald et al., 2005). There may be merit in more practical, everyday interactions, like those that the incoming residents had experienced (Sherlock, 2002). However, these were less likely to offer the bonds and support existing residents had shared within their networks.

Earlier in the chapter, the importance of being 'known' was discussed, and the relevance of 'knowing' people who are 'like me.' The shift in relationships on the estate may represent the reduction in feeling that the greater mix of residents has reduced shared values and social codes. This may also mean that it is more complex and challenging to connect with incoming residents and those who are not "like us" (Ahmed, 2012, p.102). Therefore, this could reflect the importance of shared values and behaviour in connecting with others and constructing community (Sommerville, 2011).

For example, some of the incoming residents, like Emma, expressed a desire to be more connected with others. In contrast, Helen indicated that she was more satisfied with more practical connections of "limited liability" (Corcoran, 2008, p. 279). This reflects the capacity of networks in working-class communities to be complex and nuanced (Crow et al., 2001). The different experiences for residents and the evidence of bridging and bonding capital contest the view that working-class networks are limited, whilst those in more middle-class areas are beneficial (Matthews & Besemer, 2015).

For both existing and incoming residents, longer-term, closer, and highly supportive social networks were more likely to contribute to positive constructions and experiences of community. For all residents, there was a strong suggestion that for these networks to have the potential to be developed but also maintained, the community needed spaces and opportunities to come together (6, 2004; Taylor, 2004). Therefore, the next section will explore the role of such spaces in social networks and interaction.

7.1.2 "Getting to know each other."

The importance of the third space in developing networks

Residents viewed social spaces and community venues as places that could facilitate social interaction and build social networks (Hickman, 2013; Oldenburg, 1997). This was seen as especially important post-development, as many existing residents felt networks develop over time. Many residents constructed community through relationships. Thus, without appropriate social spaces, several residents noted a decline in social interaction and 'community itself' within the estate.

Several residents, both incoming and existing, associated strong social networks with what community *is*. It was also felt that time and length of residence were important in forming and maintaining networks. As there was an influx of new residents within the development, several residents felt that there had not been yet the time or the space to; "get to know each other." As Mary reflected in her narrative:

> **Mary:** *"Yeah…I think we had a good community at one time, but it's all falling apart now because people are moving, and you've got new people coming on, and it all falls back down to there's nowhere for us all to get to know each other."*

Mary continued to consider that because there was "nothing" in terms of social space, events, or community facilities that; "nobody's communicating." Arguably a

complete "lack of connections" can have detrimental impacts on residents (Preece, 2020, p.837). Therefore, the estate had begun to miss even the most "simple exchanges" with other residents (Yarker, 2019, p.540). Even these more informal, everyday interactions could have yielded more positive constructions of community and belonging.

In particular, Maggie, Mary, Susan, Liz, and Cliff valued community spaces that can facilitate interaction with other residents and agencies. Maggie talked about her previous positive experiences of using a community centre:

> **Maggie***: "Well, it's just things like you pop in and sit an' have a brew an a chat you find out what's going on in the community an just, rather than like letters through your door or word of mouth you don't feel as involved that way, do you? …Yeah, plus it's like, we, we, we used to get loads of young mums an that there were stuck in the house all day, it was somewhere for 'em to go meet people. And you used to get a good atmosphere in 'em, plus like the housing were there, and they had their input, and everybody knew what was going on, so we liked it."*

Maggie considered that a central community meeting point could be a means to get residents "out of the house" to engage with others and stay informed. Indeed, such spaces have been found to reduce levels of social isolation, particularly for young mothers (Cattell, 2004). Within her narrative, Susan reflected on how she formed relationships with other parents when she first lived on the estate. Similar to Maggie, Susan also highlighted the importance of social spaces for mothers:

> **Susan:** *"I suppose if there was parks, you would get to know the mums because if you had moved on here, if you were, a young girl moved on here, and you didn't know no one, you would be isolated really because there is no one of your, where would you go, you know? There's a group down at the centre, but I don't know whether they're still doing that, but other than that, you, you wouldn't know anybody or where to go to meet anybody, no."*

In reflecting on the absence of community spaces, Susan also used "isolated" to describe how an incoming resident could feel without places to go or people to interact with. This reflects the importance of community spaces in reducing isolation and building networks (Lee & Tan, 2019). Susan continued to consider this situation; it was a simple equation for her; as the level of residents increased, then so did the need for community resources:

> **Susan**: *"They put more families onto the estate; you can't expect to put people onto an estate with more families and still not provide no resources for 'em, you know."*

The findings presented here build upon those in Chapter 6 to establish the significance of families and children within residents' community constructions. The formation of the estate's identity as a welcoming place for new families that could offer supportive relationships was important to several residents. Liz also discussed the value of being involved for new families who could have benefited from supportive networks when moving into "unknown places" (Preece, 2020, p.837). Liz reflected that without the social spaces Rookwood had once benefitted from, she had noticed a decline in interaction and communication on the estate:

> **Liz**: *"If their families are being, you know, left out of something or feel like they are, and then you get involved in something, I think it is a place where people can go as well because I don't speak to nobody. We come home from work, come in, and that is it, nobody at all, but so I am not speaking to other parents."*

As I have ascertained in the previous chapter, all residents felt there was a lack of events, spaces, and activities within the neighbourhood. Incoming residents made comparisons with places they had lived in beforehand, and existing residents recalled a past Rookwood. They were using memory to remember spaces that had previously enabled social interaction. All the residents reflected that a lack of community spaces and activities had resulted not just in a decline of interaction

between residents but that it had halted altogether. This situation was summarised adeptly by Liz:

> **Liz***: "No one knows each other, and there's no involvement, there's nothing to, for anybody to get involved."*

Mary also reflected that she felt the community had withdrawn and declined without third spaces and community events as residents were unable to "communicate," interact, and develop relationships. This demonstrates the role of the third place as a "port of entry" where incoming residents can connect with others and develop supportive relationships (Oldenburg, 1997, p.8). Mary was asked what she felt the impact the loss of community spaces had on the estate's social networks. Mary then described; not only a lack of interaction but a deficit in the supportive attachments those networks can bring:

> **Mary**: *"It's affected it because nobody's getting, nobody's meeting together and doing things together. It's just like passing in the street and saying hello or meeting round at the school when you are taking the kids. There's no bond there like it used to be."*

From an incoming resident's perspective, Emma described how she would have expected more community spaces, activities, and involvement from local councillors. Emma had experienced and utilised such spaces and resources in other areas and expressed disbelief regarding the lack of such amenities on Rookwood. Emma expected "ports of entry" to Rookwood to be available (IBID). Emma also discussed these resources when asked what makes a community; she described connections and belonging. She also attached this to the locations and opportunities that enable residents to 'come together,' as was common across the resident narratives:

> **Emma:** *"It means being connected, and you know, people coming together and a sense of that belonging in that area and for a, for an area like this, I would think there would be community hubs, community cafes, you know,*

things going on, residents' meetings, local councillors being visible and active, that's what it means in these kind of areas for me, but I haven't seen that here."

Emma's experience contrasted with existing residents' memories of interaction and relationships on the estate. These memories recalled when everyone was "known," and there were regular, positive opportunities for residents to interact. It indicates that successful third places can, and do, exist within working-class areas, highlighting the positives they can bring to a community (Oldenburg, 1999). Furthermore, Emma's account reflects how previous positive community experiences can make moving into a different area challenging, notably if the new neighbourhood lacks social spaces and interaction, which can be isolating (Preece, 2002). As Liz has previously reflected, she had a strong family network on the estate and lived there herself for a lengthy period. However, Liz also commented on how much more difficult life could be with limited interaction as an incoming resident:

Liz: *"Yeah, I would imagine that more so with the new people now because they probably don't mingle and make friends."*

When asked if she felt part of a community on the estate, Frances reflected that she was detached because she did not have the relationships that would enable her to construct a community through a network. This indicates the role of social spaces in connecting residents and reducing isolation (Fong et al., 2021). However, Frances did not position this as her choice, as she stated she felt more could be done to create a community on the estate:

Frances: *"No, coz I don't, I don't really know people. Like I say, I keep myself to myself, really, but it's just, I think more needs to be done as a community…In the community. More needs to be done."*

It is difficult to know whether the diverse types of residents would have taken the time and space to connect if given the places. The importance of shared values

and norms in community and belonging has previously been discussed (Sommerville, 2011; Ahmed, 2012). It is hard to know whether the location to facilitate connection is as important as the human drive to identify with those who are familiar, those who represent ourselves (Crow, 2018).

It was clear; however, it was felt that more was needed to create community spaces within the estate that could have facilitated interaction for many of the residents. The residents felt that some form of community base would have had the potential to foster more supportive networks over time. This reflects the potential for third places to provide an "important resource" for local communities (Hicks & Lewis, 2019, p.819). Without those spaces, the opportunities for interaction had been removed; therefore, residents were unable to construct community either through place or relationships with other residents:

> **Susan***: "There is not a big, no, I wouldn't say there was a big community thing here, but there is nothing as well for us to do on the estate, nowhere to go. So that you could do, like if we had a youth club or something like that or, I don't know, anything really."*

Susan's statement of "anything really" encapsulated that many residents did not feel that there was simply a decline in community space; they felt there was "nothing." No community spaces, no agency support, no resources, and consequently no interaction and social engagement. Again, this demonstrated that even within a willing community, some resources and space are required to enable that community to come together. This indicates the failure of approaches to roll back intervention and promote "active citizenship" to facilitate 'community' in working-class areas (Raco, 2005, p.327). The lack of support for residents on Rookwood to access resources that would both enable and empower the local community ignores wider structural issues. This then places the entire responsibility, and therefore blame, on the individual resident (Cameron, 2006). It

also signified a marked departure from the original visions of the estate[45] and the importance of social places in the built environment (Finlay et al., 2019).

Susan's stance here really captures the value of community spaces within the estate and the vital role in residents' lives. Hence several of the residents failed to understand why they were not planned into the development of the estate:

> **Susan**: *"They are still building; they are just not taking into consideration, maybe they are just thinking, well we will just get the rent, and that's it, we don't need to worry about anything else, but you are not going to get no community spirit then are you? If you just think like that because this, because they have had playthings on here before, so there is no reason why you can't build another. It's a shame, really."*

As I explored in the previous chapter, the consequence of this was not just impacting the residents' ability to construct community and belonging to the estate. The ultimate consequence for many residents was that; an increase of families amidst a broader backdrop of austerity had created an extremely specific set of circumstances that led to a rise in crime and anti-social behaviour. This further impacted the residents' ability and motivation to interact.

Several residents highlighted the importance of social spaces and facilities in forming and developing networks. However, it was not the only cause cited for a decline in interaction on the estate. Residents also expressed concerns that the rise in crime and anti-social behaviour had impacted the willingness of residents to interact and socialise, which will now be examined.

7.2 The role of interaction on resident belonging

The findings revealed that direct experiences of crime, anti-social behaviour, and the fear of crime impacted resident belonging. Perceptions of crime and insecurity

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[45] *See appendices 33 and 34 for the planning documentation detailing the social and community spaces on the original estate, including; play areas, landscaping, shops, and open space*

negatively affected several of the resident's willingness to remain on the estate. Both existing and incoming residents reflected on the impact of crime upon their belonging and expressed wishes to leave the estate and live elsewhere.

The lack of supportive social structures, fear of crime, and isolation impacted the residents' ability to feel at home on the estate. This theme particularly evidences the links between place, networks, and belonging on the residents' experiences and constructions of community. A lack of social space, and a reduction in interaction, coupled with a rise in crime and isolation, led to the ultimate consequence of residents being unable to feel 'at home.'

7.2.1 "Just keep yourself to yourself."
The impact of crime, "trouble," and interaction

Within the third chapter, I established the potential impact of experiencing crime and anti-social behaviour on social networks and interaction. It was highlighted that a rise in crime in deprived neighbourhoods could heighten fear, making residents reluctant to interact and socialise (Cheshire & Buglar, 2016). In Rookwood, concern and anxiety over crime and anti-social behaviour had contributed to residents retreating to the relative safety of their own homes (Bailey et al., 2012). For several residents, this meant reducing their social networks to relationships only within their family to preserve a sense of safety and security (Crow et al., 2001). It will also be discussed how this preservation was not simply physical, but that a dis-identification with the estate's negative elements and people helped preserve a more positive sense of personal sense of identity.

As discussed briefly in the first section, existing residents saw the estate as a relatively low crime area within the initial round of interviews. Any threats to the safety and security of the estate were viewed as mainly external. Both Brian and Maggie used words like "safe," "comfy," and "familiar" to describe what they liked about living on the estate. Demonstrating the interaction between feelings of safety, belonging and home (Yuval-Davis, 2006). These aspects formed part of the

early constructions of community, which some residents felt were unique to the estate:

> **Brian**: *"You know, you don't get that in many places; that's why I like Rookwood so much, yeah? I think that's it round here; you can walk out your door and feel alright, you know, that's my opinion."*

The 'knowing' amongst most existing residents discussed earlier in the chapter contributed to feelings of safety and security. However, another critical factor was the social code that Brian termed "keeping yourself to yourself," which he referenced several times throughout his narrative:

> **Brian:** *"It keeps itself to itself, which is good, you know? I mean, we've lived here three and half years and, and we have never really had an altercation with any residents round here."*

Keeping yourself to yourself was about not seeking to disrupt other residents, a respect for the norms of the estate and abiding by this code equated to maintaining minimal levels of 'trouble.' Previously those who created 'trouble' were seen as outside of the social norms on the estate. Therefore, these residents became excluded from the estate's social networks (Ahmed, 2012). It was felt that Rookwood was a relatively peaceful and safe place to live. At that time, residents could construct belonging through connections to others who embodied the same values (Plamper, 2010). Issues or disputes were rare, and if they occurred, they were often resolved internally and quickly:

> **Brian:** *"Nah, that's pretty much it, you know? We - everyone, keeps themselves to themselves, they don't push their problems onto you, or they don't make unnecessary disruption for everyone else, you know? Erm…and if they did, someone's gonna say sommat and then that's it, you know what I mean things just don't drag on round here. You know, if there's any issue between neighbours, the neighbours will argue it out or talk it out, and once that happened, that's it; it doesn't go on an on. Whereas on other estates, it*

does go on and on and on, whereas on here it's different, and I think it's
because it's a small estate to comparison, you know?"

The confidence from well-established relationships and supportive networks within a small estate represented the 'known.' This created comfort for some residents by living with others "like them" (Preece, 2020, p. 834). However, the development alongside incoming new residents and a bigger estate represented the 'unknown.' Therefore, highlighting the capacity of the well-established networks on the estate to exclude and other, 'outsiders' (Paddison, 2001). In the first round of interviews, both Brian and Maggie raised concerns about whether incoming residents would cause 'trouble.' However, it was felt that this would not be tolerated on the estate and those seeking to cause 'trouble' would not fit in with the local community:

Brian: *"It will be interesting to see how it happens, and I do feel for most of the new residents, you know, I'm not saying they have to keep themselves to themselves, but like come in…. keep themselves to themselves they find Rookwood like everyone else finds Rookwood an easy estate to live on. Erm, if they starts causing trouble or making a name for themselves, don't think they'll last. That's, that's my personal opinion, you know it's erm, like anywhere really you start, trying to make name for yourself or kicking off all the time or anything like that, you ain't gonna' last. Either councils gonna' force you out or other residents are gonna' force you out, do you know what I mean?"*

During my time on the estate, residents seemed reluctant to approach agencies to assist in resolving issues. This demonstrated the value placed on solving problems internally and residents relying on the code of "keep yourself to yourself." This indicates that those who lived outside the estate's code would not be welcomed into the networks; they would not be simply social excluded but physically removed. The willingness to permit outside agencies in this process highlights the importance of removing 'trouble' and those that cause it. This reflects a negative side to the strongly-bonded networks I first encountered at the beginning of the research: the bonding capital's exclusionary capabilities between the existing

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residents and its power to cast out 'others.' As Brian noted, it was felt those causing trouble would be removed, either through other residents or with support from outside agencies, if required. 'Trouble' in itself is a relatively vague term, which could be translated into code for those who do and do not belong, splitting the social networks into "us" and "them" (Billington et al., 1998, p.171).

However, by the second round of interviews, the crime and anti-social behaviour had risen to a level that the community appeared unable to deal with internally. Interestingly, Brian, who was quite a central figure for the estate, who had encouraged others not to make trouble, had moved away. This was possibly a loss of another key "catalyst" resident to maintain the social codes of the estate (Taylor, 2004, p.213). In Brian's absence, the principle of "keeping yourself to yourself" had to be adapted. The code became a means for many residents to withdraw from interaction; avoid the risk of crime, and distance themselves from those causing 'trouble':

> **Shauna**: *"No, no. Just keep myself to myself…I don't know; I just think they are all trouble causers. So, I just distance myself from them. I just sit in here and keep myself out of it."*

Similar to Brian, Shauna is making clear distinctions between insiders and outsiders; but who are the trouble causers? Shauna is an existing resident and within her narrative discussed witnessing a rise in crime, anti-social behaviour, and drug use which she found; "disgusting." The choice of words here and tone suggest that Shauna cast a moral judgement on those who cause 'trouble.' Shauna also sets herself apart from this by using "distance." This distance is not simply proximity but her distinction is in terms of her identity, that she is separate from the tainted identity of 'trouble.'

Shauna uses the same terminology as Brian, but in a different context, to withdraw and protect herself from 'trouble.' It was important for many residents to "dis-identify" with this criminal behaviour and the broader, negative perception of the estate (Preece, 2020, p.336). Likewise, incoming residents wished to distance

themselves from 'trouble' and used similar language to describe how they sought to create space between themselves and crime on the estate:

> **Frances**: *"I keep, coz I am not from up here, I really tend to keep myself to myself anyway. Kids don't really go out and mix with anybody, but yeah, the old lady over there, I have helped her a few times, like, she is just widowed, so I have helped her a bit and, other than that, I keep myself to myself."*

Experiences and perceptions of crime had also affected the degree to which incoming residents wanted to get involved or interact with other residents. When this was combined with a lack of local connection to the estate, it discouraged newer residents from socialising:

> **Helen:** *"I really don't want to get involved in it in all, honestly. Just that, I honestly do come in, close the blinds, and that's it, and I have just got my son here, and he does exactly the same, so it's like being in, not being here, if you know what I mean."*

However, existing residents were also affected and noted how the rise in crime had contributed to a reduction in interaction, thus, demonstrating that withdrawal from social interaction can be a consequence of living with high crime (Popay et al., 2003). Maggie initially described how she felt safe and familiar on the estate. By the second interview, the crime levels had affected her sense of security and how she socialised and interacted with others:

> **Maggie**: *"…and yeah, and she's mentioned like gangs of people and that they are like, personally me, nothing Coz like I said, I don't, I don't even walk to the shop…For me personally, I don't feel safe here; that's why I have stopped going out, like I said, to the shop and that."*

It should be acknowledged in a piece about the impact of the othering of social housing residents those who are othered through the resident's narratives. The study sought to "bring forth voices" that have gone unheard (Heslop & Ormerod,

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2020, p.148), and it must recognise the voices of Rookwood that remain unheard. Those who sit outside Brian's social code of "keeping to themselves" go unheard within the research; latterly, so do the young residents of the estate who are associated with criminality. These 'outsiders' cannot give their narratives; the research can only reflect on their exclusion through the substantial bonding capital present in resident accounts early in the study and the desire for all residents to dissociate from 'trouble.'

The previous chapter highlighted the importance of play, children, and childhood within resident narratives. Part of how residents constructed positive experiences of community was through safe places for children to interact and play. As well as those spaces being significantly reduced, it was also felt by several of the residents that the estate, in general, was no longer a secure environment for children. Therefore, some residents had sought to reduce when and where their children could play:

> **Mary:** *"So X doesn't let her kids play out, and I don't let my grandkids play out, next door, she has kids, but they're all older. The little one she doesn't play out of the garden; you can't do it."*

> **Shauna***: "I don't, I don't want them to play out. It is like X was crying her eyes out yesterday."*

Mary, Susan, and Frances all discussed their need to watch over children to protect them from potential risks. These sentiments again return to the themes of; childhood, innocence, and safety within the estate. Thus, reiterating the importance of play and young people in resident constructions of community. Again, it should be acknowledged here that those young people remain unheard; they are spoken for, and about, but not to during the research.

Connecting the themes of safety and childhood innocence revisits how parents had withdrawn from the wider estate to protect their families from increasing crime levels (Brodsky et al., 1999). This restates the concerns about the importance of

safe places for children. These spaces needed to strike a balance between; a degree of freedom to play whilst still being safely observed by responsible adults.

In the second round of interviews, these concerns were also voiced about older children. Susan, Helen, and Frances all reflected on their older children being reluctant to socialise with others of a similar age on the estate. This was primarily attributed to fear and anxiety of crime and a perceived threat of "gangs" of youths. Both Susan and Frances discussed the impact of crime in the area on their teenage sons:

> **Susan**: *"I think he is at that age now; he is frightened to go out sometimes, 0especially, you know, on the estate, there is a lot of gangs and that, and I don't want him out."*

> **Frances:** *"And now my lad, he is 14-year-old at the end of t'day, he's frightened stiff of going to bed on his own now at night. He is getting in my bed, which he shouldn't be doing, he is 14-year-old, but it has frightened him."*

In the second round of interviews, fear of crime and feeling unsafe and "frightened" was prevalent across most of the residents' narratives. Previous research has indicated that fear can play a pivotal role in withdrawing from social spaces and interaction, particularly for women (Plane & Klodawsky, 2013).

