Home, Housing and Communities: Foundations for Inclusive Society

Editors

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Editorial

Home, Housing and Communities: Foundations for Inclusive Society

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Abstract

This issue of *Social Inclusion* explores the interconnected, but multi-faceted concepts of home, housing and communities as fundamental tenets of an inclusive society. Our editorial introduces our motivation for this topic, outlines the contributions to the collection and highlights some crosscutting themes, which emerge from the articles. The research presented was largely completed in advance of the full impact of the 2020 global coronavirus pandemic. In concluding the editorial, we reflect on the equal centrality of home, housing and communities to surviving the pandemic and ensuing economic crisis and encourage greater commitment to home and housing as a human right to mitigate social and economic inequality and underpin sustainable, inclusive settlements for the future.

Keywords

communities; empowerment; home; homelessness; housing; human right to housing; neighbourhood

1. Introduction: Inclusive Homes, Housing and Communities

Our motivation for this themed issue builds on the 2016 special issue on homelessness and social inclusion (Anderson, Filipovič Hrast, & Finnerty, 2016) and the overriding requirement for "access to good quality and affordable accommodation" (Anderson et al., 2016, p. 2) as a fundamental dimension of social inclusion. A focus on the social dimension of housing was core to the call for articles for this volume. Across the globe, nation states face enormous challenges in meeting housing needs across diverse communities, and social sustainability became a key concern for the 2030 sustainable development agenda with the significant inclusion of a specific Sustainable Development Goal (no. 11) on housing and sustainable settlements (Cociña, Frediani, Acuto, & Levy, 2019; UN HABITAT, 2015; United Nations, 2015).

The contributions here present new research that casts the social role of housing as central to the exploration of the significance of home and the flourishing of communities. The articles draw on a range of theoretical perspectives, including rights based approaches, empowerment and co-production, realist theory and institutional theories. They also develop a range of innovative research methods to explore the role of housing in addressing inequality. Housing meets a fundamental need for physical shelter and contributes to psychological well-being by fulfilling a sense of personal space, autonomy, and privacy. However, housing per se does not deliver this, where the housing is unsafe, inadequate or lacks privacy—i.e., falling into the 'houseless,' 'insecure,' and 'inadequate' categories of the European Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion (Edgar, 2012). Housing, necessarily located in a particular geographical space, may also create and affirm a sense of social

and cultural community. The links between (the right to) housing and (the right to) other "goods" are many and varied, for example, security and dignity, privacy, a family life, social inclusion, cultural diversity and health, and non-discrimination (Donnelly, Finnerty, & O'Connell, 2020). A rights-led approach to understanding housing within society emerges as a valuable overarching framework in many of the articles in this volume.

2. Overview of Contributions

The articles presented here provide a wide range of new evidence and approaches on the nexus of housing, home and community, from five European countries and from Australia.

Three articles present broad overviews of the challenges for housing in contributing to an inclusive society. Maloutas, Siatitsa, and Balampanidis (2020, in Greece) and Tunstall (2020, in England and Wales) both critique housing policies and outcomes over the long term in differing national contexts, while McCall et al. (2020, Scotland, England and Wales) present an innovative approach to forward planning for housing in the context of an aging society. Maloutas et al.'s (2020) review of housing policy in Athens illustrates how some countries mainly provided opportunities for affordable housing in the post-war period through low-cost homeownership. Their analysis also demonstrates a process of loss of social integration through increasingly unequal access to housing associated with a lack of policies to regulate the 'untrammelled' housing market. The urgent case is made for inclusive housing policies to combat market-generated inequalities. Tunstall's examination of housing growth in terms of space per person in England and Wales over 1981–2011, develops novel conceptions of 'inclusive growth' (benefitting the worst off) and 'just growth' (preventing an increase in inequality). Although housing space did increase, the growth was neither inclusive nor just as housing inequality rose and there was no evident gain for the poorest groups. Tunstall (2020) also concludes that major changes in the national housing system are needed to address these unequal outcomes. McCall et al. (2020) scrutinise the effectiveness of planning for an ageing population across the housing sector in Scotland, England and Wales. Using an innovative 'Serious Game' approach involving policy makers, practitioners and service users, tackling inequality again emerged as a key challenge requiring placing housing at the heart of service integration and supporting the co-production of decision-making across social policy, services, and stakeholder groups.

