Portfolio Volume 1: Major Research Project

Exploring the bond between people and their social housing: a London based study

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"The ache for home lives in all of us. The safe place where we can go as we are and not be questioned." – Maya Angelou

I firstly would like to express my sincere gratitude to the people who voluntarily contributed their time and were generous in sharing their experiences. I am privileged to hear their rich and vibrant experiences about their homes, local areas, and communities. I appreciated the opportunity to learn about their strength and determination to keep going in the face of adversity.

I would like to thank my supervisors, Lizette Nolte and Carl Harris, for their endless support, guidance, and passion for this research. Thank you for encouraging me to be authentically me throughout this process and your patience and kindness through a challenging time in my life. I would like to thank the London Tenants Federation for helping to shape this research and Sam Parrington and Angela Byrne for their help in recruiting for this study.

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to my family for their endless support and, particularly, my mother and grandmother in instilling values of equality and being vocal in the face of social injustices. I would like to thank my friends whose support never wavered despite times when I was far from being optimistic! I would like to thank my friend and fellow housing activist, Nina Carey, for her mentorship and insights during this process.

Finally, this research is dedicated to the people whose lives were lost and affected by the Grenfell Tower fire. There is still no accountability for the lives lost and affected. I hope this research is one of the many stepping-stones illuminating the richness of social housing, rehumanises its communities, and enables social and political change in the current housing system.

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ABSTRACT

A growing literature suggests our homes have a particularly powerful symbolic and psychological significance (Graham et al., 2015). In the UK, the certainty of safe, secure, and affordable housing for the most vulnerable in our society is under threat (Schrecker and Bambra, 2015). Historically, social housing was considered the solution to the housing crisis; however, its public perception as a desirable housing tenure has changed substantially (Thompson et al., 2017). This research aimed to explore the social processes, which underpin and determine the bonds people have with their social housing, communities, identities, and relationships with society. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with twelve people living in social housing in London. Data was analysed using Constructivist Grounded Theory methodology and a theoretical model was co-constructed. Participants described their homes as representing bonds to places, people, and histories, which provided them a sense of security, safety, and belonging. These bonds were perceived as pivotal for their psychological wellbeing and informed how they view themselves. Participants experienced social and political discourses about social housing and its inhabitants as acts of discrimination and maltreatment. They described their housing being viewed as a commodity resulting in the neglect, fracturing, and erosion of their homes, local areas, families, and communities. As a result, many discussed ways of resisting its dismantlement. The research highlights important implications for Psychologists, other healthcare professionals, social housing communities, the housing system, and the government.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This research concerns the experiences of social tenants in London. This section begins with an introduction to the researcher and her relationship with this research. Next, the relationship between housing and wellbeing and the origins and historical overview of social housing in the United Kingdom (UK) will be discussed. Following this, the current provision of social housing, and factors which have shaped its provision, will be explored. A brief summary of the place attachment and identity literature will be discussed. This will be followed by an overview of the changes in the perception of social housing and its inhabitants. A literature review regarding the experiences of social tenants is provided. Lastly, the rationale and aims of this research are defined.

The term 'social housing' is used when referring to housing owned by local authorities (councils), housing associations, or other organisations on a not-for-profit basis. It is acknowledged some individuals may not identify with their homes being defined like this and may prefer the use of different terms, e.g., council housing.

This thesis will be written in the third person, as is typical for formal research theses. However, the text will switch to the first person when the researcher wishes to reflect on the research process and add her personal voice.

1.1 Situating the researcher

It has been argued that qualitative researchers are not 'neutral' scientific observers who can dismiss scrutiny of their values. This, therefore, requires a reflexive approach (Charmaz, 2014). I hope reflexivity will enhance this research quality by considering how my positions and interest as a researcher affect all stages of the research process (Primeau, 2003). In this section, the insider researcher position, reflections on this topic, and the epistemological stance will be discussed.

1.1.1 Experiences growing up in social housing

I have spent the majority of my life living in social housing. My relationship with 'home' has changed during this period. The London borough I grew up in has one of the most substantial income inequalities. I was aware of this disparity from an early age because of where my estate was situated and the socioeconomic differences between my peers and me. Growing up in a council estate, I noticed the difficulties I, my family, and family friends (neighbours) faced were fundamentally tied to the gendered, social, cultural, political, and economic obstacles we encountered. My experiences of living on a council estate have fostered an interest in exploring the relationships between external environments and internal wellbeing. Appendix A includes an extract of my experiences growing up in social housing.

1.1.2 Reflections on the topic

I continuously queried how my experiences of living in social housing would influence this research. It subsequently led to exploring the literature on insider researcher membership (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). Insider researcher membership refers to researchers who conduct research with populations where they share an identity, language, and experiential base (Asselin, 2003). Insider researcher membership has been reported to have potentially positive and negative implications on research (Breen, 2007).

A possible positive implication is a more rapid acceptance from participants, which contributes to a greater depth to the data gathered (Unluer, 2012). This was salient for this research because a proportion of the interviewees showed me their local neighbourhoods to personify their experiences. In contrast, I often faced a negative aspect: the assumption, from participants, of having intimate knowledge of the situated experiences of all social tenants in London. For instance, some participants used coded language and communication, (e.g., unfinished phrases), to signify 'knowing' between them and I (Kanuha, 2000). To mitigate this, I asked participants to expand on their answers and provide examples to illustrate their points.

I countered the impact of my experiences on the research process through different ways. I shared a reflective account with my supervisory team in the early stages of this research. The account detailed my experiences of living in social housing and what drew me to this research. It provided my supervisory team with the foundation to curiously enquire and remain aware of the role my experiences played in shaping this research. Also, selecting Constructivist Grounded Theory as my research methodology encouraged me to stay close to the data. Finally, reflexivity was used to make transparent and critically examine my biases, which informed the decisions I made throughout this research (Engward & Davis, 2015).

Following the Grenfell Tower fire in 2017, social housing has commanded plenty of public and political attention. Before embarking on this research, I investigated how this tragedy could occur in one of London's richest boroughs. Many media articles and housing activist and organisational blogs highlighted the structural inequalities facing Grenfell Tower residents and social tenants across the UK. This filled me with sadness and anger that safe, secure, and affordable homes for the most vulnerable in our society continue to be under threat. Throughout this research, I have been careful to prioritise self-care, in the form of breaks and socialising, and regular contact with my supervisory team.

1.1.3 Epistemological stance

I wanted to clarify my understanding of the nature of reality (ontology) and how we gain knowledge from it (epistemology) before embarking on this research. Being transparent of one's ontology and epistemology is crucial because it influences how research is framed in its attempts to 'discover' knowledge (Moon & Blackman, 2004).

I believe that truth exists separate from human subjectivity. For instance, I think poverty exists independently from the accounts of the people who took part in this research and my interpretations of their accounts. However, I do believe how people make sense of these truths is socially constructed (Charmaz, 2014). In other words, all descriptions of these truths are mediated through the filters of language, meaning-making, and social context (Houston, 2010). Aligned with my beliefs, I adopted a critical realist position for this research. Critical realism

"marries the positivist's search for evidence of a reality external to human consciousness with the insistence that all meaning to be made of that reality is socially constructed" (Oliver, 2011, p. 2). Additionally, it recognises subjectivity in the production of knowledge (Madill et al., 2000). It also accepts that these social constructions can constitute what we know as the reality of our social worlds (Haigh et al., 2019). Therefore, the approach allowed me to contextualize aspects of the objective world and constructs from the social world that influence or determine the link of causation (Taylor, 2018).

Regarding this research, I will endeavour to provide constructions of participants' accounts, which honour the context in which they exist and how they construct meanings through our conversations (Fitzpatrick & Christian, 2006). Taking a reflexive stance (Charmaz, 2014), I acknowledge my assumptions and biases shape these constructions, e.g., my own experiences of living in social housing, knowledge of psychological theories, and values of equality and social justice.

1.2 Overview of social housing

The section begins by discussing the relevance of housing to mental health professionals. The definition of social housing and its origins will be discussed. It then outlines the current provision of social housing in the UK. Subsequently, the social and political factors, that have influenced the current provision and affordability of social housing, will be discussed.

1.2.1 Housing and wellbeing

Psychological wellbeing is understood as encompassing six distinct dimensions (Ryff & Keyes, 1995):

1. Autonomy: sense of self-determination
2. Environmental mastery: the capacity to manage one's life and the surrounding world effectively
3. Personal growth: a sense of continued development as a person
4. Positive relations with others
5. Purpose in life: the belief one's life is purposeful and meaningful

    6.   Self-acceptance: positive evaluation of oneself and one's past life

In the public health field, housing is viewed as a social determinant of health, thus influencing an individual's psychological wellbeing (Bates et al., 2019). According to the United Nations (Thiele, 2002), housing is a human right that extends beyond basic shelter. There is growing literature moving beyond material housing conditions to consider how the meaning we infer on our homes impacts our psychological wellbeing (Di Masso et al., 2014). It suggests our homes have a particularly powerful symbolic and psychological significance (Graham et al., 2015). More broadly, our homes are understood to connect us to communities and contribute to our place in the world (Kyle et al., 2004). Policymakers in the UK have explicitly identified "housing [as] a vital component of community care" (Department of Health and Social Security, 1989; p4).

The Ecological Systems Theory (EST) further exemplifies the relevance of housing on psychological wellbeing. The theory explains how different types of environmental systems influence human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1992). In summary, the EST (illustrated in Figure 1) depicts five ecological systems nested within the other: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem (Neal & Neal, 2013). The microsystem is the immediate environment the individual lives in. The mesosystem captures the relationships between the microsystems. The exosystem is the environment, which indirectly affects the individual. Macrosystem encompasses cultural and societal beliefs, decisions, and actions. Chronosystem involves the transitions and shifts in one's lifespan. Home is considered part of an individual's microsystem. The EST will be revisited in the discussion chapter.

Figure 1: The Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1992)
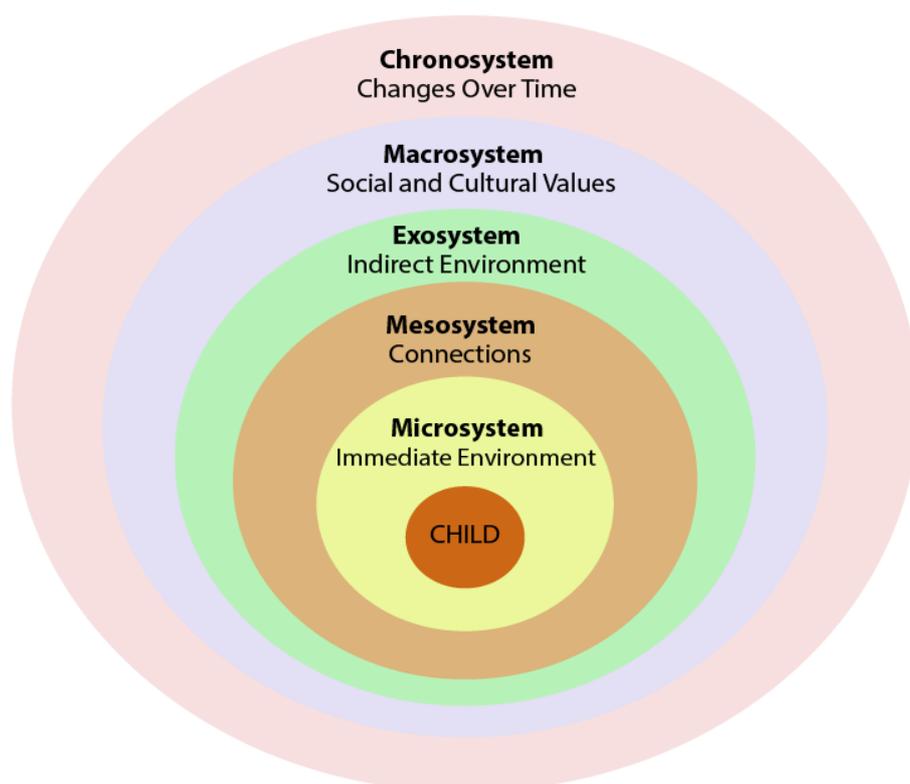
As a social determinant of health, I believe psychologists and other mental health professionals have an obligation to consider how housing affects our psychological wellbeing. Harper (2016) argues the efforts of psychologists and other mental health professionals should be 'beyond the therapy room' in the form of preventative measures attempting to prevent causes of distress. As stated in the NHS Long Term Plan (NHS England, 2019), I believe all professionals working in the NHS are obligated to promote public health and prevent ill health.

1.2.2 Definition

In the UK, social housing is housing at rents 50% below local market rates provided by local authorities (councils), private registered providers (housing associations), or other non-profit organisations (Housing and Regeneration Act, 2008). A distinguishing feature of social housing is how it is allocated. The Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 states social housing is let to people whose needs are not adequately served by the commercial housing market. Therefore, it

is allocated according to need rather than the ability to pay (Scanlon et al., 2015). As this research focuses on London social tenants' experiences, the allocation of social housing in England only will be discussed. Historically, the Housing Act (1996; 2004) specified a legal obligation to prioritise social housing to people who:

- Are homeless or are threatened with homelessness

- Live in overcrowded housing

- Need to move for medical, social or welfare reasons, e.g., experiencing domestic abuse at their current home

- Need to live in a particular area for social or welfare reasons, e.g., to live close to a relative for caring responsibilities

- Are an armed forces member

However, the Localism Act (2011) restored the power of local authorities to set their own criteria for who is deemed as 'qualifying for social housing'. This power has resulted in substantial differences in the allocation of social housing in local authorities across the UK (Robinson, 2013). For instance, some local authorities introduced criteria, excluding people from seeking social housing (Laylard, 2012). Currently, social housing and affordable housing are frequently used interchangeably in the housing sector. However, social housing and affordable housing are two different types of housing. The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) introduced affordable housing as part of the Affordable Homes Programme in 2011. Contrary to social rented housing, affordable rented housing is set to 20% below the local market rate.

1.2.3 The origins of social housing

2019 marked the 100th anniversary of the inception of social housing. The Housing and Town Planning Act (1919) marked a government mandate for local authorities to provide housing by law (Stewart, 2005). When the act was introduced, the sitting Housing and Health minister spoke of social housing as of

the utmost importance for social stability and for the wellbeing of the British people (Stewart, 2005).

Subsequent housing acts attempted to revive the state-led intervention to build quality homes to meet local housing needs. The number of social housing, created each year by local authorities, peaked at over 200,000 in the early 1950s (Scanlon et al., 2015). By the late 1970s, 42% of the British population lived in social housing; this figure has been consistently declining since the 1980s (Berg et al., 2016). At that time, local authorities were encouraged to transfer their social housing stock, its maintenance, and building new social housing to private non-profit housing associations (Chartered Institute of Housing, 2018). The intention appeared to reduce local authorities' role in direct provision and the central government's role in financing new social housing and refurbishment (Malpass & Mullins, 2002).

1.2.4 Current provision of social housing

17% of the population (3.9 million households) live in social housing (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2018). The figure rises to 22% in London (Greater London Authority, 2015). It is estimated 14% of social housing is supported housing (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2018). Various sources suggest a continued need for more social housing as the number of households is projected to rise (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2018). However, the number of social housing properties built in London has fallen from over 30,000 in 2009-10 to 961 in 2018-19 (Homes England, 2019).

As a result of the social housing shortage, the number of people forced into the higher-priced and unregulated private rented sector, poor-quality and cramped temporary accommodation, or homelessness has dramatically increased (Chartered Institute of Housing, 2018). There are consistently over 1 million households on local authorities' waiting lists across the UK (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2018). In London, the picture is starker. In the London borough of Newham, it has been reported 7,500 children live in temporary accommodation, and 1 in 25 people are homeless (Shelter, 2014).

Overcrowded and poor-quality housing has detrimental health implications. More recently, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the link between poor housing and physical health complications. Figures from the Office of National Statistics (ONS; 2020) illustrated that areas with the most overcrowded housing, like Newham, had the highest COVID-19 death rate. Living in temporary and precarious housing affects an individual's personal safety, sense of control and mastery over their lives, thus shaping physical and mental health/wellbeing outcomes (Foster et al., 2011). With such a nationwide need for social housing, what factors have contributed to its systematic decline?

1.2.5 Housing policies

Over four decades, substantive legislative reforms have led to a drastic decline in social housing (Mulliner & Maliene, 2013). The legalisation explicitly implemented in England and Wales will be discussed below.

The right to buy (RTB) legislation, introduced in the 1980 Housing Act, is one of the most significant impacts in the social housing sector (van Ham et al., 2013). The law provided local authority tenants, with at least three years of social tenancy, with the right to buy their homes at a discount. In 1997, this was extended to people living in housing associations. Overall, the RTB legislation has had positive and negative impacts upon individuals and neighbourhoods (McKee, 2010). For instance, it connected with aspirations for homeownership and promoted a massive transfer of wealth from the state to low-income households (King, 2010). However, since its introduction, over 2.7 million social homes have been sold to tenants at prices below market value, resulting in a shortage of available social housing (Kleinhans & van Ham, 2013).

In response to the global financial crisis, the 2011-2015 coalition government implemented austerity measures (reducing social spending and increasing taxation to reduce budget deficit) (Berry, 2016). Over the period between 2010-2015, the affordable housing budget was nearly halved compared to the previous four years (down from £8.4 billion to £4.5 billion). Robinson (2013) argues that this has recast the role and function of UK social housing. Social housing is currently framed as "providing the support that people need…and to be a

springboard for social mobility rather than trapping people into patterns of worklessness and benefit dependency" (HM Government, 2011; p. ix). The most notable legislations illustrating the change, in how social housing is viewed, is the Localism (2011) and Welfare Reform (2012) Acts.

The Localism Act (2011) listed a series of measures that provided greater freedom to local authorities, communities, and individuals. Several changes to housing legislation were introduced, impacting social housing allocation, tenure, and regulation. The act resulted in local authorities and housing associations converting a large proportion of their social housing (50% below market rate) to affordable housing (20% below market rate). Secure and low-rent social homes have been gradually replaced by far more expensive, insecure properties with dire implications for low-income tenants in London (London Assembly, 2014).

The Welfare Reform Act (2012) specified that an estimated 660,000 working-age social housing tenants, in receipt of Housing Benefits, would have a reduction in their benefit entitlement if they were deemed to 'under-occupy' their homes. The policy, commonly known as the Bedroom Tax, disproportionately impacted tenants with disabilities and families headed by single-parent households (Hudson-Sharp et al., 2018). The subsequent loss of income is said to have harmed the health and wellbeing of all those affected (Moffatt et al., 2016). Due to the social housing shortage, those affected by this policy were forced out of their secure homes and into the unregulated private rental sector (Hodkinson & Robbins, 2013). In summary, RTB legislation has contributed to a substantial reduction in social housing stock. In contrast, Localism and Welfare Reform Acts have impacted the long-term security and affordability of social housing in England and Wales.

1.2.6 Gentrification

The under-supply of social housing can partly be attributed to gentrification. Gentrification has been defined as "the transformation of a working-class or vacant area to a middle class residential and commercial use" (Slater, 2009, p. 294). It has been argued gentrification partly occurred in response to central government programmes, e.g., New Deal for Communities (1998-2008). These programmes aimed to address multiple housing issues (Lawless et al., 2010). For

instance, combating "spatial de-concentration of poverty" by building mixed-income housing (Lees, 2008, p. 2452). In reality, it has been claimed this process has been detrimental to the communities assumed to be helped (Atkinson, 2000). In London, the rate of gentrification over the past 20 years has been unprecedented because of the demolishment of council estates and mixed-tenure redevelopments (Hubbard & Lees, 2018). This is understood to contribute to the decline of social housing provision and mass displacement of previous social housing populations (The Guardian, 2015).

According to Department of Communities and Local Government (2007), mixed tenure developments were intended to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour and the upkeep of housing and the local environment. An enhanced sense of community and place attachment was envisioned (Kearns & Mason, 2007). However, the outcomes of mixed tenure developments remain mostly unsupported by the literature (Doherty et al., 2006). On the contrary, it has shown mixed-tenure housing communities have led to new forms of stigma. Tensions were created when there were marked economic, social, and cultural differences between residents (Rose, 2004; McCormick et al., 2012). It has been argued mixed-housing tenures lead to the displacement of low-income groups (Atkinson, 2004). Three longitudinal studies found gentrification-induced displacement in London (Lyons, 1996; Atkinson, 2000; UK collaborative centre for housing evidence, 2020). Fullilove (1996) found insecurity or displacement from long-term homes and communities threaten psychological processes of attachment, familiarity, and identity.

1.3 Meaning and perception of social housing

This section will begin by introducing the term of "place attachment", to conceptualise the bond between an individual and their homes (Manzo & Devine-Wright, 2014; p1). Place identity will then be discussed as a way of conceptualising how home informs the development, formation and maintenance of identity (Grey & O'Toole, 2020). In these fields, place refers to "a physical area offering shelter, stability, attachment and meaningful symbols to people" (Courpasson et al., 2017, p239). Finally, the evolving perception and meaning of social housing and its tenants will be explored.

1.3.1 Place attachment

Home has been viewed as a relational resource linked to psychological characteristics; this provides the basis for security, mastery, self-esteem, and overall life satisfaction (Hiscock et al., 2001). Much of this understanding has stemmed from the place attachment literature, where the link between characteristics of places and wellbeing has been most explicit (Lewicka, 2011).

Place attachment is defined as "a bond between an individual or group and a place" (Manzo and Devine-Wright, 2013, p. 1). Scannell and Gifford (2010) define place attachment as a multidimensional concept with person, psychological processes, and place dimensions (PPP framework). In this framework, the person dimension focuses on who is attached and the extent to which the attachment is based on individually and collectively held meanings. The psychological processes dimension is interested in how affect, cognitions, and behaviours manifest in the attachment. Finally, the place dimension looks at the object of the attachment, e.g., place characteristics. The PPP framework includes previous models of place attachment and the plethora of existing definitions of place attachment (Manzo & Devine-Wright, 2013). The PPP framework is represented in figure 2.

Figure 2: The Person, Psychological processes and Place (PPP) framework (Scannell & Gifford, 2010)
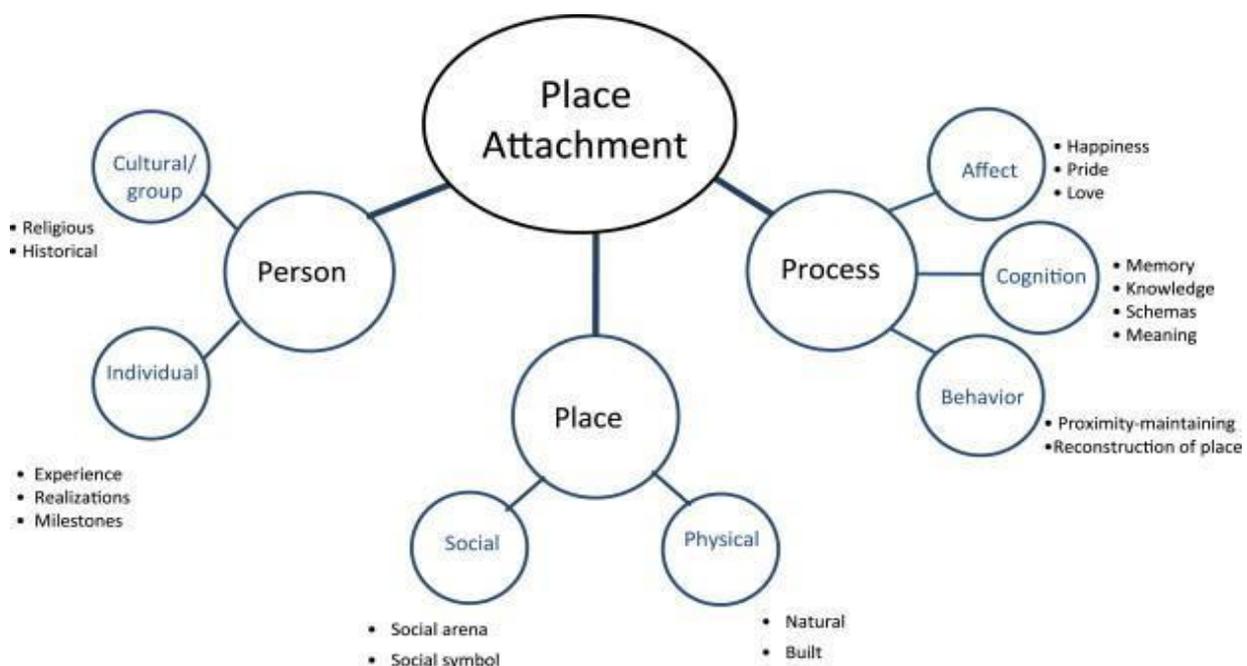
Place attachment is viewed as being influenced by additional factors associated with places (e.g., its scale) and people (e.g., their value system) (Scannell & Gifford, 2010). Similarities in the key aspects of place attachment and interpersonal attachment have been theorised (Morgan, 2010). These similarities include maintaining physical proximity, separation distress, and providing a safe and secure base (Scannell & Gifford, 2014). Studies have found ties to place contribute to wellbeing, e.g., greater happiness, life satisfaction, and a sense of belonging (Cattell et al., 2008; Eyles & Williams, 2008). Overall, a majority of these studies have been correlational, so it is difficult to determine whether place attachment is a cause or consequence of positive psychological outcomes (Scannell & Gifford, 2016).