Many of the residents connected this fear and feeling of insecurity as a contributing factor to why they felt involvement and interaction on the estate had declined:

> **Susan**: *"People just don't want to get involved, you know, whether they are frightened or what it is going be or what, I don't know."*

Helen also used her interview to describe how her son did not even feel safe "*walking round the corner.*" Helen expressed how she thought she had struggled

to find a place on the estate due to her experiences of crime. She then concluded that she somehow did not 'fit' within the estate, reflecting on her feelings of difference and separation from other residents:

> **Helen:** *"…maybe I am a little bit too snobbish and not been brought up, coz a lot of the people that live around here and even a lot of the new people as well, are people who have lived in social housing and ****** as well. And it's a little bit frightening in all honesty, from the background I am, and I am trying not to be sort of like stereotypical myself, social housing is all people from what I have seen, it pretty much is, it is every man for themselves round here. They are only community-spirited when they need to be community or want to be community-spirited. So, for me, I don't think anything; I think because I am hell-bent on actually moving out of the place, it's, it's not something I want to get involved with."*

Here Helen reflected upon her status as an outsider. Helen considered if her lack of experience living within social housing had contributed to her lack of belonging and low toleration of 'trouble' on the estate. She made it clear that she did not wish to interact with other residents within her narrative. Helen was also keen to distance herself from the "type" of people she perceived would want to live and remain on the estate. This represented her attempts to withdraw from the estate, to separate her own identity from the 'tainted place' of Rookwood (Slater, 2018). Helen wishes to be explicit in her separation of herself from those she others as the 'type' of people who 'should' remain on the estate, therefore propagating stigmatising narratives of social housing residents. This is Helen's rejection of a particular class identity and position (Skeggs, 1997). Through Helen's judgment of others, she can distance herself from them and their status (Valentine & Harris, 2014).

Although Helen sought to distance herself through her outsider status, none of the residents interviewed wanted to be associated with the crime on the estate. Throughout the interviews, it was clear all residents were concerned about the levels of crime and shared their difficulties living with it. Existing residents Shauna

and Liz and returning resident Susan also considered why they felt "different" from others around them. All three women reflected on feeling different or isolated because they chose to work and not participate in anti-social behaviour:

> **Liz:** *"I think working….and…. you're like a minority…. you what I…. being a normal working-class family like there's only us on our street that gets up and goes to work in a morning……on my, my side of the street."*

> **Shauna***: "I can't, I can't sit in the back garden coz it just stinks, I can't stand the smell of it me, I don't like it…Oh yeah. It is like half seven in the morning till three in the morning…Yeah. I would love to know how they afford it coz they don't work…No, I don't want to know. See, this is why I distance myself from everybody round here because they all do it."*

Insider and outsider distinctions will be re-visited subsequently. In this instance, residents place importance on; keeping out of 'it,' keeping away from 'it' and at times othering 'it.' So, that 'it,' and it being 'trouble,' is separated from a resident's sense of self and therefore unable to taint their own identity. It appears that many residents felt anti-social behaviour had become the new social code of Rookwood. This would then replace 'keeping yourself to yourself' and thus situate many residents outside the altered norms of the estate. Again, highlighting the importance of being able to connect to others with similar values when forming social networks (Ahmed, 2012; Plamper, 2010). Here the residents incorporate what they are *not* to define their position and identity. Liz's account is one of the rare times a resident names class; she positions herself as 'working-class' and uses the term 'norm' and stresses that she is in employment. The implication here is that there is an 'other' on the estate that is, therefore, not 'normal.' Liz uses employment to distinguish between her working-class status and a lower, under-class position.

Consequently, 'keeping yourself to yourself' became a means of self-protection in multiple ways. Indeed, several residents reported a rise in individualism over

collectiveness. Helen explained how this impacted on her feeling of community through a retelling of when her cat went missing:

> **Helen**: *"I had a cat… If that was me, if that was me, and I know if that was, it would have been me living at home with my parents and the community we had lived in; they would have been straight round and said something. Somebody has seen something for; definitely, I put leaflets all through the doors, somebody has seen something, for definitely. It was ten, it was ten days later, and she was found buried under some snow, like right over the way there. As far as I am concerned, community spirit is actually just being a little bit honest and saying, I am really, really sorry something has happened to your cat. It's daft…maybe, but it is just none of that. It is just like protect yourself, protect yourself."*

Within her narrative, Helen expressed the concern that her neighbour lied to her about seeing the cat and that he was involved in her disappearance. Helen's account reflects how she felt that her neighbour would rather 'protect' himself over being honest with her—accompanied with the fact that her pet cat was found dead further compounded Helen's feelings of fear and isolation.

In her narrative, Mary summarised the feeling reflected in many of the resident's narratives about their understanding of why interaction had declined. This decline was markedly so during the period between the development and the second round of interviews:

> **Mary**: *"The community that we have, to be honest, none at all, nobody, nobody really bothers with anybody anymore, you know, like it used to be? None of that anymore…It is because like people has, people don't like going out, like walking the streets. If you walk onto Rookwood, you have always gangs of them round about X, X, X and X them are the main places where they are. So, people walking past feel intimidated coz they are always up to sommert, they are always doing something. Like one day I was taking my granddaughter out dancing, as I drive down out of here, one*

of them had got soil in a pipe, and he flung it at the car, and it nearly
smashed the back window it was that hard, she was in the back of the car.
If I would have got hold of him, we did chase, me and my other daughter,
but they are all standing there laughing. They don't care whether somebody
gets hurt or anything. It is just. So, I think that is why people don't bother
with anybody anymore."

Within this account, Mary discussed her own experiences of crime, describing a feeling that there was a constant lack of regard and respect on the estate, a sense of recklessness. She continued within this segment to discuss how her daughter had stopped leaving her house empty after it was burgled: "*she doesn't like coming out of here since they robbed her.*" Mary reflected that as people were intimidated and living in fear, they had further withdrawn from social interaction with others.

When reviewing the resident's accounts, it is also essential to consider the impact of nostalgia and the residents' perception that community is 'not what it used to be.' In their earlier interviews, Cliff, Liz, and Maggie all reflected that they had seen a lack of interest in community involvement prior to the rise in crime. Perceptions of crime are not always reflective of reality and can echo concerns about social change and feelings of being out of control (Lewis, 2017). However, as I have previously established, the rises in crime and anti-social behaviour were well documented. The rise was accounted for in both news reports and police figures, including reports of theft, arson, and shootings. The resident accounts reflect the effects of residing in high crime neighbourhoods and the daily challenges this presents (Popay et al., 2003).

To belong within a place is to identify with it, and the stronger that identification, the more "inside" that place you are (Relph, 1976, p.9). This returns to the concept of belonging as those inside the accepted codes of a place and those on the outside. At the beginning of the research, the existing residents felt *inside* the estate within those codes, contributing to their ability to positively construct belonging to Rookwood. As the social codes of the estate shifted, as more

outsiders came to live in the area, these residents no longer sat within the estate either as a place or as a feeling. Outsiders are viewed as different and essentially marginalised (Elias & Scotson, 1994). This highlights the exclusionary capacity of both community and bonding capital; therefore, a place provides a source of power to exclude others and make distinctions between insiders and outsiders (Billington et al., 1998; Paddison, 2001).

It is impossible to know whether any of the residents would have been more involved to a higher degree if the threat of crime had been removed. However, the prevalence to which it is associated with an unwillingness to interact would indicate there was some connection. Consequently, the findings support research that suggests that fear and crime can reduce community interaction (Bailey et al., 2012). Furthermore, the relationship between belonging and fear indicates that crime can impact resident constructions of home (Allen et al., 2021; Fossey et al., 2020). The amalgamated impact of; crime, reduced involvement, and a lack of social space does appear to have affected the resident's experience and construction of community. It also highlights the role of supportive networks in areas subject to high levels of deprivation. Supportive relationships with others can be used as a coping mechanism to deal with the challenges in such neighbourhoods (Cockerham et al., 2017). Many of the residents' experiences of crime and withdrawal affected their well-being and long-term plans to remain on the estate. Therefore, I will now continue to explore this further and begin to examine the relationship between crime and interaction with resident constructions and feelings of belonging.

7.2.2 "It is not home."
The consequence of crime and anti-social behaviour on resident belonging

I have already detailed the rise in crime[46] between the first and second rounds of interviews on the estate. The resident experience of this crime influenced their perceptions and experiences of community. This had markedly affected their

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[46] *See Appendices 8, 23 and 29 details of the increase in crime on the estate, as well as (Rodgers, 2015a) and (Rodgers, 2015b).*

connection to the estate and their desire to remain there for several residents. Unable to leave but unable to belong, the residents became "trapped in place" (Pain, 2010, pp.8-9), revealing the lack of autonomy over their position.

The findings reflect that belonging can be constructed through "confidence in place," evolving through feelings of safety and familiarity (Yarker, 2019, p.540). In the previous section, I explored how several of the resident narratives revealed feelings of fear and insecurity attributable to crime and anti-social behaviour. Residents experienced crime to such an extent that the feelings of fear then became re-directed towards the estate and community, not just the criminal acts themselves:

> **Helen**: *"For a long period of time after me being kicked in my head, it was like, I couldn't even come into the estate without feeling fear."*

The narratives of Helen and Frances revealed that their personal experiences of crime had impacted where they viewed their 'home' *is*. Without any previous positive memories of the estate or strong social networks within the estate; they were both unable to construct Rookwood as 'home' and expressed desires to leave the area in the future:

> **Helen:** *"It's a house, it's not a home…If I had somewhere that I actually thought, well, I am home, and a home is different from a house. That I could actually call home."*

Some of the new residents felt that their houses were of decent quality. Therefore, demonstrating both an awareness, and a degree of guilt, of being unable to feel at home there. Helen reflected that she was "lucky" to have been allocated a brand-new home. However, the quality and design of a new house were not enough to make it feel like a "home" (Fossey et al., 2020). Thus, revealing the importance of safety and security in making a home for many of the residents:

> **Frances**: "*I like the house, love the house, like the garden and everything, it's just, it's like, I don't, I just don't feel, I don't feel safe, to be honest, I don't think.*"

> **Helen**: "*I really do know I have been lucky actually getting a brand new one, first social housing home, so a two bedroomed one for me and my son, it's just, I think I did hit the jackpot when I bid the actual house that I got. Without a doubt, and now that things have settled down in the community, it is a lot easier to live round here; it is just my, don't want to be here, type of thing is, which makes it hard.*"

Even though Helen noted that some of the crime had started to 'settle down,' this did not lessen her powerful desire to leave. Helen described that her new home was similar to hitting "the jackpot" in terms of quality. However, due to her experiences of crime and a distinct lack of belonging, she was unable to settle within the estate.

Likewise, Frances found that crime adversely affected her sense of belonging and 'home.' The experience had created unexpected feelings of uncertainty: "*…it has really thrown me this, it's like, well, what's next?*." Shauna summarised the conflict that she, Frances, and Helen felt about being attached to their house but not to the area it was situated in; *"If I could pick this house up and go somewhere else, I would.*" As Shauna's narrative demonstrated, feelings of dissociation and insecurity to the estate were not limited to incoming residents. In her earlier interview, Maggie stated she viewed the estate as her 'home,' a "comfy" and familiar place. However, in her second interview, she recounted several incidences of crime and anti-social behaviour and expressed her desire to leave the estate stating she was; "*dying to get out.*" This reflects the bearing of crime upon constructions of belonging and the subsequent isolation it can bring to residents (Kearns et al., 2015).

This overall view was expressed by several other existing residents and marked a swing in feelings of belonging. Long-term residents who had viewed the estate as

'home' were now looking to leave. Mary, one of the residents who has lived on the estate the longest, felt this change in feeling. This was significant as other residents had viewed Mary as central to the estate's 'community' and was now no longer able to enjoy her home or interact with other residents:

> **Mary**: *"I hate it on here, and I have lived here for like 24 years this year, this month, 24 years, there is nothing, there is nothing for the kids, nothing for us. It is like even with like with me communicating; you know what I was, I used to go all over doing all different things and, I don't do nothing now, I sit in here."*

This change in both long-term residents Maggie and Mary's feelings towards Rookwood symbolised a clear shift in the estate. Throughout my time working on the estate, residents rarely raised concerns about crime or nuisance. Furthermore, within the first round of interviews, as previously stated, the threat of crime was frequently perceived as external to the estate. However, the resident's accounts of crime, nuisance, and anti-social behaviour dominated the second round of interviews. Thus, indicating the impact of crime on residents' health and well-being (Rolfe & Garnham, 2020). For example, both Shauna and Frances discussed how their fear of reprisals and future crime affected their sleep patterns:

> **Frances**: *"Yeah, I mean, like a couple of month ago, I was finding it hard for sleep because I was up like three, four times through the night."*

> **Shauna**: *"I can't sleep, I lose sleep…I don't know what it is. I just think I worry about these at the end…causing trouble, because they keep picking on the kids, and I keep laying there at night thinking they are going to damage me car or put me windows through or something, that's what I keep thinking. I don't know why I am thinking like that, but I do, but I can't sleep at night."*

Maggie, Frances, Mary, and Liz all discussed how they had reduced their interaction to their close family that lived nearby. Therefore, reflecting the impact

fear and crime can have on connecting with others (Bailey et al., 2012). Residents' social networks had significantly reduced due to crime and a loss of social spaces. The wider, more supportive networks originally described by Mary, Cliff, Maggie, and Brian had reduced to more "socially excluded networks" (Cattell, 2004, p.150). Both Liz and Mary reflected that they felt that it was only their family ties and the responsibility associated with them that kept them living on the estate:

> **Liz**: *"So, and I have always said that I would definitely go, I would definitely move, I would definitely, but I can't, while my nanna is still there, she, I couldn't move…So I'm stuck here for a bit, but I would definitely go. Not because of anything to do with the estate, I would say, well probably, I don't know, I also would think that I would prefer to have like, a better community spirit, but I don't think that it happens everywhere, not like, I don't know, it's because we, because I was brought up with it, I don't know if it's just an age generation thing, but I would, I would definitely go to look for something like that."*

Liz's language here of being "stuck" on the estate represented how many of the residents felt, a conflict between their desire to leave yet having to remain. An example of making a "negotiated settlement;" is a precarious balance between where residents feel they should live and their actual lived experience (Popay et al., 2003, p.67). It also reflects why a more middle-class understanding of belonging is not appropriate in research such as this. Thus, indicating the need for further inquiry into the understanding of belonging in working-class areas (IBID). This again returns to being trapped in place, 'stuck' between being simultaneously unable to leave and unable to belong.

Incoming residents without close family ties to provide support seemed to be especially affected by crime and anti-social behaviour. Helen is indicative of this; she had little family living nearby and admitted she was reluctant to engage with anyone on the estate outside her home. Helen's experience of crime had altered her perception of social housing. Helen connected crime and fear with being a 'tenant' and asserted she could never feel at 'home' in a social tenancy. Her fear

of crime had impacted her ability to enjoy her house as a 'home' and establish a degree of permanence:

> **Helen**: *"I have not got everything, you know, all my nice things out because if anyone did come in and rob the place, it would be stuff that although I am going to miss, it's still replaceable, whereas I have got a lot of irreplaceable stuff that I wouldn't even put in the house…So I want to be around my old things, I want to be, you know, around my parent's things, my grandparent's things…Have those things around me, so that, so that makes a home to me, whereas this is just very, very basic, very basic. I wish it was different, I really do, but it's, it's just not, no."*

Helen's experience demonstrated that dealing with crime without supportive social networks can impact residents belonging and well-being stemming from fear and isolation (Cheshire & Buglar, 2016). Some residents came to feel like they were part of a minority within the estate. Crime and anti-social behaviour had become so prevalent that it was felt that it was widely accepted and considered the norm. This created feelings of being outside the estate's social codes, as explored earlier. Many of the residents interviewed felt they were part of a minority that regarded crime as abnormal:

> **Frances:** *"It is just when you hear about all these shootings and that, that threw me when I first moved on. It's like, all these shootings that were going on, I think, god, what am I doing here?"*

> **Shauna:** *"And I think that is why nobody likes us because we don't do it and we are not into it…that is what I say to X all the time. I just feel like the outsider because we don't go buy it and smoke it."*

In particular, Frances, Shauna, and Helen felt that they sat outside the norms of the estate and therefore did not belong there. They made moral judgements about others through the behaviour they witnessed (Valentine & Harris, 2014). These judgements enabled residents to distance themselves from their own position

(Skeggs, 1997). Arguably this is a rejection of the underclass discourse; the lowest of all social classes (Tyler, 2020).

The lack of belonging stemmed from the feeling that they were outside the estate's accepted codes and values. Frances expressed this through the belief that the majority of residents were either involved in crime or were implicit in it by "*turning a blind eye*":

> **Frances:** *"Another time, my lad was coming home from work, and he was staying here because he, I had got his little lad, coming home from work. It was like three o'clock in a morning, that petrol station, that petrol garage that used to be here, somebody was trying to rob it and he phoned the Police straight away, but it seems to be us that are like doing things and like everybody else is just turning a blind eye."*

Consequently, the adverse outcomes attached to crime did not simply stem from the actual experience of crime. Crime also created a feeling of being different, sitting outside the estate's codes of behaviour and therefore not being able to belong, despite feeling they should. This highlights the importance of bonding social capital and the importance of supportive networks in navigating the difficulties within working-class communities (Forrest & Kearns, 2001). Unable to identify and connect with others on the estate, it meant that, by the final round of interviews, all residents sought to leave the estate and live elsewhere:

> **Liz**: *"I'd, I'd go…if. I would go. Without a doubt, I would go. I'm gonna go, as soon as I sell the house in five years….and I think it's because, rather like I said, its hard work being a working-class family and still trying…..luckily I can only do that because I've been there so long so I know how to get along with people, you know what I mean whereas a lot of people wouldn't they'd look, they'd look they wouldn't like you but because I know a lot of people we can fit in all right, but I find it really hard work with the kids because…..it….it…it makes parenting harder you've not only got to do what*

you're doing with your kids but you've gotta' work ten times harder because you're up against a rolling battle."

Again, within this excerpt, as well as expressing a desire to leave, Liz spoke about knowing how to get along and fit in with other residents. However, she gave the impression that this had not been a natural fit but was more how she had adapted to life on the estate. The language used here, such as "hard work" and "battle," demonstrates the difficulties she faced in remaining on the estate and her wish to leave "soon." This was echoed by Maggie, who expressed her desire to leave in even stronger terms:

> **Maggie***: Yes, I am desperate to move, really want, want away from here, and everybody that I talk to says the same, they want off the estate…Off the estate, yeah, I mean X, my friend, she has lived there all her life, and she wants off here."*

As within Liz's narrative, Maggie's language was strong, emotive, and expressive, using terms such as "desperate," "passion," and "hate" to demonstrate the strength of her feelings. This is a glaring contrast to her first interview, where she described the estate as "home," a place she felt "comfy" and "familiar."

Although the language used by all residents expressing their lack of belonging to the estate is intensely emotive and negative, perhaps the strength of feeling is best represented in Helen's narrative. Helen's experience illuminates the difficulties faced by all the residents in making a connection to the estate and creating a 'home':

> **Helen:** *"I don't know, that is the strange thing, it's when we go from here, I haven't got a clue actually where we would like to go…. I think probably nearer town, and that's all I know, so I haven't really got a, to be honest, I haven't really got a home. That sounds awful, doesn't it?"*

Helen's experiences of crime, fear, and isolation had left her completely unable to call the estate home and settle into her new house (Kearns et al., 2015). She reiterates this several times during her interview by making an apparent distinction between the house where you live and the feeling of home:

> **Helen**: *"No, it is a stop-gap. It's definitely a stopgap. It's a house. It's not a home."*

As explored previously, Helen had been reluctant to unpack her belongings or leave any possessions of emotional connection in the house. She was prepared to leave as soon as possible and avoided developing any attachments to the house, the estate, or fellow residents. This precaution was designed to enable her to cut ties as easily and quickly as possible should the opportunity to leave present itself. This also represented that Helen's belonging possibly goes beyond making a negotiated settlement (Popay et al., 2003) but is an actual conscious act to resist belonging to Rookwood. Rather than trying to adjust in place, this becomes about dissociation, a rejection of a particular identity and class position (Skeggs, 1997). This could then translate into a refusal to belong, a rejection of 'home' therefore reflecting the emotional elements of both identity and home

This demonstrates the power of place; Rookwood is not a "neutral container" of residents but a symbolic concept, onto which residents project value and meaning upon (Paddison 2001, p.201). The feelings of wanting to leave the estate play into narratives about how social capital in working-class areas is often associated with 'getting out' (Skeggs, 1997). However, social housing residents' lack of choice and agency means they cannot negotiate a departure, leaving them confined by their own homes. The negative impacts of being unable to leave, means they have to remain in place trapped with a "chronic sense of less" (Pain, 2019, p.14). Here, the resident's experiences highlight the impact of remaining in places subject to residualisation and social change.