The next set of four articles look at lived experience of home and homelessness across community groups that often face particular disadvantage in access to housing. Sahlin (2020, in Sweden) contrasts the experience of homelessness for migrants with that of national citizens. Articles by Anderson, Theakstone, and Lawrence (2020, in Scotland) and Ellis, Munoz,

Narzisi, Bradley, and Hall (2020, in Scotland) both examine disabled people's pathways to independent living and the transformational potential of suitable housing. O'Sullivan, O'Connell, and Byrne (2020, Ireland) foreground the too often neglected perspectives of children and young people in their study of housing regeneration. Drawing on Simmel's (1965) definition of poverty in relation to public assistance, Sahlin's (2020) analysis of Swedish Parliamentary discourse (2015–2019) reveals how discussion of homelessness became increasingly nationalistic, prioritising ethnic belonging and national origin above people's lived experience and housing needs. Societies acknowledge responsibility to give shelter to certain groups, while excluding large numbers experiencing housing exclusion under the ETHOS typology (Edgar, 2012). Anderson et al. (2020) examine accessible social rented housing as a route to independent living for disabled people. Underpinned by principles of disabled-led co-production, the study compared perspectives of housing providers and tenants/applicants. As with national overviews, local level practice revealed a continuing gap between the needs of disabled people and what housing providers were able to deliver. The processes of moving into a purpose-built estate of smart homes for a diverse group of disabled people were analysed in Ellis et al.'s (2020) in-depth qualitative case study. Experiences prior to moving and following relocation revealed the positive impact of moving into suitable smart homes on residents' wellbeing and feelings of inclusion. Shifting the focus to that of community, for an often excluded group, O'Sullivan et al. (2020) present the perspectives of children and young people living through the regeneration of a large social housing estate. The research reveals their lack of involvement in the decision-making process, as well as their experiences of poverty, stigma and exclusion. Creative and participatory methods adopted in this study are also required in practice to deliver more inclusive regeneration programmes that value the voices of children and young citizens in society.

The final three articles explore the wider importance of neighbourhoods and communities to promoting housing inclusion. Tually, Skinner, Faulkner, and Goodwin-Smith (2020, Australia) connect home and community building to social housing, while Rolfe and Garnham (2020, Scotland) look at the neighbourhood and wellbeing effects for new tenants moving from precarious to secure housing. The closing article by Robertson et al. (2020, in Scotland) illustrates the importance of neighbourhood and community to a broader sense of belonging, beyond home as a dwelling. Tually et al. (2020) explore the transfer of public housing stock to the community housing sector in a disadvantaged area. The programme, founded in community development and place-making to promote social inclusion, was valued by residents and other stakeholders. Co-production developed new structures for participation, building confidence in the social landlord and greater sense of a safe home and inclusive community for residents. The study presents a

transferable model to tackle structural disadvantage associated with excluded communities. Rolfe and Garnham (2020) then explore the effects of neighbourhood on health and wellbeing of predominantly low-income new tenants of three types of housing organisation. Their longitudinal, mixed-methods study found that analysis of neighbourhood effects as causal factors was required to help housing organisations deliver a more inclusive tenant experience. For example, where social housing stock is geographically concentrated, landlords could invest in local amenities and the built environment, while those (mainly private sector) landlords with dispersed portfolios had more capacity to offer tenants greater choice of area. In a contribution that focuses on the outdoor environment, Robertson et al. (2020) demonstrate how inclusive walking groups support people with dementia to remain connected in their communities. Methodologically, this research incorporated 'walking interviews' and discussions with people living with dementia, as well as other stakeholders in a national programme of dementia-friendly walking groups.