Overall, the majority of the place attachment literature has been in a residential context, favoured positive affect, and given primacy to rootedness and length of residency (Lewicka, 2011). Emerging evidence infers the stability of place attachment can be reduced by social, economic, political, environmental, and other external disruptions (Devine-Wright, 2009). These disruptions can contribute to "the loss of a humanized, culturally familiar and socially filtered locale" associated with feeling "at home" and being in relative security (Wacquant, 2008; p. 241).

1.3.2 Place identity

Place identity is defined as "those dimensions of self that define the individual's identity about the physical environment using a complex pattern of conscious and unconscious ideas, beliefs, preferences, feelings, values, goals, and behavioral tendencies and skills relevant to this environment" (Proshansky, 1978; p155). The person-place relationship is viewed as a dynamic process in an ever-changing social and physical environment (Proshansky et al., 1983).

A majority of the place identity literature has been criticised by heavily emphasizing individualistic cognitions and feelings (e.g., personal sense of belonging) while overlooking the social, cultural, and discursive dimensions of person-place bonds (Di Masso et al., 2014). This critique acknowledges that the link between place and identity is temporal, socially located and relates to how

"we weave meaning around our past, present, and future" (Kenny et al., 2011, p. 16). Relatively recent literature attempts to integrate the concept of place into existing identity models (Hauge, 2007).

One notable theory is Identity Process Theory (IPT) (Breakwell, 1983; 1986; 1988). This theory describes identity as a structure and a process. Breakwell describes the structure of an individual's identity as consisting of two distinct but related sets of dimensions: the content dimension and evaluative dimension (Breakwell, 1992). The content dimension contains information about the individual e.g., behavioural, physical, psychological and life-historical aspects. The evaluative dimension contains the positive or negative evaluation of each content dimension. These evaluations change over time because of individual and societal changes (Hauge, 2007). Two processes regulate the content and evaluative dimensions: assimilation-accommodation and evaluation processes. Assimilation-accommodation is a two-pronged process (Breakwell, 1988). Assimilation is the absorption of new information into the pre-existing identity structure; accommodation is the adjustment of the identity structure to include the new information (Hauge, 2007). The evaluation process entails the allocation of meaning and value to the content dimension (Speller, 2000). Different principles guide these processes according to culture. In Western industrialized cultures, these principles were viewed as continuity across time and situation, uniqueness or distinctiveness from others, feeling confident and in control of one's life, and feelings of personal worth or social value (Jaspal & Cinnirella, 2011).

Breakwell argues places are relevant sources of identity elements. Aspects of identity originate from places we belong to because places have meaningful and significant symbols (Breakwell, 1996). Places become elements of identity since they support and maintain distinctiveness, self-esteem, self-efficacy, and the continuity of the self (Breakwell, 1996). Places are viewed as having meaning, which is continually being renegotiated, and therefore their contribution to identity is never the same (Hauge, 2007). Breakwell argues that being in new and different places impacts identity through attenuation and accentuation; threat and dislocation (Breakwell, 1996):

1. Attenuation and accentuation refer to being away from familiar places and having to withdraw or diminish the support such places provide.
2. Threat refers to moving to a new place, which imposes new expectations and invalidates the values based on the earlier place attachment.
3. Dislocation refers to moving to a new place, which results in the old place and effects becoming irrelevant.

The subsequent two sections will explore the socio-political, cultural, and historical changes in how social housing and social housing tenants are perceived. The changes were understood to impact the bonds people have with their social housing and the effects on their identities.

1.3.3 Changing perceptions of social housing

The perception of social housing in the UK has drastically changed in the last 70 years (Ellis & Henderson, 2014). In the 1960s and 1970s, high-rise social housing estates were commonly referred to as a post-war utopian vision of "villages in the sky" (Thronberry, 2012; p. 31). Currently, social housing is perceived as a 'last resort' housing tenure and is afflicted with a "problem image" (Hastings, 2004; p. 233). This illustrates that the 'problem image' perception of social housing does not naturally exist but is socially constructed (Permentier et al., 2011). Negative images of social housing, particularly high-rise buildings, can persist even following redevelopment and investment (Hastings, 2004).

It has been argued local and national media are a source of negative reputations, particularly for social housing estates (Flint et al., 2007). Fictional dramas, daytime reality talk shows and factual documentaries (e.g., Benefits Street) are identified as being a source of these narratives (Kearns et al., 2013). This mirrors studies investigating social tenants' views of how others assess their neighbourhoods (Andersen, 2008; Permentier et al., 2011). Social tenants identified average income, the demographic composition of the residents, and distance from the city centre as being influential in shaping a negative reputation to social housing. Also, the portrayal of social housing in the media can be amplified by think tanks and infiltrate political debate (Slater, 2018). Political figures refer to social housing, particularly high-rise estates, as "sink estates" (Social Exclusion Unit, 1998, p. 10). These perceptions have both real and

ideological effects. For instance, as Slater (2018) argues, 'sink estate' narrative has entered the political lexicon to condemn the very existence of social housing in favour of other housing tenures, particularly homeownership.

Sociological literature describes the influence of the media and political figures in the perception of social housing as territorial stigmatisation (Wacquant et al., 2014). Territorial stigmatisation is seen as driven by strong top-down devaluation resulting in the "symbolic demonization" of areas (Wacquant, 2008a, p. 115). Waquant (2008) argues territorial stigmatisation justifies urban interventions, which deepen the marginalization of social tenants. This can be exemplified by the £10 million Grenfell Tower refurbishment. The refurbishment and management of the block have been sharply criticised due to not addressing evident structural shortcomings in the quality and the safety of the tower block (Shildrick, 2018). Watt argues the refurbishment and management of Grenfell Tower and the responses following the fire revealed, "the injustices, deprivations, expulsions, and brutalities that are routine in the lives of working-class, multi-ethnic Londoners" (Shildrick, 2018; p. 789).

1.3.4 Changing perceptions of social tenants

There has also been a change in how social tenants are perceived across time (Boughton, 2018). Social tenants were discursively constructed as affluent and privileged during the 1960s (Jacobs et al., 2003) to socially excluded and economically inactive currently (Watt, 2008). Also, they are often perceived as central to narratives of crime and anti-social behaviours (Jones 2011). Social tenants are described as mostly arising from an 'underclass' group (Watt, 2008). 'Underclass' refers to a social class that experiences social, educational, and economic marginality compared to other social classes (Flint, 2002).

Hastings (2004) argues the changes in perception of social tenants are due to the economic and demographic changes. This change is often referred to as 'residualization'; this refers to the provision of a particular housing tenure being allocated to more disadvantaged households (Clark & Monk, 2011). As discussed earlier, the legislative reforms over the past 40 years has partially led to concentrations of the most disadvantaged people living in social housing (Luisa Maffini & Maraschin, 2018). As a result, one-third of eight million social housing

tenants live in poverty (Lloyd, 2010). Schemes such as the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) has meant a surge of people seeking asylum have been located to areas with large supplies of social housing (Phillimore & Goodson, 2006). At neighbourhood level, it has been argued these changes may disrupt a pre-existing system of social relations and an inherent sense of belonging between current social tenants (Hickman et al., 2008). The arrival of new social tenants has been observed to cause backlash from long-term social housing tenants if no social interventions and economic funding is in place (Hickman, 2013). As a result, ruptures may arise between social tenants groups through social differentiation (Palmer et al., 2004). They can make micro-distinctions to 'locate' the source of a bad reputation in other social tenants elsewhere (Osborne et al., 2011).

Literature suggests that the stigma about social housing may act to reinforce and perpetuate the material disadvantage of its inhabitants (Palmer et al., 2004). Stigma is described as when four interrelated components converge in the context of social, economic, and political power. The components are: distinguishing and labelling differences; associating human differences with negative attributes; separating 'us' from 'them'; and status loss and discrimination (Link & Phelan, 2001). The stigma associated with social housing impacts residents' health and wellbeing by adding to how they are socially and economically excluded (Palmer et al., 2004). Social exclusion is one indicator correlated with life expectancy, physical health, and a range of psychologically relevant issues (Marmot, 2005; Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009). It is described as the "inability to participate effectively in economic, social, and cultural life and, in some characteristics, alienation and distance from mainstream society" (Duffy, 1995; p. 5). Social exclusion is also associated with reduced access to social capital (Abrams, Hogg & Marques, 2005). Social capital is defined as resources based upon connection, networks, and group membership (Bourdieu & Richardson, 1986). Emerging literature suggests social tenants are at greater risk of social exclusion on measures of income, employment, and physical and mental health (Marsh & Mullins, 1998; Turnstall, 2011). Concerning mental health outcomes, social tenants are 1.5 times more likely to experience poor mental health (Johnson et al., 2004) and four times more likely to report their housing conditions worsen their health (Social Exclusion Unit, 2004). Overall, social

tenants' mental health and wellbeing is believed to be influenced by a wide range of complex, structural, and psychosocial processes (Holding et al., 2019).

The sections above demonstrate a broad systemic context for people living in social housing in the UK. However, it has not provided an understanding of the in-depth experiences of social tenants living in the UK and how they impact their psychological wellbeing. This will be explored further in the systematic literature review.

1.4 Systematic Literature Review

1.4.1 Aims of systematic literature review

The sections above demonstrate a broad systemic context for UK social housing and highlighted how several factors can shape the bonds people have with their social housing. However, it has not provided an understanding of the in-depth experiences of social tenants in the UK. Therefore, the systematic review of peer-reviewed empirical literature aimed to answer *what are the experiences of adults living in social housing in the UK*?

1.4.2. Search strategy

The literature search was conducted from December 2019 to April 2020. Searches were carried out for the terms, shown in table 1, using the following databases: Scopus, PubMed, APA PsychNet, Social Care Online, and Google Scholar. Initially, the terms: tenants, residents, or occupants were used to generate papers to focus on social tenants solely. However, this generated a small number of papers, and relevant papers for this review were unfairly excluded. These terms were dropped in favour of using "adult" as a search term. Note that Google Scholar yields large results, which cannot be easily restricted to the peer-reviewed empirical literature. Therefore, a more restricted search was performed requiring "social housing" OR "council housing" OR "public housing", "adult", and "UK OR England OR Scotland OR Wales OR Northern Ireland" to be included in the title. The reference and citation lists of each relevant paper were also searched to ensure that no studies had been missed out in the primary searches. As discussed in section 1.2.4, there have been substantive policies, which have drastically changed the conditions of social housing in the UK. Therefore, the search was limited to papers published within the past ten years to account for the most recent housing legalisation (Localism Act, 2011).

Table 1: Terms used to search databases

AND	NOT
"adult"	"children"
"social housing" OR "council housing" OR "public housing"	"private rented housing" OR "home ownership"
UK OR England OR Scotland OR Wales OR Northern Ireland	

Once duplicates and non-peer-reviewed literature were removed, the inclusion and exclusion criteria (shown in table 2) were used to screen the title, abstract, and full text of the peer-reviewed empirical literature.

Table 2: Inclusion and exclusion criteria for systematic literature review

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Paper on experiences of living in social housing in the UK	Papers focused on interventions Papers focused on prevalence
Participants are adults (over the age of 18 years) Papers are written in English	Participants are children or adolescents (under the age of 18 years) Papers are unavailable in English
Primary data or review of secondary data	Theory-only paper
Relevance to mental health and wellbeing	Relevance only to physical health

A flowchart of the systematic literature review selection process is shown in figure 3.

Figure 3: Systematic literature review flowchart

Initial search results

n = 5011

Duplicities n = 1604

Non-peer reviewed literature n = 852

Articles selected for title screening

N = 2555

Articles screened by title

Excluded articles: n = 2503

Conducted outside the UK: 1418
Not related to social housing: 1016
Experiences of children living in social housing: 2
Focus on UK social housing stock: 9
Intervention study: 6
Cost-utility analysis: 2
Focus on architecture of social housing: 1
Focus on physical conditions of social housing: 17
Prevalence of anti-social behaviour: 2
Prevalence of health behaviours: 6
Prevalence of mental health conditions: 1
Prevalence of physical conditions: 6
Prevalence of socioeconomic deprivation: 3
Housing legislation: 13
Theory-only paper: 1

Articles selected for abstract review

n = 52

Articles screened by abstract

Excluded articles: n = 36

Conducted outside the UK: 7
Not related to social housing 4:
Focus on UK social housing stock: 1
Experiences of children living in social housing: 2
Intervention study: 4
Focus on architecture of social housing: 1
Focus on physical conditions of social housing: 1
Prevalence of health behaviours: 2
Prevalence of physical conditions: 3
Prevalence of socioeconomic deprivation: 2
Housing legislation: 5
Theory-only paper: 4

Articles selected for full text review

n = 16

All inclusion and exclusion criteria applied

Excluded articles: n = 8

Focus on physical conditions of social housing: 3
Housing legislation: 1
Theory-only paper: 1
Participants are not solely social housing tenants: 3

Articles generated from reference lists n = 3

Articles selected for systematic literature review

n = 11

1.4.3 Synthesis of findings

A total of 11 articles were included in the systematic literature review. These articles came from the fields of social work, sociology, public health, anthropology, psychology, and law. Of these papers, eight used qualitative measures, two used quantitative measures, and one used both qualitative and quantitative measures. Appendix B summarises these studies according to their methodology, participants, and key findings. The 11 articles' findings were synthesised based on the guidance specified by Baumeister & Leary (1997). Central concepts within the findings were identified from each paper. These concepts were then grouped into the following five themes listed below. It is important to acknowledge that this process is likely to be influenced by the researcher's biases and perspectives.

- Financial hardship
- Physical environment (social housing and surrounding areas)
- Communities in social housing
- Navigating the social housing system
- Stigma about social housing

Financial hardship

Two studies discussed how financial hardship shapes the experiences of people living in social housing (Holding et al., 2019; Longhurst & Hargreaves, 2019).

Social tenants experiencing financial hardship, arising from unemployment and difficulty claiming the appropriate benefits, were discussed in two studies (Holding et al., 2019; Longhurst & Hargreaves, 2019). The consequences of financial hardship were having rent arrears and relying on food banks (Holding et al., 2019). Financial hardship also shapes the use of energy and, in some cases, contributed to fuel poverty (Holding et al., 2019; Longhurst & Hargreaves, 2019). However, Longhurst & Hargreaves (2019) found practices of care also shaped energy consumption. This involves participants using additional energy (e.g., using the heater for longer) for someone else in their household. More broadly, relationships were found to be a resource to help cope with energy vulnerability (Longhurst and Hargreaves, 2019). On the other hand, Longhurst and

Hargreaves (2019) found social tenants experienced stigma attached to living in fuel poverty and poverty more generally. Stigma was expressed as embarrassment and shame. This contributed to increased social isolation and prevented some from seeking help (Longhurst and Hargreaves, 2019).

Physical environment

Six of the studies discussed how housing conditions shape the experiences of people living in social housing (Gibson et al., 2011; Kearns et al., 2012; McKenzie, 2012; Boomsma et al., 2017; Pevalin et al., 2017; Holding et al., 2019). These studies can be further categorised as investigating internal and external housing conditions. Internal housing conditions involved adequate heating, damp, mould, and sound insulation (Boomsma et al., 2017; Pevalin et al., 2017; Holding et al., 2019). External housing conditions involved conditions of communal areas and amenities and security levels within social housing. Internal and external housing conditions were found to be worse for people living in flats in high-rise buildings compared to those living in low-rise buildings and houses (Kearns et al., 2012). This result was consistent for households of working-age adults, older adults, and families.

Internal housing conditions

Issues associated with heating, condensation, and damp, lasting for one year, were correlated with poor mental health outcomes (Boomsma et al., 2017; Pevalin et al., 2017). The longitudinal data suggests this correlation does diminish over time once the housing problems were resolved (Pevalin et al., 2017). However, there was a stronger positive correlation if the housing problems (associated with heating; condensation and damp) had worsened over time (Pevalin et al., 2017). This association between persistent housing problems and poorer mental health outcomes was stronger for social tenants compared to private renters and mortgage holders. The reason for this association may be due to social tenants having less housing autonomy, therefore, limiting their ability to move or solve the housing problems (Pevalin et al., 2017). For instance, social tenants experienced frustration and helplessness about not finding a solution to ventilate and heat their homes more effectively (Boomsma et al., 2017). Interestingly, the association between specific internal housing conditions (associated with condensation, damp and mould) and wellbeing and health were

stronger if accompanied by concerns about the affordability of energy (Boomsma et al., 2017).

Gibson et al. (2011) found issues associated with internal housing conditions (e.g., overcrowding; damp and inadequate heating) subsided following housing improvements and area regeneration. Improved affective outcomes (e.g., mental wellbeing and mood), arising from moving into improved social housing, were reported (Gibson et al., 2011). However, these outcomes were often due to changes in their life circumstances rather than changes to the housing's physical structure.

External housing conditions

Gibson et al. (2011) identified several key aspects of living in social housing, which positively impacted mental health, wellbeing, quality of life, and mood outcomes. These aspects ranged from having a private main door entrance to the layout of the surrounding streets. This contributed to feelings of control and safety towards home (Gibson et al., 2011). This was contrary to communal areas in social housing estates, which were recounted as "dirty…noisy…and less common for adults to use them for leisure" (Gibson et al., 2011; p566). People living in social housing estates perceived communal areas (e.g., corridors and stairwells) as promoting anti-social behaviours and detrimental to their safety (Hicks & Lewis, 2019; Holding et al., 2019). These behaviours would limit people moving around the estate (Hicks & Lewis, 2019; Holding et al., 2019). As a result, security measures were implemented to prevent anti-social behaviour; however, social tenants perceived this as conducive to sociability (Holding et al., 2019). This also exacerbated inaccessibility for neighbours living with physical disabilities. To mitigate this, participants utilised their balconies (another physical aspect of their home) to promote positive connections with their homes and neighbours (Hicks & Lewis, 2019). This also served a function of disconnecting themselves from the estate (Hicks & Lewis, 2019).

Communities in social housing

Five studies explored how communities in social housing are established, maintained and shaped (Kearns et al., 2012; McKenzie, 2012; Koch, 2018; Hicks

& Lewis, 2019; Holding et al., 2019). All of these studies investigated social connection, cohesion, and support.

The perception of communities within social housing varied between studies (Koch, 2018; Hicks & Lewis, 2019). Social housing communities were described as inclusive (Hicks & Lewis, 2019). This constituted as "looking out for each other" and offering practical support, e.g., caring for an ill neighbour (Hicks & Lewis, 2019; p813). Hicks & Lewis (2019) found social tenants reported social ties in the estate being stronger in the past. Nevertheless, social tenants spoke of a wish of maintaining a "friendly distance" from their neighbours (Hicks & Lewis, 2019; p816). For some, this served a protective function to prevent neighbours providing information to "punitive" employment and social welfare agencies (Hicks & Lewis, 2019; p816).

Crime and anti-social behaviour occurring on social housing estates were reported by three studies (Koch, 2018; Hicks & Lewis, 2019; Holding et al., 2019). This resulted in reduced feelings of safety and belonging (Holding et al., 2019). Disputes between social tenants occurred and were exacerbated by poor internal housing conditions (Koch, 2018). For instance, they were hearing neighbours in their flats due to poor sound insulation. As a result, residents described their homes being turned into a site of "unwanted intrusions" (Koch, 2018; p227).

Social tenants distinguished themselves from their neighbours to distance themselves from problems occurring in estates (Koch, 2018; Hicks & Lewis, 2019). On the other hand, these distinctions were also made towards those living outside of social housing (McKenzie, 2012). These social tenants held a strong narrative of belonging to the neighbourhood (McKenzie, 2012). Belonging to a neighbourhood was verified through intergenerational connections, length of time living in the neighbourhood, and depth of local knowledge (McKenzie, 2012). This sense of belonging appeared to exist despite whether people viewed their homes as temporary and did not choose to decide where they lived to begin with (Hicks & Lewis, 2019).

The perception of communities in social housing and the amount of social contact and support differed amongst different types of social housing. All households

(working age and older adults and families) living in high-rise buildings were reported to experience less frequent contact with neighbours and poorer perceptions of community cohesion compared to other dwellings (low-rise buildings and houses) (Kearns et al., 2012). People living in high-rise buildings were reported as being twice as likely to have no available means of social support compared to other dwellings (Kearns et al., 2012).

Navigating the social housing system

Four of the studies discussed people's experiences of navigating the social housing system (McKenzie, 2012; Thompson et al., 2017; Holding et al., 2019; Humphry, 2020). Thompson et al. (2017) demonstrated how residents framed social housing as an inherent ideology based on the notion of need and 'waiting it out' in precarious housing. Authors found ill health and 'incapacity status', regarding employment, were heavily deployed in the social construction of social housing need. Participants spoke of needing to 'perform' their difficulties to housing officials because it was commodified as resources in the social housing system. These accounts served a role in instigating state responsibility and being recognised as deserving of their homes.

However, Humphry (2020) drew a contrary conclusion, which suggests certain providers are 'awarding' social housing upon assessment of "self-responsible personal behaviour and financial viability" (p.14). Participants living with disabilities were seen as 'deserving' because the landlord perceived them as not responsible for their disadvantages. The position of social housing provision being a market concern of affordability was demonstrated by shifting the responsibility of repairs to tenants. Also, participants were reminded of their choice to live in their homes in response to complaints and lack of financial resources for home maintenance. This mirrors Koch's (2018) findings that complaints were individualised and depoliticised by shifting the problem onto individual social tenants to police their own and neighbours' behaviour. These actions served to construct and exacerbate class inequalities.

Landlords were reported leaving social housing and surrounding areas (e.g., communal gardens) in disrepair were reported by two studies (McKenzie, 2012;

Holding et al., 2019). This led to spaces being made redundant and subsequently being used for unlawful behaviours (McKenzie et al., 2012). These practices left social tenants questioning whether they were "good enough" (McKenzie, 2012; p. 468).

Stigma about social housing

Two studies reported stigma towards social housing and its inhabitants (McKenzie, 2012; Hicks & Lewis, 2019). Social tenants described "being looked down on" and "demeaned" (McKenzie, 2012; p.467). A study found social tenants, living in St Anns (large council estate in Nottingham), positioned themselves as being "at the bottom" or of a "lower class" (McKenzie, 2012, p.468). The stigmatisation of social housing was reported to affect different aspects of daily lives of social tenants (McKenzie, 2012). This included difficulties getting a taxi to and from their homes. As a result, social tenants would mitigate exclusion and abandonment through investing in belonging to their local communities (McKenzie, 2012). In contrast, Hicks & Lewis (2019) found social tenants would mitigate the effects of stigma by distancing themselves from neighbours who were more 'in need'.

1.4.4 Discussion of findings

The research suggests a wide range of factors shapes people's experiences living in social housing. All of these studies discussed factors, which impact the psychological wellbeing of social tenants. This predominantly involved how their housing shaped how they viewed themselves, their sense of autonomy, and their ability to manage their lives and the surrounding world effectively (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). A few papers found social tenants can experience financial hardship, which impacts their ability to pay their rent, afford food, and effectively heat their homes. Relationships were a resource to cope with these hardships; however, stigma, associated with poverty, increased social isolation and prevented some from seeking assistance from others. More broadly, the stigmatisation of social housing influenced how social tenants viewed themselves and affected different aspects of their daily lives.

A majority of the papers, selected for systematic literature review, focused on the

implications of internal and external housing conditions on social tenants' psychological wellbeing by altering key psychosocial processes such as control, privacy, and sociability (Gibson et al., 2011). Communities in social housing were discussed as being both beneficial and hindering the psychological wellbeing of social tenants. These communities were perceived as causing local crime and anti-social behaviour, thus impacting on their sense of safety. Some studies showed social tenants kept a friendly distance from their neighbours to protect and distance themselves from local problems. Others demonstrated belonging to a social housing community was longed for and, once granted, persisted even when their homes were viewed as temporary.

Finally, social tenants were perceived as 'performing' their needs to housing officials to access social housing. More recently, there has been a shift from a model of residualization to individualisation. This predominantly involved social housing providers selecting people who evidence financial stability and self-responsible personal behaviour. Class inequalities were exacerbated because social tenants were constructed using the norms of the higher-income tenants' consumer identities.

