'Experiences of place attachment and mental wellbeing in the context of urban regeneration'

Abstract

Urban regeneration is an important policy focus across the European Union, with initiatives seeking to address inequalities in public health. Although theoretically such initiatives should produce benefits for mental wellbeing, this lacks strong supporting evidence. The current research addressed a prior overreliance on quantitative methods and underappreciation of the psychological significance of place, through the adoption of qualitative interviews with residents, as part of an independent review of a £650m regeneration project. Interpretative phenomenological analysis was utilised to explore the processes involved in residents' mental wellbeing and place attachment. Analysis developed three super-ordinate themes: 'feelings of control', 'social and community relations', and 'understandings and definitions of place'. These highlight issues relating to physical health, social isolation, community cohesion, as well as the potential for regeneration activities to undermine various elements of the people-place relationship.

1. Introduction

Regeneration is said to improve living conditions and life chances by replacing poor quality housing, altering the built environment and stimulating the local economy (Acheson et al. 1998; Department for Communities and Local Government, 2010). Regeneration in the United Kingdom dates back to the 1850s (Roberts, 2008), but the term 'regeneration' was not officially adopted within the governmental lexicon until the 1980s. The term replaced 'redevelopment' and was regarded as a means to address concerns within the economy and social wellbeing of British society (Furbey, 1999). A significant figure during this period was Michael Heseltine, the then Secretary of State for the Department of the Environment, who led the government response to redevelop derelict and under-utilised sites to stir economic activity and to bring about social change. The Conservative approach of the 1980s set the trend for large-scale interventions and the transformation of the urban environment (Jones & Evans, 2008).

In reviewing the policies and initiatives of the past century, it becomes clear that regardless of the nature of regeneration, its shortcomings are readily highlighted by its critics. A common criticism centres around the concept of gentrification and it has been suggested that rather than benefitting an existing population, regeneration may lead to change through population movement (Uitermark & Bosker, 2014). Gentrification's role in displacement has been described as an increasingly visible issue (Marcuse, 2015), seen to contribute to social exclusion and exacerbating inequalities (Peyrefitte, 2020). Slater (2006) argues that critical perspectives on gentrification have dwindled over time. Perceptions of gentrification are now said to be less about rent increases, displacement, and landlord harassment, becoming more focussed on street-level, aesthetic changes and the inclusion of up-market establishments, seen as evidence of a healthy economic present and future (Peck, 2005). Research has provided a potential explanation for this shift, identifying a focus on population characteristics (Galster, 2010) and the statistical and mapping techniques employed to explore the effects of gentrification as failing to provide a meaningful estimate of the true scale of associated displacement (Easton, Lees, Hubbard & Tate, 2019).

Place plays a crucial role in life and identity, providing an individual with a sense of belonging and a means of understanding the world through their spatial movement and across time (Preece, 2020). Neighbourhoods, as places – both spatial and imagined - are crucial to health and research has consistently highlighted the link between poor quality housing and physical and mental health issues (Marsh, Gordon, Heslop, & Pantazis, 2000; Won, Lee, Forjuoh, & Ory, 2016). Although on a theoretical level regeneration projects are proposed to aid public health, a causal link between changes in neighbourhoods and positive mental wellbeing has not been clearly established (Blackman, Harvey, Lawrence, & Simon, 2001; Mair et al., 2015). A recent systematic review of the effects of changes to the built environment identified six papers investigating large-scale interventions, revealing no strong effect on mental wellbeing outcomes (Moore et al., 2018). Furthermore, research has shown that after controlling for socio-economic status, those living in neighbourhoods undergoing regeneration had poorer mental health (Smith, Lehning & Kim, 2018). Cole (2013) emphasises the importance of intersectionality in understanding responses to neighbourhood change, identifying how a population-level approach to initiatives can lead residents to question how they have benefitted as individuals (Cole et al., 2009) and we argue that a potential explanation for the mixed research findings is a failure to consider the psychological significance of an area undergoing regeneration.