3. Conclusions in a Shifting Context

A number of interconnected threads emerge across the articles in this volume. Themes of empowerment and co-production across key stakeholders have become increasingly central to social research and to policy development. Longitudinal analysis better capturing 'process' through quantitative and qualitative methods enhances understanding of change over time. Innovation in methods has also ensured the involvement of disadvantaged groups, sometimes considered 'hard to reach.' The continuing importance of housing design is supported by the sustainability agenda, technology assisted living and Smart Homes. Contributions demonstrate the importance of national and local levels of analysis, the need to ensure fair representation of those who face disadvantage in the housing system and the potential transferability of innovative research methods and research findings to further enhancing the evidence base. Issues of inequality and social justice are addressed throughout, often in relation to housing rights and human rights. Evidence indicates how housing can still be either exclusionary or inclusive, revealing systemic gaps but also important successes and transferable models for future policy and practice. Scope remains for governments and non-government actors to adopt much more proactive approaches to delivering on equalities agendas (Matthews & Poyner, 2019; Matthews, Poyner, & Kjellgren, 2019).

Our thematic issue emerges some months into the 2020 global coronavirus pandemic, with most countries still facing a public health and economic crisis that may turn out to be a once in a 100-year event. We know already that the pandemic impacted highly unevenly across age, race and social class (McKee, Pearce, & Leahy, 2020). The public health crisis rapidly affected multiple dimensions of the economy and government including health care, education, transport, and employment. Homes, housing and communities were also settings for both lived inequality and possible pathways to protection. Media attention focused on health care responses, but frontline housing and homelessness services also reacted urgently to protect tenancies and communities, and to support roofless people into emergency accommodation (Fondation Abbé Pierre & FEANTSA, 2020). During critical phases of staying and working at home, differentiated housing conditions exposed inequalities in terms of space for childcare/home education, home working, home shielding, self-isolation and digital connectivity. Taking the example of the UK, community organisations were vital to delivering local self-help and support to vulnerable households, but the particular vulnerability of older households was exacerbated in institutional settings constrained by the neglect of social care policy. In June 2020, the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing issued a call for evidence on housing issues to feed into a report to the General Assembly on Covid-19 and the right to housing (United Nations Human Rights, Office of the High Commissioner, 2020). Future analysis would benefit from more fully considering housing as social determinant of health (Rolfe et al., 2020) and a key social provision to underpin future social protection and resilience. The ensuing economic and social challenges will demand further creative responses from housing agencies to delivering the benefits of homes and communities post-pandemic, albeit with necessarily different approaches to pre-pandemic.

No single grand theory links all aspects of Home, Housing and Communities but greater recognition of the importance of housing as a human right does bind many of the issues addressed in this thematic issue and in wider housing and communities research. Housing as a fundamental human right remains crucial to tackling economic inequality and social exclusion and is arguably as relevant to the 'Me Too' and 'Black Lives Matter' movements as to the coronavirus pandemic and to the 2030 sustainable development agenda that no one should be left behind. A Housing Rights approach can galvanise stakeholders at global, national and local levels, as well as empower disadvantaged groups and communities to deliver adequate affordable homes and safe sustainable communities for all.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Isobel Anderson co-leads the Home, Housing and Community Research Programme at the University of Stirling. She has held more than 40 research awards and published widely for scholarly and practice audiences. Within the European Network for Housing Research (ENHR) Isobel has jointly co-ordinated two working groups: Welfare Policy, Homelessness and Social Exclusion (WELPHASE), 2004–2013, and Housing in Developing Countries, 2015-to date. She is on the international advisory committee of the *European Journal of Homelessness*.

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Article

Access to Housing and Social Inclusion in a Post-Crisis Era: Contextualizing Recent Trends in the City of Athens

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Abstract

The way housing affordability evolved since WW2 in Greece—and in its capital city in particular—is an example of how the South European welfare system managed, for several decades, to provide socially inclusive housing solutions without developing the services of a sizeable welfare state until global forces and related policies brought it to an end. The increased role of the market in housing provision since the 1980s, the rapid growth of mortgage lending in the 1990s, the neoliberal policy recipes imposed during the crisis of the 2010s and the unleashed demand for housing in the aftermath of the crisis have led to increased housing inequalities and converged the outcome of this South European path with the outcome of undoing socially inclusive housing solutions provided by the welfare state in other contexts. The article follows long-standing and recent developments concerning the housing model in Greece and especially in the city of Athens, focusing on mechanisms that have allowed access to affordable housing for broad parts of the population during different historical periods, and examines the extent to which the current housing model remains inclusive or not. The aim here is to discuss the most important challenges concerning access to decent housing and highlight the need for inclusive housing policies to be introduced into the current social and political agenda.