1.4.5 Critique of the literature

The quality of these studies was reviewed using four quality appraisal frameworks. Four quality appraisal frameworks were preferred over one framework to evaluate both qualitative and quantitative approaches e.g., Elliot et al (1999). The four quality appraisal frameworks were preferred because it captured the methodological nuances in the studies selected for the systematic literature review. One limitation faced when using four quality appraisal frameworks was the difficulty in comparing qualities across methodologies. However, this was mediated by using the guidelines specified by Siddaway et al. (2019). These guidelines specify 'zooming out' and providing a conceptual overview of studies by focusing on universal methodological strengths and limitations. For instance, assessing robustness of research findings through presenting quotes (qualitative studies) and use of robustness tests (quantitative studies). The qualitative studies were appraised using the "Big-Tent" Criteria for Qualitative Quality (Tracy, 2010). This framework was selected because it

provided a conceptualisation of universal hallmarks across different qualitative methodological paradigms (Tracy & Hinrichs, 2017). This was particularly important for this systematic literature review because the selected qualitative studies were informed by different epistemologies and used a variety of measures (e.g., semi-structured interviews to observation). The quantitative studies were appraised using different tools according to the type of study. One quantitative longitudinal study was appraised using the CASP appraisal cohort study checklist (Critical Appraisal Skills Programme, 2018). The other quantitative cross-sectional study was appraised using Appraisal tool for Cross-Sectional Studies (AXIS) (Downes et al., 2016). The AXIS tool is designed explicitly for cross-sectional studies and only includes items relevant to this design (Downes et al., 2016). Finally, a mixed-methods study was appraised using the Mixed-Methods Appraisal Tool (Hong et al, 2018). The quality appraisal frameworks used to checklist each study can be found in Appendix C.

All of the papers were well written, and authors provided clear research aims. Most of the authors (Gibson et al., 2011; Kearns et al., 2012; Boomsma et al., 2017; Pevalin et al., 2017; Thompson et al., 2017; Hicks & Lewis, 2019; Holding et al., 2019; Longhurst & Hargreaves, 2019) included relevant literature and identified a gap their research would fill. On the other hand, other papers (Kearns et al., 2012; McKenzie, 2012; Koch, 2018; Hicks & Lewis, 2019; Humphry, 2020) preferred situating their respective research in the local and societal housing context. For these papers (McKenzie, 2012; Koch, 2018; Hicks & Lewis, 2019; Humphry, 2020), it was hard to determine the research rationale because a coherent presentation of the literature was missing.

Papers differed in how their methodology was presented. This largely varied between quantitative and mixed methods (Downes et al., 2016; Boomsma et al., 2017; Pevalin et al., 2017) and ethnographic papers (McKenzie, 2012; Koch, 2018). The ethnographic papers (McKenzie, 2012 & Koch, 2018) merged the data collection description alongside its findings. Therefore, information about the choice of methodology, participant demographics, and data analysis were missing. Nevertheless, McKenzie (2012), Koch (2018), and Hicks & Lewis (2019) used a multitude of measures (e.g., diary-elicited discussions, observations, and walking tours). This enhanced the comprehensiveness of their data; however, it

was hard to determine if triangulation was achieved. The majority of the papers were clear about their methodologies. However, only Pevalin et al. (2017) and Hicks & Lewis (2019) specified their attempts to achieve rigour and replicability.

A majority of the studies specified the type of sampling used and drive for diverse samples. Only studies, which had financial means, used purposive sampling (Gibson et al., 2011; Holding et al., 2019; Humphry, 2020). This included offering financial incentives and having major research companies conduct screening for prospective participants. Some of the studies (Kearns et al., 2012; Boomsma et al., 2017; Pevalin et al., 2017; Thompson et al., 2017; Hicks & Lewis, 2019) identified limitations in recruitment, but only Kearns et al. (2012) identified who was underrepresented in their sample. Authors recruited from 14 areas in Glasgow and therefore had an impression of the area demographics.

All of the qualitative studies used quotes from participants to support their findings in data. This brought the data to life and engaged the reader. However, none of these studies used credibility checks, e.g., member checking. Another critique is that only one researcher (McKenzie, 2012) declared their relationship with the topic, and only two researchers (Boomsma et al., 2017; Hicks & Lewis, 2019) disclosed their research was funded. McKenzie (2012) discussed her insider researcher position and how this impacted her research. Therefore, it was hard to determine whether a majority of the researchers explored how their values, interests, and assumptions affected their interpretation of data.

The papers focused on one estate (McKenzie, 2012; Hicks & Lewis, 2019), one housing provider (Longhurst & Hargreaves, 2019; Holding et al., 2019), one borough (Thompson et al., 2017), specific boroughs in one city (Gibson et al., 2011; Kearns et al., 2012); and a vast region in England (Boomsma et al., 2017). However, most of these studies discussed implications for governmental policies instead of considering dissemination locally. Nevertheless, all of the reported studies contributed to the rapidly changing and limited literature on social housing experiences.

1.5 Research rationale

A majority of the studies identified single (e.g., Longhurst & Hargreaves, 2019) or multiple (e.g., Holding et al., 2019) housing issues. The other studies investigated physical and social changes to a neighbourhood (Gibson et al., 2011; McKenzie, 2012; Humphry, 2020). These studies explored how these issues or changes impacted the quality of life and wellbeing of social tenants. Although many of the studies in the systematic literature review were good, the number was limited. This review highlights that the experiences of social tenants are complex. Little is still known about the bonds people have with their social housing, and no studies have explored the processes that underpin how these bonds are formed. As discussed earlier, place attachment literature helps conceptualise the bonds people form with their homes and the variety of ways these bonds are expressed. The studies were limited to one council estate, provider, or an area situated in Glasgow, Nottingham, Newham (London borough), and South East England. As discussed earlier, the socio-political landscape of social housing has substantively changed. Therefore, emerging research needs to consider the local and socio-political landscape in understanding the context of social tenants.

This research will be informed by the PPP framework. This involves investigating individual and collectively derived meanings, the physical characteristics and geographical scale, and the psychological processes. The research aims to address the literature gap in exploring the socio-political realities of people's lives concerning their homes and how this influences place attachment formation (Manzo et al., 2008). I have chosen to focus on people living in London because there are statistically more social housing tenants and greater income inequality in London than in other parts of the country (Greater London Authority, 2019). Also, the rate of gentrification is unprecedented in London, impacting the supply and certainty of social housing (UK collaborative centre for housing evidence, 2020).

1.5.1 Research questions

This research aimed to explore the social processes that underpin and determine the bonds people have with their social housing, communities, and, particularly, their identities and relationships with society.

The research questions were:
1. What are the bonds people have with their social housing and how do they experience this as impacting their psychological wellbeing?
2. What factors determine the bonds people have with their social housing?
3. How do people currently living in social housing in London perceive themselves, their communities, and place in society?

CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the rationale for undertaking qualitative research for this project will be discussed. The epistemological position of the researcher and why Grounded Theory was chosen as a methodology will be explored. Subsequently, the study design, participant inclusion criteria, recruitment, data collection, and analysis will be detailed. Throughout this section, the researcher will explain her experiences conducting this research.

2.1 Design

An exploratory, qualitative method was favoured to gain a depth of understanding of participants' subjective feelings, thoughts, and experiences (Barker et al., 2002). More specifically, a Constructivist Grounded Theory method was chosen for its suitability in researching a neglected area, such as this one (Chun Tie et al., 2019). The method was achieved using semi-structured interviews and Constructivist Grounded Theory analysis (Charmaz, 2014).

2.1.1 Epistemological position

A Constructivist Grounded Theory method was chosen because it was most consistent with my epistemological position. As discussed in the previous chapter, adopting a critical realist position enabled me to presuppose an objective reality but assume all descriptions of this reality is mediated through the filters of language, meaning-making, and social context (Oliver, 2011). A Constructivist Grounded Theory method stipulates reality is "multiple, processual and constructed" (Charmaz, 2014; p. 13). It also acknowledges the researcher's position, perspectives, and interactions as an inherent part of the research reality (Charmaz, 2014).

2.1.2 Constructivist Grounded Theory

Grounded Theory is an inductive and comparative methodology for gathering, synthesizing, analysing, and conceptualizing qualitative data for theory construction (Charmaz, 2014). It was chosen over other qualitative methods such

as Narrative Analysis, which explores the personal accounts of events and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, which explores the meaning making of subjective experiences (Barker et al., 2002). In contrast, Grounded Theory explores the social processes and searches for the relationships between these processes (Green et al., 2007). Therefore, this method is best placed for this study because it explores the social processes, which underpin and determine the bonds people have with their social housing. As discussed earlier, Grounded Theory is the preferred method when little is known about a phenomenon.

To date, there are three main distinct versions of Grounded Theory. These versions include the traditional Grounded Theory associated with Glaser, evolved Grounded Theory associated with Strauss, Corbin and Clarke, and Constructivist Grounded Theory associated with Charmaz (Chun Tie et al., 2019). There are distinct differences between them: the epistemological position of the researcher; the timing of using literature; and the approach to coding, analysis, and theory development (Charmaz, 2014; p8-9). Distinct from earlier versions of Grounded Theory, which has positivistic assumptions, Constructivist Grounded Theory views reality, and thus research, to be constructed not discovered (Charmaz, 2014).

Constructivist Grounded Theory was chosen because it focuses on understanding how, when, and to what extent experiences are embedded in larger and, often, hidden positions, networks, situations, and relationships (Charmaz, 2014). As discussed in the introduction chapter, it is crucial to explore the socio-political realities of people's lives to understand how it might shape the bonds with their social housing. In addition, Constructivist Grounded Theory recognises the researcher has an impact on the work. Therefore, the method helped me account for how my experiences living in social housing influence the research process (Charmaz, 2014). Reflexivity was instrumental in acknowledging times when my preconceptions about the topic meant I overlooked what is often taken for granted (Vrasidas, 2001). Constructivist Grounded Theory methodology defines reflexivity as a critical element in ensuring the groundedness of a theory (Ramalho et al., 2015).

2.1.3 Use of interviews

Individual semi-structured interviews were used as the data collection method. The semi-structured interviews consisted of a dialogue between the researcher and the participant. It was guided by a flexible interview script and supplemented by follow-up questions and comments (Dejonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). Interviews have been favoured as a data collection method in qualitative research for exploring detailed descriptions of individuals and events in their natural settings (Weiss, 1995). More generally, semi-structured interviews involve (Edwards & Holland, 2013):

- The interactional exchange of dialogue between two participants
- The researcher has topics, themes or issues they wish to cover but with a fluid and flexible structure
- Meaning and understandings are created in an interaction, which involves the construction and reconstruction of knowledge

The data collection method provides an avenue for participants to "speak in their own voice and express their own thoughts and feelings" (Lune & Berg, 2007; p. 69). Semi-structured interviews allow the flexibility required within a Constructivist Grounded Theory method (Charmaz, 2014). For instance, Hiller and DiLuzio (2004) argued interviews give a voice to marginalised groups and unheard voices, which was considered particularly important in this study.

However, semi-structured interviews have several disadvantages. For instance, an interview's objectivity can be comprised when a participant's responses can be affected by how they perceive the overt characteristics of the interviewer, e.g., attribute social class according to accent (Knox & Burkard, 2009). A researcher's own knowledge and views can also shape what is being asked and elaborated further in interviews (Potter & Hepburn, 2005). Special consideration was required regarding this because I had experiences of living in social housing.

To counter these limitations, I took several actions. A majority of the participants were curious about whether I had lived in social housing. It was felt essential to disclose this for participants to feel comfortable to share their experiences. I also

read broader than the research topic to avoid the analysis being narrow and superficial, e.g., reviewing the related literature in other disciplines. Reading widely around a topic can enable a researcher to identify one's assumptions (Harper, 2013). In the discussion chapter, I refer to various relevant psychological theories to prevent reproducing dominant narratives conceptualising a phenomenon (Harper, 2013). Finally, maintaining a reflective diary and regular meetings with the supervisory team were instrumental in monitoring my assumptions.

Following considering their advantages, disadvantages, and compatibility with the Constructivist Grounded Theory methodology, semi-structured interviews were deemed the most appropriate form of data collection. Face-to-face semi-structured interviews were preferred in this study for rapport purposes (Shuy, 2003). Subsequently, interviews were conducted via Skype because face-to-face interviews were not feasible during the COVID-19 pandemic. The advantages and disadvantages of using Skype as a tool for qualitative research interviews can be found in Lo Iacono et al. (2016). One advantage was the research was able to proceed. However, a disadvantage was some of the participants shared feeling self-conscious on video and did not feel comfortable elaborating their responses.

2.2 Ethics

2.2.1 Ethical approval

Ethical approval was granted by the University of Hertfordshire Health and Human Sciences Ethics Committee with Delegated Authority (protocol number: LMS/PGT/UH/03781) (Appendix D). The research was conducted in line with the BPS Code of Human Research Ethics (2014).

2.4.2 Ethical considerations

2.4.2.1 Informed Consent

Before each interview, participants were given a participant information sheet (Appendix E) explaining the purpose of the research and the implications of their involvement. The sheet also detailed the procedure, confidentiality, and anonymity.

The right to withdraw from the interview and study at any time was also specified. The researcher provided participants an opportunity to ask questions about the project before consenting in writing. Participants were given a consent form, if they wanted to be involved in the project (Appendix F), to sign. All participants gave their consent for the researcher to contact them in order to invite participants to check and comment on the representativeness, credibility, and accessibility of the findings (Birt et al., 2016).

2.4.2.2 Confidentiality

All interview recordings were stored on a password-protected laptop; the files were anonymized using a participant code. During transcription, all identifiable information was removed from the transcripts. Therefore, the sources of any quotes used in the research would not be identifiable. Transcripts were stored on a password-protected laptop. A brief demographic information form (Appendix G) and consent forms were password protected if electronic or in a locked cabinet for paper forms. All paper and electronic forms were securely destroyed on the completion of this study. The limits of confidentiality were made clear to participants, for example, the appropriate services would be informed if a participant or someone else was thought to be at risk.

2.4.2.3 Participant distress

Before conducting interviews, the researcher was aware that the questions, exploring their experiences of living in social housing, might evoke psychological distress. Throughout the interviews, the researcher responded to any distress, expressed by participants, compassionately. The researcher also planned for extra time during the debrief component of the interview schedule to discuss any issues that arose during the interview. This was to ensure participants did not end the interview with any distress caused by participating in the study. Finally, the participant information sheet included appropriate services for participants to access, should they require it.

2.3 Consultations with people living in social housing

I consulted with a representative of an organisation representing a large number of London social housing organisations. The representative is also a London social tenant. This initial consultation was instrumental in the refinement of the research topic and study design. Initially, the representative was apprehensive of me because she had a negative experience collaborating with journalism students on their research projects. The students had not disseminated the research with participants. The representative expressed concern about what social tenants would get from the project. At the conception of this project, this was something I had considered and intended to use a participatory informed design in this project. This would ensure collaborative participation with social housing communities in producing knowledge directly relevant to them (Coghlan & Brydon-Miller, 2014). In practice, I intended to invite social tenants to join a steering group, which would contribute at stages of the project, e.g., recruitment, analysis, and dissemination stages.

The representative appreciated my intentions but queried the time and effort it would take to be involved in a steering group. Following the consultation, I met with my supervisory team about the research design. I clarified the hope for the research to be informed by social tenants to retain relevance and meaningfulness. We discussed how this could be met through the Constructivist Grounded Theory method, which uses an iterative process. For instance, as the project progressed, the interview schedule was altered to explore new issues brought up by interviewees.

Furthermore, following my first interview, I consulted with a participant to check the wording of my questions. The participant recommended no significant changes but suggested using the word 'home' instead of 'social housing'. She verified my information sheets and consent form were clear and acceptable. She also suggested ideas for recruitment and used her social media accounts to broaden my reach to contacting potential participants. The participant felt social tenants might be apprehensive about this project and encouraged me to disclose that I lived in social housing to make people feel at ease. It proved to be essential

to share this for future interviews while ensuring my own experience remained decentred.

2.4 Participants

2.4.1 Recruitment

A stepped sampling approach was adopted. Using a Constructivist Grounded Theory methodology, this project did not aim to sample a representative distribution of social tenants (Charmaz, 2014). Initial sampling was purposive; this involved identifying and selecting individuals experiencing the phenomenon of interest (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

Initial recruitment was through Twitter (stage 1). Study information shared via social media can be found in Appendix H. Stage 1 only yielded two suitable prospective participants. I reflected with my supervisory team on why I was experiencing recruitment difficulties. I shared the distrust I faced about the project on Twitter. This involved being questioned on my intentions and purpose of undertaking the project. In these instances, Rasmussen et al. (2016) argue considering the context in which the research is undertaken to plan for the next recruitment strategy. According to a consultation with 7,681 social tenants, many felt strong mistrust towards external organisations (Shelter, 2019). In these scenarios, recruitment strategies require an extended time frame, higher resource needs, and operation via community partnerships (Bonevski et al, 2014). For instance, this involves undertaking a proactive approach to recruiting participants, e.g., knocking on doors (Rasmussen et al., 2016). Due to the time and resources restraints of this project, I focused on establishing partnerships with people already situated in social housing communities across London. For instance, a partnership was formed with a community centre manager who worked with social tenants in nearby estates.

The rest of the recruitment occurred by these people approaching prospective participants (stage 2) and snowball sampling (stage 3). Snowball sampling involved participants recruiting future participants from among their acquaintances (Sedgwick, 2013). Recruitment of vulnerable populations often

relies on snowball sampling because of difficulties in identifying and gaining access to them (Aldridge, 2013).

Initially, people who expressed an interest in participating and met the inclusion criteria, were selected on a first-come-first-served basis. Later, interviewees were recruited to fulfil theoretical sampling criteria. Theoretical sampling will be explained in the data analysis section (section 2.6).

2.4.2 Inclusion criteria

The inclusion criteria were adults (18 years old or above) living in social housing provided by a London local authority or housing association. Prospective participants were required to hold either a lifetime or fixed-term social housing tenancy. People who could not speak English were excluded from this project. Due to the financial and time restrictions of this project, interpreters could not be employed.

2.4.3 Rationale for sample size

Traditionally in Grounded Theory, data collection would end when categories become 'saturated' and that this logic supersedes sample size (Charmaz, 2014). Saturation occurs when no new theoretical insights may be found with further data gathering (Charmaz, 2014). However, it has been argued there is no agreed method of establishing when data saturation has been reached (Francis et al., 2010). As discussed earlier, critical realism combines ontological realism and epistemological subjectivism (Bhaskar, 2013). Therefore, within this position, saturation is problematic because there is an assumption of many alternative constructions of the data. Data sufficiency in Constructivist Grounded Theory is more open and occurs when no new information emerges to add meaning (Dey, 2007). An alternative to data saturation aims for well-developed categories composed of depth and variability (Poole, 2009).

This study aimed to recruit until a coherent co-constructed theory had been achieved, which accounts for the majority of the data, without adding any new categories. I acknowledge that other co-constructions could have been made, for

example, if another researcher analysed the data. In total, twelve participants were interviewed.

2.4.4 Participant demographics

Table 3: Participants' demographic information

Recruitment pathway	Name*	Gender	Age (years)	Ethnicity	Social Landlord	Type of social housing	Social Housing Tenancy	Length of time in current property
Twitter	Priscilla	Female	65+	Any other White background	Housing Association	Flat in a low-rise building (under 12 floors)	Lifetime tenancy	32 years
Twitter	Patricia	Female	55-64	White British	Local authority	Masionette	Lifetime tenancy	38 years
Through member of community	Mary	Female	65+	White British	Housing Association	Flat in a low-rise building (under 12 floors)	Lifetime tenancy	6 years
Through member of community	Alicia	Female	45-54	Black Caribbean British	Local authority	Flat in a low-rise building (under 12 floors)	Lifetime tenancy	20 years
Through partnership with community leader	Ken	Male	65+	White British	Local authority	Flat in a low-rise building (under 12 floors)	Lifetime tenancy	19 years
Snowballing	Arjun	Male	35-44	Indian British	Local authority	Flat in a low-rise building (under 12 floors)	Lifetime tenancy	38 years

Housing and Mental Health network	Muna	Female	18-25	Black African	Local authority	House	Fixed term tenancy	11 months
Snowballing	Renee	Female	25-34	Black African British	Local authority	House	Lifetime tenancy	27 years
Snowballing	Trish	Female	45-54	Black Caribbean	Local authority	Flat in a low-rise building (under 12 floors)	Fixed term tenancy	3 years
Through a member of the community	Sarah	Female	45-54	White British	Local authority	Flat in a high-rise building (over 12 floors)	Lifetime tenancy	29 years
Twitter	Amy	Female	35-44	White British	Housing Association	Flat in a low-rise building (under 12 floors)	Lifetime tenancy	5 years
Snowballing	Phoebe	Female	25-34	White British	Housing Association	Flat in a low-rise building (under 12 floors)	Lifetime tenancy	7 years

2.5 Data collection

2.5.1 Resources

Semi-structured interviews were based on the interview guide and recorded on a Dictaphone. A laptop was used to keep an electronic reflective diary. The researcher used a reputable transcription service to transcribe the interviews. The person who transcribed the interviews signed a confidentiality agreement form before transcribing interview recordings. NVivo 12 software was used to analyse the data.

2.5.2 Developing interview guide

It is understood the interview questions and interviewing style of the researcher would outline the context, frame, and content of the project (Charmaz, 2014). Within this Constructivist Grounded Theory methodology, an open-ended interview-style applied to a broad and loose interview guide. The interview script (Appendix I) was developed in consultation with my supervisory team and reflecting on the research design and aims. The Person, Psychological processes and Place (PPP) framework (Scannell & Gifford, 2010), presented in the introduction chapter, helped tailor a portion of the interview guide. This was particularly useful when considering the different aspects of home e.g., physical conditions and social aspects. Authors of the framework have proposed its utility in developing an interview schedule to include the person, psychological processes, and place dimensions (Scannell & Gifford, 2010). Overall, the questions were related to eliciting the processes in the participant's experiences, thoughts, feelings, and actions (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2012).

As grounded theory is an iterative process, the guide changed once during the project's duration to explore new issues brought up by interviewees. The amended interview script (Appendix I) enabled me to explore hypotheses or focus on interesting leads to elaborate and refine categories in an emerging theory. For instance, the initial participants discussed public perceptions about social housing influenced how they viewed themselves and other social tenants. I subsequently included the following question in the interview script: *how have the stories you heard about social housing influenced how you view yourself and the local community?*

2.5.3 Interview procedure

The initial six interviews were face to face and took place at a convenient location and time of the participant's choice. The location of the interviews was places participants were familiar with and of walking distance from their homes, e.g., libraries or community centres. An option to have interviews over the telephone and Skype was offered to increase the accessibility for participants (Trier-Bieniek, 2012). The final six interviews took place via Skype because face-to-face

interviews were not feasible during the COVID-19 pandemic. The length of the interviews ranged from 30 minutes to 1 hour and 30 minutes.

At the beginning of each interview, I placed the research in context and orientated the participants by telling them what my research question was. Throughout the interviews, I invited participants to elaborate on their responses by employing prompts, summarising to check my understanding, and by empathising with their perspectives (Charmaz, 2014). I checked with the participants that I had not missed any key areas. I attempted to end the interview positively by closing with the key points I can take forward. Ending interviews on a positive point was crucial for me because participants discussed how their current housing impacts their psychological wellbeing and quality of life.

As discussed earlier, I was aware of how my own experiences of living in social housing may influence the interview process. I wondered about the possibility of a "two-way taken for granted cultural competence" that can occur (Mannay, 2010; p. 94). This involves both the researcher and the participant assuming the researcher entirely understands the participant's experience. As a result, I felt it was essential to question my taken for granted assumptions and consider processes to make my social housing experiences unfamiliar (Mannay, 2010). Mannay (2010; p94) describes this process as "making the familiar strange"; Deleuze (2000) argues abandoning the constraints inherent to language facilitates this process. This supports the practice of Constructivist Grounded theorists who are aware of the participant's use of language and ask questions about this. During the interviews, this translated to me repeating key points and gently turning the participant's words into open-ended questions for further elaboration (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2012). This practice highlighted the experiences the participants shared, which I perceived as familiar, was actually very different in reality.

During the interviews, some of the participants showed me photographs of their homes and local areas. Whereas, others gave me asked a tour of parts of their local area that was important to them. Although this was not formally part of the initial interview procedure, it felt important to capture this experience. I interpreted this as evoking an understanding of how the participants understood their worlds

(Pink, 2014). I wrote an extract in my reflective diary (Appendix K), about an example of this. In discussion with my supervisory team, I noticed some of the participants struggled to talk about their home and area's physical conditions. We discussed how we could utilise photographs and tour of parts of their local area as part of the interview procedure. From the fifth participant, I asked participants to show me parts of their home and local area via photographs, to which they were connected. Photography has been seen as advantageous in social science research (Plummer, 2001). For instance, Beilin (2005) used photo-elicitation in his research on landscape sociology and found photographs rather than the researcher's questions were the focus of the discussion.

2.6 Data analysis

Interviews were transcribed verbatim, and the data were analysed using NVivo 12 software. In Constructivist Grounded Theory, data collection and analysis co-occur. This facilitates the emergence of concepts directly from the data through constant comparative analysis between the data and the developing concepts, and between the developing concepts. Preliminary analysis began following each interview through the use of memoing. Memos in Grounded Theory are records of thoughts, feelings, insights, and ideas concerning the project. Memoing is considered fundamental for the development of Grounded Theory (Lempert, 2007). Throughout the research, I used memoing to document ideas about potential relationships between codes, between categories, and between codes and categories (see Appendix M for an example of a memo). My reflective diary also helped me make my opinions, thoughts, and feelings visible, and an acknowledged part of the research design, data collection, and analysis processes (Ortlipp, 2008).