Within environmental psychology, the emotional attachment people hold toward their environment is known as place attachment (Low & Altman, 1992). When considering place attachment, one must first consider the diversity of theoretical understandings of the concept. To operationalise this for the current research, we draw on the work of Seamon (1979; 2000; 2012; 2014), who approaches place phenomenologically, defining it as: "any environmental locus in and through which individual or group actions, experiences, intentions, and meanings are drawn together spatially" (Seamon, 2014, p.11). From this position, person and place become interwoven, enabling the research process to explore the phenomenon of 'person in place.' Seamon also draws attention to what Lewicka (2011) considers to be the generative aspects of place: the underlying processes that can be both sustaining and detrimental to place attachment. These are place definition, place dependence, place bonding, place interaction, and place identity. Each of these stands to be influenced by urban regeneration, which is significant with place attachment being associated with higher levels of life satisfaction, social capital, and overall adjustment (Lewicka, 2011; Rollero & De Piccoli, 2010; Tartaglia, 2012). Each of these sub-processes will be drawn upon throughout the conducted analysis, to begin to unpick the complex interrelations between people and the environment, as well as regeneration's influence on this.

In considering the influence regeneration has on mental wellbeing there are two main dimensions to contemplate (Henderson & Knight, 2012). Hedonic wellbeing relates to the experience of positive emotions (Huta & Ryan, 2010) and eudaimonic wellbeing, to the realisation of one's potential (Ryan & Deci, 2001). These are conflicting motivations, however, as not all that makes us happy contributes to positive health outcomes, and not everything that is healthy contributes to happiness. For the current research, we employ a broad eudaimonic understanding of mental wellbeing, enabling the consideration of the role of the environment in facilitating the positive functioning and self-actualisation of residents.

With the Government's launch of the Stronger Towns Fund, an initiative targeted at areas of lower levels of economic growth (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2019), the use of regeneration appears set to continue. The current research seeks to apply a critical focus to one such project in the North West of England, to better understand the complex nature of the outcomes of such an approach. There has been a traditional reliance upon outcome indicators to determine the impact regeneration has on residents. Such indicators have struggled to account for the multi-faceted nature of regeneration and the people-place relationship. Researchers are increasingly calling for further attention to be paid to the complexity of housing development, regeneration, and gentrification and how the intersection of individual and neighbourhood characteristics influence health (Cole, 2013; Smith, Lehning & Kim, 2018). Wider structural issues such as welfare reform, labour market opportunities, transport, public safety, educational opportunities, and broader local economic prosperity impact on the health and wellbeing of a population and the interaction of these issues necessitates an interpretative approach. Through the utilisation of qualitative interviews and interpretative phenomenological analysis, this independent review addresses this need directly, seeking to develop original insights, by drawing on an approach grounded in psychology, into the ways in which these regeneration initiatives have influenced the place attachment and mental wellbeing of residents living in an area of regeneration.

2.0   Methods

2.1 Design

The current study utilised Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to explore residents' experiences of regeneration. IPA is informed by three main areas of philosophy: phenomenology (the study of experience), hermeneutics (the theory of interpretation), and ideographics (an emphasis on the particular) (Breakwell, Smith, & Wright, 2012; Frost, 2011; Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009; Sokolowski, 2000). The approach enables the possibility of developing further insight into data of a more descriptive nature through comprehensive analysis (Schleiermacher & Bowie, 1998). The intent of applying this was to generate greater insight into the underlying mechanisms through which regeneration may assert its influence on mental wellbeing and place attachment.