Issue

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1. Introduction: Contextual Diversity of Housing Affordability and the Greek Case

Crises are usually assumed to deepen social inequalities in relatively short periods of time. Income is severely reduced for most social groups as jobs become scarce, and small property owners are often dispossessed since they have to sell property under conditions of low demand. Those with considerable wealth can endure the impact of the crises much longer and can even profit at the medium or long term by acquiring property at a low price.

However, this is not always the case. The major crises of the last century—the two world wars and the financial crisis of 1929—did not lead to increased inequalities. They were, rather, followed by long periods of decreasing inequalities, as counter-intuitively depicted by the works of Piketty (2014) and Milanovic (2016). Nevertheless, these decreasing inequalities were not structurally produced by the crises, but by the major policy changes they induced within the particular political climate and the global balance of powers during these particular post-crisis eras.

The sovereign debt crisis in the countries of Southern Europe exercised strong pressure on their residual welfare systems. Incomes were reduced—sometimes severely, as in the case of Greece—unemployment in-

creased considerably and extreme forms of deprivation, such as homelessness, became important, since their family-centered welfare systems were no longer able to address the needs exacerbated by the crisis. Housing was affected in different ways among these countries, despite their similarities in housing provision and consumption practices (Allen, Barlow, Leal, Maloutas, & Padovani, 2004). The effect on affordable housing appears much more severe in Spain and Italy—although both were hit less severely by the crisis than Greece—as witnessed by the extent of evictions and the importance of the housing-related movements (Siatitsa, 2014).

Housing affordability is usually assumed to be an issue when a considerable part of the working class cannot find adequate housing. In advanced industrial societies, this was usually the case when housing provision was left to the market. Affordability of housing was eventually addressed through important state intervention under different forms—public provision of accommodation for rent below market prices, subsidized rent in the free rental market, rent regulation, subsidized access to homeownership, etc.—and, eventually, housing became one of the main social services provided at the apex of the welfare state and the one that suffered the most when it declined (Esping-Andersen, 1999).

In Southern Europe, housing affordability has been much less related to the industrial working class due to the weaker and belated local industrial development, except the few regions of Piemonte, Lombardia, and Catalunya. Overall, access to housing was mainly a problem for the large groups of internal migrants directed to the main cities, who produced an unprecedented urbanization wave for the whole region (Leontidou, 1990). Moreover, the very large numbers of Southern Europeans who migrated to Western Europe or overseas indicates that the push effects during the first post-war decades were much stronger than the capacity of the region's cities to accommodate the outgoing population (Allen et al., 2004). The plethora of the workforce and the relatively weak industrial development acted as disincentives for investing in housing policies along the lines of the Western or Northern European welfare states, while the clientelist and, in most cases, authoritarian political systems promoted different answers for the housing question.

The low percentage of public housing for rent in the housing provision systems of Southern European countries, compared to those of Western or Northern Europe, testifies to their different path in terms of addressing housing affordability (Allen et al., 2004). In Greece, public housing for rent has never been developed and continues to be completely absent. However, housing needs have been important in peripheral European countries, where before the severe damages of WW2 and the Civil War (1946–1949), housing conditions were very poor: In 1940, 57% of households lived in one room, 28% had no kitchen, 94% had no bathroom and 9% had no WC of any kind (Stratis, 1955). Housing conditions improved

considerably after the wars. The ratio persons/room in the metropolitan area of Athens increased from 1,96 in 1939 to 2,5 in 1947 due to the war and then decreased to 1,47 in 1961 and 1,03 in 1975 (Centre of Planning and Economic Research [KEPE], 1976, p. 121; Jenks, 1957, p. 3). The improvement of housing conditions has been even more considerable for lower-income groups (Maloutas, 1990, p. 16). At the same time, tenure remained relatively stable—around 55% of homeownership between 1958 and 1986—after its increase in the first post-war decade (Maloutas, 1990, p. 123).