The data analysis phases discussed below followed the Constructivist Grounded Theory principles and guidelines outlined by Charmaz (2014).

Initial coding

All interviews were analysed using the initial coding principle of Grounded Theory (Charmaz, 2014). This principle begins with a line by line method. This method involves the data being broken up by lines or short segments and given a code

consisting of a word or short phrase (Ramalho et al., 2015). The researcher coded words that reflected action by creating codes based around gerunds. A gerund is the noun form of a verb (e.g., defining). This is understood to move analysis forward by capturing, crystallizing, and connecting fragments of the data actions (Bryant & Charmaz, 2010). Two trainee clinical psychologists colleagues undertook a proportion of initial coding. Comparisons were made between each set of codes to ensure no relevant ideas were missed. During this process, it was discovered that there were times when the researcher did not attend to more negative attitudes about social tenants, which were showing up in the data. For instance, the researcher's codes did not illustrate participants holding negative beliefs towards their social tenant neighbours. This was reflected in a series of memos and enabled me to consider mine and the participant's unexamined prejudices.

Focused coding

The focused coding stage followed the initial coding stage. This stage involved reviewing the set of initial codes to identify codes that were appearing frequently or had a significant meaning. Focus codes were created for each interview. These codes were then considered for comparative focused codes across the interviews. Throughout the process, memos were used to record social processes and how the data was being managed. As a result, key ideas and feelings about the direction of the data were explored. These focused codes were then used to analyse the remainder of the interviews. The codes were continuously refined and developed to ensure that they stayed connected to the data. Where needed, new initial codes were identified if unique information emerged from later interviews. Appendix N shows a selection of initial and focused codes. As focused codes were used to analyse the interviews, they began to be combined into initial categories and subcategories. This involved clustering different focused codes to fit under a higher conceptual category. This helped explain key ideas and crucial social processes. Also, it began to identify the theoretical direction of the results.

Theoretical coding

The final coding stage was theoretical coding. Theoretical coding consisted of refining the final categories and specifying the possible relationships between them (Charmaz, 2014). The interviews were reviewed to assess whether or not the theoretical relationships were able to explain the model. This raised hypotheses and questions about the social processes described by the participants. At this stage, theoretical sampling was used. Theoretical sampling involved recruiting further participants to elaborate and refine emerging theoretical categories. For instance, the emerging "Constructing home" category identified bonds social tenants had with their homes, nearby places, people, and histories. This raised questions as to whether these bonds were similar or different for newer social tenants and those with little local social ties. The theoretical sampling criteria included people with shorter tenancies and limited local social ties. At this stage, diagramming (Appendix O) was used to aid the process of theoretical integration (Charmaz, 2014). The final grounded theory model described in the following chapters appeared to explain the majority of the data. The final grounded theory model was shared with five participants. Their contributions helped further shape the model by improving its representativeness, credibility, and accessibility.

2.7 Methodological rigour

The validity of this research was assessed using the "Big-Tent" Criteria for Qualitative Quality framework (Tracy, 2010). The framework uses eight key markers to assess the quality of qualitative research. The same framework was used in the systematic literature review to assess the validity of qualitative research. Full details of the review of this research against these quality markers can be found in the Discussion chapter (Section 4.4).

CHAPTER 3: RESULTS

This chapter begins by discussing an overview of the grounded theory model. Subsequently, there will be an explanation of each of the categories and sub-categories with links between concepts is provided.

3.1 The grounded theory model: an overview

Findings were co-constructed as four categories: "Constructing home"; "Shaping sense of self"; "Navigating a 'profit over people' system" and "Living in a judgemental society". These categories comprise ten sub-categories; this is outlined further in Table 4. Figure 4 presents each of the categories and demonstrates the links between them. A more detailed grounded theory model is included in Appendix P.

Table 4: Social processes in the grounded theory model

Category	Sub-category
1 Constructing home	1A 'Having a place to call your own'
	1B Going 'beyond bricks and mortar'
	1C Belonging to a community
2 Shaping sense of self	2A Redefining worth
	2B Justifying respectability
3 Navigating a 'profit over people' system	3A Going under the hammer
	3B Being subjected to uprooting
	3C Resisting dismantlement
4 Living in a judgemental society	4A Being under a detracting public gaze
	4B Facing discrimination and mistreatment

Figure 4: Grounded theory model

Living in a judgemental society

Being under a detracting public gaze

↓

Experiencing discrimination and maltreatment

Navigating a 'profit over people' system

Going under the hammer

↓

Being subjected to uprooting

↑

Resisting dismantlement

Constructing home

Having a place to call your own

↓

Going beyond bricks and mortar

↓ ↑

Belonging to a community

Shaping sense of self

Redefining worth

↕

Justifying respectability

3.2 Category 1 - Constructing home

The category relates to social processes occurring between participants and their social housing. The following sub-categories were co-constructed within this category: "Having a place to call your own", "Going beyond bricks and mortar" and "Belonging to a community". As shown in figure 4, participants spoke of these sub-categories as stages, which they moved through as time progressed, and feelings of safety and security grew or were comprised.

3.2.1 Sub-category 1A – 'Having a place to call your own'

This sub-category describes the foundations of the participants' home. These foundations involved "Putting down roots", "Establishing safety" and "Providing and creating solace". Participants spoke about how these foundations were informed by their experiences of previous homes and were instrumental in providing them solace in the face of uncertainty and distress.

3.2.1.1 Putting down roots

Putting down roots speaks to how participants first settled in their home. They described their experiences of being allocated their home and moved into the area they are living in. Overall, participants had lived in their homes ranging from 11 months to 38 years. The turnaround for being allocated their home differed substantially between participants. This suggests the growing inaccessibility of social housing in London. Older participants spoke about being offered their homes in a matter of days or weeks. In contrast, participants, who were allocated their home over the past 10 years, shared having to wait in overcrowded social housing and temporary accommodation.

"When I rented from (area in London) Housing sixteen years ago… just walked into their offices, said can I have a flat… they offered me a choice of three different garden flats five weeks later" (Mary)

"{Social housing} it's so unattainable….I was in a bed and breakfast for two years before I got my first flat" (Amy)

The unattainability of social housing and the overall precarious nature of the housing system left some participants only feeling secure in their homes by having lifetime tenancies. However, for some participants, this did not eradicate feelings of fear that they would lose their homes.

"There is still that feeling…fear that we might still get asked to leave for something that we didn't do" (Muna)

For others, registering and being allocated their homes coincided with significant life events or changes in the family. Their home signified a new beginning, and "*security and foundation…we belong somewhere*" (Phoebe).

"*…our very first council property when I first got married. To have that place on your own with my husband…I think that was really special*" (Patricia)

3.2.1.2 Establishing safety

A majority of participants discussed why they established safety in their homes and local areas. For many, establishing safety was necessary to protect themselves from the actual and imminent danger in their local areas. Their direct experiences of danger ranged from experiencing harassment from neighbours to being the victim of racial abuse.

"I feel like I always got picked on by people. I don't want to fight…just wanted to be left alone. I used to hate that word, Paki…I am not Pakistani, I'm a Sikh" (Arjun)

In contrast, some participants shared stories about their family members and neighbours being harmed or being exposed to unsafe behaviours. This ranged from hearing and witnessing neighbours being severely injured to their children being exposed to drug use.

"At the end of my road, we've got the passage. There's a lot of drug use on my road. Like my kids are used to seeing people with needles., They just do it in broad daylight, they sit there injecting" (Amy)

Based on these direct and indirect experiences, participants differed in how safety was established. For some, this involved predominantly staying in their homes and restricting the time spent interacting with their neighbours.

"I'm always in my house. I don't mingle with people…this flat now is like mind your own business flat" (Trish)

In contrast, a minority of participants described ensuring their children's safety by always "*knowing where they are*" (Mary). For instance, this involved restricting playtime outdoors in favour of time spent within the home.

"It's more or less keeping them in the house and playing at a certain time and then coming back into the house" (Renee)

3.2.1.3 Providing and creating solace

A majority of participants shared how spaces in their homes and local areas were "*calm*" (Muna) and "*comfortable*" (Ken). These spaces provided them with emotional relief from the trials and tribulations of everyday life. Many participants described these trials and tribulations ranged from having a stressful day at work to needing a break from parenting and London's hustle and bustle.

"After a hard day's work and the stress of working with children. You feel so wound up. It's [home] is just a nice way to escape. Even if it's only just for a brief time" (Patricia)

Spaces to relax and unwind differed between participants. Some of the participants shared the physicality of their home automatically provided them solace.

"I like the fact it's sunny and calm and quiet. I like having a separate entrance into my flat and so it feels like I'm living in a little cottage…my own private space" (Priscilla)

In contrast, other participants described creating spaces of solace in their homes and local area. For some, this involved decorating their home with religious statues and filling it with soothing smells.

"I've got Buddhas everywhere on the windowsill and I feel at peace" (Alicia)

On the other hand, a minority of participants and their spaces of solace were particularly meaningful when other opportunities, to break away from daily stressors, were financially unavailable.

"We haven't been able to afford [a holiday]…our holiday really is out in the garden" (Patricia)

In summary, participants discussed how stability, safety, and solace are essential ingredients to "having a place of their own". Participants described how this was determined on several contextual factors, which were out of their control, e.g., levels of danger in their area. Some participants discussed how it disrupted the sense of security in their homes. However, participants mitigated these factors through actions occurring in their homes, which were in their control. For instance, creating spaces to relax and unwind in their home.

3.2.2 Sub-category 1B – Going 'beyond bricks and mortar'

This sub-category describes the interactions between the participants and the people they live or lived with and histories associated with their homes. These interactions demonstrated the meaning-making processes between the participants and their homes. These interactions are described as "Signifying histories" and "Sustaining relationships".

3.2.2.1 Signifying histories

Many of the participants shared that their homes and local communal buildings were meaningful to them. They described how significant life events and milestones meant these places were no longer just bricks and mortar. However,

there was a notable connection between the amount of significant life events and milestones participants shared and the length of their tenancies. Mary illustrates this relationship. She transferred flats with her son's family 6 years ago. Mary had lived in the previous flat for over 40 years, where she raised two of her children and cared for her elderly parents.

"I moved sooner than I thought I really wanted to, and it took me a long while to settle there. It just isn't the same" (Mary)

The significant life events and milestones many participants shared often involved their family members, e.g. *"the birth of my children, the special times with my parents and spending time with the grandchildren"* (Sarah). Some participants identified specific places in their homes, which signified these events and milestones. For instance, Muna shared how the stairs in her home signified her sibling, who has physical disabilities, was able to walk independently.

"I think that's the first time…he actually got into the house and used the stairs…seeing him happy, he's like, "Look, I'm going up the stairs and I don't need anyone's help with it." (Muna)

For some of the participants, who had longer tenancies, they identified buildings in their local areas and their homes, which signified personal histories. For instance, Arjun's local community centre was where he started his career in youth work. He spoke about temporal changes whereby the centre is now underutilised.

"This is where I started my youth work… I could go off and do things, and it was cool…I want more people to come here, hire it out and use it." (Arjun)

A minority of participants, who had longer tenancies, described connecting to the history of their homes. These histories signified their homes were intended for people with similar socioeconomic backgrounds. For instance, Patricia described her home was originally for workmen, which gave her a sense of belonging in her local area, which was becoming wealthier.

"They were built in the 1930s…workmen's cottages…Working class people, lived here" (Patricia)

For a couple of participants, the sense of belonging was also affirmed by connecting to local area histories. These histories portrayed stories of resistance in the face of fascism to preserve the inclusion of diverse communities.

"It's special to (a borough in London), there is a very strong and vocal Jewish community that got rid of the Blackshirts in the riots" (Ken)

3.2.2.2 Sustaining relationships

A majority of participants shared how their homes helped sustain the relationships they had with their own families. Some identified how parts of their homes were used for family traditions. For instance, Muna shared her living room was used for mealtimes and playing games. These interactions enabled her family to share their concerns to each other.

"The living room is where we have breakfast, lunch, dinner or play games… the kids just start talking about what happened at school and all the drama" (Muna)

Many participants thought what helped sustained familial relationships was having separate spaces. They described this as a "*different way of being together*" (Phoebe). This was particularly salient for participants who used to live in overcrowded housing with their families. Their previous homes were portrayed as "*a bit hectic*" (Sarah). For instance, Amy explained her family sometimes "*wind her up*" and having a bedroom meant, "*I'm still in a relationship with them*".

"We're all together now but we have separate spaces so if we can do our own thing…it's significant for me because we were in a one bedroom before and my partner and I didn't have a bedroom and the kids were in the bedroom" (Amy)

Interestingly, some of the participants, who had shorter tenancies, described their homes as *"somewhere where my family is"* (Phoebe). It meant they were less attached to their homes and could move so long as they were with their family.

"I love my home but my heart is really with the kids. If I moved, I'd probably feel the same in a different home." (Phoebe)

However, for those who had lived in their homes for longer, this was the contrary. Mary viewed her previous home (now rented by her son) as sustaining her relationship with her deceased parents. Mary felt leaving her home would end this relationship and invoke feelings of loss.

"The cemetery, so I'll go and keep it tidy. But I don't feel they're (deceased parents) there. They're more where they used to be, like in at my house." (Mary)

"I don't know how I'd feel if strangers was in it [her previous home]… that will cut ties, isn't it?" (Mary)

In "Beyond bricks and mortar", participants highlighted how their home represented bonds to personal, familial, and cultural histories and past and present relationships. These bonds fostered an attachment between participants and their homes and affirmed a sense of belonging.

3.2.3 Sub-category 1C – Belonging to a community

This sub-category describes *"connectedness"* (Sarah) between the participants and their neighbours and local people living in their area. The level of connectedness differed according to the length of tenancy. A majority of participants described the actions which illustrated they belonged to a community. These practices were consolidated to "Joining through commonality" and "Reciprocating support".

3.2.3.1 Joining through commonality

Many participants described the first step of belonging to a community was getting to know their neighbours and local people. For some, this was achieved by using the same local facilities in their area. These facilities were often described as "*community hubs*" (Alicia) and ranged from local markets and buildings to communal spaces offered as part of their housing tenancy.

"We live very near to a street market on the next road…I, and everybody else, go up there and do all our food shopping." (Priscilla)

A proportion of participants, who had longer tenancies, described a temporal change in the connectedness between them and their neighbours. For instance, Mary recalled social ties in her local area being stronger in the past and therefore felt a declining sense of belonging to a community.

"When I first moved here years ago, everybody knew everybody...It's not quite like that now." (Mary)

Some of these participants felt the fast-paced nature of living in London meant they and their neighbours kept to themselves and did not have the time or opportunity to integrate.

"I've been here twenty something years…no one really knows their neighbours. We're all kind of leaving at different times of the day" (Arjun)

In contrast, younger participants felt the value of being a part of a community differed across generations. For instance, Phoebe thought her older female neighbours valued local social ties because they "*stayed at home a lot more…would rely on having to build relationships close to home*". She felt there were cultural changes across time, which meant her generation had more financial pressures. This translated to having little time to invest in relationships with their neighbours and local people.

"Single parent families have increased whereas, back in the day, you probably would have stayed with your husband...our generation don't really have a lot of time to do things" (Phoebe)

A minority of participants felt social ties with their neighbours and local people emerged in times of uncertainty. For instance, Sarah shared getting to know her neighbours when their tower block was evacuated for fire safety concerns. In

contrast, Phoebe thought communications between her and her neighbours had improved because they were staying at home due to COVID-19.

"There were some residents that I didn't know until the evacuation…we've had these friendships now for over two years" (Sarah)

"With COVID-19 and people being at home. There has been a lot more communication in the last six weeks compared to the seven years I've lived here." (Phoebe)

Nevertheless, a minority of participants described the interactions between them and their neighbours varied for similar reasons specified above. Amy explained limiting the interactions with her neighbours because she was concerned about losing her home.

"One of the neighbours complained upstairs and [community event] all got shut down. We got letters…I got a complaint about the kids playing outside. I got really worried. It felt like a real threat to my tenancy" (Amy)

3.2.3.2 Reciprocating support

Another way some participants described belonging to a community was by reciprocating emotional and practical support with their neighbours. For some, this support was described as crucial for their "*survival*" (Patricia).

"When there were really awful times in my house. I can run to a neighbour till they call the police" (Amy)

This support ensured the welfare of those most in need in the area. The most in need predominantly were "*very elderly residents that we look out for*" (Mary). For a minority of participants described, the support also ensured community safety. Muna explained how her neighbours sent her and her siblings home when they were concerned about their safety.

"I remember seeing a couple of people coming around with their bikes. We didn't know them…we were sent home by one of the parents" (Muna)

On the other hand, some participants described not being *"close friends"* (Priscilla) with their neighbours but their support was there if needed. Participants with longer tenancies shared weathering difficult times with their neighbours. They described the support illustrating the care between themselves, their neighbours, and local people.

"We all help and care for each other" (Arjun)

Practical support ranged from collecting shopping, offering childcare to covering expenses. This was particularly important for a minority of participants who lived at some distance from their family and friendship social networks. Trish shared neighbours helped finance her daughter's wedding.

"I paid for nothing [daughter's wedding]. Not one of them took the money off me…£1,400 is a lot of money" (Trish)

Participants with longer tenancies felt the support they gave and received from their neighbours depended on knowing each other's circumstances. For instance, Patricia shared she was helping her neighbour with childcare after becoming aware of his family circumstances.

"His partner has run off, he's left with three children. He's got no support around him to look after his children while he works… I then looked after them" (Patricia)

In summary, participants described that belonging to a community was part of the construction of their homes. They explained how they met and got to know their neighbours and local people using the same local facilities and buildings. However, temporal changes in the connectivity within their community were discussed. In times of uncertainty, this connectivity emerged and restored to weather collective difficulties. Reciprocating support was seen as essential for survival and at their disposal for many participants if required. This support was crucial in ensuring the welfare and safety of the community. For a minority, this

support was particularly important because they lived away from their own family and friendship social networks. Participants, with longer tenancies, shared tailoring the support once knowing each other's circumstances.

3.3 Category 2 – Shaping sense of self

This category describes the social processes relating to the participants' identities. It demonstrates how the "Constructing home" category mutually influences it. Participants defined who they are was shaped by the people, histories, and cultural practices of their home. The following sub-categories were co-constructed within this category: "Redefining worth" and "Justifying respectability". The relationship between these sub-categories was bi-directional. It was understood that how participants understood their value as a person determined their respectability and vice versa.

3.3.1 Sub-category 2A: Redefining worth

Participants spoke about how the people, histories, and cultural practices, associated with their home, made them continuously define their value. The main ways they viewed this was by "Keeping going despite hardships" and "Providing care". This sub-category countered the influence of the last two categories: "Living in a judgemental society" and "Navigating a 'profit over people' system". This involved opposing social and political discourses about social housing tenants by situating themselves in alternative identity spaces. Also, taking pride in their homes despite external forces to disrupt and dismantle it in some cases.

3.3.1.1 Keeping going despite hardships

A majority of participants described having "*hard pills to swallow*" (Arjun). They reflected on being and living amongst *"the realest of realest people"* (Alicia) because of experiencing different *"hardships"* (Priscilla).

> *"People who experienced life. This is what life is…they've been through the difficulties"* (Trish)

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A majority of participants shared having *"to just keep going with what we're doing"* (Sarah) or *"getting on with it regardless of the situations here"* (Ken) for *"survival"* (Amy). They discussed they were able to keep going because they witnessed the difficulties faced by neighbours. Sarah described this as *"you get on with it because you could be a lot worse".* They described knowing about these difficulties because they belonged to their local community. Some participants felt witnessing their neighbours' problems helped them view their circumstances as more fortunate.

"I'm really lucky, I got no mental health and me kids and everything. I know lots of people that need something" (Mary)

For some participants, witnessing their neighbours' hardships encouraged them to persevere and find ways of addressing their difficulties. For Arjun, witnessing his neighbours' hardships put his hardships into perspective and described getting by as *"getting off your arse and go and sort yourself out"* (Arjun). Whereas, Priscilla preserved with her hardships associated with her home by reclaiming the autonomy over it. She discussed *"taking back control"* of her home to counter a housing system that maltreated her by denying her agency.

"My partner was very good at manual stuff and so we did all the repairs ourselves… most of us have no need for them [her landlord]" (Priscilla)

Finally, some participants spoke about drawing strengths from their hardships. They explained how this had equipped them in other aspects of their lives. They felt this gave them access to opportunities to which other people would not be privy to. For instance, Renee is a cartoonist and felt her home helped inform her creative processes.

"It actually has helped me creative-wise…as an artist, I use my home to actually to tell stories" (Renee)

3.3.1.2 Providing care

Some of the participants discussed how they viewed themselves as caring and compassionate through their interactions with home, their neighbours, and the

local community. Participants, with longer tenancies, spoke in length how they were "*a resource*" (Priscilla) to their neighbours and *"a representative for the people in the community"* (Sarah). This was utilised when the certainty and safety of their neighbours' homes was thought to be threatened. They described signposting them to services, researching and advocating for their tenancy rights, and directly addressing their issues.

"The housing officer had left notes to get rid of all the stuff from your balcony by next week… they [his neighbours] came and said, "[Ken], look at this."…So, I immediately went on the website, I found exactly what the rules were. At the Tenants' Association that night, I made sure that they [his neighbours] were listened to" (Ken)

A majority of the participants discussed how they valued support from their communities. However, those with longer tenancies expressed their gratitude by contributing back to their communities. Contributing back to their communities ranged from working in their local school and community centre to creating recreational spaces for local young people. For instance, Mary lived in her local area for over 40 years and was currently volunteering at her local community centre. This was a way of her contributing back to the centre where her elderly mother attended social groups.

"I came here [community centre] because my mum used to be a member of the lunch club. I came here to help them when she was here and I'm still here" (Mary)

Finally, many of the participants shared providing care by nurturing their homes and local area. This was regardless of how long participants lived in their homes. For Alicia, it challenged the myth that *"people who live in social housing don't care about where they live"*. For some, nurturing their home was seen as a collective responsibility and predominantly involved maintaining their home and local area. It was understood to maintain their personal and community wellbeing.

"We take pride in it [her estate], we moan if there's any litter. We respect it. We want it to be like anyone else's block…clean and welcoming" (Sarah)

In "Redefining worth", participants described their value as a person by how resilient they were in the face of hardship and the care they provided. These factors were described as dependent on and determined by their interactions with their homes, neighbours, and local communities

3.3.2 Sub-category 2B: Justifying respectability

Participants described justifying their respectability by demonstrating their worth and distinguishing from their neighbours and local people. Justifying their respectability was seen as essential to countering the broader social and political discourses about social tenants. They understood respectability was used as a means of othering and denying material resources. This will be expanded further in the latter two categories. The following main ways participants justified their respectability was by "Distinguishing from others" and "Demonstrating worth".

3.3.2.1 Distinguishing from others

A majority of participants discussed distinguishing themselves from their neighbours who they felt were further marginalised in society. They described these neighbours as having "*greater needs*" (Ken) compared to them.

"I know a lot of people here that unfortunately didn't get the sort of upbringing so things didn't go accordingly to them" (Renee)

A minority described there being *"ranks"* (Phoebe) within their estates. They perceived this hierarchy as being determined by financial circumstances.

"There are ranks…you have families that are working at the top… I'm probably one of them families at the top." (Amy)

For instance, Phoebe perceived the Housing Association tenants on her estate felt "*better than the council tenants*" because they paid an extra £20 a week on rent. There appeared to be some internalisation of the dominant discourses (discussed below in the "Living in a judgemental society" category), with participants appearing to 'rank' themselves within the perceived hierarchy.

A minority of participants, who grew up in social housing, described a culture within social housing estates as "*a hard circle to break from"* (Amy). They felt a narrative underpinned this culture was, *"you never feel like you can go any further"* (Phoebe). They felt this drove a minority on their estates to partake in socially frowned upon behaviours, which they condoned.

"There was a lot sort of drinking, drug-taking, and crime. It was seen as the norm. Even now, there's people on this estate having terrible trouble with anti-social behaviour…I suppose they didn't have the opportunities" (Amy)

3.3.2.2 Demonstrating worth

A minority of the younger participants discussed demonstrating their worth to justify their respectability. These participants sometimes referred to social housing as a "*one-horse town"* (Phoebe) that *"feels there's not much outside of it"* (Amy). Demonstrating their worth was often described as having a talent and pursuing further education. For instance, Renee shared how her mother encouraged her and her siblings to pursue their talents to defy dominant perceptions about all social tenants being deviant.

"She [her mother] said "I don't want my children to turn into drug dealers and all of that". I pursued my talents… living in a council situation doesn't mean that you have to be a statistic of never succeeding" (Renee)

In contrast, Arjun recalled living in poverty when he was growing up. He described demonstrating his worth by getting a job at his local corner shop, which turned a corner in his life from "*effing around with the wrong crowd".* He felt this taught him jobs were crucial for his personal and professional development.