2.2   Research Context

The current research context is Pendleton, a densely populated, urban area within the City of Salford in Greater Manchester, UK. The housing stock is predominantly social housing, in the form of local authority-owned high-rises and housing estates. The local population is above national levels for unemployment and the Salford Mental Wellbeing Needs Assessment (Peck & Tocque, 2010) reveals the area to have among the worst levels of physical and mental health deprivation in the country. Pendleton is currently undergoing an approximate 15-year, £650m regeneration project, funded by a private finance initiative (PFI). This involves the building of 1,600 new homes of mixed private owned and socially rented tenure. The newly diversified housing stock was seen by the local authority to increase opportunities for both new and existing residents, attracting those of higher income and to lead to a 'dilution' in the concentration of economically inactive households (Salford City Council, 2014, p.19). Furthermore, 1,250 existing properties will be modernised, health and lifestyle classes introduced, alongside 24 small and medium business enterprises, community workshops and training programmes, work experience, and employment opportunities (Salford City Council, 2016; Salford City Partnership, 2009). Pendleton also sits against the canvas of numerous previous regeneration projects, having undergone extensive redevelopment during the 1960s and 70s, a General Improvement Area declaration and Estate Action in the 80s, several Single Regeneration Budgets in the 90s, and Housing Market Renewal in the 00s (Salford City Council, 2004).

2.3   Participants

Based on Turpin et al.'s (1997) guidance on sample size for IPA research, the current study involved a sample of nine adults who had lived within the borders of the ongoing regeneration project in the Pendleton area of Salford for a minimum of five years before the initiation of the project. Participants were recruited through local community groups, including a local tenants' association, and a key volunteer-led association. Such groups were approached to help identify participants who, although active in the community, may not be a part of existing consultation forums for the regeneration partners and thus potentially 'representative' of hidden voices in the neighbourhood.

Participant	Age	Tenure type	Property type	Time living in area
Doris	79	Social rented	High-rise accommodation	64 years
Emily	56	Social rented	High-rise accommodation	8 Years
Joe	68	Social rented	High-rise accommodation	24 years
Jim	72	Social rented	High-rise accommodation	19 years
Margaret	66	Social rented	House	15 Years
Rita	60	Social rented	High-rise accommodation	60 years
Sheila	73	Social rented	High-rise accommodation	59 years
Steven	63	Owner-occupied	House	61 years
William	70	Social rented	High-rise accommodation	70 years

Table 1. Overview of Participants

2.4 Data collection

The interview schedule was developed through the scrutiny of the research questions and Smith, Flowers, and Larkin's (2009) guide for good IPA interview practice. Interviews should open with questions of a more descriptive nature, inviting participants to be more analytical later in the interview session. Questions were designed to take several forms: descriptive, narrative, structural, contrasting, evaluative, circular, and comparative (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012).

2.5 Analysis

The analysis focused on place attachment and mental wellbeing. Drawing on the guidance of Smith et al. (2009), analysis involved a systematic, standardised process following the stages of immersion, initial notetaking, identification of themes within individual cases, development of themes across cases, and writing-up. The analytic focus began with the individual and particular, working outwardly to make more general statements. The process moved from the descriptive to the interpretive, in an iterative and inductive cycle (Smith, 2007). In ensuring the trustworthiness of the findings, we followed the guidelines advocated by Yardley (2008), who identifies four main principles: sensitivity to context; commitment to rigour; transparency and coherence; as well as impact and importance.

3. Findings

The performed analysis led to the development of three super-ordinate themes that illuminate how residents experienced place attachment and mental wellbeing throughout the regeneration process. **Table 2** outlines each super-ordinate theme, identifying the contained sub-ordinate themes, and contributing participants.

Super-ordinate Theme	Sub-ordinate themes	Doris	Emily	Joe	Jim	Margaret	Rita	Sheila	Steven	William
Feelings of control	Physical health concerns	X	X	X	X			X		
	Managing choice	X		X	X			X		
	What regeneration means for the area				X	X		X	X	X
	Crime and safety concerns	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Social and community relations	High-rise living	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
	The perils of relocation	X					X			
	Removal of social spaces		X			X	X	X	X	X
	Changing demographics			X					X	X
Understandings and definitions of place	Resources and landmarks	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
	A loss of place	X							X	X
	Sense of belonging	X							X	X

Table 2. Summary of the participants' contribution to themes

3.1   Super-ordinate theme: Feelings of control

This first super-ordinate theme refers to the influence of regeneration activities on residents' sense of control over their circumstances, which is problematic, as control/autonomy is a central element of eudaimonic wellbeing (Maslow, 1970; Ryan & Deci, 2008; Ryff, 1995).