The improvement of housing conditions continued after the 1980s. Available housing space for residents of Athens increased between 1991 and 2011. Those with less than 20 square meters per capita decreased from 40.5% to 21.5% and those with more than 30 square meters per capita increased from 26.4% to 45.6%; and homeowners increased from 65% in 1991 to 66.4% in 2011 (National Centre for Social Research and the Hellenic Statistical Authority [EKKE-ELSTAT], 2015). This improvement of housing conditions, however, was not a permanent trend from the early post-war period to the crisis.

Since the early 2000s, comparative housing studies have documented the important changes in housing policies and systems due to the effects of European integration, the broader globalization trends, and fast mobility of neoliberal policies (Doherty et al., 2004; Kleinman, Matznetter, & Stephens, 1998; Peck, 2011; Peck & Tickell, 2002). Questions of convergence or divergence under these global trends were discussed (Kemeny & Lowe, 1998), as housing markets became more and more interconnected, due to the financialization of housing (Aalbers, 2016), and housing policies under the neoliberal doctrine followed interconnected paths of providing affordable housing through the markets, became more targeted, and were to a great extent delegated to the third sector. The Global Financial Crisis revealed the risks and growing inequalities produced by the gradual retrenchment of the state from the provision and protection of housing (see Fields & Hodkinson, 2018). Post-crisis international market trends and global finance continue to play an important role in shaping local housing conditions. However, diversified responses at the national and local level have produced different outcomes.

In Southern European countries, the homeownership model, more and more dependent on lending rather than traditional mechanisms, has been strongly contested (Alexandri & Janoschka, 2017; García-Lamarca & Kaika, 2016), discussions about the need for a renewed social housing agenda and affordable housing provision have multiplied (e.g., Marcuse & Madden, 2016; Poggio & Whitehead, 2017), while coping strategies from the local level and solidarity initiatives have been pointed out as prominent fields for social innovation in housing (Arapoglou & Gounis, 2017; Gosme & Anderson, 2015). The analysis of genealogies and path-dependencies of national and local housing systems is crucial in the pro-

cess of understanding these radical transformations and their effects, but also for identifying relevant institutional changes and new housing policy directions to answer growing needs and deepening housing exclusion (see Anderson, Dyb, & Finnerty, 2016).

In this article, we provide an overview of long-standing and, more importantly, recent developments concerning the housing model in Greece and especially in the city of Athens, in other words, concerning the mechanisms for the production of and for the access to housing. With regard to the relevant experience of past decades, the overview provided here is based on the accumulated knowledge found in the existing academic literature. As for the very recent developments, which there is not yet extensive literature on, while relevant data are limited and/or questionable, the overview is based on a careful and critical collection of evidence found in relevant scientific studies, reports of European and national institutions and organizations (such as Housing Europe, the European Federation of National Organisations working with the Homeless [FEANTSA] or ELSTAT) and the press. Special emphasis is given to the city of Athens since it is the capital city of a centralist state, as well as by far the largest metropolitan area in the country and, therefore, the place where the processes of access to housing and their effects become more visible and understood. Beyond the mere description of the Greek housing model and its transformations through time, we simultaneously examine whether and to what extent this has been and/or still is a socially inclusive model.

At first, we stress that the early post-war period was marked by two housing provision systems (the self-promotion and the land-for-flats system) that enabled access to decent housing for a wide range of different social groups. Thus, these housing provision systems managed to assure a relatively high level of social integration and inclusion, even though they were not the outcome of explicit socially inclusive housing policies (Section 2). Next, since the 1990s and due to the liberalization of the housing market and the rapid expansion of mortgaged loans from private banks, access to housing became much less socially inclusive (Section 3). The outburst of the crisis back in the late 2000s further hit the housing sector, in a period when socially inclusive processes were heavily undermined, exacerbating ongoing rather than generating new processes of housing deprivation and inequalities. However, at the same time, niches of affordable housing were still preserved amidst crisis conditions (Section 4). Lastly, during the current so-called post-crisis period, with the real estate sector growing significantly following the sharp increase of tourist demand and investment interest, housing affordability is severely at stake, especially for the most vulnerable and unprotected population groups, such as the unemployed, the elderly, migrants and refugees, often faced with extreme conditions of housing precariousness and deprivation (Section 5).