"We was a poor family…I started working for Turkish green grocers. I got arrested three times one week…He'd [shop owner] said "[Arjun], I've told you, there's a job here for you". His thing was to me, "Go get a job. And you'll appreciate them training" And I still use that ethic today" (Arjun)

In summary, participants justified their respectability by distinguishing themselves to people they lived amongst and demonstrating their worth. A majority of

participants felt some of their neighbours had greater needs compared to them. A minority described there being hierarchy within their estates whereby those, with more financial hardships, were at the bottom. They felt these pressures led to a minority of their neighbours partaking in behaviours they condoned. A minority of the younger participants described justifying their respectability by demonstrating their worth. This was often described to involve having a talent and pursuing further education. For one participant, he felt choosing employment, instead of perceived deviancy, demonstrated his worth. For these participants, demonstrated their worth was thought to contribute to ascending social mobility.

3.4 Category 3 – Navigating a "profit over people" system

This category relates to social processes occurring between social tenants and the housing system. Participants spoke of navigating a housing system that prioritised generating wealth at the expense of their wellbeing and the preservation of their communities and homes. They shared how their landlords maximised profit devalued their homes and reduced their and their community's sense of belonging. The following sub-categories were co-constructed within this category: "Going under the hammer", "Being subjected to uprooting" and "Resisting dismantlement". As shown in figure 4, "Going under the hammer" and "Resisting dismantlement" are counter processes, which either intensify or oppose "Being subjected to uprooting".

3.4.1 Sub-category 3A – "Going under the hammer"

This sub-category describes how social housing and, by association, surrounding areas were monetised and sold off. This section will discuss the participants' experiences of the interactions between social landlords (local authorities and housing association) and private developers. These interactions have been co-constructed as "Witnessing home being monetised" and "Observing the erosion of social housing".

3.4.1.1 Witnessing home being monetised

A majority of participants often described the land they were living on as *"a redeveloper's paradise"* (Alicia). Participants who have lived in their homes for

decades described witnessing a historical and cultural change in the favourability of houses in their local area.

"There was rows and rows of dilapidated three-story houses after the war that the gentry [gentrifiers] didn't want. They were so run down" (Patricia)

These participants thought how their homes were viewed and valued had changed over time.

"The whole confusion between value, the actual value of somewhere that is somebody's home and they pay for it and they live it, in it, and the financial cost of replacing it" (Priscilla)

A majority of participants understood the priorities of their social landlords as focusing on generating wealth. This was understood as being at the expense of the welfare of its residents. Muna described being seen as in the way of *"somebody else's financial profit".*

"Housing management organisation has different priorities…they move away from prioritising the wellbeing of the residents to finances" (Trish)

Participants, who had longer tenancies, spoke about their landlords abusing their political powers to maximise profit. This was perceived to involve actions that directly and indirectly impacted the lives of a majority of the participants. For instance, Patricia described how their landlord increased her rent despite legalisation, ensuring rent freezes for the foreseeable future.

"The government wouldn't let any of the housing providers put up the rent for two years. The (housing association) thought we'll increase their maintenance charges instead" (Patricia)

In contrast, Alicia explained her landlord sold land to a private developer with the promise of building more local housing. However, she thought the price of this housing was extortionate and was only beneficial to the private developers.

"The council was sold that land for millions to the property developers…those flats are going for over £500,000. They're going to make huge amounts of money" (Alicia)

Some participants spoke about how the money acquired from private developers was not used to invest in their local area, thus benefiting their local community. Some participants felt *"the voice and the tenants' rights are diluted"* (Amy) and expressed feelings of powerlessness.

"The council have got all of this money from different investments that are happening, but you just don't see any changes" (Phoebe)

3.4.1.2 Observing the erosion of social housing

Across time, participants, with longer tenancies, described witnessing the erosion of social housing nationally and, more strikingly, locally. They defined social housing no longer being deemed as profitable by the local and central government. Patricia described a change in the purpose of social housing politically. She felt social housing was now perceived as a stepping-stone to homeownership instead of being for "*working class people to put down roots".*

"The government decided that council housing was only a temporary measure. That wasn't why council housing was started in the first place" (Patricia)

Some of participants felt the erosion of social housing was achieved in a multitude of ways. A proportion of these participants perceived one way being newer social tenants being issued fixed-term tenancies instead of lifetime tenancies. Amy shared her landlord was issuing shorter-term tenancies to people moving into social housing from temporary accommodation.

"I was the only person without a short tenancy in the block because I was already in permanent one bedroom. Everyone came from temporary housing" (Amy)

These participants thought this left newer tenants feeling they "*can't put down roots and it's not worth investing"* (Ken).

Also, participants with longer tenancies observed private developers purchasing local social housing from their landlords. They described witnessing these homes being demolished and not replenished at the same rate. Alicia perceived the partnership between her landlord and a private developer not resulting in further social housing because it is not profitable.

"Now, they [local authority] seem to be in with the developers…in the end the developers say "Well this job has cost us more so we're not able to offer any social housing." (Alicia)

On the other hand, a minority of participants, who were politically aware, located the blame for depleting social housing in the actions of the central government and past legalisation.

"It was only when Thatcher started the Right to Buy. The council didn't replenish the stock that they sold off" (Sarah)

The erosion of social housing left a minority of participants worried about housing security for their children and grandchildren in the face of depleting social housing and growing housing prices.

"I'm secure but my children aren't and my grandchildren certainly won't be. There's always that worry" (Trish)

In "Going under the hammer, " most participants described their sense of the different ways their landlord prioritised and maximised profits, which resulted in their homes being monetised. Some participants, who lived in their homes for decades, described a historical change in how social housing is viewed and valued. Participants who had longer tenancies described witnessing their landlord abusing their political power by making their homes unaffordable or selling off nearby estates and local buildings. They described social housing as no longer seen as profitable, which endorsed its gradual erosion on a local and national scale. For some participants, the growing unaffordability of living in London made them worry about their children's and grandchildren's housing security.

Ultimately, their homes "going under the hammer" infringed on their sense of security and belonging.

3.4.2 Sub-category 3B – "Being subjected to uprooting"

This sub-category illustrates how participants described themselves, their families, communities, homes and, local areas being systemically neglected, dismantled, and fractured by their landlords, often in collaboration with private developers. These practices were understood as 'transforming' their neighbourhood and its inhabitants to maximise profit. Participants described these practices being forced onto them and impacting their psychological wellbeing. These practices have been co-constructed as "Experiencing home being left to rot", "Witnessing the fracturing of families and communities" and "Viewing the erasure of neighbourhood character".

3.4.2.1 Experiencing home being left to rot

A majority of participants explained how their homes were *"left to rot"* (Alicia). Their landlords were responsible for the maintenance of their flats, houses and estates. However, the maintenance was seen as often delayed, often leaving a majority of participants frustrated that they were repeatedly "*neglected"* (Trish).

"They [their landlord] take their time to come and fix stuff. That's frustrating stuff."
(Renee)

A minority of participants felt their landlords were systematically "*run down"* (Ken) their homes to demolish later and sell it. Alicia explained she lives in Inner London and, despite growing local development, there was a lack of investment in her estate.

"*The council are not investing because they know they want to sell it…it's got to the point where it has become neglected"* (Alicia)

For some participants, their homes being left to rot highlighted the negligence of their landlords. They described feeling angry at *"how unsafe we are living in"* (Sarah). For instance, Phoebe described how the pavement around her estates

was uneven for a prolonged period and expressed concerns about her and her neighbours' safety.

"We've got uneven pavement. It's really risky, so you could fall over" (Phoebe)

Whereas, for other participants, they felt "*sad and deflated*" (Sarah) because their homes, and by extension, they were neglected. This was more striking for a minority of participants who lived next to privately developed luxury buildings.

"They [a private developer] have developed a new kind of redevelopment on our street. So where the luxury flats are, there is nice kind of tree and pavement outside…then as soon as you step closer to the estate, you've got uneven pavement" (Alicia)

3.4.2.2 Witnessing the fracturing of families and communities

Participants, with longer tenancies, described witnessing the different ways their families and communities were fractured over time. They described this occurring because their landlords re-housed their family members and neighbours in other boroughs and cities due to a lack of local social housing. For instance, Arjun shared living in his estate for over 30 years and witnessing his neighbours rehoused out of the estate. Whereas, Mary shared her local authority offered to rehouse her daughter in Leicester because of no available local housing.

"Well, a lot of the original families from here (an estate) are all gone" (Arjun)

"They wanted to put her in…Well, it was miles away in Leicester" (Mary)

For these participants, re-housing or pricing their families out of the local area was understood as fracturing their social support network. This was particularly salient for the older participants who were retired or about to retire and had grandchildren. Patricia expanded this further by sharing living away from her adult children and grandchildren had detrimental implications on the care provided across the different generations in her family.

"If only they could live local to where they were brought up...where we still live. The childcare is something that we would do but also they would look after us in our old age" (Patricia)

As their families and neighbours were re-housed out of their area, these participants described wealthier people moving onto their estates due to increasing house prices. There was a spilt between how participants, with longer tenancies, perceived demographic change. For some, their families and neighbours moving out meant losing social ties and ultimately impacted their sense of belonging to a community. In contrast, other participants positively perceived forming social ties with new neighbours from different socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. These differences were perceived as irrelevant and strengthened their sense of belonging to a community. For Arjun, this demographic change led to apprehension about what might happen next to his home. Whereas, Priscilla reflected on living in a mixed tenure community worked well and contributed to an environment of embracing and learning from people from other backgrounds.

*"You've got people now that come onto this estate that bought these flats outright. I don't know what they want to do" (*Arjun)

"It works really well... this area is extremely mixed [tenure community], so it's people from every background who learn from each other" (Priscilla)

3.4.2.3 Observing the erasure of neighbourhood character

Participants with longer tenancies discussed witnessing gradual changes in their neighbourhood as a result of land transfers to private developers and local authority increasing rent and housing prices. These changes were perceived as the area becoming wealthier (e.g., high streets become more high-end) at the expense of erasing their local area's roots. These changes were gradual and made some participants feel unwelcomed and question their place in the area.

"(Road in London) was always working-class people and a no-go area for middle class people…Now we've got art galleries opening up, designer shops...There used to be fruit and veg, not anymore" (Patricia)

Sarah described how erasure of their neighbourhood occurred virtually. She expressed anger when hearing about how a neighbouring tower block was edited out of a national advertisement.

"They [Sky] had done that advert. Where they filmed, there's one of our tower blocks. They edited out the tower block [from the advert]" (Sarah)

Some of these participants viewed developers as exploitative because changes in their local area were rarely of benefit to themselves and their local communities. This was particularly evident for participants who were a part of no or tokenistic consultation about changes to their neighbourhood. Amy perceived this as *"doing consultations after they had decided what they were gonna do"*. Alicia expressed apprehension about her local area's redevelopment by a partnership between her local authority and a private developer.

"Big rich developers coming in…we all want our neighbourhood to look really nice but at what price?" (Alicia)

In summary, "Being subjected to uprooting" illustrated participants' descriptions of how participants' homes, local area, families, and communities were forcibly neglected, fractured, and erased by their landlord and private developers to maximise profit. They discussed how these actions infringed on the security of their home and severed ties with their families and local communities. As the economic disparity grew in their local area, some of the participants felt neglected by their landlords and no longer belonged.

3.4.3 Sub-category 3C – "Resisting dismantlement"

This sub-category describes the acts of resisting the dismantlement of the participants' homes and their communities being fragmented. These acts varied between participants according to the length of time they lived in their homes. These acts often occurred in solidarity with neighbours and local people. Arjun

framed this as *"our community is not a community that takes being done to lightly"*. These practices have been co-constructed as "Fighting for preservation" and "Reconstructing home".

3.4.3.1 Fighting for preservation

A proportion of the participants described how they have resisted the neglect, demolishment, or redevelopment of their homes and local areas. Mary described this as fighting to *"keep our places like it is"*. The reasons for preserving their homes were not always explicit. However, Patricia shared her purpose was to protect a future for her and the local people's children and grandchildren.

"We want to protect what we've got, and we don't want to lose anything…we want a brighter future for our children or grandchildren" (Patricia)

When discussing the neglect, demolishment, or redevelopment of their homes and local areas, participants described mobilising with their neighbours and local councillors as crucial. Some of these participants shared raising awareness of the existence and value of their homes and local buildings to local people, local authorities, and, in some cases, nationally. Ken recalled his estates and local area were due to be demolished and redeveloped by a private developer. However, he and his neighbours felt this redevelopment was not intended for them and would ultimately lead to their displacement. He described how his estate survived because he and his neighbours resoundingly rejected the regeneration at the ballot.

"We mobilised and saved this estate. These homes and the local area was reliant on the actions and perseverance of the local communities." (Ken)

A minority of participants said that they fought to preserve their homes and neighbourhood by holding their landlords to account by being involved in redevelopment projects. This ensured the quality of repairs and the local community's needs were at the centre of refurbishment plans.

"I got involved with the Major Works Project … I liaise with the Council and the project director weekly and we just keep an eye on it." (Sarah)

As discussed earlier, a proportion of participants described a local and national depletion of social housing. Some were involved in local and nationwide activism to amplify the need and purpose of social housing to resist its dismantlement.

"My housing campaigning is mostly done online… I was arguing with somebody on Twitter about tenants should move out of social housing" (Prisicilla)

On the other hand, a minority of participants, who lived in temporary accommodation, their activism involved sharing their and other people's stories about the living conditions of temporary accommodation to ensure social housing reform. For Muna, she shared her experiences living in a bed and breakfast for three years and the need for more social housing to her MP.

"We tried to get our local MP to talk about social housing. He turned up and I spoke everything that was going on" (Muna)

Finally, participants with longer tenancies discussed how they reached out to their neighbours and local people to foster connection and resist further fracturing of their communities. These participants shared feeling isolated, and the lack of connectivity is detrimental to their psychological wellbeing. These participants spoke about different ways they were trying to re-establish connections with their neighbours. For instance, Alicia shared her estate is currently being redeveloped. She felt the development of designated green spaces within her estates would foster connections between her and her neighbours. On the other hand, Priscilla explained her neighbour organised a garden party to create and foster stronger connections on her street.

"I'm in the situation where it's very isolated. Just having green spaces (on the estate)…space for us could make such a big difference." (Alicia)

"My next-door neighbour decided to have a garden party so that everybody on the street could meet each other. I rang on doorbells to ask people if they were coming" (Priscilla)

3.4.3.2 Reconstructing home

A minority of participants shared they felt "*disempowered*" (Alicia) towards their landlord and wary of "*the power that they hold*" (Muna). As a result, they resisted their home's dismantlement by re-evaluating and changing their understanding of what home meant to them. For some participants, it led to contemplating or requesting a new home entirely within their local borough.

"It's my home but the combination of the extreme levels of gentrification made me want to go somewhere more working class because it's become so rich here"
(Priscilla)

"I like my flat but… I don't really feel it's where I'm going to be forever. I probably wouldn't have the kids on a bunk bed, for example" (Sarah)

These responses mainly came from participants who lived in their homes for a short time and felt they did not feel connected to their local community, e.g., estate or road. Nevertheless, these participants did not see themselves as a passive receipt to the dismantlement of their homes. Their resistance was covert yet profound to them.

In summary, "Resisting dismantlement" highlighted the ways participants preserved their home and local areas and protected their families and communities. This was achieved in solidarity with their neighbours and local people and strengthened their sense of belonging. Many participants discussed that feelings of isolation due to the fracturing of their families and communities, spurred them to maintain connectedness with the remainder of the community. A minority of participants viewed resistance as involving changing their understanding of what home meant for them and contemplating or moving from their current home. This was in response to feeling disempowered by their landlords and unable to draw from others' solidarity.

3.5 Category 4 – Living in a judgemental society

The third category relates to the social processes occurring between social tenants and society. The following sub-categories were co-constructed within this

domain: "Being under a detracting public gaze" and "Facing discrimination and maltreatment". Participants found they faced scrutiny, judgement, and discrimination from people in the housing system and society. As a result, they described being maltreated by people in the housing system and ostracised by local people and, sometimes, other social tenants.

3.5.1 Sub-category 4A: Being under a detracting public gaze

This sub-category describes how participants felt social tenants were positioned in wider society. A majority of participants were aware of the discourses about social housing and the assumptions placed on what it means to be a social tenant. These discourses have been co-constructed as "Positioned as 'sponging off society'" and "Being viewed as deviant". They felt these discourses diminished the value of themselves, neighbours, and the broader social housing community. For some participants, these discourses were classed, racialised, and gendered.

3.5.1.1 Positioned as 'sponging off society'

Most participants spoke about the misconception that a majority of social housing tenants are benefit claimants. They described there being a dominant misconception that benefit claimants were *"sponging off society"* (Amy). As a result, they felt the public thought that *"people living in the housing estate cannot become anything"* (Renee).

"I think people have this kind of presumption that people who don't work live in social housing claim benefits and are a burden on society. You know sponges in a sense" (Alicia)

For a minority, they felt this misconception was determined by their ethnicity and gender. For instance, Renee felt she was often misrepresented as a black woman living in social housing in the public eye.

"I'm talking as a black woman…they think the only things that I can amount to is getting pregnant" (Renee)

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A majority of participants spoke about this discourse perpetuated in the media, e.g., television programmes in the form of "*poverty porn"* (Arjun). Some said that these programmes were also gendered and felt these fuelled feelings of anger and outrage towards people living in social housing.

"Being portrayed in the media…this kind of hype about teenage pregnancies…it's getting people angered and scorning teenage mums" (Alicia)

A minority of participants discussed how the misconception about social housing tenants *"sponging off society"* was capitalised for other people's gains. Priscilla felt this misrepresentation that all social housing tenants are unemployed was endorsed and capitalised by housing organisations. Priscilla recalled coming across social media posts, which she felt portrayed social tenants as "unfortunate" and requiring intervention.

"They [housing organisation] are saying all over social media that 54% of social housing tenants are unemployed and that they are helping people get employed. Only 7% of people who rent social housing, who aren't either disabled or carers or students, are unemployed" (Priscilla)

3.5.1.2 Being viewed as deviant

A proportion of the participants described how social tenants, criminalised by the association of living in estates, were deemed as *"bad"* (Priscilla) and, therefore, needing to be *"policed"* (Trish).

"People judge and assume, because we live in a tower, that we misbehave and always get arrested" (Sarah)

Some participants located the perpetuation of this discourse in the media, e.g., television programmes. Renee shared how stories about violence and drug abuse occurring within social housing were sensationalised. She alluded to only these stories being green-lighted and shown to the broader public.

"The only films that do get a green light right now are films about drugs and stuff like that… They only put negative stuff" (Renee)

A minority of participants spoke about the lack of positive representations of people living in social housing. Ken spoke about the need to *"rehabilitate"* the image of social housing by showing positive representations.

"It's so important that we rehabilitate council housing by showing good examples. The examples in the public eye are drug dens, needles, and police" (Ken)

In summary, "Being under a detracting public gaze" highlighted how participants had a sense of being viewed as "sponging off society" and deviant. They discussed their frustration of being misunderstood by society because of misrepresentations in the media, for example. These social and political discourses appeared to have personal implications for their sense of self, as they represented a pervasive message that their lives would not amount to much. For some participants, these discourses were gendered and racialised as well as classed. The next section will consider how these discourses influenced how people in the housing system and society treated the participants.

3.5.2 Sub-category 4B: Experiencing discrimination and maltreatment

This sub-category will discuss how participants reported they were treated like "*second-class citizens*" (Patricia) when interacting with people in the housing system and wider society. These described acts of discrimination and maltreatment have been conceptualised as "Being degraded" and "Being mistreated".

3.5.2.1 Being degraded

A majority of participants spoke about being treated with contempt when interacting with people in the housing system and society. These participants perceived their landlords "*not seeing them as people*" (Arjun) and being made to feel *"worthless"* (Muna). As a result, many participants expressed apprehension towards interacting with staff from their local authority and housing association.

"It's just that feeling of being looked down…it's always really hard to just go in and speak to someone from the local authority" (Ken)

For some, interactions with staff in their local authority and housing association reminded them their home belonged to their landlords, not them.

"Certain things that the local authorities do, which make me feel like it's still not my place" (Trish)

A minority of these participants spoke about experiencing contempt from their own family and friends in different ways. For instance, Sarah shared discriminative views about social housing held within her family. When she became a social tenant, she felt her family members were ashamed to visit her home.

"My mom used to say to me, "Stay away from those council flats and people in there"…now my own relatives are ashamed to visit" (Sarah)

A proportion of participants shared feeling resentment from local private renters and homeowners because they were living in the same area. Phoebe described her estate being built next to many terraced houses. She felt the local private renters perceived her estate as an eyesore to the local area.

"The people, that are paying the higher rent, think that they should have a better living environment…not looking over the road at an estate" (Phoebe)

For a minority, they reported that regular complaints were made to their landlords to alter their homes to make it appealing to the local homeowners. These actions ultimately made the participants feel unwelcomed in their homes and local area. Sarah shared the local homeowners attempted to segregate her estate from the nearby houses.

"I found out that they (local homeowners) wrote to the housing department to get permission if they could build a wall so that we couldn't walk through" (Sarah)

3.5.2.2 Being mistreated

A proportion of participants perceived their landlord misused their powers to mistreat them. They described that their landlords placed unreasonable restrictions on their homes at short notice and without consultation with them and their neighbours.

"Six months ago, the housing officer had left notes all around saying, get rid of all the stuff from your balcony, next week we're coming and we're removing everything" (Ken)

These actions reminded them that they had no autonomy over their homes; this made them question if they belonged. Priscilla viewed this as social housing landlords *"having agency over your own life"*. This control reminded them their landlords had the power over where they lived and whether they had a home or not.

"If you're offered a council place, you're a council tenant, you got to go where they put you. You haven't got a choice, you either take it or you got nowhere to live." (Mary)

When comparing to other social tenants, a minority of participants felt their landlord treated them differently. For Muna, her landlord did not share crucial information so she could stay in her old rented home. She was then placed in temporary accommodation miles from her local area.

"Other people were moved into a temporary accommodation close to their local area rather than miles away, which was what happened to us" (Muna)

Some participants also noticed the treatment towards social tenants by their landlords differed. In their accounts, this appeared to be ageist and racist. For instance, Priscilla felt she was heard and respected by her landlord because she was older and white. Whereas, Ken described witnessing the racism his landlord subjected to his neighbours.

"Three different people have said to me as we've left the Housing Association's offices, "Aren't they polite to you?"… they were all considerably younger, and two of them are black" (Priscilla)

"They (neighbours) start speaking in broken English or less than perfect English. They're were shouted down, or there was racism" (Ken)

In summary, "Experiencing discrimination and maltreatment" highlighted how participants felt disrespected and were treated unjustly by people in the housing system, homeowner neighbours and, for some, their own family and friends. This amount of discrimination and maltreatment varied substantially within participants' descriptions according to ethnicity, age, and class. Overall, participants told how the discrimination and maltreatment they faced made them feel they did not belong in their homes and communities.

3.6 Relationships between categories and social processes

Participants made many comments that indicated complex and shifting relationships between all of the issues discussed in this theoretical model.

It seems that the dominant and pervasive social and political discourses about social housing and its inhabitants were experienced as discrimination and maltreatment faced by participants from people in the housing system, local homeowners, and broader society. This was perceived as subtle everyday ways and crude misuses of power, which disregarded participants. These discourses were experienced to delegitimise and exclude them and, by extension, deplete the value of their homes, which provided a sense of security, safety, and belonging. These social and political discourses about social housing were understood to influence the housing system. The system was perceived as viewing housing as a commodity. This resulted in participants' landlords being seen as monetising their homes and eroding social housing both practically and ideologically. As a means of generating wealth, a majority of participants perceived being subjected to the uprooting of their families, communities, homes, and local areas by their landlords and private developers. Despite this, many participants shared resisting this uprooting by fighting to preserve their families,

communities, homes, and local areas. In contrast, a minority described reconfiguring their meaning of home and contemplating and moving to another home. The public positioning of people and their social housing and a 'for-profit' housing system was experienced as infringing on the processes between the bonds participants have with their homes and their identities.

For most participants, the bonds with their homes encompassed places, people (families and communities), and histories. These bonds ultimately influenced how they viewed themselves. Their identities were understood to shape further the bonds they have with their homes, e.g., detaching from or strengthening belonging to a community. Whereas, these bonds to social housing were seen as providing the intent for participants to contest the dismantlement of their families, communities, homes, and neighbourhoods. Participants described indirectly challenging pervasive social and political discourses through actions, which indicated their deservedness and respectability. These actions were understood to represent powerful counter claims to identities that challenged the dominant identity discourses they were subjected.

While these interactions represent the construction of social processes across the dataset, it is essential to note that there were notable differences within the diverse participant group. These differences were due to the length of their tenancy and demographic characteristics, e.g., age, ethnicity, and gender. A notable example was the sense of belonging to a community that differed substantially according to their tenancy length. Participants, with longer tenancies, felt more connected to the people they lived amongst. In times where they felt being subjected to the uprooting, they could utilise these ties to resist. The implications of these findings will be discussed in the subsequent chapter.

CHAPTER 4: DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the findings of this study will now be discussed concerning the research questions, existing literature, and relevant psychological theories. The potential clinical implications, methodological issues, and areas for future research are examined. This chapter will conclude with a final summary of personal reflections on the research process of this study.