3.1.1 Physical health concerns

The ongoing regeneration is perceived as exacerbating existing health issues, which is an important factor in mental wellbeing (Diener & Lucas, 2000; Dolan, Peasgood & White, 2008). The primary source of these worries was the dust created as part of refurbishment, with properties undergoing significant structural changes. Sheila describes her decision to temporarily relocate while the work took place, explicitly identifying health concerns as a motivating factor:

Sheila: *"I have asthma and er (pause) like a bad heart, so… You couldn't stay in with all that dust."*

Another participant living in such a property is Joe, who chose to stay in his home as the work was carried out. A factor that seemingly worsened his experience was that assurances made prior to the initiation of the work were not kept:

Joe: *"We were assured there would be dust monitors. We never saw one."*

Joe decided to stay as he believed that monitoring equipment would be used to ensure his safety. As a result, he feels he has made an ill-informed decision, increasing his health concerns, and reducing control over his circumstances. Emily opted to move into a newly renovated flat and she describes her discovery of asbestos in this property. She continued to explain her actions since this discovery:

Emily: *"When I checked on my – online, on my rent account where you report repairs, it said: 'completed'. So, they'd just closed it off. So, I've opened up another repair for the same - the same issue and I haven't heard nothing back yet."*

The presence of asbestos has led to health worries, and a sense of dismissiveness has reduced her capacity to address this and her sense of control. This is a common pattern within the findings. Significant structural changes to properties will be expected to cause a level of disruption but the accounts supplied highlight how perceived unresponsiveness from local authority and regeneration partners has led to increased feelings of helplessness and decreased control.

3.1.2 Managing choice

The interview explored the opportunities granted to residents that sought to minimise such disruption. The nature of these opportunities varied, according to the phase of the regeneration project underway at any given point. Those having homes worked on in the first phase of refurbishment were given the opportunity to temporarily relocate to a hotel in the seaside town of Southport:

Jim: *"I went to a hotel in (pause) Southport… I was away for 5 weeks."*

The benefit of this measure is that it allowed residents to remove themselves from a property that may raise concerns for their health, providing residents with a level of control over their circumstances. Participants explained how this was not free from limitations, however:

Jim: *"I know some people were very frustrated (pause) People who are more physically active, I think (pause) found it a bit restrictive."*

Here, Jim outlines his perception of the restrictive nature of this initiative. Although he was content, the lack of activity available at the hotel was problematic for others. The 'restriction' he describes also refers to the regimented nature of life within the hotel.

During the second phase of refurbishment, residents were able to be temporarily relocated to completed properties within Pendleton. Theoretically, this would protect them from construction work, while allowing them to remain in the area, reducing disruption to daily life. One participant who accepted this offer was Doris:

Doris: *"There was no carpet down or anything."*

Doris describes a property that did not meet her expectations. Despite being moved to minimise her exposure to property unsuitable for inhabitation, she found herself in such circumstances regardless. Once more, an accommodating measure looking to increase autonomy instead served to reduce it.

3.1.3 What regeneration means for the area

Analysis also developed themes of control on a wider scale. One such issue related to tenant involvement. William expressed distrust towards the effectiveness of this measure in giving residents control over the regeneration process:

William: *"Tenant feedback… Which I think is a load of nonsense really, because I think they've made their minds up a lot of the time about what they're going to do and these reports have got to be seen to be written, not written to be seen."*

Although having the potential to afford residents a level of control of the nature of regeneration activities, William does not believe this feedback has been utilised. Jim and Sheila, however, described a more positive experience:

Sheila: *"It was us (tenants' association) that got the security going… They were going to put a fence in, all the way 'round each block and we said no way!"*