When considering a final round of interviews, I could not reach Helen by any means. I can only presume that she had left the area and the research project was yet another reminder of living somewhere that was not home. The changes on the

estate had been challenging for all residents, and the impact of living in an area of high crime without adequate community provision was clear. This impact was not only an inconvenience or of superficial consequence, but it had also affected resident well-being and mental health (Mee, 2009). Helen's experience represented how unsettling and emotional a lack of belonging can be:

> **Helen**: *"I haven't got a home. That's it; I am going to end up crying here, aren't I?"*

Maggie, an existing resident with previous long-standing connections to other residents and the estate, was also no longer able to construct belonging to Rookwood. Within her second interview, she also revealed strong feelings of dissociation with the estate and when asked if she felt the estate was home, she reflected:

> **Maggie**: *"The estate itself and the area? No, I hate it. I hate it with a passion, and I want to get out. I am getting old now. I need to get out."*

The strength of feeling in Maggie's response and the accounts of existing residents who had previously reflected positively on their constructions of belonging to the estate highlighted the social change experienced on Rookwood. The decline of the estate, from the resident standpoint, had gone from being a safe and familiar home with well-connected networks; to a place of crime that was devoid of community provision. This had resulted in fear, social withdrawal, and isolation, highlighting the importance and significance of community, home, and belonging for residents.

The findings reflect the need for residents to find sanctuary in their ability to make a home (Ali, 2021). When asked what would constitute home, how would Helen know she was home, security and safety were the first elements that came to mind:

Helen: *"Settled and safe…If I had somewhere that I actually thought, well, I am home, and a home is different from a house. That I could actually call home, yes definitely because with having like limited family around me as well, your community becomes your family in a way, doesn't it? You do look out for each other, and you do invite each other for Christmas dinner, and you do invite each other for Sunday dinner, so yeah, I do like that community spirit, but definitely not around here. It just, I just don't feel it whatsoever."*

Helen discussed being safe, settled, and surrounded by a supportive network and a sense of community. The resident narratives indicate the importance of social housing to provide a home beyond a 'unit' and represent a resident's fundamental right to create a home (Rolfe & Garnham, 2020). Rookwood is a localised example of how policy, social change, and practice have all combined to prevent residents from exercising this fundamental right:

Frances: *"It's never felt like home here. I don't know why; it's never felt like home."*

Echoing Frances, Helen noted that the feeling of home was lacking where she currently lived. Helen then continued to encapsulate this further by connecting belonging and home to a feeling rather than a place:

Helen: *"It has got to be a home, yeah, yeah… You have got to feel it."*

I end with Helen's experience to serve as a precis of the whole resident narrative. That narrative is that; a culmination of a lack of community space, events, interaction and a rise in crime and disorder had negatively impacted residents belonging. This meant that neither the estate nor residents' houses felt like "home." Living with anti-social behaviour and crime alongside a lack of supportive structures, networks, and resources significantly diminished the residents' positive community constructions.

7.3 Chapter Summary

The findings within this chapter demonstrate the interplay between place, social networks, and belonging in residents' constructions of community and the complexity of the concept (Ahmed, 2015; Crow, 2002). The findings evidence the importance of a location for social interaction to form networks. Therefore, reiterating the significance of third places in resident constructions of community (Oldenburg, 1999; Sherlock, 2002).

The narratives of Rookwood serve as a localised example of the impact on residents living with crime and anti-social behaviour (Popay et al., 2003). It also clearly demonstrates the role of fear and crime in withdrawing from others (Bailey et al., 2012) and how this can lead to social isolation (Kearns et al., 2015). The challenges faced by residents on Rookwood evidences the need for supportive social structures (Cole & Goodchild, 2000). Furthermore, the narrative evidences the benefits of bonding social capital in working-class communities (Forrest & Kearns, 2001). It also demonstrates the heightened need for social and community space in areas subject to high levels of social change (Hickman, 2013). The residents' experiences highlight the "power" of a neighbourhood to impact residents' well-being and health (Fossey et al., 2020). Hence emphasising the need to involve residents in the design, planning, and management of their neighbourhoods (Tually et al., 2020). Throughout the research, the shift in belonging and interaction on Rookwood highlights the importance of 'home' as an essential part of human life and experience (Allen et al., 2021).

The research has emphasised the importance of community and social space in resident experiences and constructions of community. Residents viewed these spaces as necessary to facilitate interaction, build social networks, and support children and young people. These elements were central to what community is and does; therefore, a lack of social spaces equated to a lack of community for residents. The impact of a decline in social spaces contributed to; reduced interaction, increased crime, and a decrease in supportive networks. These

experiences then negatively affected constructions of belonging and feelings of 'home.'

Chapter 8 – Discussion: Change, Loss, and Community

8.1 Introduction

> *"The homes we live in are so much more than bricks and mortar. They're where we raise our families, put down roots and build communities. Everyone in this country deserves not just a roof over their head but a safe, secure and affordable place to call their own – and social housing has a vital role to play in making sure they do."*
> (Ministry of Housing, 2018, p.5)

I began my thesis to explore the value and meaning of community for the residents of Rookwood. From the outset, I established the importance of the 'community study' to understand a neighbourhood experiencing change and loss. Therefore, I have used my research to demonstrate the value of examining the local impact of wider socio-economic changes on UK social housing. Throughout my thesis, I have maintained the importance of resident narratives in understanding this change. Additionally, I have also evidenced the significance of the resident narrative through my research. My findings revealed that community has value in residents' lives and has additional importance in social housing neighbourhoods.

My research is presented as a 'counter narrative' to the 'master narratives[47]' of social housing communities portrayed in British media and political channels. This narrative was constructed as a result of a study of community perceptions of loss, change and nostalgia. Residents construct community and belonging through place and social networks. However, as established in my literature review, these concepts are also inextricably connected. Resident constructions of the community are also personal and infused with nostalgia, resulting in temporal belonging across time and place. In particular, the findings have demonstrated the role of third and community spaces upon resident constructions of community. Thus, the research has highlighted the importance of community spaces and facilities in working-class neighbourhoods subject to social change. The narratives of

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[47] *I understand master narratives to be dominant and hegemonic narratives that are widely accepted but may exclude those that are marginalised. Therefore, counter narratives are narratives that help tell the story of those groups (Andrews, 2004, Bamberg, 2004).*

Rookwood demonstrate the importance of; community, home, and belonging within residents' lives. Furthermore, it evidences the impact of the loss of community spaces and amenities on residents' constructions of community and belonging. This then illuminates the effect of social change on the residents' ability to both make a home and feel at home.

This chapter will draw my research to its conclusion, seeking to understand the narratives' place in wider research and their role in informing practice. An interpretation of my findings will establish the contribution the narratives of Rookwood have to make. This contribution is discussed in terms of both research and dialogues about community and social housing. I do this by revisiting some of the literature and arguments explored in my earlier chapters to understand how my research corresponds to this. The chapter will then examine the counter-narrative of Rookwood against the master narratives of community and social housing that are prevalent in media, policy, and politics. Through this exploration, my findings will demonstrate the value of the community study as a lens to explore social change at a neighbourhood level, as previously established in Chapter 2.

The chapter continues to include a reflexive account of the whole research process. This will then define the key contributions to knowledge I have created. I will outline how the research responds to the distinct lack of resident narratives across various dialogues. This will be achieved through the development of a counter-narrative of community from a resident standpoint. I will conclude the discussion made throughout the thesis regarding the importance of counter-narratives to tackle resident stigmatisation.

Furthermore, it will be determined how my findings have been used to critique the policy and practice arising from this stigmatisation. The case for standpoint research, such as my own, will be made to demonstrate the need for both research and practice to influence political and policy change. Within a discussion of my contribution, I seek to encapsulate and clarify the role and significance of community, belonging, and home within residents' lives. I do this to re-assert the

contention that residents place value and importance on community and belonging, which is especially relevant within social housing neighbourhoods. I will also reflect upon the limitations of my study and how this has impacted the overall outcome of the research. Once I have defined the contribution the thesis seeks to make, the chapter will then progress to translating this into specific recommendations for policy, practice, and future research. A primary aim of my research is to generate new knowledge and apply this to practical settings. The study seeks to inform service improvement that will positively impact residents' lives and communities. The thesis will end with a conclusion summarising the research, its findings, and what it has sought to achieve.

8.2 The value of the 'Third Place' in social housing communities

Residents frequently construct community through social spaces within their narratives and place value upon these spaces. Residents utilise 'third places'[48] for multiple reasons; to interact with others, hold activities and events, and for safe spaces for children to play. These spaces had previously been a means for residents to influence, control and own their community. However, the community spaces on the estate have changed vastly over its history. During this study, all the remaining social spaces on the estate were either removed, altered, or closed.

As evidenced in my introduction Rookwood, and the local area, are local examples of the national residualisation of British social housing. This residualisation has reduced local amenities, facilities, and social spaces. Additionally, it has created a decline in essential services, such as access to GPs, banks, or post offices (Pinoncely, 2016). Furthermore, many social housing estates often have limited social and community facilities, leaving many residents without central meeting points or key services (McKenzie, 2015). In residualised and low-income neighbourhoods, the loss of these amenities reduces the amount of social space. A shortfall in community space has been keenly felt after the recent economic downturn (Hickman, 2013).

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[48] *Throughout the thesis I draw on the theory of third spaces as shared locations that help facilitate social interaction and develop relationships (Oldenburg, 1999; Oldenburg & Brissett,1982)*

Rookwood was initially designed with a shop, school, playgrounds, and open green space (see Appendices 33 and 34). The shop on the estate has long since been demolished alongside low-rise flats in the early 2000s. This was followed by removing the play areas (replaced with large boulders to prevent off-road vehicle use (see Appendix 6). During this time, the flat converted into a community shop for the resident's association was also lost[49]. However, the land left from the demolished properties was re-landscaped into open, green space, which was often informally used as play areas and sites for local community activities. A community centre was developed on the school premises through lottery funding. However, when the school was changed to an academy in 2012, the community access and use of the hall were significantly reduced[50]. The green, open spaces have been removed and replaced by the development of new properties on the estate. Therefore, the amenities and community spaces on the estate have been considerably reduced since it was first built. Several residents discuss its implications on their changing experiences and interpretations of community on the estate. The findings regarding lost places on the estate represent the interplay between resident "biography and history," which furthers an appreciation of broader social phenomena (Crow, 2000, p.179).

The findings indicated that residents can often view the loss or removal of such spaces as a deterioration of the community (Goodchild, 2008). The narrative also established that this loss of social space had a negative impact on residents' capacity to form and create social networks. This supports wider research that third places contribute to social interaction and help reduce isolation (Hickman, 2013). Consequently, many of the social links and networks that may be central to community experience become reduced. This is due to a decline in the places where such social activity would naturally occur. Within the resident's narratives, a combination of a lack of social spaces and experiences of crime had created social withdrawal and isolation. My findings are supported by research that has

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[49] See Appendix 28 for details of the planning consent to convert a flat into a space for community use for, the then, Rookwood Tenants and Residents Group
[50] See Appendices 25, 26 and 27 for the original plans of the 'community centre' annex at the school and the associated funding that was originally designed for both educational and community use

found that community spaces reduce isolation and improve resident well-being (Fong et al., 2021).

The residents' accounts also stress the effects of a decline of community spaces in a neighbourhood already high in socio-economic deprivation (Fitzgerald, 2016; Williams, 2019). It again demonstrates the importance of place in how residents belong *to* somewhere and the role of place in constructions of community. This also evidences the power and value of understanding a place undergoing change through the experiences of its residents:

> *"We therefore cannot understand places without also understanding how they are perceived and experienced in multiple ways by those who live there."*
> (Preece, 2020, p.840).

The findings emphasise the continued relevance of place in resident constructions of community, particularly those of third spaces (Crow & Allan, 1995; Oldenburg, 1999; Sutton & Kolaja, 1960). The estate's regeneration has affected the topography, layout, and features throughout the study. Elements of the built environment can impact how residents construct and experience community (French et al., 2014). These elements became important in residents' constructions of community post-development, where experiences of crime and anti-social behaviour began to impact residents' lives. Therefore, highlighting the significance of belonging and home in the design and ongoing management of a social housing estate. Consequently, the findings have confirmed that the design of a neighbourhood can contribute to residents' feelings of safety and wellbeing (Watson & Dannenberg, 2008).

The narratives also evidence the importance of resident ownership and control in both constructions of community but also in how residents construct belonging. The findings highlight the importance of community "owned" spaces and places that are "made for," run, and accessed by the community itself. The removal of such places, and the subsequent consequences, demonstrate the impact of excluding residents from dialogue about themselves and their communities

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(Skeggs, 1997). Rookwood helps evidence that the loss of resident autonomy is more likely within neighbourhoods subject to regeneration. Community places should not be bestowed upon residents; alternatively, residents should shape and claim their own spaces. Thus, the findings support the assertion that residents now need to be more involved in development and planning, where they have previously been excluded (Glucksberg, 2014). Therefore, demonstrating the need for residents to lead the regeneration and development of their local area (Munsie, 2016).

Throughout the thesis, I have argued that the loss of third places is currently under-researched and their significance in working-class communities "understated" (Finlay et al., 2019, p.1). The narrative of Rookwood contributes to the gap in this understanding, highlighting that community spaces arguably play a more significant role in low-income neighbourhoods (Bashir et al., 2011). I also contend that the power struggle faced by residents on Rookwood to claim their own spaces is representative of broader power struggles that social housing residents experience:

> "*People feel increasingly surrounded by property development and rapid change in an area they call home yet have little control over what happens to it. They have ideas they want to develop but struggle to gain attention or respect for them.*"
> (Symons, 2018, p.220).

Although I feel the narrative of Rookwood contributes to understanding third places, as I have maintained, 'community' is likely to be experienced differently across various neighbourhoods. I contend this does not diminish the value of Rookwood's narrative; it exemplifies the personal nature of place and community. This also highlights the importance of understanding each individual community's needs, wishes, and ideas. Like many estates in residualised areas, the findings suggest an added significance of place-based community within social housing (Cole & Goodchild, 2000; Forrest & Kearns, 2001; MacDonald et al., 2005).

The Covid-19 pandemic has re-emphasised my findings' current relevance due to the renewed significance of social interaction on the quality of life (Laing, 2021). Therefore, highlighting the need to re-shape the built environment with the increased importance of social and shared places (Veeroja & Foliente, 2021). Consequently, the findings reinforce the enduring relevance of the third place and the need for further research in the area (Finlay et al., 2019). The narrative of Rookwood contributes to knowledge that proposes new approaches are now necessary for; residents to reclaim and develop social spaces in their neighbourhoods (Goosen & Cilliers, 2020)

8.3 The residents' right to feel 'at home.'

> *"Identifying with a place as home was transformative, especially when supported by friendly neighbourhood interactions, safety, and accessibility of local amenities."*
> (Fossey et al., 2020, p.1)

My research emphasises a clear need for the social housing residents' right to feel at 'home,' demonstrating an important area of focus for the housing sector. The narrative evidences the value of residents feeling safe, at home, and connected to their local neighbourhood. My findings revealed that only through the creation of 'home' could residents positively construct belonging to where they live and others around them. Research evidences that belonging is central to health and well-being as a basic human need (Allen et al., 2021). Despite this, social housing residents somehow sit outside this, as their homes become monetised as 'units' by the housing sector (Ali, 2021).

This study demonstrates that the fundamental human right of housing should go beyond shelter to meet other aspects of fundamental needs (Anderson et al., 2020). I argue that my findings demonstrate the very human necessity to construct belonging and feel at home. Being able to make a home has the potential to create transformational effects on a resident's life and health (Fossey et al., 2020). The ultimate consequence of a lack of belonging is the inability to feel at home and hence seeking to escape from a place that does not 'fit' (Preece, 2020). However,

as my findings revealed, most social housing residents cannot 'escape,' thus creating a dissonance between place and belonging. Therefore, it highlights the importance of research such as my own to examine the factors preventing social housing residents from 'making a home' where they live. The findings have contributed to community studies by exploring the impact of residualisation on residents and how feeling trapped within a place can negatively impact belonging. This area is arguably overlooked due to the wealth of community studies on gentrification and exclusion (Hodkinson, 2019; Pain, 2019).

My research found that safety, belonging, and community can be highly significant to residents' well-being. The ability to make a home depended on feelings of safety and comfort and connecting to both the places and others around you. It was found that belonging can be constructed through a "confidence in place" via perceptions of safety and familiarity (Yarker, 2019, p.540). Consequently, the ability to feel at and make a 'home' impacted residents' lives. This evidenced that positive experiences in community are relevant, useful, and important to residents. My findings echoed the work on the impact of living in "improper places" and the adverse effects this can have on residents' ability to belong (Popay et al., 2003, p.68).

Experiences of crime, feelings of safety, and fear were prevalent within the resident narratives and were an essential element in their constructions of community. It was found that a fear of crime may cause residents to withdraw socially. The research suggested this is more likely among mothers, who will do so to "protect" their children from perceived risks (Brodsky et al., 1999, p.660). Feelings of insecurity and fear may also prevent residents, particularly women, from engaging with others and using community spaces (Plane & Klodawsky, 2013). This is supported by my findings that demonstrated that safe spaces for children to play were a crucial element in resident constructions of community. Mothers and grandmothers prevented their children from accessing spaces on the estate to protect themselves and their families.

Furthermore, several residents discussed a general withdrawal from interaction to guard against crime. This social withdrawal was not only employed to protect against crime but as the self-preservation of positive identity. The distance was employed to shield personal identity against the broader identity of those on the estate committing crime. Regardless of how outsiders perceive Rookwood as a 'whole,' it was critical for residents to "dis-identify" (Preece, 2020, p.336). Many residents planned to leave the estate to complete this dis-identification. The residents sought out other residents who had similar values and outlooks, hoping to build 'emotional communities' (Plamper, 2010).

Thus, residents discussed "keeping to themselves" to withdraw from crime and withdraw from those who committed it. Initially, "keeping to themselves" was an informal social code that equated to being seen not to cause "trouble" on the estate. Initially, trouble was viewed as unacceptable behaviour; consequently, those that caused trouble were not acknowledged in the social networks of the estate (Ahmed, 2012). However, the social codes of the estate had shifted during the research due to the rise of crime and anti-social behaviour. The resident narrative indicated that it was felt that 'trouble' had become the new norm. The residents interviewed were keen to distance themselves from this 'trouble.' Keeping to themselves, then translated as avoiding and dissociating with trouble. Therefore, resident withdrawal from others was employed to distinguish their personal identities from the 'tainted place' of the estate (Slater, 2018).

Withdrawal from social interaction results from living in high crime areas, affecting a resident's well-being (Popay et al., 2003). This was demonstrated in the residents' narratives as they talked about negative emotions, fear, withdrawal, and even a lack of sleep as an outcome of living with increased crime. This withdrawal led to isolation, demonstrating that the experiences of crime and insecurity can cause loneliness (Kearns et al., 2015). Therefore, the findings contribute to research suggesting that negative neighbourhood effects such as noise, crime, and violence are likely to adversely impact health (Rolfe & Garnham, 2020).

It was found that experiences of crime in an area already subject to high socio-economic deprivation, such as Rookwood, leads to uncertainty and withdrawal (Cheshire & Buglar, 2016). Thus, the findings support research that suggests crime reduces community involvement (Bailey et al., 2012). The connection between belonging, fear, and interaction within the residents' narratives highlights the interplay between these concepts, as established within my literature review (Allen et al., 2021; Fossey et al., 2020).

Social networks are an important means of how residents construct community and navigate life in low-income areas (Cole & Goodchild, 2000; Forrest & Kearns, 2001; MacDonald et al., 2005). This may be particularly so in estates such as Rookwood, where residents reveal the impact of living with reduced amenities, community spaces, and a rise in crime. The research highlights the adverse effects of living with anti-social behaviour on belonging and resident well-being (Cheshire & Buglar, 2016; Mee, 2009; Popay et al., 2003). This also underpins why social networks may have more value in lower-income areas. The findings reiterate the role of community spaces and networks in tackling other issues within social housing, such as anti-social behaviour and well-being.

As my findings have indicated, living with crime and anti-social behaviour can influence a resident's decision to leave an area (Popay et al., 2003). Therefore, the research adds to the critique of utilising 'elective belonging' to understand belonging in working-class neighbourhoods. As found in Rookwood, a compromise may be reached where residents cannot elicit free choice over their homes. This results in a "negotiated settlement," reflecting a balance of where residents feel they should live and their actual lived experience (Popay et al., 2003, p.67). This interpretation of belonging is highly relevant for residents in areas of social housing who are often allocated their homes through needs-based assessment with minimal choice (Tunstall & Pleace, 2018). It also bears significance for some of the incoming residents interviewed within my research who see their residence on Rookwood as temporary, a transitory option until they can move on. I, therefore, contend that working-class belonging in areas of social housing is complex and is not adequately described through the concept of "elective

belonging" (Savage et al., 2005, p.29). Consequently, my findings support the theory of negotiated belonging, indicative of the balance many social housing residents must achieve between where they live and where they want to live (Popay et al., 2003). This also highlights the need for further understanding and research into belonging in social housing communities.