Based on a thorough overview of long-standing and recent developments concerning the housing model in the case of Greece and especially in the case of the city of Athens, this article aims to reveal the most important current challenges concerning the access to decent housing, as well as in relation to social integration and inclusion. It is argued here that the crisis, which hit back in the late 2000s, and what followed next does not constitute a distinctive turning point but a catalyst in a long process of decreasing social integration and inclusion through (a decreasing, more and more unequal) access to housing while regulating housing policies have always been almost non-existent. We close this article by highlighting the need for inclusive housing policies that must urgently be introduced—for the first time in the case of Greece— into the current social and political agenda.

2. The Production of Affordable Housing in the Greek Capital (1950–1980)

Athens has undergone very important changes from the early 1950s to the end of the 1970s. Its population more than doubled, inducing housing needs which amplified the post-war reconstruction process. Internal migration towards Athens was not produced by the appeal of its labor market, but by push factors in the places of origin of migrants (Burgel, 1976). This meant that the labor market was not the cornerstone for migrants' integration in the Athenian society and—similarly to other large cities of Southern Europe—access to housing primarily enabled the integration procedure (Allen et al., 2004). Access to housing during that period was mainly provided through two housing provision systems: self-provided affordable housing in the city's urban fringe and affordable apartment housing in the city center through the land-for-flats system (Leontidou, 1990; Maloutas, 1990; Prevelakis, 2000).

2.1. The Self-Promotion of Affordable Housing

The new migrants in Athens during the 1950s and 1960s were very numerous—the city's population more than doubled since 1951 (Maloutas, 2018, p. 27)—and their occupational profile was unstable and precarious. Most of them were occasionally employed in construction (men) and personal services (women) and, therefore, not suitable to become tenants since they were either unable to face regular expenses or were housed by their employers. Housing needs, however, were growing fast and the political unrest they could produce in the unstable post-civil war climate was seriously considered by the authoritarian right governments of that period. The solution eventually promoted was self-promotion—often involving illegal construction—on a legally acquired small plot. This solution also served big landowners holding large pieces of rural land at the city's outskirts, who were permitted to segment their properties into tiny lots and sell them as *kleingarten* (small gardens) that the new set-

tlers unofficially transformed into urban building plots (Mavridou-Sigalou, 1988).

This housing solution was partly inspired by policies regarding the housing of the refugee waves of the 1920s when over a million Greek-origin residents of Asia Minor were deported to mainland Greece, after the Lausanne treaty in 1923 (Gizeli, 1984). Self-promotion was actively encouraged by the US—who had just taken over the supervision of the Greek protectorate from Great Britain—as an effective way to confront communist influence by transforming poor internal migrants to small property owners (Kalfa, 2019). Homeownership increased, and mainly became socially disseminated. Properties may have remained unequal, but being an owner became much less socially distinctive.

2.2. The Land-for-Flats System

Homeownership was not only stimulated by self-promotion; it was mainly addressed to recent internal migrants who could often implement self-construction processes. Several other groups, especially not involved with manual labor, were less suitable for self-promotion, mainly if it involved self-construction. The land-for-flats system (*antiparochi*) filled the gap for those who were not recent residents and/or were in higher positions on the social ladder.

The land-for-flats system was, in fact, a joint venture between a small landowner and a small building promoter who joined forces (land, capital, building know-how) to produce an apartment block, which they eventually split at the end of the works according to their initial contract based on the share of land in the whole investment (Antonopoulou, 1991). This system was prolific in the 1960s and the 1970s and completely reshaped the city's housing stock. More than 34,000 new apartment blocks of five stories or higher were built from the early 1950s to the late 1970s in a city where less than 1,000 such blocks existed before 1950 (Maloutas & Karadimitriou, 2001). Its success was related to the important tax reliefs it enjoyed compared to alternative building promotion and to the increase of construction coefficients in the late 1960s, which made it even more attractive. As a result, the housing market was flooded with a constant supply of affordable apartments.