Sheila describes her influence on the decision-making process surrounding the security facilities in her building. This control appears to be enabled by membership of a tenants' association. Jim is also a member, and his words also suggest a greater level of control over regeneration-related decision-making:

Jim: *"I just think we've got the best out of it that we could. So, I'm very happy about that!"*

Like Sheila, Jim speaks as an active participant in the regeneration process, as opposed to a passive recipient of it. Within the words of Joe, however, is an indication that membership of a tenants' association does not guarantee such autonomy:

Joe: *"I go to meetings and I know what goes on... There are certain people who rule the roost."*

Joe is also a member of the tenants' association, but he expresses disillusionment at its achievements. This excerpt serves to emphasise the role of power and politics within the organisation. As with other accommodating measures, the group has the potential to provide more control, but power structures appear to mediate this effect.

3.1.4 Crime and safety concerns

Physical safety is a fundamental element of mental wellbeing (Maslow, 1970). Within the current findings, crime and safety concerns are identified, with participants' perceptions of crime in Pendleton being severe:

Margaret: *"Because there is bad sides of it... The shootings and the drug dealings."*

Drug use is described by many as being highly apparent in the area. Here, Margaret highlights some of the more serious issues associated with this problem. Furthermore, Doris identified her resident management company as having contributed to her fear of crime:

Doris: *"Because he was outside and they hadn't let him in. You know, you have to press to get in? You see, these are safety things. Nobody buzzed me and said suchabody's downstairs, which they're supposed to do."*

The security of her building is managed by her resident management company and in this excerpt, she explains how their failure to adequately administer this put her in a situation of perceived danger. Participants offered a further perspective on the causal factors of crime-related issues, implicating the changing physical structure of the area:

William: *"Well, you don't feel as safe doing them sort of things, do you? In anonymous areas, like you did when there was shops there. And loads of people around, surrounding you. You feel a lot safer walking in areas where you knew there was loads of pedestrians doing shopping."*

William and Doris both relate their fears of crime to the changing physical landscape. They highlight the removal of communal areas and the increase of 'anonymous' overpasses and underpasses, as increasing risk to personal safety. Within the findings, however, is an indication that regeneration can also benefit community safety:

Jim: *"So, they gated all that, so it's like a small estate... And the electric gates… I just felt so secure."*

Here, Jim highlights how security changes implemented as part of regeneration efforts are a positive inclusion, leading to improved feelings of personal safety.

3.2 Super-ordinate theme: Social and community relations

This super-ordinate theme highlights how changes brought about by regeneration have had consequences for social and community relations. This is another fundamental element of mental wellbeing, with models identifying the human need for love, belonging, human connectedness, and meaningful relationships (Maslow, 1970; Ryan & Deci, 2006; Ryff, 1995).

3.2.1 High-rise living

When discussing regeneration, participants would often refer to historic projects, such as the replacement of Victorian terraced streets with high-rise estates that took place in the 1960s:

Doris: *"We were moved out of 2 ups 2 downs into these flats (pause) a totally different way of living."*

Doris emphasises that this is not only aesthetically different but also has an influence on the daily lives of inhabitants. Steven supplies his perspective on some of the issues faced by individuals living in such accommodation:

Steven: *"When they come out all they've got is them doors. About 4 doors on each landing. And you might not even know who are in there, or anything. The only people they talk to is the people in the lift."*

The accounts provided highlight how changes to the environment can influence the social experience of residents. However, there were also positive examples of how regeneration has the potential to address some of the social issues faced by those living in high-rise properties:

Sheila: *"We have our own community room… I do bingo at night-time and (pause) on a Wednesday night. And up to being poorly last year, I was doing cooking."*

The accounts of participants appear to show how the retrofitting of social facilities can enable a greater level of interaction within multiple-occupancy properties, which represents an example of good practice.