The research contends that although complex to pin down and define 'community' remains an important part of working-class life. For the residents of Rookwood, safety and belonging were central to this. Although anti-social behaviour has arguably reduced in political priority (Johnstone, 2016), this narrative demonstrates it is still authentic for residents living with crime. The findings highlight that living in fear of crime and anti-social behaviour can have damaging effects on community, belonging, and home. Consequently, additional research is now required to further explore the significance of home and community within social housing (Anderson et al., 2020). This thesis has drawn on recent work exploring the impact of home and belonging on resident well-being (Fossey et al., 2020; Rolfe & Garnham, 2020; Tually et al., 2020). However, it is argued that research needs to further understand belonging to place from a resident standpoint (Preece, 2020). This understanding needs to incorporate an evaluation of the social landlord's role in resident belonging (Rolfe & Garnham, 2020). Furthermore, Yarker (2019) argues research should now focus on developing a more comprehensive understanding of how humans construct belonging to place, particularly in neighbourhoods subject to change.

The narrative of Rookwood illuminates the human reality of not being able to make a home amidst broader issues of crime and austerity. This research contributes to knowledge highlighting the importance of home and comfort for social housing residents (Ali, 2021). The expectation that social housing residents should and would tolerate higher levels of anti-social behaviour is enabled by the entrenched narratives of the sink estate (Koch, 2018). Again, this returns to the importance of the resident voice within dialogues about social housing. The role of the resident's narrative, as is intended here with Rookwood's' own narrative, is to provide a counter to damaging meta-narratives of social housing. The research focuses on

the importance of home, not simply shelter, and therefore the role of the resident voice in shaping and making a home.

Rookwood evidences the human need to construct belonging to other similar people and safe places. This has arguably been highlighted further in the wake of Covid-19 (Allen et al., 2021). The resident's narrative clearly demonstrates that a home is not simply a 'unit,' and that community is essential to residents making a home (Robertson et al., 2020). Rookwood helps us understand that belonging and home are central to being human and integral to health and well-being (Allen et al., 2021).

8.4 Nostalgia, change and loss in social housing

Throughout the thesis, I have asserted the potential of narratives such as Rookwood to detail the local level experience of a community undergoing change. More specifically, a social housing estate facing a decline and loss of community services, amenities, and spaces (Pinoncely, 2016). Here the story of one estate evidences the real-world experience of social change and welfare reform (Crow, 2002). It helps illuminate the effects of both austerity and social housing development. Again, this demonstrates the power and value of understanding living through a place subject to various policy changes and decisions through the lens of its residents (Preece, 2020).

The narrative of Rookwood can help; "illustrate the meaning of macro-level trends for people's everyday lives." (Crow 2000, p.173). It details the tangible and human outcomes of policy enabled through meta-narratives of 'community' and the 'sink estate.' Arguably Rookwood can serve as a cautionary tale of the exclusion of residents in decision making about their own homes. This exclusion was experienced at a local neighbourhood level preventing residents from shaping their communities. However, this was facilitated by the broader exclusion of residents in macro-level dialogues and policy about social housing.

The impact felt by Rookwood's residents due to the loss and change has already been covered in the discussion of third places earlier in the chapter. Additionally, meta-narratives will be explored in more depth in the next section. Here I wish to examine how residents processed change and loss. Many residents harnessed memories of past places to enable the construction of community and belonging. Lost communities were employed to highlight the contrast between the community residents sought and the community they currently experienced. The change and loss on the estate negatively impacted on experiences of community. Therefore, residents sought to construct belonging to past places and times.

The 'lost' shared spaces gave the estate a different "feel," and several residents used nostalgia to construct happier and safer memories of the estate. The narrative evidenced that belonging can be constructed to the same place but at a different time, responding to change (May 2017). The narrative also demonstrated whilst this may create a yearning for the past, it can also be a positive means of processing and coping with change (Ahmed, 2015).

Research has previously suggested that working-class residents can fear change in their neighbourhoods, and it can be seen as something that endangers specific ways of life (Blokland, 2004; Gustafson, 2014). This indeed parallels my research where existing residents expressed their concern and fear about the impact of the development and new residents on the community. In times of change, people can feel a stronger sense of belonging to a place or time within their past rather than something in the present (May & Muir, 2015). Some research has suggested that feelings of nostalgia are more prevalent in working-class constructions of belonging, as social change is interpreted as a loss of 'community' (Savage, 2008). Working-class residents may have limited resources and capital ties, which may fix them to a particular place due to a lack of social mobility (Gustafson, 2014). Nostalgia can be utilised when belonging is threatened by change; the recollection of a past time when "we were all the same" can be employed as a coping mechanism (Blokland, 2004, p.127).

Indeed, the residents in my research experienced dissonance between past and present and used nostalgia to establish a balance. This thus enabled them to construct belonging, but; "in the present, not to the present" (May, 2017, p.409). Therefore, my findings demonstrate how we can construct belonging to a place lost in time, searching for our own "lost past" (Ahmed, 2015, p.164). Nostalgia is often employed to help cope with the socio-economic shift in working-class communities, often presented as a fear of change (Blokland, 2004). However, viewing working-class nostalgia merely through the prism of a refusal to accept change can frame it as limiting. This then ignores the beneficial potential of nostalgia in residents' lives and within the community overall (Ramsden, 2016). As my findings determined, nostalgia can contribute to more positive constructions of belonging. Therefore, my research supplements emerging work exploring the value of nostalgia and the constructive ways it may be used (May, 2017). Nostalgic narratives and remembering can help working-class communities define and understand their identity, particularly in times of social change (Ramsden, 2016). What is evident in Rookwood's narrative is that it is essential to understand the value of nostalgic narration for residents. It seems to provide familiarity and safety for the residents in uncertain times (Ahmed, 2015). Thus, this facilitates "belonging from afar" (May, 2017, p.411).

The desire to belong to past times and lost places further reiterates that Rookwood is not currently a place where residents can successfully construct community and call home. This highlights my contention within my literature review that community and belonging place-based constructions fluctuate with time and change (Leaney, 2020). The role of memory and nostalgia in resident narratives again underlines the human impact of living in "improper places" (Popay et al., 2003, p.68). Therefore, stressing the need for research to understand better the value of nostalgia in resident construction of community (Paton, 2013). It also highlights the gap in knowledge regarding residents who feel "trapped in place" and its impact upon belonging, or a refusal to belong, a concept which the study sought to explore (Pain, 2019, pp. 8-9).

In terms of belonging and identity, it could be more straightforward for the residents to determine what they are *not* rather than what they are (Skeggs, 1997). Bourdieu's theory references placing self and placing others; however, this does not necessarily account for resistance towards your place (Skeggs, 1997). What happens when you cannot adjust to your place and position when you seek to resist it, to dis-identify with your own perceived spoilt identity (Reay, 1998). The political aspects of class can be complex. Individuals may seek to place themselves "outside" of class instead of being tainted by it, an element of defensiveness in class identity (Savage et al., 2001, p.875). Class may not be named but is often omnipresent and found in typical rejections of particular class positions and identities (Skeggs, 1997). This was part of the resident's response to being forced to remain in a place they did not wish to be, highlighting the impact of feeling trapped upon belonging. This progresses beyond the concept of un-elective belonging and reveals an active refusal to belong as part of dis-identification with Rookwood as a tainted place.

I contend that my findings support the argument that research needs to explore in more depth the role of nostalgia in processing social change and belonging (May, 2017). As established in my literature review and supported by the narrative of Rookwood, memories become complicated when infused with nostalgia (Corcoran, 2002). My research does not seek to adopt a specific position on the benefits or limits of nostalgia. Instead, it contributes to knowledge about the understanding of the utilisation of nostalgia within resident constructions of community and belonging (Lawler, 2014). Although nostalgia may be prevalent in resident narratives of community, this does not mean they have not experienced loss and negative change, particularly in the context of welfare reform. Furthermore, it does not mean that residents are unaware of nostalgia within their narratives (Yarker, 2019). I contend that my findings indicate that nostalgia and temporal belonging can be helpful for residents living with and coping with change and decline in their neighbourhoods.

I do not seek to discount the potential influence of nostalgia on memory. However, my research has demonstrated that nostalgic resident accounts of social change

should not be dismissed. Rookwood evidences the value of the community study to understand the lived experience of social change and welfare reform. Therefore, detailing the human impact of diminished resources, spaces, and services. There is a lack of research into the legacy of slum clearance areas (Yelling, 2000). Furthermore, there has been little inquiry into the personal histories of social housing and the town itself.[51] It may be that projects encompassing reminiscence could enable residents to develop positive feelings towards a place undergoing change (Garrow, 2021). In conclusion, it is also felt that narratives such as Rookwood assist an understanding of the effectiveness of policy that seeks to tackle social change. The narratives achieve this through an appreciation of resident experiences and resident solutions.

8.5 Meta-narratives of community and social housing

As I contended earlier in the thesis, the research has supported the notion that community is a fluid and interpretive concept. Despite awareness of this in research, 'community' has become doxa in social policy (Alleyne, 2002). This is a result of policy applications of community relying on positivistic constructions (Ahmed, 2010). Consequently, one of the objectives of this research was to contribute to a growing body of studies that seek to challenge and explore homogeneous constructions of community (Alleyne, 2002). Traditional approaches to knowledge have arguably hindered this challenge by an absence of alternative truths about the lived experience (Harding 2015; Personal Narratives Group 1989b). Therefore, this research has sought to demonstrate counter narratives' precise role and importance in the challenge, exploration, and critique of meta-narratives (Bamberg, 2004). Hence this study's development of a counter-narrative from the resident standpoint that seeks to appraise policy critically and inform change (Harding 2004a; Hodkinson, 2020).

Similarly, the social housing estate narratives have also become doxa; the sink estate has become the accepted depiction of the contemporary social housing

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[51] *Whilst working on the estate I researched funding for reminiscence projects, I was informed by the National Lottery Heritage Fund that a bid for a project would likely be supported due to the lack of personal history projects conducted in the local area. Additionally, the Fund was keen to support projects that expanded personal accounts of slum clearance estates.*

neighbourhood (Slater, 2018). These narratives are formed around specific class-based values that social policy has been developed upon (Rogaly & Taylor, 2009). Furthermore, I contend that the consistency and persistence of such narratives have enabled widespread acceptance of policy that is often laden with blame and stigma (McKenzie, 2017).

Within the third chapter, I outlined how the concepts of community and social housing have been brought together through urban renewal and regeneration policy (Cole & Goodchild, 2000). I evidenced how the social housing estate is framed as the problem in terms of community, whilst a middle-class, traditional depiction of community is proffered as the 'solution' (Flint & Kearns, 2006; Tonkiss, 2005). Through an exploration of literature and a presentation of my findings, I have demonstrated that social policy fails to appreciate the complexity of the concept (Taylor, 2004). Therefore, policy has become detached from the lived realities of the neighbourhoods it aims to 'regenerate' (Crisp, 2013). The dominance of neoliberal uses and constructions of community in policy has led to the complicated and paradoxical elements of the concept being overlooked (Warr et al., 2017). This is partly due to the lack of involvement with residents, often at the centre of neighbourhood-based policy (Glucksberg, 2014). This has enabled only 'community' constructed from certain ideological viewpoints to be applied in policy (Amin, 2005). Consequently, communities of difference are disregarded and rejected (Gedalof, 2018).

As policy has accepted community as understood, this has resulted in a lack of exploration and challenge of the concept (Alleyne, 2002). Rather than accepting and validating communities of "sameness" (Gedalof, 2018, p.117), research should seek to challenge and examine the narratives employed within social policy. This examination should aim to determine the efficacy of policy in tackling social change (Allen, 2009). My findings seek to contribute to research that examines social policy directed toward social housing communities.

I, therefore, argue that resident narratives have particular importance in broader dialogues about social housing. This is primarily due to the continued damaging

meta-narratives prominent in British culture. The 'estate' has become a focus for a morose obsession, but not one that cuts through sensationalism to deliver authentic understanding (Cuming, 2013). Images and narratives of social housing communities are often sensationalist and inaccurate (Kearns et al., 2013). The 'sink estate' narrative has become so entrenched that it has created an "agnotology" of the depictions of social housing (Slater, 2018, p.879). This narrow and stigmatising view of social housing has evolved into class-based exclusion that alienates and demonises (Valentine & Harris, 2014). As I have found in my research, residents become excluded from the decision-making processes about their own homes and neighbourhoods.

'Community' can, and I argue, should be harnessed by residents to take collective action to resist any damaging impacts of the state (Wallace, 2016). As my research demonstrates, communities and residents are arguably often well placed to guide decisions and changes within their neighbourhoods (Bowles & Gintis, 2002). Research has evidenced the efficacy and legitimacy of resident groups, but they gather minimal support from either providers or the government (Somerville, 2005). Within my research, residents faced barriers from local agencies when voicing their opinions and ideas. The findings demonstrate that by occupying the "fuzzy nexus of morally charged ideas about community and place," 'community' was used as a means of control and power (Tait & Inch, 2016, p.178).

Estates such as Rookwood are viewed as unregulated and in need of organisation and management (Osborne & Rose, 2004). Returning to my reflection in my study rationale, this is how Rookwood was first presented to me, depicted as a neighbourhood requiring 'support' to be cultivated into a middle-class vision of community (Huxley, 2007). The residents' narratives demonstrated how 'community' became a means to manage Rookwood. This approach results in top-down practices instead of genuine engagement and empowerment (Rose, 1999). This exclusionary approach enabled 'community' constructed from dominant perspectives (Alleyne, 2002). This indicates my working experience on Rookwood, which saw residents excluded and prohibited from certain spaces, discussions, and decisions. The residents were unable to construct their community; instead,

local agencies sought to prescribe a middle-class version to them (Bauman, 2001).

Exploring social class as a power structure relates to Rookwood and is reflected in the residents' frustration with their lack of autonomy over 'their' spaces. This is evidenced in the re-telling of the narrative of the community hall by Mary, this was an important shared space to the residents, but the loss of its use was beyond their influence or control. So, as well as the loss of a critical community space, and the impacts this brought, the hall was symbolic of the resident's deficit in agency, reflective of the power structures affecting working-class neighbourhoods. Within this one example, Rookwood evidences the everyday impact of policy formed from stigmatising meta-narratives of the working class. The othering and stigma of working-class positioning positively affect the resident's ability to belong to working-class identities (Tyler, 2015). The residents could not create a physical distance by getting 'out' of Rookwood (Skeggs, 1997). Therefore, the residents in Rookwood create a distance between their position and the negative identity of the estate by being clear about what they are not. This distance reiterates that the power and stigma of class position can threaten self-identity, so it can be palatable to situate yourself outside of class (Savage et al., 2001). Thus, dissociating n yourself from those who cannot be improved, the distinctions between working-class and underclass (Skeggs, 1997).

The power of meta-narratives cannot be separated from community policy in working-class areas. Language and narratives are utilised to maintain specific political ideologies, primarily ones that negatively represent social housing residents. These damning representations enable certain types of policy, creating a cyclical process. Consequently, these meta-narratives become even more dominant and entrenched, enabling increasingly neoliberal policy change (Heslop & Ormerod, 2020). As my findings indicate, excluding residents from decisions about their community can cause wider damage to the overall neighbourhood. In this study, this has been realised in an increase in crime, a decrease in supportive social structures, and a decline in positive attachments to the area.

Therefore, the over-reliance on meta-narratives within social policy has excluded and de-humanised residents (Glucksberg, 2014). Furthermore, this has compromised the efficacy of the policy itself, arguably dismissing the best-placed people to be involved in the development of their own communities. Rookwood is a localised example of how this has created more problems; crime, anti-social behaviour, isolation, and mental health. The cost of policy failings is a high price to pay in monetary and human value. My findings support research that evidences that the current neoliberal approach to housing policy is neither practical nor efficient (Hodkinson, 2021).

In summary, master narratives about social housing communities have been highly damaging (Alleyne, 2002; Slater, 2018; Tyler, 2013). Furthermore, my research demonstrates how these meta-narratives are intrinsically connected to the power structures that control policy (Riessman, 2008). Additionally, this study evidences the value of involving residents in broader conversations about social housing policy and the importance of the counter-narrative (Bamberg, 2004).

8.6 Counter-narratives and radical community development

> *"Participation without empowerment is therefore a confidence trick performed by the controllers of an activity on participants in that activity."*
> (Somerville, 1998, p.234)

This thesis has sought to evidence that the exclusion of residents from broader dialogues and processes regarding housing and community policy should now be countered with resident narratives. The counter-narrative of Rookwood contributes to a growing body of research, and practice, which seeks to work with and for, local communities (Ali, 2021; Hodkinson, 2020; Symons, 2018; Tually et al., 2020). One of the primary objectives of my research was to develop a counter-narrative of social housing. This is not presented as an idealised depiction of an estate but as a means of representing residents' truths and experiences.

I have recommended that social policy seek out and appreciate alternative and counter-narratives through my research. This study contributes to the growing

opinion that housing research and practice need to adopt a more radical and critical stance (Hodkinson, 2020). Revisiting the fourth chapter, I assert that counter-narratives and a more radical approach are required to tackle the "social and structural harm" caused by neoliberal social policy (White, 2017, p.13). "Dominant narratives" have been applied by those holding positions of power to shape social policy in a neoliberal agenda (Heslop & Ormerod, 2020, p.146). Excluded groups face a continual battle against the "hegemony" of neoliberalism, therefore reflecting the importance of alternative narratives (Hall, 2011, p. 727).

In my research, the outcome of such policy is the loss of community spaces, contributing to a wide range of exponential and negative consequences for residents. Furthermore, Rookwood reflects the many social housing estates situated in areas adversely impacted by neoliberalism and post-industrialism. As I have previously suggested, Grenfell is the ultimate consequence of such policy on a broader scale. Narratives about the tragedy focused on technical faults and resident blaming, thus avoiding the wider socio-political context that contributed to the fire (Hodkinson, 2018). As in my research, the voice of the Grenfell community, and its residents, has been largely ignored; despite raising multiple and severe, concerns about resident safety (Booth, 2021). I suggest that the levels of inequality represented by Grenfell now "demands" critical inquiry to better understand the impact of this upon social housing communities (Madden, 2017, p.4). Grenfell typifies the combination of inequality and a "malevolent geography of injustices" that result in the dismissal of resident needs, concerns, and safety (MacLeod, 2018, p. 460). I feel the narrative of Rookwood helps to demonstrate that Grenfell is one of many places of 'malevolent geography.' These tainted places are continually subject to territorial stigmatisation by those who do not live there (Slater, 2018).

The situation post-Grenfell demonstrates the need to "bring forth voices" that have gone unheard to challenge dominant narratives about social housing and welfare reform (Heslop & Ormerod, 2020, p.148). Research like my own seeks to present a narrative of those unheard voices. Furthermore, it adds to an approach post-Grenfell, which delivers a more radical and critical approach to housing policy

(Hodkinson, 2020). I argue that the findings of this research highlight a need for radical community development, resident activism, and academic research to work together in delivering critical inquiry. This would affect positive change for residents and inform social policy that responds to residents' needs. However, the ethos of true community development work clashes with a neoliberal approach. The latter places value on competition, free markets, and deregulation, whereas community development seeks to collectively improve the position of the "powerless" (Kenny & Connors, 2016, p.28).

Conversely, community-based projects have gained prominence under neoliberal governments, arguably to "divert responsibility," as opposed to genuine community development (Mendes, 2018, p.215). It is argued neoliberal applications of community utilise it as a "spray on solution," framed as progressive policy whilst masking wider social issues (Bryson & Mowbray, 1981, p.255). I have my own experience of initiatives and projects that are 'sprayed' over neighbourhoods. Upon reflection, much of the work I was involved in was delivered in a paternalistic, top-down approach. However, community is not "discovered" by agencies and community workers, regardless of how well-meaning and close to the ground they feel they are (Schofield & Jones, 2019, p.173).

I also assert that community development is not simply well-intended paternalism but has become a vehicle for control (Bryson & Mowbray, 1981). As I established in Chapter 4, community is then applied as "self-government" whilst enabling a further rollback of the state (Meade & Shaw, 2016, p.39). Thus, creating a conflict of interest for Community Workers. This is because such workers are usually employed by the agencies attempting to elicit some form of control over the communities they work within (Symons, 2018). I experienced this conflict within my practice as a middle-class 'officer' employed to 'fix' a working-class community.

When considering community development work from a "critical left perspective" (Kenny & Connors, 2017, p.55), many community projects often do not recognise the power imbalances between communities and agencies. Even positive asset-based approaches can still mask issues of power and class, which then "deflect"

from inequality (Kenny & Connors, 2017, p.418). The combination of globalisation, austerity measures and neoliberalism has arguably negatively impacted the communities many workers engage in. Additionally, this has also reduced the services and resources accessed by both the community and workers alike (Lynch et al., 2020).