2.3. Homeownership, Social Mobility and the City's Social Geography

Affordable housing in Athens during the early post-war period was provided mainly to those who could access homeownership either by investing their savings and/or their personal/family labor, their family's assistance, or the selling of property at their places of origin. This option did not cover everyone; in fact, it left out the most vulnerable who could not take advantage of the relatively low cost of access to homeownership. It covered, however, broad housing needs since those of the most

vulnerable members of lower-income groups were usually covered through family solidarity (Maloutas, 2008).

The two aforementioned housing provision systems have significantly affected the city's social geography. Self-promotion has steadily established the native Greek working class in the suburbs of the western part of the city and the outer periphery, reproducing both the center-periphery and east-west social dichotomy. Land-for-flats, on the contrary, has massively provided affordable housing in neighborhoods in and around the center, allowing for a socio-spatial mix and, eventually, contributing to the gradual suburbanization of upper-middle- and middle-class households (Maloutas, 2018).

The policy to facilitate access to homeownership for a wide range of social groups followed broader political objectives in a tradition of right-wing populism and clientelism (Vaiou, Mantouvalou, & Mavridou, 1995). The outcome of this policy option has been much broader than the limits of the housing sector. Increased access to homeownership contributed to social inclusion since it became a pillar of the large wave of social mobility during the first post-war decades, along with the small family business, self-employment, and access to higher education (Maloutas, 2010).

3. The Progressive Demise of the Access to Affordable Housing Since the 1990s

The land-for-flats system provided massively affordable housing, but at the same time, it set the market as the main mechanism of housing provision. Conditions of supply, demand, and rent regulation during the early post-war decades were favorable for maintaining affordability and enhancing social inclusion in terms of access to housing. These conditions, however, changed over time.

Self-promotion—the most accessible way to homeownership for lower social groups—started declining since the 1960s. When inflation and interest rates dropped spectacularly in the 1990s, the mortgage market was unleashed following the abolition of important restrictions for private banks in mortgage lending (Economou, 1988). Bank credit contributed to boosting real estate transactions by considerably increasing the purchasing power of middle-class households. It also induced price increases and reduced the access of lower-income groups to decent housing (Emmanuel, 2004, 2014). The homeownership rate increased for higher occupational groups (managers, professionals, and their associates) from 67.2% to 73.9% between 1991 and 2011, while for lower ones (manual workers) it decreased from 64.2% to 57% (EKKE-ELSTAT, 2015).

The growing social inequality in access to housing has been attenuated by several factors that decreased its social and political visibility. Since the 1980s, housing demand for new residents diminished following the sharp decrease of internal migration. Housing demand in Athens since that period increased mainly due to the demand for suburban housing by expanding middle-class

households. On the other hand, the shrinking native Greek working class remained spatially immobile and the housing needs of its young generations were usually accommodated through defensive family strategies of intergenerational redistribution of housing resources (Maloutas, 2008). Nevertheless, a new wave of housing needs and demand appeared in the 1990s with the important growth of immigrant groups. Although the number of immigrants was high and rapidly growing, the social and political impact of their housing needs has been minimized by the fact that they were politically voiceless and because they were able to find affordable accommodation in a segment of the private rented sector that had been gradually abandoned by native Greek households (Balampanidis, 2020; Kandylis, Maloutas, & Sayas, 2012; Vaiou, Karali, Monemvasitou, Papaioannou, & Photiou, 2007).

4. The Impact of the Crisis on Housing Affordability

The global financial crisis of the late 2000s affected the housing sector where social inequalities had been growing for the last twenty years. The impact of the crisis was very unequal concerning tenure. Tenants were immediately affected by the sharp growth of unemployment and by the considerable decrease in salaries/wages. As a result, they were often unable to meet their rent contract obligations and had to look for smaller houses or to share dwellings with family members or friends. Housing needs have been addressed as individual/family issues during many decades and they continued to be treated as such even during the crisis. Measures protecting tenants have always been residual compared to those for homeowners since the early post-war period, and they were completely canceled with the liberalization of the housing market in the 1990s, while measures adopted in the framework of the Greek adjustment programs accelerated rental eviction processes. Thus, solutions to housing problems during the crisis were mainly quested traditionally. For example, the late emancipation from parental homes, whose share was already growing in the 2000s, was further reinforced during the crisis, while many young people living autonomously had to return (Balampanidis, Patatouka, & Siatitsa, 2013; Serraos, Greve, Asprogerakas, Balampanidis, & Chani, 2016; Siatitsa, 2016).