3.2.2 The perils of relocation

Another factor implicated alongside social isolation was resident relocation. Doris, who was relocated during the regeneration initiative of the 1960s explains her view on the problems associated with this:

Doris*: "It's going from good neighbours to people that you don't know. People – we knew people there."*

She identifies a limitation of earlier regeneration efforts, and how if not conducted in a careful manner, relocation can sever social ties. Unlike Doris, Rita has been relocated as part of the current regeneration of Pendleton:

Rita: *"Where we were, you used to get on with everybody. All their friends used to live underneath them. Now, they're too far out. They've gone all different places."*

Despite the limitations identified of previous regeneration projects, Rita's words suggest that lessons have not been learned. Almost fifty years have passed since Doris was relocated, and yet Rita has shared the same negative experience.

3.2.3 Removal of social spaces

When discussing perceptions of the changing physical landscape, participants would name consequences for their routines. This led to the third sub-ordinate theme relating to social relations, the removal of social spaces:

William: *"You were passing dozens and dozens of (pause) pubs, which have all disappeared now."*

Here, William discusses the removal of pubs. Other examples cited by participants include the changing shopping environment, and the removal of sports facilities. These accounts serve as a useful warning to any party with the intention of implementing physical change to a location, of how buildings can serve a purpose beyond their designed function.

A positive example was the introduction of the new Gateway centre, which supplies adult and children's library services, council services, social events and activities, health services including a GP surgery, as well as general information and advice. The centre also hosts the local TimeBank community group:

Emily: *"TimeBank is a group where you share skills and your time. You make time for people. It's basically like it was in the olden days, where people used to do things for other people. You know, just*

because they could do... And it's just a nice feeling, you know. And people get together and you make lots of friends there."

Multiple participants described the group's facilitative role in social interaction, highlighting the potential benefits of community initiatives.

3.2.4 Changing demographics

Several participants identified the presence of friction among the community, resulting from the changing social demographics brought about by regeneration. Higher property value is identified by Steven as having brought individuals of greater financial means into the area:

Steven: *"You know, the others they think they're snobby because they live up there..."*

Steven identifies the existence of a sense of superiority among his neighbours. William highlights how the social effects of regeneration may extend beyond the specific borders of any given project:

William: *"But the people on the opposite side of the road used to call them the 'yuppies' on the other side of the road. And there was a lot of, you know, a lot of disenchantment there when them houses went up."*

Here, William refers to the redeveloped area of Salford Quays, which borders the electoral ward in which Pendleton is situated. Issues appear to have arisen due to the presence of individuals of greater socio-economic means. These findings further illuminate the issues of social integration often associated with regeneration. They also highlight how the social effects of such initiatives may extend beyond the borders of a project.

3.3   Super-ordinate theme: Understandings and definitions of place

The third super-ordinate theme relates to participants' understanding of the area in which they live. Within the findings, there are multiple examples of how, over time, residents' understandings of their local area have transformed.

3.3.1 Resources and landmarks

The first sub-ordinate theme relating to this is the removal of physical resources and landmarks. Eight participants highlighted how because of their removal, their capacity to achieve daily life goals has diminished:

William: *"When they disappeared, I tended to shun the Precinct and shop up town in Manchester."*

William's words are reflective of most of the sample, who describe how the area is now less equipped to meet their needs. In section **3.2.3**, the Gateway centre was named as a positive addition to the area. Due to the multi-purpose nature of the building, this was also described as a facilitative factor in residents pursuing daily life goals:

Emily: *"And having the doctors as well… The first thing I need to know is where's the doctors."*

Here, Emily describes the doctor's surgery as being an important resource, now located within the Pendleton Gateway. This example serves to show how regeneration efforts do have the potential to be an enabling factor in residents seeking to satisfy their needs.