Therefore, it is argued that there is no straightforward relationship between community work and agencies of power, but on a practical level, some form of symbiosis could be achieved (Cretney, 2019). The high levels of critique of neoliberal applications of community as a means of "controlling" and "training" the working-class highlight the difficulties in striking this balance (Staines, 2020, p18). Some research has suggested that genuine community development can be achieved without being "co-opted into a neoliberal agenda" (Cretney, 2019, p. 510). My own experience delivering community development on the ground confirms this complex balance, as I was employed by an agency complicit in removing residents' power yet being expected to 'empower' those residents. Therefore, it is reasserted that community constructions in policy and development work are done in the absence of wider political issues. Assumptions are made that community is separate from issues of class and power, and that change can be made locally (Bryson & Mowbray, 1981). However, research such as mine, my highlights the ability of community studies to explore micro issues; change cannot be achieved simply through neighbourhood community projects (Crow et al., 2019). There needs to be broader action and change at a macro level. As my findings indicate, more could be achieved with increased resident involvement and autonomy to direct and influence change (Munsie, 2016). However, 'resident involvement' is a complex and broad concept, commonly used in very generalised terms within the social housing sector (Preece, 2019).

Involving residents within decision making structures will not automatically guarantee any degree of influence (Marsh, 2018). It is more likely that most existing involvement structures serve only to underpin the power imbalance between landlord and resident (Bradley, 2013). This thesis supports the notion that the social housing sector rarely delivers authentic resident engagement, with most

processes reinforcing existing power structures (Preece, 2019). Residents are often 'selected' for resident involvement, again placing a high degree of control with the landlord (Cairncross et al.,1994). It is suggested that providers are wary of truly devolving power to residents (Hickman, 2006). Furthermore, the social housing sector's view of formalised structures is likely to differ significantly from how many residents may wish to be 'involved' with their local community.

Therefore, this work is part of a body of research that suggests that radical and true community development work should provide a voice and action for residents. This is particularly for those in already stigmatised communities who are often excluded from power structures. Community for residents such as those on Rookwood is something they create, control, and own; it is not to be developed *for* residents. This then calls for involvement to lead to true empowerment that enables residents to; "gain increased control over their housing situation" (Somerville, 1998, p.234). The new housing white paper post-Grenfell does provide the sector with the opportunity to affect positive change. I argue to maximise this opportunity, the use of both radical community development and critical inquiry must be further developed.

Rookwood's narrative has demonstrated that social housing providers need to involve residents to understand what is valuable to them; to empower them to create and shape 'community' for themselves. The findings support that "investment" *into* and *with* communities is now needed (Brodsky et al., 1999, p. 677). Arguably social landlords are well-placed to enable co-produced change. It has been found that more collective community development can improve resident outcomes (Tually et al., 2020). This would include resident involvement outside formalised structures of decision making, moving towards engaging with residents within their "claimed spaces" (Muir & McMahon, 2015, p.20). Therefore, I outline recommendations for policy and practice later in the chapter; now, I turn to a reflexive summary of the study.

8.7 Reflexivity: Defining contributions and limitations

I use this section to present a reflexive summary of my research and build upon my methodology's reflexivity section. Through this, I will address the limitations of my research approach and the impact on my findings. Within this, a consideration of the constraints faced by the research will be discussed, exploring how this has affected the final thesis. The section concludes by drawing on the points raised within this chapter to clearly define what I see to be the contributions to knowledge and understanding made by the research.

8.7.1 Reflexive Conclusion

In my methodology chapter, I defined the importance of reflexivity and transparency within a narrative approach. Chapter 5 appraised my position in terms of the research, and I do not intend to repeat that here fully but will re-visit some key issues to conclude the thesis. Again, I assert that although the study is resident-focused and not about me, I feel it is important to explore my relationship to, with, and upon the research (Bruner, 2004). I wish to focus on the changes in my own situation throughout the study and where I find myself at the project's conclusion.

When I began the research, I was working directly in the community at the focus of the study. As I reflected earlier, this closeness helped me establish trust and connections with residents, forming my interview sample. As I left the area, I maintained contact through social media, but this created a distance that altered the interview data between rounds. I do not raise this to suggest that it affected the quality of data gathered but to highlight the shift in my position from community worker to researcher. At first, I struggled with this distance and felt uncomfortable with my role as a researcher rather than a worker. However, upon reflection, this distance benefitted my interview technique and overall approach to the research. It helped me strike a balance between being passionate about my research; without becoming too emotionally invested in the subject matter.

Despite a loss of proximity to the research area, I feel that my socio-political awareness developed alongside my professional progression. My work in Customer Insight highlighted the continued difficulty for residents to voice and express their concerns. This, therefore, stressed the importance of continuing my research from a resident standpoint. I feel that my skills in data analysis and research methodology developed during this time as I grew more experienced in working with resident narratives. Even towards the end of the research process, I continued to advance my understanding; the discovery of standpoint theory and methodology was vital in my research journey. In particular, the work of Sandra Harding was both influential and inspirational. I identified with Harding's assertion that research can be valid, critical, and politically engaged without "dispassionate neutrality" (Harding, 2004a, p.6). I finally felt I identified wholly with an epistemological position with this approach. Following this discovery, I felt more confident in the aim of my research to deliver both a critical and political narrative.

In many ways, the housing sector has seen much change since I first conceptualised the research in 2012, and yet in other ways, little has changed for the resident voice. The socio-economic landscape post-Grenfell, and the further inequalities highlighted during the Covid-19 pandemic, have only strengthened my belief in the need for research from a resident standpoint.
However, despite the positives of my research journey, the study has not been without its limitations. The study, participants and I have also faced multiple barriers throughout the research, and I will discuss those and how they should be considered in terms of my findings.

8.7.2 Study limitations and constraints

I am aware that a criticism of my research may be its interpretative approach and a relatively small area of focus. I acknowledge this as a critique, but I do not recognise this as a failing or negative. I have strongly asserted the need for resident narratives throughout the thesis and made a case for community-based research. My study evidences the requirement for resident standpoint approaches. A standpoint approach enables a richer understanding of the micro-level impact of

broader and structural social change. Although I vigorously defend a qualitative narrative approach in my methodology, I recognise that there are limits to what narrative research can achieve. I have not, and do not, present the sample of residents within this study as wholly representative of all social housing residents. Nor do I seek to produce findings that present definite answers of what community is and does for all residents. Also, although standpoint approaches have influenced me, I cannot lay claim to wholly understanding or presenting a resident standpoint due to my own position.

The value of specific resident narratives has been demonstrated; therefore, I seek to contribute to a wider range of truths about residents. However, it is acknowledged that my research is only one representation of the resident experience. I challenge traditional perceptions of objectivity within research as I have previously argued that all knowledge is socially situated and attached to certain values (Harding, 2004b). Furthermore, qualitative research can still contribute to knowledge despite its subjectivity (Harding, 2015). However, I must acknowledge that the research comes from my position. Consequently, this study is influenced by my own values and politics, thus being affected by my worldview and bias.

A further limitation of this approach is that despite being developed from a resident standpoint, I am not, and have never been, a social housing resident. The tension between those two positions must be acknowledged. A lack of focus on class position within research comes from those who fail to recognise their own power and privilege (Skeggs, 1997). The study has aimed for a collaborative approach that prioritises the resident voice. Nonetheless, my role as a middle-class researcher and its impact on the findings must be considered a limitation. Although I identify as coming from a working-class background, the research process has made me aware that my position is currently much more middle-class. When recognising class as a power structure, it is essential to consider that access to, and the production of knowledge is inherently part of those structures (Skeggs, 1997). The advantages this affords, my access to traditional systems of power and knowledge, thus affects the perspective of the thesis. Although my research may

then reflect my position and background, this does not then discount its ability to reflect the residents' experiences

Standpoint approaches have influenced the research due to the lack of, or dismissal, of resident accounts in both housing policy and research (Hodkinson, 2021). Furthermore, as I discussed in chapter 5, the standpoint of residents who remain "trapped in place" post-regeneration rather than those who have lived through gentrification is notably absent (Pain, 2019, p.10). Hence work on standpoint and counter-narratives have been drawn upon to assist the research in platforming unheard voices to answer the need for change in research and policy (Harding, 2004a; Hodkinson, 2020). In terms of unheard voices, as I asserted in my methodology, I do not intend the group of participants to be representative of either Rookwood or social housing overall. However, there are some absent voices I wish to acknowledge specifically. Within resident narratives, the young people and children of the estate are referenced and, at times, in negative terms. I am aware that no young people were able to be included in the research, and this is important to highlight in a study about, and because of, unheard voices.

More wholly resident-led projects are now required to strengthen resident standpoint research further. I have come to reflect that such projects are likely to sit outside traditional academic knowledge streams, possibly through more creative and organic means. It is recognised that a more grassroots approach may have generated different forms of knowledge that were more resident directed. However, I have selected the most appropriate means available to myself as a researcher to enable a resident-led narrative.

A thesis, the institution it is created through, and thus the structures to which it is attached, have a distinct distance from Rookwood. It creates a final product that is inaccessible and arguably irrelevant to most residents. I, therefore, intend to consider different means to disseminate my findings to a wider audience, such as urban poetry. It is also why this thesis recommends more radical, ground-level approaches to both research and practice with and for social housing communities.

Some of the study's limitations are more personal to my own circumstances and experience. I have worked full time throughout the research, alongside multiple health issues. When I began the thesis, I was married without any health concerns; within months of commencing a Professional Doctorate, I faced a divorce and multiple health issues. I developed physical disabilities and underwent a long fertility journey, giving birth to a son in lockdown near the end of my research. I do not raise these issues to engender sympathy from the reader but to highlight the practical barriers I have faced.

The thesis possibly could have benefited from a structural, thematic approach, but I was unable to develop this in the time scale. I feel that an exploration of plot typologies could have drawn further critical insight from the data but could not commit the time to this approach. Again, I also feel that the breaks I had to take in my study impacted my relationships with the participants, particularly the newer residents. This contributed to the difficulty I experienced in gaining access to conduct second interviews. Furthermore, the barriers, my health, pregnancy and Covid-19 prevented a final and third round of interviews. I feel that the overall research project would have benefitted from this data. This would have assisted in developing further understanding of the estate's journey post-development. This would have been particularly interesting in determining how the issues of crime had progressed. I wanted to understand community experience over an extended period of time and feel that this is a key limitation. However, on a practical level, I did conversely end up with a more realistic data set to work with and possibly additional data could have proven unwieldy.

My own lack of research experience did present some limitations, especially early in the research. I used my previous limited expertise to adopt a coding approach, the consequences of which I have already outlined. It was also a challenge to return to the data and unpack how best to approach it. Although I have reflected on the frustrations of the lack of a structural, thematic methodology, I feel that I have developed an appropriate and achievable approach. I also think that given more time, difficult to achieve as a working mother; I would have made my

'epistemological discoveries' earlier. This would have possibly brought my completion timeline forward.

As I have stated, I do not include such personal reflections so that the reader can pity my position but so that they can understand it and its relationship to my research. However, I also feel that my challenges demonstrate my commitment to the study and my passionate belief in resident narratives' importance, value, and power.

Having reflected on some of the research limitations and challenges faced during the process, this section will be concluded by focusing on what contributions to knowledge the thesis has made.

8.7.3 Contribution to knowledge

As part of a Professional Doctorate, I undertook this thesis to explore research questions raised in my practice. Therefore, it was always intended as a real-world piece of work. Consequently, I would like to clarify the contributions to knowledge that this research has made. Then I will explore how this new knowledge could be translated into recommendations. These recommendations will be outlined in terms of their application to; practice, policy, and future research.

As I have asserted throughout the thesis, community studies such as mine illuminate the human experience of macro-level social change (Crow, 2002). In this instance, that was the impact of socio-economic change, housing policy and welfare reform from a resident standpoint. Thus, the narratives of Rookwood tell the story of a community undergoing a decline and loss of community services, amenities, and spaces. The study confirmed the additional significance of home, community and belonging for residualised social housing undergoing social change (Cole & Goodchild, 2000; Forrest & Kearns, 2001).

The findings revealed the enduring importance of place within resident constructions of community and, in particular, the value and usefulness of the

'third place' (Oldenburg, 1997). The impact of social change and austerity had been found to significantly reduce, remove, and control shared spaces that the community had freely utilised. These spaces were central to how residents connected to the local area and each other. Therefore, their loss was seen to negatively impact residents' constructions of community. It is thus concluded that social and community spaces hold relevance for residents within social housing neighbourhoods (Hickman, 2013). This study highlights the need for further understanding and research into the significance of the third place in social housing communities.

An additional outcome of the loss, change and removal of community spaces and amenities was increased crime and anti-social behaviour. Residents felt that this was, in part, due to a significant reduction in facilities and spaces for local children and young people. Here the resident standpoint highlights an unintended consequence of policy designed to deliver cost savings. Community spaces and facilities were reduced on the estate as part of re-development to increase rental units and through welfare reform. However, the research has highlighted the particular importance of these spaces and services in areas already subject to high socio-economic deprivation (Bashir et al., 2011, Hickman, 2013). The rise in crime and decrease in resident well-being indicated both the human cost and the long-term inefficiency of such policy.

Furthermore, safety and fear are clearly related to resident belonging and their decisions to remain in the local area. This has implications for the sustainability and housing management of social housing neighbourhoods. Consequently, indicating the need for a better understanding of the impact of austerity policy on working-class and social housing neighbourhoods. The research also outlines the long-term outcomes for both residents and the wider community.

Therefore, community, supportive relationships, and shared spaces were also seen as a means of coping with social changes. Residents were faced with dealing with increased levels of crime without being able to access essential support through social networks or community activities. Furthermore, residents began to withdraw from social contact as a means of self-protection due to the fear

of crime, creating isolation. The narratives of Rookwood highlight the detrimental effect of living in high crime neighbourhoods, already subject to social change (Popay et al., 2003). The residents' narratives also demonstrate that safety, belonging, and community can be highly significant to residents' well-being. (Cheshire & Buglar, 2016; Mee, 2009). The findings on residents' experience of crime underpin the importance of social networks in social housing neighbourhoods. Additionally, it re-emphasises the role of community spaces in tackling broader issues in social housing.

A lack of community space, reduced social interaction, and fear of crime resulted in residents being unable to connect to where they lived. As the thesis has previously highlighted, this is one of the consequences of residents having to endure living in "improper places" (Popay et al., 2003, p.68). It also indicates a gap in knowledge of the understanding of working-class belonging. This is a disparity in understanding that this study has sought to address. Previously work on belonging has focused on the concept of elective belonging. This research adds to the critique of the suitability of this concept to fully appreciate working-class belonging. The findings suggest this is primarily due to residents' lack of free choice (Paton, 2013; Jeffery, 2018). As I have previously stated, it is more likely that social housing residents must reach a "negotiated settlement" (Popay et al., 2003, p.67). Therefore, evidencing a need for further understanding of belonging in social housing communities.

The thesis has revealed the difficulties and impact of living in social housing during "hard times" (Paton, 2013, p.83). In particular, the research contributes to further understanding of residents feeling 'trapped' in areas subject to residualisation, addressing the gap in knowledge due too much research focusing on gentrified areas. It has also highlighted the significance of temporal belonging as residents coped with social change. Residents frequently constructed belonging to places within their past due to the negative changes in the present (May, 2017). Themes of nostalgia, childhood and past belonging were prevalent within resident constructions of community. However, nostalgia may have affected the accuracy

of residents' memories (Blokland, 2004). It was also a helpful means of processing the change around them (Ahmed, 2015).

Consequently, the research highlights the positive role of reminiscence and memory for residents experiencing social change and loss. The study indicates that resident experiences should not be discounted due to the presence of nostalgia in their narratives. Previously nostalgic accounts have been framed as a working-class fear of progression (Bryne, 2007). However, my findings have highlighted that temporal belonging has been found to be valid, relevant, and important to social housing residents. Thus, my study helps signify the role of nostalgia. Therefore, my findings support previous work suggesting that further research into how nostalgia can be used as a coping mechanism is required (May, 2017).

In resident constructions of community, the significance of the third space was not confined to simply a social space. For residents of Rookwood, access and ownership of these spaces were important to their constructions of community and their autonomy as citizens. Community was not something to be delivered by outside agencies; it was to be created and owned by residents. Residents expressed how they had voiced their concerns about a decline in community spaces and amenities but found themselves unheard and dismissed. I argue that these findings reflect wider levels of exclusion of social housing residents from structures of power and control.

Furthermore, the findings revealed that besides the inequality of this exclusion, it was an ineffective approach. The omission of residents from critical decisions about planning, neighbourhood management and community spaces can have much wider negative consequences (Glucksberg, 2014). In Rookwood, this was realised in increased crime, decreased supportive social structures, and a decline in positive attachments to the area. Such outcomes are likely to adversely impact the long-term sustainability of the estate. This, therefore, makes a case for increased resident involvement and ownership of neighbourhoods (Munsie, 2016). Furthermore, it also makes a case for the need to review the 'how' of resident

involvement to enable it to be more inclusive to a broader range of residents (Muir & McMahon, 2015).

The thesis set out to demonstrate that the exclusion of residents stems from a lack of understanding of the resident experience. This gap in understanding derives from a distinct absence of resident narratives in social policy. Similarly, resident viewpoints are also often missing from political rhetoric and media representations of social housing. Rookwood's narratives have revealed the impact on communities and residents' lives. The research has continually asserted the harm that stigmatising meta-narratives have enacted upon social housing communities, which the findings have confirmed (Slater, 2018). Meta-narratives are political and connected to the power structures that control both social policy and service delivery (Riessman, 2008). Thus, the findings evidence the value of involving residents in wider conversations about social housing policy and in continuing to present counter-narratives (Bamberg, 2004). My findings have highlighted the harm that has resulted from the stigmatisation and demonisation of social housing residents. This, therefore, demonstrates the need for research conducted from a resident standpoint.

I have argued for an increased role for both researchers and community workers in tackling the exclusion and stigmatisation of social housing residents. However, my experience and findings demonstrate that community development often occupies a "resistant space" counter to a neoliberal world (Shevellar & Westoby, 2018, p.6). Workers will often have to try and work "in and against the state," balancing a continual interchange of their community work and power structures (Meade & Shaw, 2016, p.38). I use my findings to demonstrate that community workers and researchers alike now need to take a more "politically progressive stance" to address socio-economic injustices. (Lynch et al., 2020, p.251). This is, therefore, why I have made a case for standpoint research methodologies with and for social housing communities (Harding, 2015). Through the community study of Rookwood, I have produced a counter-narrative that is both political and critical, challenging the meta-narratives of residents so commonly found within social policy.

I return to the position of the housing sector post-Grenfell; the tragedy should have served as a trigger point to finally realise the harm neoliberal policy has enacted upon social housing communities. Regrettably, little change or ownership has occurred in subsequent inquiries (Hodkinson, 2020). Social housing communities still face multiple barriers and setbacks in enacting change and being heard (Cornish, 2021). Thus, I present this narrative to contribute to a growing body of research post-Grenfell. This approach seeks to truly engage with, and listen to, the resident voice. My research has sought to re-humanise the social housing resident through counter-narratives and positively contribute to improving social policy and housing practice. I will, therefore, now turn to outline the recommendations for policy and practice that I feel have arisen from my research.

8.8 Recommendations for policy and practice

"Within this context, not only will housing and tenant campaigns be crucial, but so too will the role of academics in critically dissecting the purpose, mechanisms and effects of these policies as well as offering intellectual resources to help nourish the creation of alternative policies and paradigms."
(Hodkinson & Robbins, 2013).

Although not always explicit, the recommendations outlined from the findings of this research have been interwoven throughout the thesis. I feel that the narrative of Rookwood helps put forward very clear recommendations that change is now needed in terms of social policy and practice relating to social housing communities. The research helps outline a distinct role for ongoing inquiry into the value and significance of; community, social spaces, and belonging for social housing residents. I also contend that developing counter-narratives in research and policy is also a vital area of focus for the future.

The findings of this research have implications for the sustainability and housing management of social housing neighbourhoods. Furthermore, I argue that narratives such as Rookwood's have real significance in shaping change in future

social policy. I outline my recommendations below in terms of; the estate itself, social housing practice, social policy, and future research.

8.8.1 Recommendations for Rookwood

The first recommendation stemming from this research is to recognise and understand the resident narrative of Rookwood for relevant local providers and agencies to acknowledge the narrative and work together to address the issues raised within it. I aim to take responsibility for this by disseminating the findings by different means to various relevant agencies.

Taken directly from resident suggestions, the primary recommendation for the estate, and the wider area, is effective and genuine consultation with residents about how to move forward and improve community facilities. The second recommendation is to reconsider community spaces and places within and close to the estate. Furthermore, the community centre attached to the school was funded for community use for at least 21 years after funding was approved[52]. The funding was granted in 2003, the usage was changed in 2010, and the evidence outlining the need for the facility remains unchanged. Therefore, I suggest this warrants further investigation into the possibility that the facility should be reinstated in some capacity.

Furthermore, due to the prevalence of nostalgia within the residents' positive constructions of community, it is recommended that consideration should be given to a local reminiscence project. Previous similar projects have been found to help residents develop more positive feelings towards places that have endured change (Garrow, 2021).