4.1 Overview of results

The following section discusses the main findings of this research, relevant literature, and psychological theories concerning the research questions, which were:

1. What are the bonds people have with their social housing, and how do they experience this as impacting on their psychological wellbeing?
2. What factors determine the bonds people have with their social housing?
3. How do people currently living in social housing in London perceive themselves, their communities, and place in society?

This research illustrates that people have multiple bonds with their social housing, which provided them with a sense of security, safety, and belonging that was pivotal for their psychological wellbeing. For example, some participants described their home as providing them with solace from daily stressors. These bonds ultimately influenced how participants viewed themselves. For instance, belonging to a community enabled people to enact the ways they saw themselves e.g., distinguishing themselves from other social tenants to justify their respectability. Their sense of self was understood to determine further the bonds they had with their homes, e.g., detaching from or strengthening belonging to a community. The pervasive public positioning of people and their social housing (e.g., being viewed as deviant) and a 'for-profit' housing system determined the bonds people had with their social housing and their sense of themselves. It involved depleting people's sense of security, safety, and belonging to their homes and communities through different material and ideological means.

Finally, social tenants described the distinctions between how they viewed themselves and how people in the housing system, private rental and homeowner neighbours, and broader society viewed them. Under a detracting public gaze, they experienced themselves and their communities as criminalised and regarded as "sponging off society". In this study, social tenants opposed how they were positioned publicly and redefined their value as a person despite these pervasive discourses. Their value as a person was not fixed, but instead continuously redefined through the people, histories, and cultural practices associated with their home.

These results affirm home as a place with material form and meaning (Massey, 1995). Therefore, portraying home as being "doubly constructed" (Gieryn, 2000; p465). It also suggests that places are essential to individuals in terms of emotional and practical value and broader social and cultural processes (Manzo & Devine-Wright, 2014). Finally, these results illustrate social, temporal, and subjective conceptualisations of home, informing the formation and maintenance of identity and its impacts on psychological wellbeing.

4.2 Relevance of the findings to the literature

Each category of the grounded theory model will be discussed concerning the papers generated in the systematic review. This section also draws on psychological theories discussed in the introduction chapter: Person, Psychological processes and Place (PPP) framework (Scannell & Gifford, 2010), and Identity Process (IP) theory (Breakwell, 1986; 1988; 1992). The section below identifies apparent gaps in the recent literature about the experiences of people living in social housing. A majority of the studies, generated in the systematic literature review, focused on single or multiple housing issues and how it contributes to social tenants' mental health problems. In contrast, this study focuses on the bonds people have with their social housing and the processes that underpin it.

4.2.1 Constructing home

In this research, participants described the bonds with their social housing provided them a sense of security, safety, and belonging. It can be argued these

processes are a requirement for psychological wellbeing because they concern positive relations with others and environmental mastery (Ryff & Keyes, 1995).

4.2.1.1 'Having a place to call your own'

Participants described having a place they could call their own, which involved being settled, establishing safety, and creating solace. They described the process of getting their home offered by a local authority or housing association. There were notable historical changes in the social housing allocation system, e.g., length of time waiting for housing. This supports Thompson et al. (2017)'s findings that social housing is currently based on an inherent ideology of need and 'waiting it out' in precarious housing. This is in contrast to Humphry et al. (2020), who suggested certain housing association providers 'award' social housing based on good behaviour and financial viability. This research differs from both studies because it discusses the effects of the protracted social housing allocation. For instance, how this process undermines some of the participants' sense of security in their homes and contributes to feelings of fear they may lose their homes despite having lifetime tenancy.

The necessity of establishing safety in their homes to counter actual and imminent danger in their areas was discussed. A majority of participants described witnessing and experiencing harm from other neighbours and the general public. This supports the literature that demonstrates crime and anti-social behaviour occurring on social housing estates (Koch, 2018; Hicks & Lewis, 2019; Holding et al., 2019). In this study, these experiences lead to some participants decreasing socialising with their neighbours and reducing their children playing outside in the local area. This supports research, which suggests these actions contribute to feelings of control and safety towards home (Gibson et al., 2011; Hicks & Lewis, 2019; Holding et al., 2019).

Finally, a majority of participants expressed the trials and tribulations of everyday life and described how their homes provided them with solace. Interestingly, this was not discussed in the papers generated from the systematic literature review. The articles focused on inadequate internal housing conditions of social tenants (Boomsma et al., 2017; Pevalin et al., 2017; Holding et al., 2019). Participants

described being connected to aspects of their home (e.g., their garden), which provided feelings of comfort to buffer daily stressors.

4.2.1.2 Beyond 'bricks and mortar'

Many participants described how their social housing was meaningful to them because it signified histories and sustained relationships with people they live or had lived with. These bonds provided participants a sense of belonging to their homes. They described how aspects of their entire home represented significant personal life events and milestones. It was noted participants, who lived in their homes for a longer period of time, also identified buildings in their local area being meaningful to them. A minority of participants described being connected to their local area's cultural histories and about people with socioeconomic and ethnic minority backgrounds. There was no paper generated in the systematic literature review, which discussed the meanings attached to social housing and surrounding areas.

A majority of participants described how their homes helped sustain and foster stronger relationships with their own families. This study illustrated distinctions between participants about how this was achieved. Referring to the systematic literature review, no studies explored how social housing can sustain relationships with families. The generated papers emphasised how social housing communities facilitate or impede a sense of belonging and safety.

4.2.1.2 Belonging to a community

This subcategory described the actions which demonstrated participants belonged to a community. These actions involved social cohesion (ties with neighbours and local people) and reciprocating social support. There were apparent differences in the level of social cohesion reported by participants. Some of the participants described how using the same local facilities fostered social cohesion. Other participants spoke of having little contact with their neighbours and saw living in a fast-paced city, being a contributing factor. Some of these participants described becoming closer to neighbours when collectively facing uncertain times, e.g., COVID-19. However, a minority of these participants described having little contact with their neighbours to distance from local

problems to protect their tenancy. These findings support the recent literature suggesting differences in social cohesion within social housing communities (Kearns et al., 2012; McKenzie, 2012; Koch, 2018; Hicks & Lewis, 2019). However, the reason for these differences in social cohesion differed between this study and the papers generated in the systematic literature review. For instance, a minority of participants in this study supported the finding that social tenants maintained a "friendly distance" or avoided their neighbours as protection from perceived harm (Koch, 2018; Hicks & Lewis, 2019). In contrast, this study illustrated social cohesion was fostered through the use of local facilities and collectively navigating uncertain times. This offers a more nuanced perspective to a study, which suggests social cohesion, is facilitated through intergenerational connections and depth of local knowledge (McKenzie, 2012).

Finally, a majority of participants expressed reciprocating emotional and practical support with their neighbours. This support was perceived as vital for some participants' survival and viewed as a resource to use if needed by other participants. Weathering difficult times and reciprocating support with their neighbours illustrated care within social housing communities. These findings slightly differed from one of these studies that found that support was unidirectional and only offered to those in need (Hicks & Lewis, 2019).

The PPP framework (Scannell & Gifford, 2010) can be used to understand the *Constructing home* category. The framework suggests that safety is a function of place attachment. Furthermore, it offers an understanding of participants' sense of the connection between life events and milestones and their homes and places in their local area. It exemplifies the "experience-in-place", that makes their homes and local places significant (Manzo, 2005; p.74). The framework also considers how symbolic meanings of places can be shared amongst people who identify from similar backgrounds, e.g., cultures. For some participants, parts of their homes were used to sustain relationships with alive and deceased relatives. The framework suggests bonds are stronger to places that are symbolically meaningful through connections to the past. Finally, the bonds between a majority of participants and their homes include "belongingness and familiarity" with their neighbours (Scannell & Gifford, 2010; p.3). This study furthers the PPP

framework by highlighting factors that facilitate and hinder the bonds with people within a community.

4.2.2 Shaping sense of self

A person's sense of worth and dignity can be seen as important in maintaining psychological wellbeing (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). This category describes the social processes related to social tenants' identities concerning their housing. This study found this relationship was mutually influencing.

4.2.2.1 Redefining worth

A majority of participants spoke about how the people, histories, and cultural practices associated with their home made them continuously define their value as people. They described practices, which enable them to keep going despite personal hardships. This supports literature suggesting social tenants experience financial hardship (Holding et al., 2019; Longhurst & Hargreaves, 2019). In contrast to these studies, many participants did not specify their hardships but rather specified how it positively informed who they were. A majority of participants discussed how providing care to their homes, neighbours, and the local community was another action that defined their sense of value as people. This finding was not indicated in the systematic literature review because the papers did not explore how the experiences of living in social housing inform the identities of its inhabitants.

4.2.2.1 Justifying respectability

Some participants distinguished themselves from other social tenants to justify their respectability. They distinguished themselves from their neighbours who they viewed as further marginalised in society. A minority of participants described a hierarchy of exclusion on their estates whereby the most marginalised was 'at the bottom'. This finding supports previous literature that indicates social tenants drew distinctions between themselves and their neighbours to distance themselves from problems occurring in estates (Koch, 2018; Hicks & Lewis, 2019). This finding differs from one study, which found social tenants drew distinctions with those living outside social housing (McKenzie et al., 2012).

A minority of participants described demonstrating their worth to justify their respectability. This ranged from highlighting entering the workforce at a young age and pursuing higher education and talents. It was conceptualised as responding to the pervasive social and political discourses about social tenants "sponging off society" to protect a more positive preferred identity. A minority of participants understood people in the housing system, and broader society, using respectability as a means of othering and denying material resources.

The IP theory (Breakwell, 1986; 1988; 1992) can be applied to the *Shaping sense of self* category. Drawing on this theory, one can conceptualise that participants' facing of hardships was seen as part of their identities. Experiencing these difficulties was evaluated positively because it affirmed they would succeed in other aspects of life and gave them a sense of resilience. Participants also described these difficulties as making them unique in comparison to others in society. As discussed earlier, participants did not specify the hardships they faced. Therefore, it was hard to determine how this disrupted the continuity in their life, e.g., losing a job disrupts other aspects of life. For some participants, these acts of care towards their home, neighbours, and the local community was valued positively and informed their sense of self. Applying the IP theory, one can conceptualise these acts as promoting feelings of personal worth. A minority of participants viewed entering the workforce at a young age or pursuing higher education as informing a positive sense of themselves. Drawing from this theory, these experiences were valued positively because it aligned with perceived normative views about personal worth, e.g., worth being determined by productivity and successes. It also demonstrated their uniqueness by breaking away from a perceived dominant culture within their estate that restricted progress in their lives. However, for one participant, going back to education disrupted the continuity in her life because she lost friends.

4.2.3 Navigating a "profit over people" system

Autonomy and the capacity to effectively manage one's life and the surrounding world are seen as integral to psychological wellbeing (Ryff & Keyes, 1996). This category discusses how participants navigate a housing system that prioritises generating wealth at the expense of social tenants' wellbeing. They perceived

being under the heel of their landlords who, by maximising profit, devalued their homes and reduced their and their community's sense of belonging. It could be argued that this current housing system speaks to the neoliberal change in UK politics, with an emphasis on free market rather than the right for everyone to have affordable and secure housing.

4.2.3.1 Going under the hammer

Participants described their sense of the different ways in which their landlord prioritised profits and maximised these profits, which resulted in their homes and, by association, surrounding areas, being monetised. Ultimately, their homes "going under the hammer" infringed on their sense of security and belonging. This finding was not indicated in the systematic literature review. An explanation for this is the current socio-political landscape of housing in London has not been explored in these papers.

4.2.3.2 Being subjected to uprooting

Participants described how they felt that their landlord and private developers maximised profits by forcibly neglecting their homes, erasing the character of their local areas, and separating their families and communities. They discussed how these actions infringed on the sense of security their home had for them. As the economic disparity grew, some of the participants felt neglected by their landlord, e.g., delays in addressing maintenance issues and, at times, felt they no longer belonged. This finding supports studies indicating that landlords leave social housing and surrounding areas in disrepair (McKenzie, 2012; Holding et al., 2019). This finding contradicts studies suggesting social tenants experiencing frustration and helplessness about not finding a solution to the internal and external problems with their homes (Boomsma et al., 2017; Pevalin et al., 2017). A majority of participants in the current study experienced frustration towards their landlords rather than at themselves.

Also, some of the participants expressed witnessing the different ways in which their families and communities were fracturing. They described their landlords re-housing their family members and neighbours to other boroughs and cities due to

a lack of local social housing. This finding was not indicated in the systematic literature review. As discussed in the introduction chapter, the displacement of families and communities was understood to occur due to the relatively recent trend of social housing demolishment and increasing house prices (Hubbard & Lees, 2018).

Finally, participants shared observing the gradual changes in their neighbourhood due to land transfers to private developers and local authorities increasing rent and housing prices. These changes were described as the area becoming wealthier at the expense of erasing their local area's history. Interestingly, a previous study found area regeneration was experienced to improve affective outcomes (e.g., mental wellbeing and mood) in social tenants because it addressed the material conditions of their homes (Gibson et al., 2011). However, in this study, most participants felt exploited by their landlords and private developers because local area changes rarely benefitted their local communities.

4.2.3.3 Resisting dismantlement

A majority of participants described how they preserved their home and local areas and protected their families and communities. This was achieved in solidarity with their neighbours, local people, and the broader social housing community and strengthened their sense of belonging. A majority of participants discussed feelings of isolation relating to the fracturing of their families and communities. This spurred some on to maintain connectedness with the remainder of the community. A minority of participants viewed resistance as changing their understanding of what home meant for them and contemplating or moving from their current home. This was due to being wary of their landlords' power and having fewer social ties with their local community. Neither of these findings were not illustrated in the systematic literature review. Nevertheless, the gentrification of social housing and the surrounding areas and the displacement of social housing communities is a relatively recent trend.

The IP theory (Breakwell, 1986; 1988; 1992) can be applied to the findings in the *Navigating a "profit over people" system* category. This theory argues that new and different places impact identity (Breakwell, 1996). One way is that the threat

of moving to a new place challenges someone's identity, because it imposes new expectations and invalidates the values based on the earlier place attachment. This subcategory suggests participants' social housing and surrounding areas being monetised was perceived as an imminent threat. The monetisation of their home as a means of value was experienced as incongruent with their appraisals that their home provided them a sense of security and belonging through different means. In addition, the neglect, fracturing, and erosion of homes, local area, families, and communities were perceived as threats. Drawing on the IP theory, this challenged how some participants viewed themselves because it reduced the distinctiveness and continuity of place, social ties, and self-efficacy. Reduced self-efficacy refers to participants feeling not in control of what happens to their homes, local area, families, and communities. As discussed in the earlier sections, the people, histories, and cultural practices associated with their home made the participants continuously define their value as people. Therefore, if their families and members of their communities are displaced and their homes and local areas are neglected or eroded, participants cannot complete actions that demonstrate their value, e.g., providing care. As a result, some participants fought to preserve their homes and local areas and protect their families and communities. Applying the IP theory, this can be conceptualised as a desire to preserve the continuity of place (Breakwell, 1996).

The PPP framework (Scannell & Gifford, 2010) can also be applied to the findings in the *Navigating a "profit over people" system* category. Fighting for the preservation and protection of their homes and local areas can be conceptualised as participants expressing their attachment. As discussed above, a minority of participants acted differently by contemplating or moving from their current home. According to the PPP framework, it suggests these participants had a weaker attachment to their homes than those who were willing to fight for its preservation (Scannell & Gifford, 2010). It can be argued this attachment was not weaker but somewhat different from the bonds conceptualised in the PPP framework. These participants described their bonds to home as social (e.g., being with families) rather than spatial (e.g., physical features of their home).

4.2.4 Living in a judgemental society

This category relates to the social processes occurring between social tenants and society. Participants found they faced scrutiny, judgement, and discrimination from people in the housing system and society. As a result, they described being maltreated by people in the housing system and ostracised by local people and, sometimes, other social tenants.

4.2.4.1 Being under a detracting public gaze

A majority of participants expressed a sense of being viewed as "sponging off society" and deviant. They were aware of these wider dominant and pervasive social and political discourses and discussed their frustration with being misunderstood by society. For some of the participants, these social and political discourses were gendered and racialised in addition to classed. These discourses appeared to have personal implications for their sense of self. It represented a pervasive view that their lives were limited, and they would not amount to much. This finding differs from a previous study that found social tenants internalise these dominant and pervasive discourses by positioning themselves as being "at the bottom" or of a "lower class" (McKenzie, 2012, p. 468).

Although participants did not explicitly express it, these discourses may be enacted in the current housing system through the neglect, fracturing, and erosion of social housing, local area, and communities. Edwards and Potter (1992) argue, "action-orientation" of everyday discourses involves the strategic and political consequences of everyday constructions of the material environment.

4.2.4.2 Experiencing discrimination and maltreatment

A majority of participants felt disrespected and were treated unjustly by people in the housing system, homeowner neighbours and, for some, their own family and friends. This amount of discrimination and maltreatment varied substantially within participants' descriptions according to ethnicity, age, and class. Overall, many participants shared how the discrimination and maltreatment they faced

made them feel they did not belong in their homes and communities. This finding supports existing literature that indicates social tenants describe being excluded, "being looked down on" and "demeaned" (McKenzie, 2012; p.467). The stigmatisation of social housing affecting different aspects of social tenants' daily lives was also reported in this study (McKenzie, 2012). This supports the finding that social housing providers reward tenants they view as "deserving" (Humphry et al., 2020). This may explain the variation in discrimination and maltreatment experienced by participants according to ethnicity, age, and class.

The IP theory (Breakwell, 1986; 1988; 1992) can be used to make sense of the findings in the *Living in a judgemental society* category. This theory argues that social and political discourses can inform interpretations of self and be perceived as a threat to personal identities (Jaspal & Cinnirella, 2011). In this research, many participants felt the dominant and pervasive social and political discourses about social housing tenants undermined how they perceived themselves. They did not feel in control of how they were viewed publicly and experienced diminished feelings of personal worth or social value. Drawing on this theory, acts of discrimination and maltreatment can be hypothesised as threatening participants' identities. This occurred by reported acts of maltreatment from their landlords, which undermined many participants' feelings of being in control of their lives. Also, it was described how being degraded by people in the housing system, homeowner neighbours and, for some, their own family and friends undermined many participants' sense of personal worth or social value.

4.2.5 Reflections on model

This model illustrates the bonds people have with their social housing, which provided them a sense of security, safety, and belonging. In this study, these bonds were perceived as pivotal to the participants' psychological wellbeing because it demonstrated positive relationships with others and evaluation of themselves (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). These bonds also illustrated their autonomy and a sense of continued growth as a person (Ryff & Keyes, 1995).

This research goes beyond existing literature about social housing, which predominantly focuses on the material conditions of social housing and its

communities. The PPP framework (Scannell & Gifford, 2010) can be used to make sense of the 'constructing home' category of this model because it considers place features, personal factors, and psychological processes that underpin place attachment. However, this model exceeds the PPP framework by addressing the psychological dimensions of the relationship between people and places. This model extends the understanding of the social and cultural dimensions of place. Also, the interactional processes between the bonds people have with their social housing have been illustrated. The IP theory (Breakwell, 1986; 1988; 1992) can be used to make sense of the 'shaping sense of self' and 'living in a judgemental society' categories of this model. The theory formulates how social and political discourses and personal experiences can inform interpretations of ourselves. However, the grounded theory model exceeds the IP theory because it explicitly illustrates how the bonds people have with their social housing informed how they view themselves. Defining their value as a person and justifying their respectability was in relation to their homes, local areas, and communities and contributed to the participants' positive perceptions of themselves. Although this was not explicitly discussed by participants, these actions could be understood as opposing the negative perceptions of those within the housing system, their communities, and broader society. Overall, this model contributes to environmental psychology literature because it helps clarify the confusion between place attachment and place identity (Hernández et al., 2007). The literature has either used the terms interchangeably or operationalizing one as including another. This model demonstrates these terms are two separate entities that influence each other.

The IP theory (Breakwell, 1986; 1988; 1992) helps to explain aspects of the 'navigating a profit over people system' category of this model because it considers changes in places can inform interpretations of ourselves. However, this model exceeds the IP theory because it illuminates the current socio-political landscape of the UK housing system and the implications on psychological wellbeing. The current study highlighted how viewing housing as a commodity could result in the neglect, fracturing, and erosion of social housing, local areas, families, and communities. It can be argued this illuminates the implications of historical and cultural changes in the purpose of social housing and who is eligible for it. This research demonstrates how the housing system and its

practices can impede the bonds people have with their social housing. This can occur by changing their sense of security, safety, and belonging (e.g., leaving their homes, which provided them security and safety, are left to rot), and that this can impact their psychological wellbeing. This research is original in illustrating the personal opposition to the uprooting of homes, neighbourhoods, and communities through acts of resistance. It also highlighted how people who did not feel they had the social and economic capital (Bourdieu & Richardson, 1986) to fight for the preservation of their homes, reconfigured their meaning of home as a way to manage these challenging experiences. It was viewed as sustaining their psychological wellbeing because the bonds to their homes were configured to be social rather than spatial.

Finally, this model illustrates the current dominant and pervasive social and political discourses about people living in social housing and the reported implications for those on the receiving end of these. These discourses allude to a societal value of people being vital (one could argue even legitimate) members of society only when they have something of value to contribute. In this case, contributing to society via productivity and partaking in socially sanctioned behaviours. This research strengthens our understanding of the stigma faced by social tenants and how intersecting systems of oppression intersect and interact to produce social disparities in housing.

Overall, this grounded theory model is predominantly original and brings a clinical psychology focus on the literature. It furthers our understanding of the bonds people have with their social housing, how they shape their identities, what factors promote and hinder these bonds, and the potential implications for wellbeing.

4.3 Clinical implications

This research is useful for the profession of Clinical Psychology and health care professionals because it highlights the importance of exploring people's relationships with their social housing were relevant to further understanding its implications on their psychological distress and wellbeing. Drawing on Liberation Psychology literature, collective activity is required for sustained social

transformation (Montero & Sonn, 2009). Therefore, recommendations for policymakers and communities, directly impacted by the current social housing landscape, have been included.

4.3.1 For the profession

Clinical psychology aims to reduce psychological distress and enhance psychological wellbeing (BPS, 2017a). There is growing evidence that supports the social determinants of distress (Kinderman, 2014). This research is useful for the profession because it illuminates the bonds people have with their social housing provides them a sense of security, safety and belonging thus contributing to their psychological wellbeing. It also raises awareness of the potential implications of the absence of these experiences on their psychological wellbeing. Finally, this research demonstrates the bonds people have with their social housing can contribute to a coherent sense of self by redefining their worth and justifying their respectability.

Current literature suggests safe, secure, and affordable housing is an essential determinant of mental and physical health (Evans et al., 2003). This has been recognised as a critical element in the recovery of people experiencing mental health difficulties (Choy-Brown et al., 2016; Kirsh et al., 2011). This research illustrates how housing can support and undermine psychological wellbeing (Duff, 2012). The study demonstrates that the bonds people have with their social housing were pivotal for their psychological wellbeing and the factors that facilitate or hinder it. It could be argued these findings are important for those trying to understand psychological distress and wishing to support others in responding to such distress.

It can be argued mainstream clinical psychology and other psychological professions have neglected or obscured the social, political, and material implications of housing on psychological wellbeing by focusing on the intra-psychic and interpersonal level (McClelland, 2014). Ignacio Martín-Baró (1994) argues that psychology could be a force of transformation rather than conform to society's structural features that systematically marginalise and disempower people we serve. The following sections will be underpinned by Martín-Baró (1994)'s three essential elements for the building of liberation psychology:

1. *A new horizon* focuses on conscientization (Freire, 1973), which links personal distress and social oppression

2. *A new epistemology* in alleviating distress based on new ways of seeking knowledge

3. *A new praxis* (Freire, 1973) combines reflection and social action. This involves having a stance that stands alongside the marginalised and challenging oppression.

The first two elements will be explored in the recommendations for clinicians, and the final element will be explored in the recommendations for clinicians, communities, and policymakers.

4.3.2 For clinicians

A proportion of those presenting to psychological services, such as IAPT or community mental health services., will be social housing tenants. This research describes how social tenants experience the uprooting of their homes, areas, and communities and being portrayed negatively in society, which endorses acts of discrimination and maltreatment. This impedes social tenants' sense of security, safety, and belonging in their homes, thus impacting their psychological wellbeing and how they view themselves. These findings may explain why people living in social housing are four times more likely to report that housing conditions worsen their health (Social Exclusion Unit, 2004). This research suggests that we should ask about our client's housing situation in our initial primary and secondary care psychological assessments and skilfully explore the different ways it facilitates or hinders their psychological wellbeing. We should account for these direct and indirect ways that our clients' housing can impact their psychological wellbeing in our formulations and team discussions.

This study illustrated social tenants describing being degraded and maltreated when interacting with the housing system. It could be argued therapists, as professionals in a position of relative power, act as advocates for social tenants. This could include writing formal letters or calling the local authorities or housing associations to explain how their housing conditions are impeding their mental health. Overall, the different ways psychologists could intervene can be

understood using The Ecological Systems Theory (EST) (Bronfenbrenner, 1992; Harris, 2014). It uses a four-level framework (micro-; meso-; exo- and macrolevels) to conceptualise different levels of system intervention. As part of the new horizon element (Martín-Baró, 1994), below are suggestions of two psychological therapies that link personal distress and social oppression by attending to the causes of the distress at a discursive, societal or community level. These approaches are considered as micro-interventions (Browne et al., 2020).