3.3.2 A loss of place

Participants emphasised that not only has the physical structure of the area changed, but that Pendleton has now come to represent a completely new location:

Doris: *"Everything has changed… I wouldn't say I was in Pendleton if you just dropped me off here."*

In this excerpt, Doris describes how if her younger self were suddenly to be exposed to present-day Pendleton, for her it would be unrecognisable. William also refers to a change in identity for the area:

William: *"Well, as I say, seeing something like this going down here, which was an absolute landmark – that clock, that was quite unique. I'd say very sad. Now, that's just part of a freeway to get traffic in and out of Manchester as fast as possible."*

Here, William is referring to the market and clock tower that were previously situated in Pendleton. He described the tower as an 'absolute landmark,' identifying it as a definitive feature of the area. He expresses regret towards the removal of such features, and such feelings were common among the interviewed participants.

3.3.3 Sense of belonging

In section **3.3.2**, Doris's words suggest that for her, the area she once knew as 'Pendleton' has become unrecognisable. William also shared insight into his experience of this:

William: *"So, it disorientates you. Even though, as I say, you probably couldn't wait to get out of the area. Even when you come back, there's no points of reference there to link you to the place."*

William describes the sense of disorientation he experiences when reflecting on the changes, and a desire to leave the area, hinting at a reduced emotional attachment to it. Steven shared his insight into the perspective of the younger people living in the area:

Steven: *"They have no memories of history or anything like that. Only what their Dad told them. And their Granddad told them… Because that is the past now. You know, and you've got to realise the future's coming."*

Steven expresses a sense that the area he once loved has been lost. He explains how younger generations have no real sense of how Pendleton once was. Time and the changes it has brought have taken the place from him.

4. Discussion

4.1 Main Findings

The generated findings have provided further insight into urban regeneration's complex relationship with mental wellbeing. Despite delivered with the intent to improve public health outcomes, the findings reveal the project to have stimulated concerns for physical health and an apparent unresponsiveness from official stakeholders in the local authority or regeneration partner organisations, as well as inadequate accommodating efforts, appear to have contributed to feelings of helplessness. The difficulty faced by stakeholders is that autonomy and choice are two separate constructs. Autonomy is not to act independent of external forces, but being satisfied with one's

action (Chirkov, Ryan, Kim, & Kaplan, 2003). One may have many choices afforded to them and not feel free to make a decision, or be limited to a single choice with which they are content (Ryan & Deci, 2006). This highlights the complexities faced by stakeholders in their practise of looking to increase residents' sense of agency, a fundamental element of mental wellbeing. It is vital that steps are taken to maximise the options available to residents, and yet adopting such measures can never guarantee their sense of autonomy. A positive finding related to this is membership of tenants' associations, which appears to have enabled a greater sense of control over the regeneration initiative. This appears indicative of social capital, which can increase the likelihood of community mobilisation, and greater involvement in decision-making processes (Manzo & Perkins, 2006). Community participation has been shown to ease transition through a period of adaptation and the social support provided through group memberships has been seen to aid in this regard (MacKean & Abbott-Chapman, 2012).

The findings also reveal the removal of social spaces, resident relocation, and changing population demographics to have had negative consequences for social and community relations, further contributing to reduced mental wellbeing. This highlights the importance that regeneration projects adopt a holistic view of 'sustainable' regeneration. Modern regeneration projects are implemented with a focus on sustainability, which is no longer considered as solely an environmental concern, but also economic and social (Dempsey, Bramley, Power, & Brown, 2009). This tripartite definition has been likened to a three-legged stool, with each being crucial for successful sustainable regeneration (Jones & Evans, 2008). It should be noted, however, that the current findings also highlight a positive example of how regeneration has had a positive impact on social interaction. The retrofitting of social facilities to high-rise accommodation appears to have minimised isolation, an issue commonly associated with this mode of living (Gifford, 2007).