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[52] *A freedom of information request to Sports England enabled the release of the original documentation of funding for the space. The agreement specified that the building would create a "community facility" with a specific "community focus" in partnership with residents, local agencies, and third sector organisations (see Appendices 25, 26 and 27).*

Due to its stock levels in the area and its role in the re-development of the estate, I suggest that the registered social provider responsible for most homes on Rookwood, ForHousing, should take the lead in enacting these recommendations.

8.8.2 Recommendations for social housing practice

My research findings highlight the "social" role of registered providers and their responsibility to contribute to positive constructions of community and belonging (Anderson et al., 2020, p.1). It is argued that this should be "core business" for providers (Tually et al., 2020, p.99). As previously discussed, social housing residents have minimal choice about where their home is. Nevertheless, residents still have fundamental human rights to feel at home and construct belonging to where they live (Rolfe & Garnham, 2020). It is suggested that providers now need to increase the level of involvement of residents in the development and management of neighbourhoods where they may have failed to do so previously (Tually et al., 2020). A wealth of research has investigated the links between how a neighbourhood can impact residents' health and well-being, but the role of social housing landlords is under-researched (Rolfe & Garnham, 2020). The residents' narratives highlight the complexities of 'involving' residents in decisions about their homes and neighbourhoods and concurs with research that calls for further review and improvement of resident involvement practice (Muir & McMahon, 2015; Preece, 2019). Furthermore, the study exposes the limits to hearing residents within existing involvement structures which need to expand and diverge to increase their inclusivity (Muir & McMahon, 2015). However, providers must also be willing to relinquish a degree of control in terms of resident involvement and include those who are easy to dismiss ((Muir & McMahon, 2015). Arguably a good starting point would be what 'involved' looks like to residents; more research is suggested to fully appreciate how this connects to the resident perception and experience of 'community.'

My research and stance are highly critical of the sector that employs me; here, I revisit the point I made within my rationale about 'Street Level Bureaucracy' (Lipsky, 2010). In community-based research, researchers and community

workers are often viewed as "sneaking round and causing trouble" (Davies, 1975, p.80). This quote embodies my concerns about how the wider housing sector will perceive this research. Nevertheless, I still contend that the housing sector has issues with stereotyping, thus propagating classist views of 'tenants' rather than 'people' (McIntosh, 2016). This is evident in recent cases, such as the Eastfield Estate in London, prompting an ITV investigation and regulatory review (Hewitt, 2021). Again, I can only return to the example of Grenfell as the ultimate outcome of the dismissal and disregard for resident opinion and concern. Although I contend the sector has a long way to go to address stigmatising and de-humanising attitudes from within, recent campaigns such as 'See the Person'[53] offer some potential for change. However, to remove the stigma attached to residents, the whole sector must work together as a "collective" to tackle the deeply entrenched issues (Denedo & Ejiogu, 2021, p.57).

8.8.3 Recommendations for social policy

My position on social policy relating to social housing communities has been plain from the outset of this research. I have made clearly defined arguments that critique social policy in this context, which I contend have been further supported by my research.

I feel a radical overhaul of social housing policy is now required, particularly in terms of how it is developed and then applied. I support the notion that the continued use of neoliberal policy has caused violence and harm to working-class and social housing communities (Pain, 2019; White, 2017). I further support the theory that such policy is part of a wider "class project" that seeks to significantly reduce social housing in the UK (Hodkinson et al., 2013, p.3). Previous chapters have established the role of research, such as my own, in challenging and critiquing social policy (Allen, 2009). Furthermore, this thesis confirms that more critical enquiry of social housing policy is now required (Hodkinson et al., 2013).

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[53] *https://seetheperson.org/*

It is recommended that housing research and policy move away from "policy-driven evidence" (Bryson & Mowbray, 2005, p.92). The primary recommendation of this research would be that the lived experience must now be better accounted for in both the formation of and application of social housing and community policy. Residents' voices and experiences need to be more widely acknowledged and incorporated into policymaking. Therefore, more comprehensive socio-economic and political factors should also be considered in the policy responses to urban renewal and regeneration (Hodkinson et al., 2013; Lees, 2007; Macleod & Johnstone, 2012). Social housing policy faces a critical juncture; the prevalent stigma of residents now risks evolving into widespread oppression (Scambler, 2018). Social policy must be framed and formed from various viewpoints, including counter ones, not simply elitist perspectives (Amin, 2005). Otherwise, policy becomes static and will only disregard and reject differences (Gedalof, 2018).

I argue that the narrative of Rookwood supports wider research that evidences the systemic failure of neoliberal policy. It is argued that policy responses to poverty, urban renewal and regeneration have only widened inequality (Dorling, 2014; McKenzie, 2017; Mooney, 2009). Both the concepts of the sink estate and community can no longer be permitted to be accepted as doxa within social policy. I argue that academic research and social housing practice are responsible for challenging this and affecting positive change. Social housing residents can no longer be 'othered' to permit damaging social policy (McKenzie, 2015).

8.8.4 Recommendations for future research

The recommendations echo existing inquiry that suggests research should challenge and explore social policy (Alleyne, 2002), particularly housing policy (Allen, 2009).

My earlier chapters have outlined the need for community research (Crow, 2002). Furthermore, the thesis has evidenced the agnotology of knowledge surrounding community (Slater, 2018). I have also stressed the importance of research that seeks out, examines, and represents counter-narratives to challenge and unpack

master and meta-narratives (Bamberg, 2004). Thus, my recommendation for research is the continued inquiry into resident narratives and experiences. It is suggested that there should be a particular focus on resident experiences of community, belonging, and home. I feel my research demonstrates the importance of being able to make a 'home' in social housing and the multitude of negative consequences when this is not possible. Therefore, I suggest that further research is required to understand the value and impact of 'home' in social housing. This would enable a more in-depth understanding of resident experiences, informing and improving housing practice.

Chapter 9 - Conclusion

Within this final short chapter, I present a summary of the main points my research has evidenced throughout the thesis. I suggest that this study demonstrates how the current reality of Rookwood has become detached from the initial vision of the estate. Like many of the areas 'Slum Clearance' developments, the original estate was seemingly built with a holistic community view[54]. The estate was designed as a neighbourhood; with a local school, multi-use games area, play areas, shops, and open green spaces. Latterly a community centre and meeting room were developed on the estate. This funding was primarily based on the wider community's needs (see Appendices 25, 26 and 27).

The removal and closure of these spaces appear to have negatively impacted residents' constructions of community. Residents also felt excluded from the changes in their neighbourhood and could no longer access, own, and control their own community spaces. I contend that this lack of autonomy within the narrative reflects the broader power structures that exclude all social housing residents on a much wider scale.

Without these spaces, residents feel they have lost the opportunity to come together, interact, and develop supportive social structures. The loss of spaces was also seen as a loss of safe, inclusive places for children to play and interact within the estate's boundaries. This, coupled with a rise of new residents, and a decline in wider service and amenities due to welfare reform, has contributed to increased youth-related crime and anti-social behaviour. Without crucial social support networks, a positive means of interaction, and with a genuine fear of crime, residents had withdrawn from social contact. This lack of community, connection, and negative experiences of crime has led to residents being unable to feel safe and at home within the estate, negatively impacting their belonging to the area.

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[54] *This has been described from a review of the original planning documentation (see Appendices 24, 28, 32, 33 and 34) and the 1980/81 District Plan for the area*

The findings evidence the importance of community to social housing residents and the negative consequences of a perceived lack of community. Although nostalgia must be accounted for within residents' narratives, Rookwood remains a local example of the effect of reduced services and facilities within a deprived area. The estate also illustrates the exclusion of residents from the development and planning of their own neighbourhoods.

Additionally, the narrative demonstrates the implications of negative community experiences on; crime, anti-social behaviour, and resident well-being. These outcomes would likely affect the long-term sustainability and management of social housing neighbourhoods. Here Rookwood can illuminate the ultimate cost of austerity policies and politics, particularly in areas subject to high socio-economic deprivation. Therefore, concluding that; social spaces, community, and social networks are likely to have more value and purpose in social housing communities. Consequently, these communities should be prioritised in development, planning, and regeneration. It also confirms the contention that in terms of planning and developing spaces, they are best understood by those that live there. This, therefore, evidences the need for increased levels of resident involvement in the development of social housing neighbourhoods.

I have contended throughout the thesis that the loss felt so keenly in communities such as Rookwood has been enabled through increasingly damaging social policy directed at social housing neighbourhoods. Such policy is accepted on a broader scale due to the alienating and stigmatising narratives of social housing within media and political spheres. This is in addition to static and homogenous policy constructions of 'community,' which operate in exclusion of either the lived experience or wider socio-political factors. I have also made a case that these issues are part of a larger neoliberal class project designed to maintain elite positions that exclude and demonise the working-class. As I repeatedly have, and justifiably ascertained, the Grenfell tragedy was the eventual human cost of such an approach. Therefore, I also strongly suggest that radical change is required in social housing policy and practice. I have positioned this thesis as a counter-narrative against the meta-narratives of social housing communities so frequently

propagated. I argue that research and the social housing sector need to continue seeking out and platforming resident narratives.

The narrative of Rookwood holds the housing sector accountable for allowing this situation to continue. I also argue that each professional needs to take responsibility for working towards a better approach to resident involvement and engagement. My thesis suggests that the sector and academia now need to work together to create an effective challenge to policy that censures and harms social housing residents. Along with more radical community development, the sector must now move forward with the resident at its very centre.

Ultimately the narrative of Rookwood illustrates that a social housing 'unit' does not always make a 'home' and emphasises the implications of underestimating the value of 'home' and 'community' in residents' lives.

"The ache for home lives in all of us. The safe place where we can go as we are and not be questioned."

(Angelou, 2010, p.214)

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NB: *Please note some references have been anonymised and/or redacted to retain the anonymity of the estate and its residents*

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Appendices
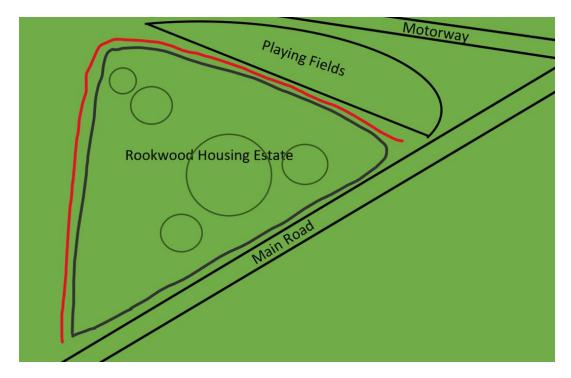
Appendix One: Indices of deprivation map for the corresponding super output area for the Rookwood Estate, demonstrating that the estate is at the highest level of deprivation, redacted.

Appendix Two: Graphic representation of the original aerial photograph of the 'Rookwood' estate showing the topography of the estate and its pre-determined boundaries, recreated and redacted for anonymity

Appendix Three: Graphic representation of the original ariel photograph of the 'Rookwood' estate showing the topography of the estate and highlighting the open land post partial demolition of the original stock in circa 2000 and before the development beginning in 2012 and street-level photographs of the land, recreated and redacted for anonymity

Appendix Four: Artistic and photographic representation of homes, similar to the new properties built on the Rookwood estate between 2013 and 2015, actual photographs have not been used to protect anonymity
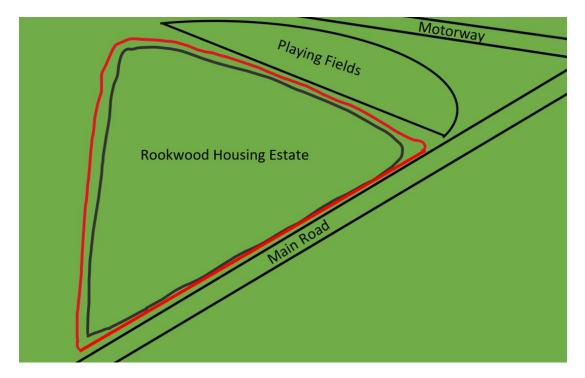
Appendix Five: Photographs to represent the general style and build original properties built on the Rookwood estate between 1980 and 1984. Actual photographs have not been used to protect anonymity
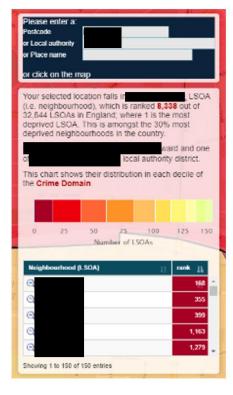
Appendix Six: Photographs of stone boulders similar to those found on the Rookwood estate that replaced the original play areas. Original photographs are not used to protect anonymity. Please note that these photographs are representative only and are not taken from the estate.
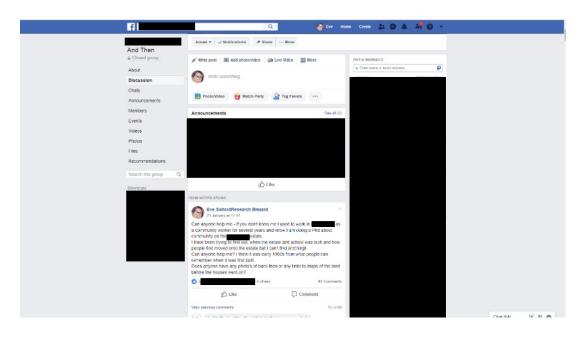
Appendix Seven: Graphic representation of the original Boundary Map of the 48-hour dispersal order imposed by Local Police in September 2015 recreated and redacted for anonymity. The boundary in red ran the entire periphery of the estate

Appendix Eight: Crime Deprivation for the area in and around the Rookwood estate as of 17.2.19, recreated and redacted for anonymity retrieved from: http://dclgapps.communities.gov.uk

Appendix Nine: Screenshot of a post in the Facebook group "************ and Then" about the history of the estate, recreated and redacted for anonymity

Appendix Ten: Resident photographs of the original play area on the estate from their childhood as shared in the Facebook group "************ Now and Then", reproduced with permission, redacted for anonymity

Appendix Eleven: Example of Registered Social Provider advert containing a local lettings policy for Rookwood - Redacted

Main sections

Welcome

Frequently asked questions

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Property search by map

Property search by detail

House exchange

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Other landlords

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Allocations scheme summary

Property details for [REDACTED]

Below is a selection of images for this property. Click any thumbnail for a larger image.

Property overview

Location	[REDACTED]
Property type	House semi detached
Rent	£101.00 per week
Bedrooms	3
Must be community / volunteer	No

Property profile

This property is a 3 bedroomed, semi-detached house. Downstairs there is a hallway, living room, kitchen, dining room and a cloakroom/WC. Upstairs there are 2 double bedrooms, 1 single bedroom and a family bathroom. There is 1 off road parking space provided with gardens to front and rear.

With a high quality kitchen and bathroom installed, this modern home also has an efficient boiler and high levels of insulation to help you reduce fuel bills and comfortably heat your home.

[REDACTED] new development, is close to shops, amenities, bus routes and motorway links. With environmental improvements planned for the neighbourhood, your home will be part of an attractive community environment.

We welcome existing and new customers. A local lettings policy is in place which is available to view in your local area office.

Please note:

Rent is in the region of £101pw

Rent is payable in advance

You will be required to provide the following information:

2 Forms of I.D

Proof of income / entitlement to housing benefit
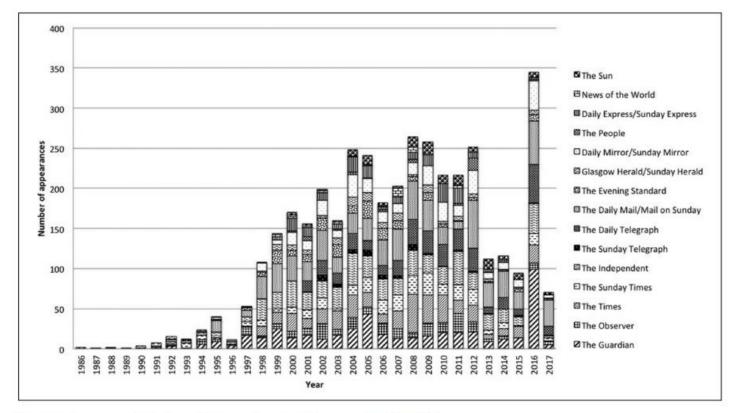
Proof of any capital/savings

2 References

[REDACTED] will not allocate any properties within [REDACTED] to anybody who has a recent history of anti-social behaviour or been recently involved in criminal activity that has been proven.

Place an expression of interest

To express interest in this property, you need to Login

Appendix Twelve: Appearance of phrase 'sink estate' in major UK newspapers in the period 1986 – 2017, as reproduced from (Slater, 2018, p. 883)

Figure 1. Appearance of the phrase 'sink estate' in major UK newspapers, 1986–2017.
Source: LexisLibrary.

Appendix Thirteen: Interview prompt questions as used in the first round of interviews

Draft Prompt Interview Questions – First Round/New Participants

Q1) Please can you tell me a bit about yourself and how you came to live on the Rookwood estate

Q3) Can you tell me what place do you call home?

Q4) Please can you tell me what you like the most about living on the Rookwood estate?

Q5) Please can you tell me what you like the least about living on the Rookwood estate?

Q6) Can you tell me what you feel is meant by the term community?

Q7) Do you feel part of the local community? Can you tell me about this and how it makes you feel?

Q8) Do you feel the Rookwood estate has its own community?

Q9) Do you feel the Rookwood estate community differs to your own community?

Q10) Can you tell me what are the positives of the Rookwood community?

Q11) Can you talk to me about any negatives of the Rookwood community?

Q12) Please tell me about how you feel the Rookwood community has changed, if at all since you have lived within the Rookwood estate?

Q13) Is there anything you think could improve the community of the Rookwood estate?

Q14) What do you feel is the role of the registered social housing provider in the community of the estate?

Q15) Do you have anything further you wish to add?

Appendix Fourteen: Interview prompt questions as used in the second round of interviews

Draft Prompt Interview Questions – Existing Participants – Second Interview

Q1) Please tell me about how you feel the Rookwood community has changed, if at all, since your last interview?

Q2) Do you feel the Rookwood estate has its own community?

Q3) How do you see the community on the Rookwood estate at the moment?

Q4) Do you feel part of the local community? Can you tell me about this and how it makes you feel?

Q5) Can you tell me what are the positives of the Rookwood community?

Q6) Can you talk to me about any negatives of the Rookwood community?

Q7) Please tell me about how you feel the new houses on the estate have affected the community on Rookwood?

Q8) Have you got to know any of the residents in the new homes?

Q9) Is there anything you think could improve the community of the Rookwood estate?
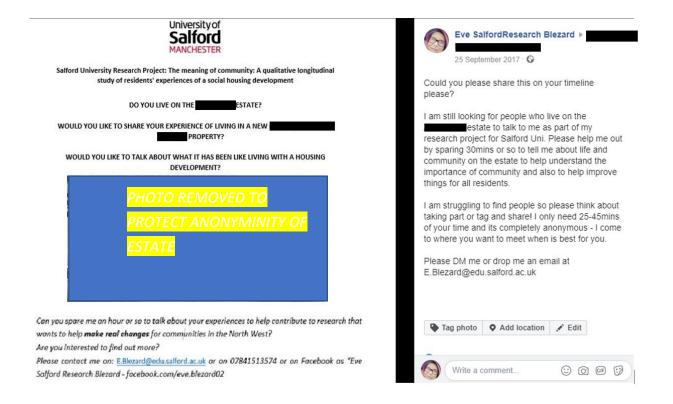
Q10) What do you feel is the role of the registered social housing provider in the community of the estate?

Q11) Do you have anything further you wish to add?

Appendix Fifteen: Participant recruitment on social media on Facebook, redacted

Text from Facebook 'Cover' photo on community profile, redacted and photo removed from anonymity:

Do you live on the Rookwood Estate?
Would you like to share your experience of living in a new ******** property?
Would you like to talk about what it has been like living with a Housing Development?
Help to tell the real story of lives in *****
DM or email: E.Blezard@edu.salford.ac.uk

Facebook post to inform and recruit participants, redacted:

Appendix Sixteen: Copy of text sent in direct social media messages to potential participants:

Hello –

My name is Eve and I am doing research about the Rookwood estate with Salford University. You might remember *** tagged you in a post about my research as I am looking for people to take part who live on the estate. You should be getting a letter about my research next week as I am looking for people to do an interview.

It's about how the community and residents have been shaped by the new houses and I am looking for residents in the new houses to learn about life on the estate. I want to tell the story of life on the estate from the resident's point of view. The research is to help make recommendations to learn what works well and what doesn't when building new homes and learn about how to improve things for residents, especially in terms of the local community.

The interview would only be around 45-60mins and would be totally anonymous and confidential, I can come to you at a time that suits you. If you wanted to learn more I can email or post you an information sheet – but hopefully you will think about taking part. If you want to ask me anything please get in touch.

Thanks,

Eve - E.Blezard@edu.salford.ac.uk, on 07841513574

Appendix Seventeen: Participant recruitment via letter and information sheet sent out through a targeted mailshot to all new/incoming residents

Letter:

Dear Resident,

Participants required for a Salford University Research Project: The meaning of community: A qualitative longitudinal study of residents' experiences of a social housing development

DO YOU LIVE ON THE ROOKWOOD ESTATE?