Narrative therapy is highly attuned to a social justice focus in therapy (Kahn & Monk, 2017) by interweaving narrative theory with Foucault's analysis of modern power (Besley, 2002). In practice, this involves deconstructing the problem to challenge oppressive dominant norms and discourses that negatively affect clients' lives (Harper & Spellman, 2014). Deconstruction of the problem situates the problem in context, not in the individual, and emphasizes the politics of experience (White, 1995). Therapists can work together with social tenants to unpack dominant discourses that contribute to their distress, e.g., discourses about "sponging off society" because they live in subsidized housing. They can explore the meanings and historical and cultural origins (Ord, 2013) of these discourses, such as the construction of living in social housing over time, considering the values informing these meanings. In therapy, these values can be explored with the client to find whether they wish to align or distance themselves from them. This is crucial because this research illustrates the ways social tenants viewed themselves may contrast with how they were positioned publically in society. A narrative therapy formulation highlights that problems only survive and thrive when supported and backed up by particular ideas, beliefs, and principles upheld by distal influences (e.g., economic, political, and cultural powers) (Morgan, 2000).

Community psychology can be another approach that exposes and explores these power differences in social tenants' lives and relationships (Combs & Freedman, 2012). This approach views people as existing in a material environment that is structured both physically and socially (Smail, 2005). The principal dynamic of social structure is power; this includes distal influences that mediate proximal influences (personal and family relationships, workplaces, etc.)

closer to the individual. Therapists can use power mapping as a form of formulation that views distress caused by restrictions on the powers and resources available to an individual (McClelland, 2014).

Figure 5: Power map and index key (Hagan & Smail, 1997b)
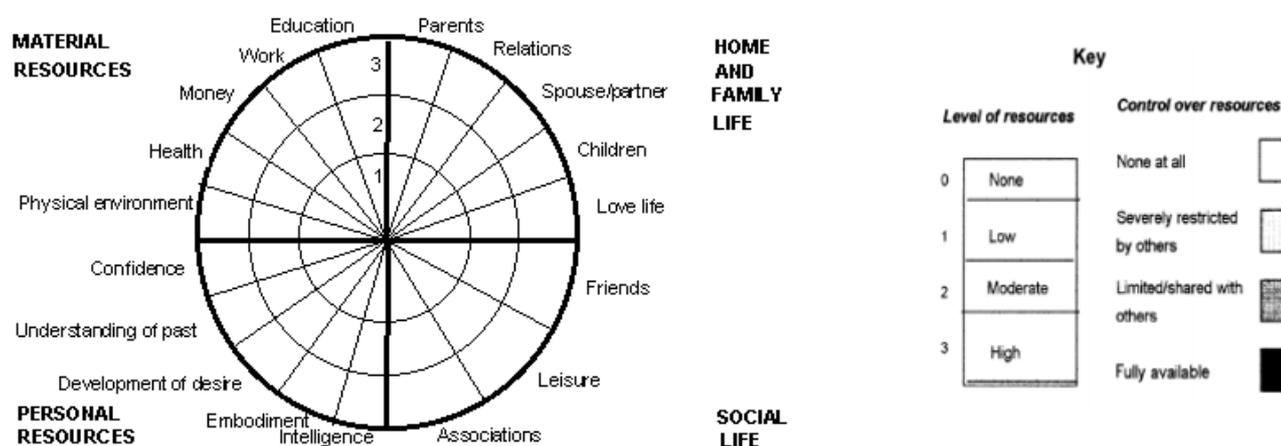
Illustrated in figure 5, power mapping is a tool to assess the proximal powers and resources available to an individual (Hagan & Smail, 1997b). The power map encompasses the main proximal fields of a person's social context: home and family life, social life, personal resources, and material resources. Social tenants might identify having little control over their home, family life, and social life while completing this map. This may lead to conversations about the distal influences that mediate these aspects of the social tenants' lives, e.g., lack of funding from local and central government. Power mapping can be beneficial in helping to map resources in a person's life to clarify their situation and identify areas for potential change e.g., possible support to be utilised (Hagan & Smail, 1997b). As part of the new epistemology element of Liberation Psychology (Martín-Baró, 1994), this is one example of alleviating distress based on seeking knowledge about the material realities of social tenants' lives.

It can be argued psychological therapies run the risk of 'magical voluntarism' if it solely focuses on people's re-storying lives in the face of adverse and oppressive material realities and practices of power (Harper & Spellman, 2006). Therefore, the social action aspect of the new praxis element of Liberation Psychology (Martín-Baró, 1994) is crucial. Therapists can use the model of social action

psychotherapy as a framework (Holland, 1992). The model of social action psychotherapy was developed by Sue Holland when working with a group of predominantly single mothers living in a council estate in London. This model is conceptualised in four levels: individual (e.g., use of psychiatric medication), personal (e.g., individual therapy), social (peer support groups), and political (partaking in social action) (Holland, 1992). The final level focuses on the causes of the problems rooted in the way our society is structured. It can be argued therapists have an ethical obligation to work at this level. For instance, they could draw on psychological knowledge to engage in preventative social action (Harper, 2016). Applying the EST (Bronfenbrenner, 1992), the next two sections demonstrate how therapists can intervene at an exo-level and macro-level (Browne et al., 2020)

4.3.3 For communities

Facing the dismantlement of their homes and local areas and the fracturing of families and communities, many people in this research shared stories of resistance. These acts of resistance were made possible through collective action and solidarity. However, some participants shared they and their neighbours kept to themselves, thus reducing the availability of collective action and solidarity. In those instances, social tenants can connect with several London housing activism groups (an extensive list is on the Radical Housing Network website) who collectively take action and challenge injustices within the housing system. These groups' work ranges from supporting people with complaints to developing campaigns, which challenge local authorities to amend their policies that perpetuate housing insecurity.

The research found an essential element of the reported resistance was holding social housing landlords accountable. A beneficial source in achieving this is utilising the Estate Watch website created by the London Tenants Federation (housing organisation) and Just Space (grassroots community organisation). This website provides resources for social tenants, experiencing estate regeneration, to hold the Mayor of London and the London boroughs accountable. Drawing from the EST, therapists can intervene at an exo-level by working in partnerships alongside social housing communities (Browne et al., 2020). This is exemplified by the work of the Housing and Mental Health network. The network consists of

qualified and trainee community and clinical psychologists who work alongside housing activist groups to raise awareness and take action against the London housing system in several ways. An example of this is participating in grassroots resident-led campaigns, highlighting the displacement of social tenants from their homes (Carey et al., 2018).

4.3.4 For policymakers

This research has highlighted the psychological impact of ongoing changes in social housing policy on its inhabitants' psychological wellbeing and identities. Therefore, it is important for this research to be considered by policymakers. Current housing policies and practices are not just impacting on the physical realities of people's lives; this research points towards the potential impact on wellbeing and sense of self. Drawing from the EST, therapists can intervene at a marcosystem level by working to change these policies (Browne et al., 2020). These interventions focus on achieving social and political change that in turn impacts the realities of social tenants.

In summary, a majority of participants in this research spoke about the current housing system that prioritised generating wealth at the expense of social tenants' wellbeing. These participants called for a structural change of the current housing system based on three suggestions: increasing the provision of social housing, ensuring the affordability of social housing, and consultation with social housing communities. For brevity purposes, the last two suggestions will be expanded below.

In this research, some participants considered the unaffordability of social housing. This translated to some of their families and neighbours were being priced out or rehoused away from the local area thus displacing their networks of support. It can be argued these practices communicate the devaluation of them and their homes, families, and communities, thus impacting their psychological wellbeing. This can be understood as the detrimental consequences of converting large proportions of social housing from social rent (50% below market rate) to affordable rent (20% below market rate). Finally, many participants shared feeling disregarded and exploited when their homes and local areas have

been redeveloped. They felt these redevelopments did not benefit their local communities. This impacted their wellbeing because they had no control over changes to their homes and local areas and felt they no longer belonged. Ultimately, this research proposes an opposing view on how social housing is predominantly perceived and valued. It illustrates the bonds people have with their social housing is beyond bricks and mortar. Therefore, consulting with local communities would ensure the social, cultural, and historical elements of places are preserved in redevelopment plans.

This research is essential for the local authorities, housing associations, and the central government to reconsider the purpose of social housing. I wish for them to connect with the origins of social housing being viewed as of utmost importance for the social stability and wellbeing of the people (Stewart, 2005). I hope this research helps facilitate social housing providers to improve the current housing system to ensure the accessibility and availability of affordable, suitable, secure, and safe social housing. I also hope this research illuminates the richness of social housing and helps rehumanise the communities residing in them.

4.4 Evaluation of the research

This section will discuss the strengths and limitations of this research using the 'Big-Tent' Criteria for Qualitative Quality (Tracy, 2010).

4.4.1 Strengths

This research has many strengths. Regarding worthy topic criteria, this research is relevant and timely because there are local and national debates about whether social housing is a 'home for life' or a short-term option. This debate has social, material, and potentially psychological implications for the conditions and provision of social housing. This research illustrates that many view social housing as a 'home for life', because it represents bonds to places, people, and histories. These bonds were instrumental in shaping the identities of social tenants. This research is compelling because it uses first-person accounts and amplifies the voices of those who may not usually have the power or opportunity to share their views (Lister, 2004). It also highlights how the current socio-political

landscape of social housing impedes the bonds people have with their social housing.

This research is rigorous because it uses a constructivist grounded theory methodology that includes a constant comparison of data and theoretical sampling. This allows for a rich, thorough, and robust analysis grounded in the personal accounts of participants. Furthermore, regular supervision supported rigour in the research process and of analysis and thought. This research meets the sincerity criteria because the author accounted for her experiences living in social housing as part of the constructivist grounded theory methodology. This involved maintaining a reflective diary and regular meetings with the supervisory team. The challenges of conducting this research were made transparent in the methodology chapter, e.g., difficulties in recruitment. An analysis audit trail is included in Appendix N to demonstrate further transparency.

To check the credibility of her research, the author shared the grounded theory model with five participants. Their contributions helped further shape the model by improving its representativeness, credibility, and accessibility. Theoretical sampling was used to find social tenants from different backgrounds, check the relevance of my findings, enrich my understanding, and further define the properties of emerging categories (Charmaz, 2014). This research is resonant because the author has attempted to ensure the research is accessible to multiple audiences, e.g., academics, policymakers, and social housing communities.

This research has made a significant contribution predominantly through heuristic contributions. For instance, furthering the understanding of place attachment by considering social and cultural dimensions. The interactional processes were also demonstrated. This study made a theoretical contribution to the place attachment literature by clarifying how place attachment and place identity could be seen as separate entities that influence each other. It also furthers the understanding of how bonds to places can inform personal identity. Finally, this research meets procedural (e.g., having university ethical approval) and situational (upholding ethical standards throughout the research process) ethics. The author was considerate of "exiting ethics" (Tracy, 2010) by considering how this research can

be disseminated to maintain accessibility to multiple stakeholders and support the enablement of social change. Some participants suggested sharing findings to local and national activist groups and support funding for local resources.

4.4.2 Limitations

This study has limitations. The majority of the participants had lifetime tenancy and lived in their homes for a median of 24 years. The research invited people to share their bonds with their social housing. This may have motivated people to participate in this study who had better experiences of social housing. As most of the recruitment for this research occurred online, this may have excluded people who are not connected to the online community. Another limitation was how the COVID-19 pandemic restricted other avenues of recruitment, thus potentially limiting the diversity of the sample. At the beginning of the research, the author got in touch with a local community centre and was invited to recruit through this centre. This may have increased the likelihood of recruiting people with fixed-term tenancies and recently moved into their homes.

While data sufficiency was achieved as discussed in the methods chapter, a larger sample may have brought further social processes, or provided additional diversity experiences. Again, the Covid-19 put some restrictions on this. Also, the sample only includes English-speaking people, which may have excluded those who already feel most marginal in society. As discussed earlier, research was situated in London; therefore, it may not be applicable to social tenants living in other parts of the UK. Furthermore, some potentially useful theoretical implications of the research were tentatively highlighted above, but no firm conclusions can be drawn again. Therefore, more research is required.

4.5 Suggestions for future research

This study brought a psychological lens in exploring the bonds people have with their social housing in London. The constructivist grounded theory methodology used in this study acknowledges research is a process (Charmaz, 2014). At a different point in time, the properties in the model may change because society, public opinions, and people's belief systems have changed.

This research found many participants only felt secure and settled in their homes due to having a lifetime tenancy. Therefore, future research can focus on exploring the bonds people have with their temporary accommodation and fixed-term social housing, becoming more prevalent. This research discussed how social tenants experience the uprooting of their families, homes, communities, and local areas. Participants in this study did not experience their homes being regenerated or face imminent displacement. Displacement has been conceptualized as severing the connections between people and their homes (Lees & Hubbard, 2020). Future research can explore how regeneration and the imminent displacement impact the bonds people have with their social housing and the implications to their wellbeing and sense of themselves. This research illustrates the reported maltreatment and discrimination experienced by social tenants was racialised and gendered and classed. Therefore, it may be interesting to specifically explore social tenants' experiences from different minority ethnic backgrounds and gender identities.

Meaningful consultation and collaboration with social housing communities could be achieved by conducting action research (Carey et al., 2018) to respond to local challenges. Action research would promote participation with social housing tenants and support action to ensure the preservation, refurbishment, and development of their homes and local areas (Bacon et al., 2005). An example of social housing action research is the Family Wellbeing Project (Harris, 2005). This project used action research to understand the factors impacting the wellbeing of families on three council estates and influence the delivery of mainstream services to the area.

Future research could use a discursive methodology to explore the significance of language in forming bonds between people and their social housing and how it influences their identities. Earlier literature on place identity suggests we can form a coherent sense of self by using storytelling to locate ourselves in material and symbolic environments (Sarbin, 1983). Despite this, the overall place identity literature has mainly overlooked the discursive dimension of person-place bonds (Di Masso et al., 2014).

4.6 Study reflections

Throughout the research, I found drawing on rather than distancing from my experiences of living in social housing was integral to its process. These experiences helped me from recruitment to the conceptualisation of the grounded theory model. For instance, I felt my experiences helped me attend to the social, cultural, and material dimensions of the bonds between people and their social housing. During data collection and analysis, I felt anger and sadness hearing accounts of how the homes, local areas, communities, and families of participants were forcibly neglected, fractured, and erased. I was angered to hear how participants were negatively viewed publicly and privately, resulting in forms of discrimination and maltreatment. Nevertheless, I drew strength from their stories of resistance. Their stories strengthened my housing and land activism and fuelled me to disseminate this research to evoke social change to the current housing system.

Initially, using Constructivist Grounded Theory methodology was overwhelming. Upon reflection, I valued the iterative process of the methodology because it widened the project's possibilities. For instance, using theoretical sampling to inquire about different types of experiences brought new issues to explore. Creating the grounded theory model was challenging in ensuring the diversity of experiences between participants was captured. The support of my supervisory team and reflections from participants, when member checking, meant this was possible. The grounded theory model captured the direction of and connections between the categories. This highlighted the social processes between participants; their homes, housing system, and broader social and political discourses. It also highlighted how inequalities are played out on an interactional and organisational level.

4.7 Conclusion

This study has contributed to understanding the bonds people have with their social housing, and the processes that underpin it. It also furthers the understanding of how places (e.g., homes) can inform our identities. This study attends to the local and socio-political landscape in understanding the context in which people in social housing are living in. It emphasises how the current

housing system and public and private positioning of social tenants impede these bonds with their homes and identities. However, this study also illustrates the acts of resistance to protect their homes, local areas, and communities. The findings differ from existing literature, which predominantly focuses on single or multiple housing issues and how they contribute to the mental health problems or wellbeing of social tenants. Overall, this is the first study to draw together the ideas in a visual model. These findings are important for psychologists, social housing communities, and policymakers, particularly in on-going changes to the housing system.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Extract from MRP reflective account

Being a second-generation immigrant, I continuously grappled with the question "where do I truly belong?" and being considered too 'foreign' to be Somali or British. This feeling of being 'foreign' and 'not fitting in' was intensified further by coming from a working class background living in an affluent borough of inner London. Upon reflection, I believe these experiences have led me on a personal and professional explorative path of what is the meaning of 'home' and how this meaning shape identities and feelings of belonging.

I spent all of my childhood, adolescence and earlier adulthood living in social housing. My relationship with social housing has changed during this period and was heavily influenced by the ever-changing narratives of what it meant to live in a council estate. Often portrayed in the dominant political ideologies and the media, these narratives included living in a 'no hope area', being 'impoverished' and social housing tenants being 'more likely' to commit anti-social and criminal behaviour. The borough I grew up in has one of the largest income inequalities in London. I was aware of this disparity from an early age because of where my estate was situated in and the differences between me and my friends and teachers. Therefore, outside of the estate, I concealed where I lived and, by extension, would act differently in order to fit in with my peers at school and later colleagues at work. I felt others would judge me based on where I lived and would think less of me. Upon reflection, I noticed I internalised these problem-saturated narratives and, as a result, I grappled with feelings of shame that I disowned a part of me. This part of me was the very parts of my identity that were informed by living in a council estate. This includes seeking and valuing connections (to people, place and histories), differences between people and the challenges and resilience, which emerge from adversity.

APPENDIX B: Summary of papers generated from systematic literature review

Authors (Year)	Title	Methodology	Participants	Key Findings
Hicks, S., Lewis, C. (2019)	Investigating Everyday Life in a Modernist Public Housing Scheme: The Implications of Residents' Understandings of Well-Being and Welfare for Social Work	**Data collection:** Semi-structured interviews Diary-elicited discussions and walking tours of community were used to elicit sensory and spatial aspects of respondents' experiences. **Data analysis:** Thematic analysis	17 social housing tenants living in a modernist social-housing scheme	Themes included wellbeing and welfare of the community; drug use in the estate and inaccessibility of the estate for older residents and residents living with disabilities. Additional themes described how residents draw distinctions between themselves to distance from anti-social behaviours occurring in the estate. Final theme discussed how the estate promoted community and relaxation.
Thompson, C., Lewis, D.J., Greenhalgh, T., (...), Fahy, A.E., Cummins, S. (2017)	"I don't know how I'm still standing" a Bakhtinian analysis of social housing and health narratives in East London	**Data collection:** Narrative family interviews and go-along interviews. A go-along interview is a ethnographic mixture of observation and interview **Data analysis:** Narrative analysis with a Bakhtinian interpretation	35 families living in social housing	Participants framed their experiences of social housing in terms of an inherent system-level ideology based on notions of need and waiting. Housing problems were discussed as exacerbating existing physical conditions or sometimes making the participants ill. Accounts of ill health were used to justify deservedness of their home.

Kearns, A., Whitley, E., Mason, P., Bond, L. (2012)	Living the High Life'? Residential, Social and Psychosocial Outcomes for High-Rise Occupants in a Deprived Context	**Data collection:** Questionnaires comparing the residential (perception of housing and neighbourhood), social and psychosocial outcomes of social tenants living in low-rise buildings, high-rise buildings and houses. **Data analysis:** Logistic regression models	5151 social housing tenants	Results showed participants living in high-rise buildings had poorer outcomes for a majority of the residential, social and psychosocial measures when compared to participants living in low-rise buildings and houses. Participants living in high-rise buildings reported poorer housing quality and fewer benefits of home (e.g., privacy, safety and retreat). They reported lower levels of social contact, weaker social networks and cited more anti-social behaviours.
Pevalin DJ, Reeves A, Baker E, Bentley R.(2017)	The impact of persistent poor housing conditions on mental health: A longitudinal population-based study.	**Data collection:** Questionnaires inquiring the relationship between housing conditions and mental health **Data analysis:** Pooled OLS regression and lagged-difference models	16, 234 individuals	Participants living in historical and current poor housing problems were associated with poorer mental health in the past. Persistently poor housing has stronger negative effect on mental health when compared to current housing problems.
Gibson, M., Thomson, H., Kearns, A., & Petticrew, M. (2011)	Understanding the Psychosocial Impacts of Housing Type: Qualitative Evidence from a Housing and Regeneration Intervention	**Data collection:** Semi-structured interviews **Data analysis:** Thematic analysis	22 people who moved into new-build social housing between a 3 and half to 5 year period	Participants attributed improvements in their quality of life and wellbeing to changes in their housing environment. For instance, this includes changes to housing design e.g., access to a private garden and having a private entrance. Findings suggest specific aspects of the built environment can impact on wellbeing and quality of life by altering key

				psychosocial process such as control, privacy and sociability.
C Boomsma, S Pahl, RV Jones, A Fuertes (2017)	"Damp in bathroom. Damp in back room. It's very depressing!" exploring the relationship between perceived housing problems, energy affordability concerns, and health and well-being in UK social housing	**Data collection:** Questionnaires to establish the relationship between housing conditions, energy affordability and wellbeing. Questionnaires had open and close ended questions **Data analysis:** Chi-square, mann-whitney U tests and thematic analysis	536 social housing tenants	Participants experiencing cold, damp or mould issues with their homes reported a sense of frustration and helplessness. Findings suggest cold, damp or mould issues were due to difficulties trying to ventilate and heat homes effectively due to building and financial constraints. These constraints were also related to poor wellbeing and general health outcomes.
Koch, I. (2018)	From welfare to lawfare: Environmental suffering, neighbour disputes and the law in UK social housing	**Data collection:** Ethnographic fieldwork and interviews **Data analysis:** Ethnographic analysis of the disputes between social housing tenants	5 social housing tenants	Participants spoke of disputes with neighbours over noise levels and anti-social behaviour and described these issues as tangible and inescapable threats. Their calls for their housing providers to provide more 'policing' and neighbourhood controls were largely ignored. Housing providers would shift the blame onto individual tenants for failing to act in socially appropriate manners whilst depoliticizing the process of dealing with complaints.
Holding, E., Blank, L., Crowder,	Exploring the relationship between housing	**Data collection:** Semi-structured interviews	44 social housing tenants	Findings suggest a wide range of complex, structural and psychosocial processes influenced the mental health and wellbeing

M., Ferrari, E., & Goyder, E. (2019)	concerns, mental health and wellbeing: a qualitative study of social housing tenants	**Data analysis:** Framework analysis was used to organize the data into key themes according to the policy interests of the Local Authority.		of social housing tenants. Research highlighted the impact on tenant health from a number of interrelated factors. This includes the affordability of and satisfaction with living conditions; the physical conditions of their home; the physical environment and social environment of the neighbourhood.
Humphry, D. (2019)	From Residualisation to Individualization? Social Tenants' Experiences in Post-Olympics East Village	**Data collection:** Semi-structured interviews, observations and 'walking-talking' the wider location **Data analysis:** Does not specify. Authors mention conducting inductive open coding and generating key themes	32 social housing tenants	Findings indicate social housing is constructed as a reward for the more self-reliant and financially responsible households rather than a safety net for those most in housing need. This devolves state responsibility and deems the most vulnerable in our society (e.g., people living in homelessness or overcrowded housing) as 'undeserving' or 'unworthy'. Authors theorise class inequalities are exacerbated through a process of individualization
Mckenzie, L. (2012)	A narrative from the inside, studying St Anns in Nottingham: belonging, continuity and change	**Data collection:** Ethnography over a 6-year period. This included interviews and observations **Data analysis:** Hard to ascertain	50 social housing tenants	Results highlight how damaging misconceptions about and misrecognition of social tenants are for people who live in social housing. These representations evoked feelings of exclusion and abandonment. To counter this, participants invested in their communities through a sense of belonging and ownership.

Longhurst, N., & Hargreaves, T. (2019)	Emotions and fuel poverty: The lived experience of social housing tenants in the United Kingdom	**Data collection:** Semi-structured interviews **Data analysis:** Does not specify. Authors discuss using a iterative process of conceptual coding and theme development	16 social housing tenants who have the same landlord (housing association)	Findings suggest worry and fear shapes how participants thought and managed their energy use and thus shape experiences of energy vulnerability. However, practices of care were also important in shaping energy consumption. Emotions, such as embarrassment, can both help and hinder potential routes out of energy vulnerability.