Also demonstrated is how changes to the structural landscape of Pendleton appears to have influenced the place attachment of its residents. Physical changes to the environment are believed to influence an individual's understanding of place (Relph, 1976), and this is apparent in the accounts provided. This can be understood in terms of place definition, an identified sub-process of place attachment, said to involve physical elements and social activities becoming intertwined with a place, forming the meaning it holds for inhabitants (Cresswell, 2008; Shamsuddin & Ujang, 2008). In addition, place interaction describes how one's understanding of place is influenced by their interaction within it (Oldenburg, 1999). Based on the accounts provided, as the physical landscape has undergone transformation, the transport and pedestrian infrastructure have changed to accommodate this. Participants describe the influence of this on their routine interactions, a factor seen to contribute to the development of place attachment (Brown & Perkins, 1992). The removal of structural resources also appears to have reduced the area's ability to meet the daily life goals of its residents, a characteristic that theorists have come to refer to as place dependence (Kyle, Graefe, Manning, & Bacon, 2004; Pretty, Chipuer & Bramston, 2003). As a result of this and the altered relationship the participants share with Pendleton, many of them express a sense of regret and sadness towards changes initiated through regeneration suggesting reduced place bonding: the emotional component of place attachment (Kyle, Jun, & Absher, 2014), as well as reduced feelings of belonging, more commonly associated with physical displacement from a place of attachment (Abramson, Stehling-Ariza, Garfield, & Redlener, 2008).

4.2   Implications

The UK government have stated their intention to spatially rebalance the UK economy, through such initiatives as the creation of the northern powerhouse (Martin, Pike, Tyler, & Gardiner, 2016). Operating in the shadow of the Grenfell Tower fire disaster, those implementing such initiatives are under unprecedented scrutiny, with some calling for a fundamental re-think of the approaches taken to urban regeneration (Marrs, 2017). Marcuse (2015) calls for a public policy response to tackle the social injustice frequently associated with regeneration and the publication of the charter for social housing white paper (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2021) could signify this. It acknowledges that for many people living in the socially rented sector, the experience of home as a source of safety, security, and dignity has not been satisfied. The Grenfell Tower disaster has raised questions about resident safety, build quality, complaints being handled slowly, and with inadequate respect, issues echoed in the current findings. The charter also announces the creation of a regulatory regime to hold landlords to account, increase transparency in decision-making, and increase opportunities for residents to have their voices heard. Lees and Hubbard (2020, p.1), however, describe council estates as being under unprecedented 'threat' from gentrification, as displacement is not seen to undermine the legal right to property. However, the recent Aylesbury Estate CPO Public Inquiry may be considered a precedent-setting win, with Southwark Council denied the right to the compulsory purchase of properties on the basis that financial compensation is insufficient to compensate for the loss of a home (Hubbard & Lees, 2018). This suggests an expanded notion of housing rights and a potential shift in power to residents over the 'politics of gentrification' (Hubbard & Lees, 2018, p. 8). Having a rich understanding of the experience of these significant investments in neighbourhoods, such as provided by this study, will inform future approaches to better undertake regeneration with the mental wellbeing of residents at the centre, before, during and after the process.

4.3   Limitations

In considering the limitations of the findings, data were collected from semi-structured interviews, exploring autobiographical accounts of life in the area. Generating the depth of recall needed to enable fruitful IPA relies on human memory, along with its limitations. One must remain mindful that the accounts provided often involved distant memories, which could arguably represent an internalised version of events. Furthermore, participants were all long-term residents of the area. This enabled analysis to track changes to the environment over time, but the omission of more recent residents prevented the further exploration of the issues raised in relation to community cohesion.

4.4   Future directions

Based on the insight gained from the findings, action research would be a welcome avenue for further research. Carried out during the course of an activity, action research draws together action, reflection, theory, and practice, in order to improve a process (Brydon-Miller, Greenwood, & Maguire, 2003). Reason and Bradbury (2001) describe action research as a participatory, democratic process concerned with the development of practical knowledge. This approach could be applied alongside specific elements of a regeneration project, to improve its implementation, as well as to provide a further avenue of communication between those delivering a project and those living under its influence. Furthermore, the findings highlight potential benefits from the inclusion of health, housing, and social care commissioners in the rollout of regeneration initiatives, which would provide further

opportunities to identify the most pressing health and housing needs of the community, ensuring the essential services are both available and appropriate throughout regeneration.

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