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE OF LIVING IN A NEW ********* PROPERTY?

WOULD YOU LIKE TO TALK ABOUT WHAT IT HAS BEEN LIKE LIVING WITH A HOUSING DEVELOPMENT?

*I want to talk to residents of the Rookwood estate to help tell the story of the community on **a social housing estate – from the resident's point of view.***

I am trying to understand what the experience of living with and living on a social housing development is really like for residents, to help improve future developments.

I want residents to tell their own stories and talk about real lives on a social housing estate in Northern England.

*Can you spare me an hour or so to talk about your experiences to help contribute to research that wants to help **make real changes** for communities in the North West?*

Are you interested to find out more?

Please contact me on: E.Blezard@edu.salford.ac.uk*, on 07841513574 or through Facebook my profile is; "Eve Salford Research Blezard"- facebook.com/eve.blezard02*

Yours Sincerely,

Eve Blezard
PhD Research Student
Salford University

Information Sheet:

Salford University Research Project: The meaning of community: A qualitative longitudinal study of residents' experiences of a social housing development

DO YOU LIVE ON THE ROOKWOOD ESTATE?

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE OF LIVING IN A NEW ****** HOUSING TRUST PROPERTY?

WOULD YOU LIKE TO TALK ABOUT WHAT IT HAS BEEN LIKE LIVING WITH A HOUSING DEVELOPMENT?

PHOTO REMOVED TO PROTECT ANONYMITY OF ESTATE

I want to talk to residents of the Rookwood estate to help tell the story of the community on a social housing estate – from the resident's point of view. I am trying to understand what the experience of living with and living on a social housing development is really like for residents, to help improve future developments.

I want residents to tell their own stories and talk about real lives on a social housing estate in Northern England.

*Can you spare me an hour or so to talk about your experiences to help contribute to research that wants to help **make real changes** for communities in the North West?*
Are you interested to find out more?
Please contact me on: E.Blezard@edu.salford.ac.uk *or on 07841513574 or on Facebook as "Eve Salford Research Blezard - facebook.com/eve.blezard02*

Information Form

Please ensure you have fully read and understood the below information before partaking in this research study

Project title: *The meaning of community: A qualitative longitudinal study of residents' experiences of a social housing development*

This study is being conducted as part of a Professional Doctorate Qualification at Salford University. The researcher is not an employee or a volunteer for **************.

The study aims to;

•   To provide a voice to social housing residents in the context of a new housing development

•   To contribute to and build on theory of community and to apply this to new contexts

•   To utilise a biographical narrative approach to understand residents' lived experiences of community

•   To further housing providers' knowledge of resident experiences

You are asked to read the following information sheet before you decide if you agree to take part in the study. Please read all the information thoroughly and ask the researcher any questions you may have.

What will the study involve?

You are being asked to take part in a recorded interview where you will be asked a series of questions about your experience of the housing development on the Rookwood estate. The questions will ask you about your feelings about your local community and your relationships with local people and services.

The questions are also designed to explore your experience of how this development has changed, if it all, the local area and community.

These answers will be used to examine how a development project can impact upon a community and the sustainability of the local area from a resident's viewpoint.

Why have I been chosen for interview?

You have been approached as you are a current ********* Resident on the Rookwood estate where the development is taking place.

What happens if I don't want to take part, or I want to stop the interview?

The interview is completely voluntary, and you do not have to take part, and this will have no connection or effect on your tenancy with ************. You can withdraw from the interview at

any time, and it is up to you whether answers you have given up to that point can be used or not.

What will happen to the answers I give?

The interview will be typed up and the answers analysed as part of a thesis submission as a part of a fulfilment of a Professional Doctorate in the Built Environment at Salford University.

A report will be written and provided to ***********. The aim of this report is to make ***********. aware of the impact of the development on the local community and residents. The report will highlight what has worked well with the development and what could be improved and will make recommendations about how this research could contribute to both future developments and ***********.role on the Rookwood estate.

None of your personal details or any information that could identify you will ever be provided to ***********. or anyone else.

Some of the data may be used at academic events such as conferences and may contribute to articles submitted for publication in academic articles.

What happens is I do not want to be identified?

Your name and all other information that may identify you will be removed or replaced in the report. Due to the number of respondents all responses will be anonymised to ensure anonymity of those participants. All data gathered and the report itself will be handled and stored sensitively with respect to data protection principles. Your details will not be given to ***********.Housing Trust at any point.

Who do I contact if I require any further information or want to ask more questions regarding this study?

You can contact the researcher directly;

E.Blezard@edu.salford.ac.uk*, on 07841513574 or through Facebook; "Eve Salford Research Blezard"- facebook.com/eve.blezard02*

Please note if you divulge information that is indicative of criminal behaviour or raises urgent safeguarding issues the research will be obligated to report this to the relevant authorities.

If you wish to clarify any information or ask any questions, please feel free to ask the researcher. If you are happy to continue, please read and fill the consent form handed to you by the researcher.

THANK YOU FOR CONSIDERING TO TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY YOUR HELP IS GREATLY APPRECIATED

Appendix Nineteen: Consent form given to residents before interviews commencing

CONSENT FORM

Research Question *The meaning of community: A qualitative longitudinal study of residents' experiences of a social housing development*

Your interview responses will be treated as confidential and stored safely in accordance of the Data Protection Act. Your interview will be anonymised to protect your identity.

Please read and then answer the questions below regarding the way in which your interview responses will be recorded.

I have read and understood the information sheet.   Yes / No

I have had been given time to ask any questions   Yes / No

I am satisfied that my questions have been answered properly   Yes / No

I understand that I can end the interview and leave the research process at any time without providing a reason.   Yes / No

I consent to the interview being audio taped and to my responses being used in this study.
                                                                                   Yes / No

I understand that I will not be identified in the research and any details I may give that could identify me will be removed or changed to protect my identity so my responses are anonymous   Yes / No

I understand a research report from the findings will be provided to ***************, but I also understand my personal details will not be provided to anyone.   Yes / No

I wish to be provided with a copy of my interview transcript.   Yes / No

_____   _____   _____

Name of Interviewee   Date   Signature

_____   _____   _____

Name of Interviewer   Date   Signature
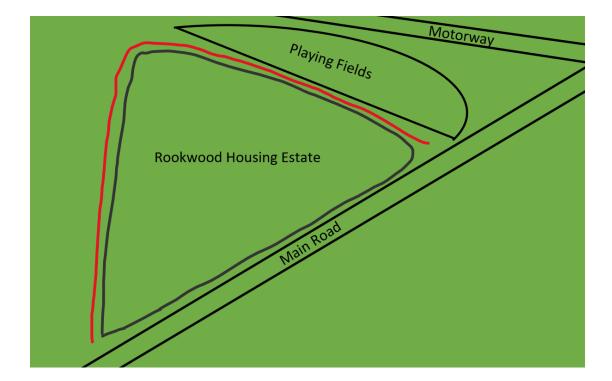
Appendix Twenty: Aerial photograph of the Rookwood Playing Fields, known locally as the 'four fields' - redacted

-
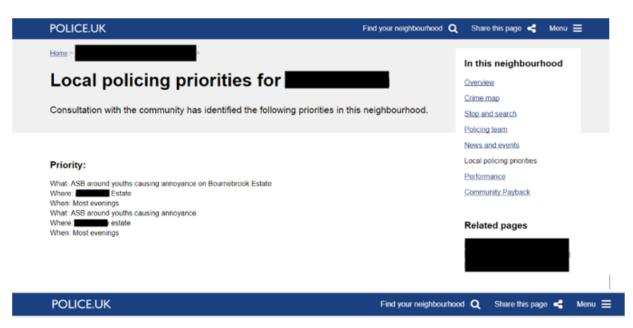
Appendix Twenty-One: Aerial photograph of the Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) and playing field located at Rookwood Academy - redacted

Appendix Twenty-Two: Graphic to represent aerial photograph displaying the 'loopline' walkway and embankments that border the estate (loopline in red)

Appendix Twenty-Three Policing priorities for Rookwood estate in Summer 2017 that detailing ASB and youths causing annoyance on the Rookwood/ estate at the time of the second round of interviews - redacted

POLICE.UK   Find your neighbourhood 🔍   Share this page ◄   Menu ≡

Home > ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ >

Local policing priorities for ▮▮▮▮▮▮

Consultation with the community has identified the following priorities in this neighbourhood.

In this neighbourhood

Overview
Crime map
Stop and search
Policing team
News and events
Local policing priorities
Performance
Community Payback

Priority:

What: ASB around youths causing annoyance on Bournebrook Estate
Where: ▮▮▮▮ Estate
When: Most evenings
What: ASB around youths causing annoyance
Where: ▮▮▮▮ estate
When: Most evenings

Related pages

▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮

POLICE.UK   Find your neighbourhood 🔍   Share this page ◄   Menu ≡

Policing priorities for this neighbourhood

Consultation with the community has identified the following priorities in this neighbourhood.

" What: ASB around youths causing annoyance on ▮▮▮▮ Estate Where: ▮▮▮▮ Estate When: Most evenings What: ASB around youths causing annoyance Where: ▮▮▮▮ estate When: ... "

Read more »

See all the priorities for this neighbourhood »

<u>Appendix Twenty-Four:</u> Planning consent for original estate design dated
January 1979 - redacted

MEMORANDUM

To   :   ███████████
            Chief Architect

From   :   ███████████
            Chief Planner

Copy   :   ███████████
            Assistant Chief Engineer

Date : 23rd January 1979
Ref :
Ext :   ████████
Tel. :

SUBJECT : Development by a Committee of the Council

APP.NO. :   ████████

PROPOSED : Erection of ████ dwellings and one shop

AT   :   Land north west of ████████████
            bounded by ████ and linear parkway,
            ████████████

FOR   :   Housing Committee

I refer to your application dated 16th October 1978 for Planning Permission in
repsect of the above-mentioned development and have to inform you that the
application was approved by the Planning and Development Committee on
14th December 1978   for the purpose of Regulation 4 of the Town and Country
Planning General Regulations, 1976.

This decision was confirmed by the City Council on 17th January 1979   and
as a result Planning Permission is deemed to have been granted for the said
development by the Secretary of State for the Environment on that date.

364

Appendix Twenty-Five: Planning documentation confirming the construction of a 'community centre' intended for both educational and community use at Rookwood Primary School - redacted

THE COUNCIL ███████████

███████████

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

DECISION NOTICE : GRANT

PLANNING PERMISSION ████████

Date of Decision: ▮▯ SEP 2001   SIGNED

Date of Issue: 21 September 2001

On behalf of the Council

Applicant:
Education And Leisure Directorate
████████████████████

Part 1 – Particulars of Application:

Date of Application: 6 August 2001

████████████████

Particulars of development:
Details of the siting, design and external appearance of a single storey extension to provide a sportshall, music room/meeting room, classroom and toilets

Part 2 – Particulars of Decision:

The Council of ████████████ hereby gives notice in pursuance of the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 that permission has been granted for the carrying out of the development referred to in Part 1 hereof in accordance with the application and plans submitted subject to the following condition(s):

Notes to Applicant:

1. This permission only authorises the carrying out of development which is entirely in accordance with the approved plans and other details submitted. In the event of any intended amendments to these details and plans, including the siting of the development in relation to site boundaries or adjacent properties, the developer must first contact the Development Services Directorate (Development Control Section) before any development is commenced for advice regarding the necessity to obtain further permission.

2. The applicant's attention is drawn to the fact that any appeal against this decision must be made within six months of the date of this notice.

Appendix Twenty-Six: Details of Sports England Lottery Funding for Sports Hall and Community Centre at Rookwood school - redacted

Our Ref: ███████ be quoted in <u>all</u> communications)

███████████

███

Dear ██

SPACE FOR SPORT & ARTS

████████████████████████

Award of Grant

1   I am pleased to inform you that the English Sports Council (Sport England) on the recommendation of the Space for Sport and Arts Project Board and subject to the terms and conditions set out below, have agreed to award a grant of **£470,000** (the Award) to assist ███████ (the Organisation) in financing an estimated allowable expenditure of £470,000 for the construction/development of facilities at ███████ detailed in the documentation specified below ("the Facility").

The development of a single-storey extension to the existing school to form:	
Sports hall	Arts room
Entrance	Toilet accommodation
Exhibition space	Stores

On behalf of the Space for Sport and Arts Project Board may I offer our congratulations, we look forward to seeing the completed facility making a real difference to the school and local community.

Sport England, 16 Upper Woburn Place, London WC1H 0QP

Sport England administer Space for Sport and Arts on behalf of the programme partners, Department for Culture Media and Sport, Department for Education and Skills, Arts Council of England, New Opportunities Fund and Sport England

<u>Terms & Conditions</u>

2   The Award is subject to the attached Award Terms and Conditions and the specific requirements and conditions set out below which the Organisation agrees to observe and perform;

    2.1   The Organisation provides confirmation of the proposed Facility start date certified on the enclosed Form SSArts LP1 when construction of the Facility commences or has already commenced and the expected completion date.

    2.2   The Organisation completes and returns the enclosed cashflow form. If you would like an electronic version of the cashflow please contact your Development Manager.

    2.3   The Organisation identifies a lead officer to oversee the implementation of this project and ensure all Award terms and conditions are met and adhered to. This person should have the authority within their Organisation to undertake this role and adequate resources available to support them.

    2.4   Submission of a detailed project specific sports / arts development plans.

    2.5   The Local Education Authority make sufficient arrangements to ensure any revenue deficit in the operation of the facilities funded by Space for Sport and Arts is underwritten. This is to ensure the facilities continue to be open to both the school and community for at least the clawback period of twenty-one years. These arrangements to be approved by Sport England.

    2.6   Respectfully request that the Organisation comply with the specific design concerns of the architects. This should be completed prior to going out to tender:

- Investigate whether a draft lobby can be incorporated at the main entrance.

- Increase critical dimensions of storage area.

- Properly secure boundary fence to the railway line

- Careful attention to acoustic insulation of new build is required

- Careful attention to natural and artificial light where the new build meets with the existing will be required during the ongoing design procurement stages.

- Provide outline specification

- The applicant to confirm that they will meet any cost increases

Sport England, 16 Upper Woburn Place, London WC1H 0QP

Appendix Twenty-Seven: Details of Case made for Sports England Lottery Funding for Sports Hall and Community Centre at Rookwood school

LEA:		1 of 5	School:		
	from an allocation of 2,200,000)				
Project Costs & Funding £	Current Costs	Current SSA Grant: £470,000 Current Partnership Funding.0	Original Costs:		Original Funding:
TOTALS: £470,000	£470,000	£470,000	440,000 (see financial viability section)		440,000
Project Description:	Single storey extension to the present school (to form the proposed entrance, arts room and sports hall. It will accomodate PE, school productions, community sports & theatre.				
Sports: Arts Mix (1-5)	3				
Estimated project completion:	February 2003				

Design/Site Specific Issues

Security of Tenure: Evidence of freehold SoT received. Architect appraisal: This is an ambitious reworking around the existing accommodation but decision on the dimensions of the hall and storage needs to be revisited as conditions to any award. Region Design Comments: The applicant technical services team were very attentive to Sport England and NWAB facility developments inputs and the resultant plans offer very good adaptable/flexible use of space as well as functional elevation/massing form. The Dukesgate school site is quite constrained and it is only possible to piecemeal infill new build between the existing school footprint and the railway line beyond

Strategic Context

Designed for use by [ ] Primary Schools. Ofsted reports highlight inadequacy of existing area for PE and particularly space for performing arts. The project will also provide a community facility, which is currently lacking, the nearest community facility is 30 minutes walk away. The community focus will be on single parent families and Young People and an overall increase in activities. There is a very proactive [ ] that will steer the project and have been keen to link the project with other local neighbourhood renewal programmes such as the [ ] combines an Education programme (improving literacy) a Community programme (Youth and family support) and an Environmental improvement programme (housing stock and public facilities). The scheme is included in Salford's Strategy for Cultural Development. It is also in a Sport England PAI area and 'Super zone' status in an EAZ, HAZ, SAZ and Excellence in Cities initiatives. These strategic plans and initiatives need to be tapped into as far as GP Referral Schemes are concerned.

Partnerships

[ ] been closely involved in consultation on what activities are needed. They could also provide some revenue funding for the Development Officer post. [ ] has a large interest in the scheme, organising funds to appoint an In-House Officer and providing sport and arts development links and expertise. Some links have been made with priority group organisations e.g. [ ] provision of sport/art playschemes) and Social Services who will hire the facility for adult education classes to encourage parenting skills. Sport: Very good and wide-ranging programme of use with lunchtime and after-school clubs (NOF) every day, activities include netball, volleyball, claywork and textiles and [ ] More diverse sports such as handball, climbing, judo and karate are already programmed alongside existing partner users such as several football clubs, Bingo Clubs and Brownies and interestingly a Youth Club for 4-11 year olds. Parents, who will be initially trained by a group leader, will facilitate activities. The school will try for an Active Mark award, as the new facilities will allow 100% curriculum and out-of-hours learning. Curriculum/Community Sportshall use is 50/50, Monday to Sunday with good community programming of activities. linking with a variety of local groups. Arts: The School Improvement Plan focus for 2001-2002 is creative, (modern and ethnic art and dance, photography and film) facilitated by students from nearby [ ] College. The space that will enhance opportunities with the added ability to host events and link with partners such as the [ ] Theatre and visiting artists/musicians. There is good emphasis on community activities and events such as IT focussed classes, craft and creativity. The applicant needs to supply a holiday programme of use.

Under-Representation / Equity

Under-representation/Equity Few opportunities exist in the community for Young People, People on LI's and single parent families. The 'In-house' Development Officer will carry out marketing. Young People: are particularly targeted in the community with the focus on youth development and crime reduction. Activities, which YP in the area find interesting, are in the programme of use such as full skills facilitated by an ex-pupil. People on low incomes: [ ] ward ranks amongst the most deprived in the country (IMD=top 2% most deprived ward nationally). This ward has the largest number of households with one parent and dependants under 16 in [ ]. These groups will be actively targeted by providing opportunities for women (health and learning) and YP. The charges will be kept low, and will be supported (in-kind) by Salford [ ] via free sports development opportunities and the 'Passport to Leisure' Scheme. Community groups will be able to raise the letting fees through small subscriptions and refreshment charges. Over 50's and women's groups will be free. BEMS: [ ] has a very low ethnic population but it is a particularly community active school with approximately 35% ethnic minority/mixed culture on roll call. The applicant states that it will link with organisations in the neighbouring areas and groups in [ ] to utilise the facility. It also mentions a link with [ ] which has a higher % BFMS. Women and Girls' activities such as health classes (GP referral scheme link) and self defence classes and learning and parenting classes could provide new skills in a familiar environment where they do not feel threatened or intimidated. There will be provision of childcare facilities with free taster sessions organised by the Parent and Toddler Group and [ ] Women's Group and the facility will be central and so easily accessible for those who lack transport. People with Disabilities: Special facility design with the main hall fitted with induction loop system for drama events, clear signage and Braille. Full disabled access and WC's. Links with MENCAP, PHAB and EFDS and disabled user local representation on the facility's management committee. Existing work will continue with [ ] Primary Care Trust and Mental Health Services to provide targeted health related sport and art programmes at the facility for therapy in a non-stigmatised environment e.g. stroke sufferers, depressive illnesses and age related conditions.

Operational Management

There will be a management steering group comprised of Head Teachers of the schools involved, members of governing bodies, community representatives and a representative from the [ ] A Community Sports and Arts Development Officer will undertake the day-to day management (bookings, timetabling, marketing and research) employed by [ ] Council and will be based at the facility. This post is likely to be funded through a number of different funding sources including Community Committee delegated funds, Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, Children's Fund and potentially SAZ and Creative Partnerships. Opening and closing of the facility will be the responsibility of the existing caretaker and cleaning via an extension of the existing cleaning contract at Dukesgate.

Viability/Financial Issues

Projected annual running costs are high. Limited income from casual hire, which will have to be addressed in a more 'complete' programme of use. Any shortfall in the budget, the applicant says will be covered by a fully committed [ ] Council through the range of funding sources at its disposal. Need more confirmed commitment on this. Although, a sensible idea, the £10,000 annual funding of the Development Officer will need to be confirmed. A business plan has been included. However, still require a more detailed scale of charges to explain how discounted/free rates for

priority groups will be subsidised and how this will relate to the budget. If these details can be confirmed/explained then long-term financial viability looks realistic. Please note that although the total allocation has not changed, ▮▮▮▮▮ have decided to allocate different amounts to the individual applications and therefore 'Current Costs' reflect the project at a more developed stage than 'Original costs'.