APPENDIX C: **Quality assessment of literature**

Quality assessment of qualitative studies using 'Big Tent' criteria (Tracy, 2010)

Criteria for Quality	Hicks, S., Lewis, C. (2019)	Thompson, C., Lewis, D.J., Greenhalgh, T., (...), Fahy, A.E., Cummins, S. (2017)	Gibson, M., Thomson, H., Kearns, A., & Petticrew, M. (2011)	Koch, I. (2018)	Holding, E., Blank, L., Crowder, M., Ferrari, E., & Goyder, E. (2019)	Humphry, D. (2019)	Mckenzie, L. (2012)	Longhurst, N., & Hargreaves, T. (2019)
Worthy topic	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Rich rigor	Some (missing information about participant demographics)	Yes	Yes	Some (limited information about data collection and analysis)	Yes	Some (limited information about data analysis)	Some (limited information about data collection and analysis)	Some (limited information about data analysis)
Sincerity	Some (limited information about researcher's	Some (limited information about researcher's	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No

	background and biases)	background and biases)						
Credibility	Yes	Yes	Yes	Some (limited thick descriptions of findings	Some (limited thick descriptions of findings)	Some (lacked multivocality. Paper drew on 8 out of 32 interviews)	Some (limited thick descriptions of findings)	Yes
Resonance	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Significant contribution	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ethical	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Some (some information about relational ethics. However, no information about procedural and situational ethics)	Yes
Meaningful coherence	Yes	Yes	Yes	Some (limited information about data collection and analysis)	Yes	Some (limited information about data analysis)	Some (limited information about data collection and analysis.	Some (limited information about data analysis)

												Missing information in results section)	

Quality assessment of qualitative longitudinal study using CASP appraisal (Critical Appraisal Skills Programme, 2018)

CASP Criteria for a Cohort study	Did the study address a clearly focused issue?	Was the cohort recruited in an acceptable way	Was the exposure measured accurately to minimise bias?	Was the outcome measured accurately to minimise bias?	Have the authors identified all important confounding factors?	Have confounding factors been considered in the design and analysis?	Was the follow up on subjects complete enough?	Was the follow up of subjects long enough?	How precise are the results?	Do you believe the results?	Will the results help locally?
Pevalin DJ, Reeves A, Baker E, Bentle	Yes	Yes	Yes (all participants were completed measures on housing	Yes	Yes (authors identified demographics e.g., age and gender)	Yes (for both pooled OLS regression and lagged-	No (only measures of housing quality was collected)	Yes (sensitivity tests to assess findings)	Yes	Yes	Yes

y R. (2017)			quality and mental health)			difference models)						

Quality assessment of qualitative cross-sectional study using Appraisal Tool for Cross-Sectional Studies (Downes et al., 2016)

	Question	Yes	No	Don't know/ Comment
Introduction				
1	Were the aims/objectives of the study clear?	x		
Methods				
2	Was the study design appropriate for the stated aim(s)?	x		
3	Was the sample size justified?	x		
4	Was the target/reference population clearly defined? (Is it clear who the research was about?)	x		
5	Was the sample frame taken from an appropriate population base so that it closely represented the target/reference population under investigation?	x		
6	Was the selection process likely to select subjects/participants that were representative of the target/reference population under investigation?		x	
7	Were measures undertaken to address and categorise non-responders?			Don't know: authors did not specify what residential, social and psychosocial outcomes

					used.
8	Were the risk factor and outcome variables measured appropriate to the aims of the study?	x			
9	Were the risk factor and outcome variables measured correctly using instruments/measurements that had been trialled, piloted or published previously?				Don't know: authors did not specify what residential, social and psychosocial outcomes used
10	Is it clear what was used to determined statistical significance and/or precision estimates? (e.g. p-values, confidence intervals)	x			
11	Were the methods (including statistical methods) sufficiently described to enable them to be repeated?	x			
Results					
12	Were the basic data adequately described?	x			
13	Does the response rate raise concerns about non-response bias?		x		
14	If appropriate, was information about non-responders described?		x		
15	Were the results internally consistent?	x			
16	Were the results presented for all the analyses described in the methods?	x			
Discussion					
17	Were the authors' discussions and conclusions justified by the results?	x			
18	Were the limitations of the study discussed?	x			
Other					
19	Were there any funding sources or conflicts of interest that may affect the authors' interpretation of the results?		x		
20	Was ethical approval or consent of participants attained?	x			

Quality assessment of mixed methods study using Appraisal Tool for Cross-Sectional Studies (Downes et al., 2016)

Category of study designs	Methodological quality criteria	Responses			
		Yes	No	Can't tell	Comments
Screening questions (for all types)	S1. Are there clear research questions?	X			
	S2. Do the collected data allow to address the research questions?	X			
	Further appraisal may not be feasible or appropriate when the answer is 'No' or 'Can't tell' to one or both screening questions.				
1. Qualitative	1.1. Is the qualitative approach appropriate to answer the research question?	X			
	1.2. Are the qualitative data collection methods adequate to address the research question?	X			
	1.3. Are the findings adequately derived from the data?			X	
	1.4. Is the interpretation of results sufficiently substantiated by data?	X			
	1.5. Is there coherence between qualitative data sources, collection, analysis and interpretation?	X			
2. Quantitative randomized controlled trials	2.1. Is randomization appropriately performed?				Not applicable
	2.2. Are the groups comparable at baseline?				Not applicable
	2.3. Are there complete outcome data?				Not applicable
	2.4. Are outcome assessors blinded to the intervention provided?				Not applicable
	2.5 Did the participants adhere to the assigned intervention?				Not applicable
3. Quantitative non-randomized	3.1. Are the participants representative of the target population?				Not applicable
	3.2. Are measurements appropriate regarding both the outcome and intervention (or exposure)?				Not applicable
	3.3. Are there complete outcome data?				Not applicable
	3.4. Are the confounders accounted for in the design and analysis?				Not applicable
	3.5. During the study period, is the intervention administered (or exposure occurred) as intended?				Not applicable
4. Quantitative descriptive	4.1. Is the sampling strategy relevant to address the research question?	X			
	4.2. Is the sample representative of the target population?	X			
	4.3. Are the measurements appropriate?			X	
	4.4. Is the risk of nonresponse bias low?	X			
	4.5. Is the statistical analysis appropriate to answer the research question?	X			
5. Mixed methods	5.1. Is there an adequate rationale for using a mixed methods design to address the research question?	X			
	5.2. Are the different components of the study effectively integrated to answer the research question?	X			
	5.3. Are the outputs of the integration of qualitative and quantitative components adequately interpreted?			X	
	5.4. Are divergences and inconsistencies between quantitative and qualitative results adequately addressed?	X			
	5.5. Do the different components of the study adhere to the quality criteria of each tradition of the methods involved?			X	

APPENDIX D: Ethical approval notification

University of Hertfordshire UH

HEALTH SCIENCE ENGINEERING & TECHNOLOGY ECDA

ETHICS APPROVAL NOTIFICATION

TO	Sureya Ali
CC	Dr Lizette Nolte
FROM	Dr Simon Trainis, Health, Science, Engineering & Technology ECDA Chair.
DATE	06/06/2019

Protocol number: **LMS/PGT/UH/03781**

Title of study: The bond between people and their social housing: a London-based study.

Your application for ethics approval has been accepted and approved by the ECDA for your School and includes work undertaken for this study by the named additional workers below:

This approval is valid:

From: 06/06/2019

To: 30/08/2020

Additional workers: **Dr Carl Harris (Consultant Clinical and Community Psychologist): The Meriden Family Programme, Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health Foundation NHS Trust.**

Please note:

If your research involves invasive procedures you are required to complete and submit an EC7 Protocol Monitoring Form, and your completed consent paperwork to this ECDA once your study is complete. You are also required to complete and submit an EC7 Protocol Monitoring Form if you are a member of staff. This form is available via the Ethics Approval StudyNet Site via the 'Application Forms' page http://www.studynet1.herts.ac.uk/ptl/common/ethics.nsf/Teaching+Documents?Openview&count=9999&restricttocategory=Application+Forms

Any necessary permissions for the use of premises/location and accessing participants for your study must be obtained in writing prior to any data collection commencing. Failure to obtain adequate permissions may be considered a breach of this protocol.

Approval applies specifically to the research study/methodology and timings as detailed in your Form EC1A. Should you amend any aspect of your research, or wish to apply for an extension to your study, you will need your supervisor's approval (if you are a student) and must complete and submit form EC2. In cases where the

APPENDIX E: Participant information Sheet

<u>**Participant Information Sheet**</u>

University of Hertfordshire ethics protocol number: LMS/PGT/UH/03781

Title of study

The bond between people and their social housing: a London-based study

Introduction

You are being invited to take part in a study conducted by Sureya Ali, a Trainee Clinical Psychologist at the University of Hertfordshire. This thesis is supervised by Dr. Lizette Nolte (Clinical Lecturer, University of Hertfordshire) and Dr. Carl Harris (Consultant Clinical Psychologist).

I am looking for people who are living in social housing, provided by a London local authority or housing association, to take part in an interview for my research, which is part of my doctorate in clinical psychology.

What is the aim of the study?

The research aims to find out about the bonds that people form with their social housing, what shapes these bonds and whether these bonds impact health, wellbeing and quality of life. Therefore, some questions will ask about experiences related to quality of life.

Why am I interested in this research?

I have grown up in social housing in London and have noticed changes in how social housing is viewed, discussed and valued as a housing tenure. I am interested in understanding the bonds people have with their social housing and communities, which extend beyond their physical home structures. I would also like to explore how current societal and political beliefs and knowledge of social housing can impact the bond between people and their social housing. Finally, I am interested in whether this bond impacts people's health, wellbeing and quality of life.

What does taking part involve?

It is completely up to you whether or not you decide to take part in this study. If you

do agree to take part, you will be asked to give your consent to complete an interview as well as some information about yourself (e.g., age, ethnicity, type of social housing). There will be a short 10-15 minute phone call to discuss eligibility. If eligible, and you are still interested we will agree to a time and place for a face to face interview that will be no longer than 60 minutes.

Vouchers

Participants in this study will be entered in a draw to win a £50 Amazon gift voucher as recognition for the time involved in taking part in the interview.

Can I take part in this study?

To take part in this study, you need to be over the age of 18 and live in social housing provided by a London local authority or housing association. You will also need to speak fluent English. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You are free to withdraw at any time before the data is analysed, without giving a reason. Any data provided will not be used in the results if you do withdraw before the analysis takes place. If you would like to support this research further, I would be grateful if you would forward the leaflet to your contacts that might meet the eligibility criteria.

What are the benefits of taking part?

There is a lack of research looking at how the experiences of people living in social housing in London. This study aims to fill this gap by exploring the bonds people form with their social housing, what shapes these bonds and whether these bonds impact their health, wellbeing and quality of life. Therefore by taking part, you will be helping to build up a body of research on social housing and wellbeing.

What are the possible disadvantages of taking part?

During the interview you may be asked some sensitive questions about your housing situation and the impact it is having on your wellbeing. If participation in this research has caused you any distress, discomfort or upsetting feelings, you may wish to contact immediate sources of support such as your family, friends, GP or a therapist.

If you would like further support, please find below the details of some organisations that may be useful. These sources of support will be able to help you regarding any concerns or worries you have regarding your emotional and psychological

wellbeing.

Your GP

Please consider contacting your GP if you are feeling low or anxious.

Psychological therapies

If you think that you may benefit from engaging in a talking therapy (such as cognitive behavioural therapy), then you may wish to consider self-referring to your local psychological therapies service, or asking your GP to refer you.

To find your nearest service, you can search on the NHS choices webpage: https://www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/Psychological-therapies-(IAPT)/LocationSearch/10008

NHS Choices

If you're worried about an urgent medical concern, call 111 and speak to a fully trained adviser.

Website: https://www.nhs.uk/pages/home.aspx

Helpline: 0113 825 0000

Samaritans

This is a 24 hour a day, free and confidential helpline for anyone experiencing any emotional distress.

Freephone: 08457 909090

Website: www.samaritans.org

Confidentiality

All information you provide in this study is completely anonymous and confidential and will be used only for research purposes. The only limit to confidentiality would be in the case that any information is given which indicates that you or someone else is at risk of harm. In this case I would need to inform the appropriate agency but would aim to inform you first. The interview will be recorded and transcribed, without any identifying information attached so responses cannot be attributed to any person. There may be some short anonymised quotes used in publications. Your data will be stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, and only the research team will have access to the data. The data will be stored on a password-protected computer.

Who has reviewed this study?

This study has been reviewed by:

The University of Hertfordshire Health, Science, Engineering and Technology Ethics Committee with Delegated Authority

What will happen to the results of this study?

The data collected during the study will be used as a part of a Doctoral Clinical Psychology project at the University of Hertfordshire. Research findings will be submitted as part of doctoral thesis. In addition, I will write up an article for publication in a journal, again no participant will be identifiable. The research may be presented at conferences and written up for mainstream media.

Taking part in this study

If you wish to take part in this study please contact me by emailing sa17aet@herts.ac.uk or call 07398089963.

Further information

If you would like further information about the study, please contact me by emailing sa17aet@herts.ac.uk or call 07398089963.

This study will be reviewed by The Health, Science, Engineering and Technology ECDA at the University of Hertfordshire.

Although we hope it is not the case, if you have any complaints or concerns about any aspect of the way you have been approached or treated during the course of this study, please write to the University's Secretary and Registrar at the following address:

Secretary and Registrar

University of Hertfordshire

College Lane

Hatfield

Herts

AL10 9AB

Thank you very much for reading this information and giving consideration to taking part in this study.

APPENDIX F: Consent form

Title of research: The bond between people and their social housing: a London-based study

Please read the following statements and circle the relevant option before you agree to take part in this study.

1) I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet provided

    Yes   No

2) I understand what my participation in this project involves. I have had any questions answered to my satisfaction.

    Yes   No

3) I understand I can withdraw at any time, without giving any reason. If I withdraw from the study, the information I have given will also be withdrawn at my request.

    Yes   No

4) I understand that the information obtained will be kept confidential and anonymous, unless the researcher is concerned for my safety or the safety of somebody else. When such concerns are raised, this will be discussed with me.

    Yes   No

5) I agree to the researcher contacting me to share and clarify their understanding of the information I have given.

    Yes   No

6) I agree that research data gathered for the study may be published and if this occurs precautions will be taken to protect my anonymity.

    Yes   No

7) Contact information has been provided should I wish to seek further information from the investigator at any time for purposes of clarification.

    Yes   No

8) I agree to take part in the above study

Yes   No

APPENDIX G: Demographic information form

The information will allow us to provide a description of the people who took part in this study. This information will be stored separately from any other information you will provide during this study and will not be linked to your responses in any way.

For the following questions, please select one option, which is most descriptive of you, or write down your answer

Gender:

Age:

Ethnicity:
White
English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British
Irish
Any other White background, please describe

Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups
White and Black Caribbean
White and Black African
White and Asian
Any other Mixed / Multiple ethnic background, please describe

Asian / Asian British
Indian
Pakistani
Bangladeshi
Chinese
Any other Asian background, please describe

Black / African / Caribbean / Black British
African
Caribbean

Any other Black / African / Caribbean background, please

Arab

Any other ethnic group, please describe

What type of social housing do you live in?

Houses

Bungalows

Flats

Within a low-rise building (under 12 floors)

Within a high-density building (over 12 floors)

Maisonettes

What type of social housing tenancy do you have?

Lifetime tenancy   Fixed term tenancy

How long have you lived in your social housing?

………………………

Who is your landlord?

Local Authority   Housing Association"

Which borough of London do you live in?

………………………

How long have you lived in the borough?

………………………

APPENDIX H: **Study information shared on social media**

Do you live in Social Housing in London?

We are looking for participants over the age of 18 to take part in our study exploring the connections people have with their social housing.

To take part, you will need to agree to participate in a 1-hour interview. Your contribution will help us further understand how people living in social housing perceive themselves, their communities and place in society and how this may impact their wellbeing and quality of life.

If you currently live in social housing provided by a London local authority or housing association and would like to learn more about this study, please contact or email:

Sureya Ali (Principal Investigator)
sa17aet@herts.ac.uk
07398089963

This study has been reviewed by the University of Hertfordshire ethics board and is part of my Doctorate in Clinical Psychology.

APPENDIX I: Interview guide

Appendix I1: Original interview guide

1. Can you tell me about your home? What is it like living in your home?

2. Can you tell me about the physical features of your home you are connected to, if any?

3. Can you tell me about the social features of your home you are connected to, if any?

4. Do the physical and social features of your home affect your quality of life and wellbeing and, if so, how?

5. Can you tell me about the experiences/memories you have, which make your home meaningful or important?

6. Can you tell me about the experiences/memories of your local community, which make your home meaningful or important?

7. Do your experiences/memories and the experiences/memories of your local community affect your quality of life and wellbeing and, if so, how?

8. In your opinion, what are the local, societal and political beliefs and knowledge about home?

9. Do these local, societal and political beliefs and knowledge influence how you relate to your home and, if so, how?

10. Do these local, societal and political beliefs and knowledge affect your quality of life and wellbeing and, if so, how?

11. Can you tell me about the people you have met through your home?

12. Have these people influenced how you relate to your home and, if so, how?

13. Is there anything else you would like to say that we have not already discussed?

Appendix I2: Amended Interview guide (new questions in bold)

1. Can you tell me about your home?

   Prompts
   - Flat/house
   - Estate
   -Area
   - Local community

2. Can you tell me about the experiences/memories you have, which make your home meaningful or important to you?

3. Can you tell me about the experiences/memories of your local community, which make your home meaningful or important?

4. Do your experiences/memories about your home and the experiences/memories of your local community affect your quality of life and wellbeing and, if so, how?

5. Can you describe the physical parts of your home you are connected to, if any?

6. Can you describe the social aspects of your home you are connected to, if any? – is there anything you want to add?

7. Do the physical and social features of your home affect your quality of life and wellbeing either in a good or negative way and, if so, how?

8. **Can you tell what influences the connections with your home you mentioned, if any? This can be in a good or negative way.**

9. In your opinion, what are the stories you have heard about social housing?
   Prompts
   - Local
   - Societal
   - Political

10. **Have these stories influenced how you view yourself and your local community?**

11. Have these stories influenced how you relate to your home and, if so, how?

12. Do these stories affect your quality of life and wellbeing? If so, how?

13. **Given the conversation we have had today, how would you define home?**

14. Is there anything else you would like to say that we have not already discussed?

APPENDIX K: Extract from reflective account

At the end of her interview, Priscilla (pseudonym for participant 1) asked if I had 20 minutes to show me how much her local area had changed. The interview was conducted at a nearby community centre 5 minutes away from where she lived. Priscilla showed me her local high street, houses opposite to where she lives, and her local park.

As we were walking along her high street, Priscilla shared how the bi-weekly market is where her and her neighbours would have 'pavement chats'. I heard how this was a longstanding tradition. The market place signified a place where she got to know her neighbours and local people and the 'pavement chats' were instrumental to her sense of belonging to a community. I heard how the surrounding places had changed substantially and made her feel she no longer was welcomed in an area she resided in for over 30 years. She spoke about the change personified an erasure of her memories with people she lives amongst. Priscilla pointed at the surrounding homes and spoke about how it was hard determine what home belonged to a social tenant or homeowner. All the homes were houses and maisonettes. I understood Priscilla alluding to the physicality of social housing could contribute to the stigmatisation of it. Finally, at her local park, she shared the children play with each other and the parents talk to one another regardless who they were and where they were from. I heard how relationships in her local area transcended housing tenure and concerned commonality e.g., sharing the same interests.

Priscilla showing me her local area and sharing stories, which personified each place, was instrumental in bringing to life her experiences shared during her interview. She helped me understand her sense of home extended beyond her actual flat and encompassed nearby places. I was curious about whether the physicality of people's homes facilitated and hindered their bonds to it. I also was curious about the experiences of people living in mixed-tenure communities. How would being part of this community impact on their sense of belonging to places and people. How would this impact on how they viewed themselves?

APPENDIX M: Example of memo-ing

Example: Conceptualisations of home

Bonds to home being described as dynamic, temporal, and social.

1. Safety – solace; privacy and relationships
2. Belonging (attachment to *that* home rather than *a* home) – relationships and history (self reflected in place?)
3. Stability – rootedness and privacy

What comprises these bonds? External factors (landlord & local people) impact on the physical and social nature of their homes e.g., landlord leaving their home to disrepair is perceived as a threat. Is this a form of living in uncertainty because they don't have full autonomy over their home? Does this impact on people's sense of belonging and safety?

People are demonstrated people assign different meanings to their homes, which determined how they then act. People who lived in their homes for longer spoke about the importance of fighting to preserve it from the actions of their landlords and private developers.

How does the conceptualisations of home differ according to length of time residing in home. Patricia and Mary spoke more about the social bonds and how it illustrated a sense of belonging. Whereas, Amy and Muna spoke more about the bonds to the physical conditions of their homes and how it illustrated a sense of safety and security. Amy and Muna did live in temporary accommodation for a couple of years. Did this mean safety and security prioritised a sense of belonging?

Overall, people spoke about being rooted to the home (by a secure tenancy) before branching out to connect with neighbours who already live there and existing communities

How to join an existing community?

- Being invited into an existing network (e.g., Priscilla and Arjun)
- Through activism to persevere home and surrounding area (e.g., Ken and Alicia)
- Sustaining the connections by being there for others when they face difficulties (e.g., Patricia and Mary)

APPENDIX N: Data analysis audit trail

Appendix N1: Extract from Patricia's (pseudonym for participant 2) interview with line-by-line code

Interview	Line by line coding
I: Interviewer	
P: Patricia	
I: OK. (laughter) Um, OK, so I'm just going to read a very brief description of, um, the study. OK, so the first question is, can you tell me about, ah, your home currently?	
P: My home currently? Um, it's, um, I think they were built in the 1930s, um, workmen's cottages they were for the railway. Um, so all the rooms are very small, um, but it's in a tree-lined street, um, yeah and it's lovely. Yeah, I mean, it's got problems because of the age of the property, you know. It's very draughty in winter. Um, and up until now the Council haven't been very good at repairing, so things have taken a long time to be repaired. Um, but apart from that, I love it.	Discussing the origins of existing home Connecting with history of home Viewing pitfalls of home Living in an ageing home Waiting for overdue maintenance work Appreciating home despite problems

Appendix N2: Examples of initial codes grouped under reciprocating support (focus code)

Reciprocating support (focus code) Initial code	Participant name (pseudonyms)	Coded text
Being there for others if needed	Mary	"We're all there and if someone's in trouble, we will turn up. We will do it, you know"
Giving back to the community	Mary	"I don't actually work here, I volunteer here. I've been here… I came here, my mum used to be a member of the lunch club here and I came here to help them"
Having reciprocal support between friends	Arjun	I mean, like my friend's husband, right he went in prison but that's another story…we job shared. I worked morning, she worked, she worked mornings and I worked afternoons.
Enabling familial caregiving through physical proximity	Patricia	"Now, the mother and the father are both disabled but they've got their support network

Sharing childcare with friend	Priscilla	So I used to have the baby in the morning and then she'd come and get him and then I used to go and work.
Receiving support from neighbour	Ken	My best mate is the, uh, historian from x. He and his wife, and when I was getting noise, you know, they were… he said, "Come here, you could've bring a mattress"

Appendix N3: Examples of initial focus codes grouped under resisting dismantlement and being subjected to uprooting (sub-categories)

Resisting dismantlement		
Focus code	**Source**	**References**
Fighting for the preservation of home	8	90
Amplifying the purpose of social housing	5	45
Holding landlords account	4	30
Branching out to maintain connections	8	70

Being subjected to uprooting		
Focus code	**Source**	**References**
Witnessing erasure of working-class roots	5	48
Having home left to rot	11	180
Witnessing face of community change	6	50
Experiencing fracturing of own families and communities	7	105

APPENDIX N: example of diagramming

Living in a judgemental society

Being under the public gaze
- Being viewed as "sponging off society"
- Being positioned as needy + vulnerable

Experiencing discrimination
- Being degraded
- Being ostracized
- Being denied resources

Needing to "transform/change" communities + homes

Classed + racialised + gendered

Navigating a for-profit system

Going under the hammer
- Pricing land at monetary value
- Witnessing abuses of power
- Observing gradual erosion of social housing

Being subjected to defacination
- Experiencing home left to rot
- Fracturing homes families + communities
- Erasing neighbourhood character

Resisting dismantlement
- Fighting for its preservation
- Reconstructing home.

Reclaiming personhood

Redefining deservedness
- Being respected
- Getting by hardship
- Accessing 'desirable' opportunities.

Claiming Respectability
- Positioning others as the problem
- Distancing from representations of deficit

Collective solidarity

Having a place you to call your own

Going beyond bricks + mortar

Belonging to a community

Constructing home
- Putting down roots
- Establishing safety
- Creating a space to unwind.

- Signifying history
- Sustaining relationships.

safety   threat

- Joining through commonality
- Weathering difficult times together
- Reciprocating support.

Place identity.

APPENDIX P: Detailed grounded theory model

Living in a judgemental society

Being under a detracting public gaze

Viewed as 'sponging off society'

Viewed as deviant

Experiencing discrimination + maltreatment

Degraded mistreated

Navigating a 'profit over people' system

Going under the hammer

Home being monetised

Erosion of social housing

Being subjected to uprooting

Home left to rot
families + communities fractured
Neighbourhood being erased

Constructing home

Resisting dismantlement

fighting for its preservation
Reconstructing home

Shaping sense of self

Redefining worth

keeping going despite difficulties
Providing care

Putting down roots
Establishing safety
Providing + creating solace

Having a place to call your own

Signifying history
Sustaining relationships

Going beyond bricks + mortar

Justifying Respect-ability

Distinguishing from others
Demonstrating worth

Joining through commonality
Reciprocating support

Belonging to a community