Regional Comments	AWARD

It has been very much a teamwork approach facilitated in the main by a competent project manager, well versed in school's issues. Strong strategic need with little or no playing fields or hard court areas and these physical limitations have tended to hinder the Heads clear ideas/vision for enhanced community group engagement. The existing school hall has to accommodate every conceivable activity that takes place, the new facilities, will allow the community, as well as the school, to broaden their horizons. The school also has long established Sports development links within ▮▮▮▮▮. It has attained "community plus" status - mostly as a result of it's partnership working in and around the ▮▮▮ area, as well as through an Excellence in Cities programme and Youth Services work. It also has a strong relationship with the Royal Exchange Theatre Company, being one of their partner schools. This has further allowed the school to achieve School Standards fund monies. However, ▮▮▮▮▮ Council recognise that they to have some further strategic work to do in the health sphere, and these new SS&A facilities would be perfectly located to serve community health issues and their Health Walk Programme ▮▮▮▮▮ Schools representatives were active participants in the Sport England / NWAB convened business planning and operational management training day held in July 2001. Sound business plan balance sheet proposals have been put forward, but we do have to recognise that without some ▮▮▮▮▮ revenue support very disenfranchised groups will find it hard to afford to use the facilities and schools likewise will find it hard, year on year, to keep balancing the books. In summary the project benefits from a long serving head who knows the issues in her area and has worked well with the Community and ▮▮▮▮▮ (despite severe site limitations) to produce a satisfactorily integrated scheme, albeit that site supervision and access will need carefully controlling given that the new facilities are to the side and rear of the existing school and particularly close to the adjacent railway line.

Value for Money

Good QS assessment. Only concern is that the substructure is too high as the applicant has identified poor ground conditions, but the overall cost of the project is what the QS would expect so this does not present a problem. Alteration projects like this always carry greater risks but the positive side is that the applicant has carried out a thorough ground survey, full conditions survey of existing building and an asbestos survey.

Summary

Historically, there has been a paucity of sport and art activities in this very deprived area. However, this is a good application in that it shows how the active management group (particularly the community focused school staff and ▮▮▮ representatives) have recognised local problems and have subsequently prioritised targeting of priority groups especially Young, People on Low Incomes and single parent families. The overall good operational management potential will be enhanced by the employment of an in-house development officer, although the applicant will have to ensure that long-term funding of this post is confirmed. The project will also be supported by sound partnerships (existing and new) such as local community groups and larger organisations including ▮▮▮▮▮. More specifically the link with existing sports and arts schemes e.g. NOF Out of hours study support £2,800 p.a. means that extra-curricular activity will be free for all children involved at the new facility. However, this revenue support may have to be supplanted by alternative grant aid if/when it runs out. In terms of the programme of use, more information will have to be submitted with particular regard to activity income projections, considering the low casual hire opportunities. Low charges for community groups and free women's activities and seniors are mentioned but there needs to be a more detailed scale of charges in direct relation to the budget. To conclude, the project has considerable potential to have a positive impact on curriculum and community sport and art, and hence, if the costs remain stable and the long-term business plan/programme of use can be confirmed then this project represents good value for SSA money.

Recommendation	AWARD

Recommended conditions for schemes deemed supportable:

Design and site conditions:

1. Investigate whether a draft lobby can be incorporated at the main entrance.
2. Increase critical dimensions of storage area with possible reduction in hall dimensions.
3. Properly secure boundary fence to the railway line
4. Careful attention to acoustic insulation of new build is required
5. Careful attention to natural and artificial light where the new build meets with the existing will be required during the ongoing design procurement stages.
6. Provide outline specification
7. The applicant to confirm that they will meet any cost increases
8. Submission of appropriate documentation regarding security of tenure.

General conditions:

1. Written confirmation by ▮▮▮▮▮ Council of 1) Development Officer funding 2) One-off item of £5,000 to purchase equipment
2. More robust business plan with specific regard to include a detailed Scale of Charges that incorporates concessions for all priority group and confirmation of activity income and formula funding.
3. Aspects of Programme of use require more detail; applicant should research additional casual hire opportunities in order to fill spare capacity and a holiday timetable is necessary.
4. Need project specific arts and sports development plans
5. LEA to identify a dedicated person to develop the project post award

Appendix Twenty-Eight: Details of planning consent for a community shop for a resident's association

███████ COUNCIL ███████████████

████████████

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

DECISION NOTICE:GRANT

PLANNING PERMISSION

DATE OF DECISION: 17 January 1996

DATE OF ISSUE: 19 January 1996

SIGNED ~~~~~~

on behalf of the Council

APPLICANT:

████ Residents Association

███████████████

PART 1 - PARTICULARS OF APPLICATION:

DATE OF APPLICATION: 20 November 1995

APPLICATION NUMBER: ███████████

Particulars and location of development:

█████████████
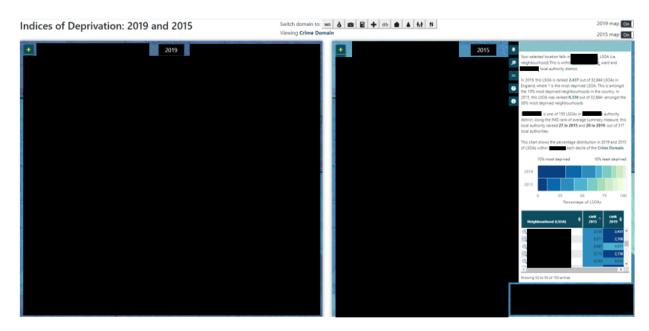
Change of use from flat to community facility

PART 2 - PARTICULARS OF DECISION:

████Council ████████████████ hereby gives notice in pursuance of the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 that permission has been granted for the carrying out of the development referred to in Part 1 hereof in accordance with the application and plans submitted subject to the following condition(s):
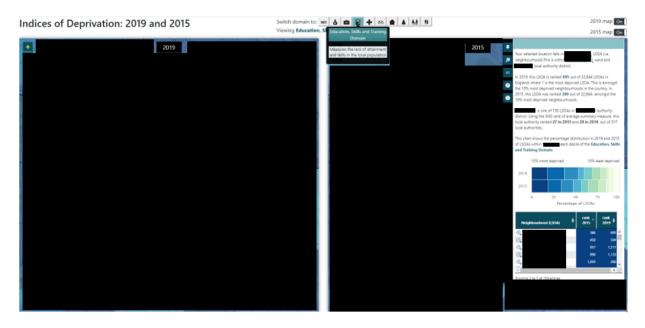
01   The development must be begun not later than the expiration of five years beginning with the date of this permission.

02   The use hereby permitted shall NOT be operated after 4.00pm in the afternoon.

03   This permission shall enure for the benefit of the ████████Residents Association ONLY.

Appendix Twenty-Nine: Crime Deprivation for the area around the estate - redacted
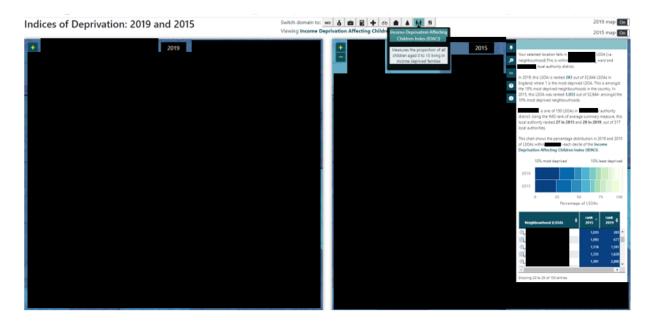
Source: *The English Indices of Deprivation 2019 I D2019 Explorer accessed at:*

http://dclgapps.communities.gov.uk/imd/iod_index.html

Appendix Thirty: Education, skills, and training Deprivation for the area around the estate - redacted

Source: The English Indices of Deprivation 2019 I D2019 Explorer accessed at: *http://dclgapps.communities.gov.uk/imd/iod_index.html*

Appendix Thirty-One: Income Deprivation affecting children for the area around the estate - redacted

Source: *The English Indices of Deprivation 2019 I D2019 Explorer accessed at:*

http://dclgapps.communities.gov.uk/imd/iod_index.html

Appendix Thirty-Two: Planning consent for an informal play area on disused railway land adjacent to the estate - redacted

M E M O R A N D U M

To   : ███████████ - Recreational   Date : 23rd January 1979
           Services Manager   Ref :
                                             Ext : ██████████
From   : ██████████   Tel. : ██████████
           Chief Planner

Copy   : ██████████
           Assistant Chief Engineer

SUBJECT : Development by a Committee of the Council.

APP.NO. : ████████████

PROPOSED : Provision of Pedestrian Way, bridle path and Informal Play Area
           with Kick-about Area.

AT   : Disused Railway Cutting,
            ████████████████████████

FOR   : Recreation Committee

I refer to your application dated 22nd September 1978 or Planning Permission in
respect of the above-mentioned development and have to inform you that the
application was approved by the Planning and Development Committee on
14th December 1978   for the purpose of Regulation 4 of the Town and Country
Planning General Regulations, 1976.

This decision was confirmed by the City Council on 17th January 1979   and
as a result Planning Permission is deemed to have been granted for the said
development by the Secretary of State for the Environment on that date.

K.B. Browne

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Appendix Thirty-Three: File Documentation from the original Council plans and design for Rookwood, detailing the clear vision for community spaces, amenities, and social space- redacted

MEMORANDUM from THE RECREATIONAL SERVICES MANAGER

Technical Services Officer   23th February, 1976
TO   Att. ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ Planning Division   Date

Your ref.   My ref. ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮

Copy to

SUBJECT: Proposed Residential Development   INITIALS 27 FEB 1976
          ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮   for FR/▮▮▮
          Comments on Planning Brief

Comments are set against the notation used in the planning brief.

2(i) It is considered that the landscaped mound fronting the motorway should form
a backcloth against which the development of the public open space can be designed.
Extensions of the ground modelling can be used to demark areas within the public
open space. Associated tree planting on the mound will increase its effectiveness
as well as reduce the visual intrusion of the motorway.

The construction of the mound is stated correctly as a pre-requisite prior to
building works, but, I would ask if the public open space is to be used as a
contractors compound, if so then on completion of the mound adequate protection
will be required to prevent misuse of the area.

Any planting works considered necessary to screen the motorway should be carried
out at the earliest possible time and adequately protected.

3(iii) To enable a landscape strategy to be formulated it is essential to
establish an early liaison between the Technical Services and Recreation departments
with information as to type of dwellings, open plan or private garden, age groups
etc. being essential to formulate such a strategy.

6. Pedestrian walkways should be used as buffer zones creating landscaped linear
walkways within developments as suggested. Adequate space either side of pathways
will provide the facility for tree and shrub planting which combined with ground
modelling and changes in level will retain the basic contours of the whole site.

As indicated footpath junctions form an ideal meeting place and therefore the
provision of seating areas with associated local landscaping should be encouraged
together with static play equipment for use by toddlers, accompanying parents.

7(iii) Consideration should be given early in the design stage to determine the
role of the public open space either as an amenity or functional area. Whichever
is decided will dictate the provision of facilities within the development.

The suggestion of a sitting area in the vicinity of Brynheys and Brynheys Close is
agreed with as this will enable the existing properties to retain their identity
whilst becoming part of the overall development.

8 The balance of land, designated although not used as car parking could be
utilised as hard surfaced Kick-about areas, suitably fenced and easily converted
when the demand for parking spaces increases.

continued.........

8. Car Parking

Provision should be made ultimately for 100% car parking which can be accommodated on hard standings without the need for garages. However, considering the anticipated low level of car ownership and current Government demands for restraint, an initial provision of 65% of car parking for residents and visitors should be provided. The balance of the land should be used in the interim period for landscaping or play areas.

9. Landscape and Open Space

The landscape proposals for the site are considered to be a major element in the development. Pruning of the landscape input could have a serious detrimental effect on the overall scheme. The landscape factor is important for four reasons:-

1. The site is within the submitted Green Belt.

2. The site is on the fringe of the built-up area of the City and some serious attempt should be made to soften the coalescence of town and country. To end the built-up area with a hard edge adjacent to open land would be visually unacceptable.

3. The site is on a slight incline leading down to the motorway and any view from or across the motorway should be softened by a high degree of landscaping.

4. Every effort should be made to reduce any noise nuisance from the motorway and the inclusion of a high degree of landscaping in both the public open space and the housing area would help absorb some of the traffic noise.

(i) Internal

The landscaped areas are proposed to reinforce the desirable characteristics of the site and to define the main housing areas; thus providing physical and visual separation, with screening of the relatively high land and skyline. The noise and visual problems of the motorway will be improved by this internal landscaping. Some of these areas also incorporate the major footpath network, and those parts which are separated from the road system can accommodate informal spaces, kickabout areas and children's play space. Toddlers play spaces should be designed near to the houses. Earth mounding and mass tree planting are proposed for these major areas. The landscape design within the housing area should have a positive relationship with the major planting and should be the subject of early discussion between the Architect and the Recreational Services Manager.

It may be possible to incorporate at least one or even both of the existing ponds as a water feature within the area, although the safety aspect must be carefully considered.

(ii) External

The external open space should not be treated merely as a wedge between the housing and the motorway but as a major factor in its own right. It is after all an area zoned for public open space and is within the submitted Green Belt, and this opportunity should be taken to permit the land to play a positive role in the provision of a community facility.

9.   All points indicated in the introduction to this paragraph are strongly
agreed with, for any cuts in landscape provision whether they be for an
increase in development numbers or for economies in the overall costs, will
result in a second class environment detrimental to all.

(i)   The internal landscape is strongly governed by whether the houses
are to have private gardens front and rear or open-plan frontages, with
private rear gardens.

Open plan frontage afford the most opportunity for the introduction of a
planned landscape with tree and shrub planting schemes sited to the best effect.

Wholly private gardens afford the authority little opportunity to direct or
dictate the overall landscape, being confined to the landscaped pedestrian
walks and small amenity areas, with little or no control over the treatment
of private gardens.

Looking to the future maintenance of the development, any increase in work
load on this scale particularly in the present financial climate will stretch
the departments resources considerably, but maintenance out of necessity
must have a role to play in the design but whatever is decided must be
consistent with good landscape design.

The introduction of water features into housing developments is always a
desirable feature but the safety restrictions necessarily imposed often
outweigh the amenity effect.

(ii)   A survey of recreation and amenity provision within the area will
assist in designing the public open space which together with liaison with
Technical Services will give its influence on the design of the development.

The treatment of this public open space should be decided at an early stage
with particular reference to its likely use and need for maintenance.   The
Recreational Services Manager should be approached at an early date for
consultations on the use of the land as this will have obvious implications
for the layout, landscaping, and provision of vehicular and pedestrian access
to the site.

The landscaped earth mound adjacent to the motorway should be approximately
3M high and is essential in protecting the public open space and the housing
area from both the noise and visual impact of the motorway.   The earth
necessary to form the mound could be made available from other areas in the
site where earth moving should be considered to reinforce the existing
differences in levels.

In all cases the landscape layout and design should be progressed in conjunction
with the housing layout design to ensure a correct balance and planned
maintenance programme.   The suggested form of layout concentrates the
landscape into larger more manageable areas rather than a series of small
spaces which would have a high maintenance factor.

10.   Shopping

The proximity of existing shops in the area, including the Little Hulton
Shopping Centre, would seem to suggest that general shopping facilities in
the area are adequate to support the influx of population as a result of
the development.   However, it is anticipated that the development could
support two corner shops which could be constructed with living accommodation
over.

NOTE

This written statement forms the basis of the planning brief for the site.
The accompanying drawing has been produced largely as a broad illustration
of the design principles set out in the brief and should only be used as a
general guide.

Appendix Thirty-Four: Original proposed plan for Rookwood estate Council
Technical Services December 1975- redacted

Appendix Thirty-Five Details of relevant training, experience, and personal development during doctoral studies

Personal Development Record			
Salford University Training			
Title	**Date**	**Content**	**Learning Outcome**
Narrative Analysis Workshop	Feb-19	Workshop on narrative analysis and methodology	Improved knowledge and understanding of narrative analysis
Preparing for Interim Assessment and Internal Evaluation	Dec-18	Information and preparation for IE report and assessment	Increased awareness of IE process and requirements
Connecting Citizens, Health and Place with Data Analytics	Apr-16	Linking place, residents, and health with data	Increased understanding of placed based health data
The Interview: its place in social scientific research strategies	Apr-16	Information and training on interviewing	Improved knowledge and understanding of interviews, esp. semi-structured interviewing
Narrative Workshop	2016	Workshop on narrative analysis and methodology	Improved knowledge and understanding of narrative analysis
Mixed Methodologies Workshop	Nov-15	Workshop on combined qualitative and quantitative methodologies	Increased knowledge combined qualitative and quantitative methodologies - helped to design research methods
NVivo and the Literature Review	Oct-15	Learning how to use NVivo for referencing and lit review	Improved skills concerning literature searching and referencing
Qualitative research with NVivo	Sep-15	Learning how to use NVivo for qualitative analysis	Increased knowledge and awareness of coding and thematic qualitative analysis

Appendix Thirty-Six Details of relevant training, experience, and personal development during doctoral studies

Conference Presentations and Workshop delivery			
Event Title	**Date**	**Content**	**Learning Outcome**
TPAS Engaging Communities Conference	Mar-18	Delivering workshop on community engagement, hearing the resident voice and actionable insight	Development of presentation skills and workshop design and delivery
Customer Engagement summit	Nov-16	Delivering presentation about community engagement and qualitative analysis to address issues of low socio-economic deprivation in social housing	Development of presentation skills and workshop design and delivery, particularly to large groups
Food Poverty Training Workshop	2015	Delivering a presentation about addressing food poverty through resident and community engagement	Development of training skills in workshop design and delivery
Guest Lectures on Housing and Homeless -Salford University	2013, 2014, 2015	3 x Guest lectures at Level 5 covering community, housing, and social policy	Developing teaching and lecturing skills and experiencing
Presentation on Social Media Conference in Housing - Manchester and London	2013	Presentation on engaging with residents through social media in Social Housing	Development of presentation skills and workshop design and delivery
Guest Lecture on Community Development – Manchester Metropolitan University	2013	Guest lecture at Level 5 covering community, housing, and social policy	Developing teaching and lecturing skills and experiencing

Relevant External Training			
Title and Provider	**Date**	**Content**	**Learning Outcome**
QSR Moving on with NVivo 12 for Windows	Jan-19	Advanced NVivo learning, including application alongside grounded theory approaches	Increased knowledge and awareness of coding and thematic qualitative analysis helped to decide on an analytical approach
NEF Consulting Social Return on Investment	Nov-16	Social value and SROI training to understand the impact and outcome for social housing residents	Increased understanding of outcome and impact measurement
Leeds University - Researching relationships across generations and through time	Jun-15	Workshop learning about biographical and longitudinal approaches	Increased knowledge and best practices for biographical research approaches
Manchester University - Poverty Masterclass	Oct-14	Workshop understanding ways to measure and examine lived experiences of poverty	Increased awareness about definitions of poverty and methods used to measure poverty

Appendix Thirty-Seven Relevant Professional Experience and Training during doctoral studies

Recent Relevant Professional Experience			
Job Title and Employer	**Date**	**Content**	**Learning Outcome**
Customer Insight Analyst, Progress Housing Group	May 17 - present	Role in Social Housing sector, focusing on customer voice, resident engagement, and qualitative analysis	Development of regularly use and application of qualitative research techniques in social housing practice. Development of focus group and workshop skills and techniques. Improved report writing and data presentation skills, including infographics. Sector-based knowledge, training, and practical experience
Customer Intelligence Officer, Trafford Housing Trust	Aug 15 - May 17	Role in Social Housing sector, focusing on customer voice, resident engagement, and qualitative analysis	Development of regularly use and application of qualitative research techniques in social housing practice. Development of focus group and workshop skills and techniques. Improved report writing and data presentation skills, including infographics. Sector-based knowledge, training, and practical experience

Associate Tutor in Applied Health and Social Care, Edge Hill University	Aug 14 - May 17	Regular delivery of Level 5 content on community, housing, social policy and methodology on several Health and Social Care degree courses	Developing teaching and lecturing skills and experiencing with regular sessions. Module and session planning, design, and delivery. Experience in marking student assignments and delivering student support
Community Development Officer, Social Housing Provider	May 10 - Aug 15	Community development and resident engagement role in social housing, including working on the estate at the centre of research	Direct frontline experience in community development and resident engagement. Working closely and in-depth in the area of research focus. First-hand experience of working in and with communities subject to social change in an area of high residualisation and socio-economic deprivation.
Homelessness and Housing Advice Officer, Chorley Borough Council	Feb 09 - May 10	Role in the Housing sector, supporting those who are homeless or at the risk of becoming homeless	Increased knowledge and understanding of housing law and process. Frontline experience and understanding of housing rights and homelessness

Appendix Thirty-Eight Ethical Approval

University of
Salford
MANCHESTER

4 May 2016

Eve Blezard

Dear Eve

RE: ETHICS APPLICATION ST16/91 – The meaning of community: A qualitative longitudinal study of residents' experiences of a social housing development

Based on the information you provided, I am pleased to inform you that your application ST16-91 has been approved.

If there are any changes to the project and/ or its methodology, please inform the Panel as soon as possible by contacting S&T-ResearchEthics@salford.ac.uk

Yours sincerely,

Prof Mohammed Arif
Chair of the Science & Technology Research Ethics Panel
Professor of Sustainability and Process Management,
School of Built Environment
University of Salford
Maxwell Building, The Crescent
Greater Manchester, UK M5 4WT
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Email: m.arif@salford.ac.uk