The crisis was harder on those without resources from family or other self-help social networks, i.e., mostly newcomers in the country, especially refugees. Overall, homelessness increased visibly as reported by relevant research (Arapoglou, Gounis, & Siatitsa, 2015; FEANTSA, 2018), although it is not possible to have a precise estimation of the population affected since there are no valid measurement processes in Greece—on top of the broader issues of measuring and comparing homelessness across contexts (Anderson et al., 2016). Refugees in particular—who increased sharply after 2015 and constitute one of the most vulnerable popu-

lation groups and most exposed to housing deprivation—were trapped in conditions with no housing or other integration policies. These conditions further deteriorated with the abolition in 2010 and 2012 of the only two housing agencies—the Workers Housing Organization and the Public Agency for Planning and Housing—according to the memorandum agreements. Instead, a crisis management anti-poverty emergency model was developed (Arapoglou & Gounis, 2017), which was rather new for Greece. Refugee housing issues have been perceived as emergency problems for a transient population, independent from those of the local population, and tackled with the assistance of EU funds, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and NGOs at least up to 2020. Refugee camps, which eventually became detention camps under the new conservative government, are completely separating refugees' housing needs from those of the rest of the population (Kandylis, 2019). Different approaches seeking the integration of refugees through housing and other processes promoted by local authorities, international organizations and NGOs—e.g., the UNHCR urban accommodation program ESTIA, involving 2,000 apartments and 14,000 people (UNHCR, 2019), or the project "Curing the Limbo" of the Municipality of Athens—are of a smaller scale and precarious status, while the social inclusion of refugees is further undermined by the recently constricted rights of asylum seekers in terms of access to health and education services.

The effect on homeowners was much less immediate, as restrictive measures against foreclosures due to debt were promptly adopted in 2009 and until 2015, while the 2010 insolvency law for households protected the first residence from liquidation. At the same time, the real estate standstill and considerable price decrease during the crisis reduced pressure on small landowners and limited their displacement. Nevertheless, mortgage arrears increased from 4% to more than 45% and over-indebtedness (Bank of Greece, 2018)—also involving tax arrears—became one of the most burdening issues for homeowners, as real-estate property taxation increased roughly 6 times (from 500 million to 3 billion; see Foundation for Economic & Industrial Research, 2018) to increase state revenues, making homeownership less attractive. Increased taxation also followed the logic of penalizing inactive landed property and motivate real estate transactions, together with other measures such as the reduction of transaction taxation (from 11% to 3%), which had limited effects due to the complete lack of demand for most of the crisis period.

These policies contributed considerably to the significant increase in housing expenses in households' budgets. According to Housing Europe (2019, p. 10), housing expenses in Greece in 2017 required the highest share of households' disposable income (about 41% on average and 72% for those under the 60% median income) among the 31 European countries considered. They also affected small landlords who possess most of the proper-

ties in the private rented market of Athens. These landlords, being dependent on the income from their properties, were usually unable to follow long-term strategies of withdrawal from the market until prices/rents recovered. They often agreed on lower levels of rent to keep their tenants, mitigate their loss of income from other sources, and face their increased taxes. This created a kind of buffer for tenants in the privately rented housing market, alleviating some of the pressure for part of them. Reduced demand for rental and low prices also allowed for the fairly effective implementation of housing programs for refugees (such as the ESTIA program previously mentioned) and other vulnerable groups in the private rental market. Although this situation would be favorable for long term initiatives to promote social rental schemes in exchange to incentives and secured public contracts with small landlords, the momentum was lost by the government of the left (2015–2019), which introduced, however, a rent subsidy for low-means households in 2019 and mainly focused on extreme housing deprivation, such as homeless shelters or Roma housing (Siatitsa, 2019).

Within these negative consequences of the crisis for housing and the parameters that mitigated their effects, affordable housing continued to exist in Athens in two major forms. The first is the large mass of owner-occupied housing in traditional working-class suburbs and throughout the broader urban periphery. This housing stock, already in the hands of lower and lower-middle income groups, accommodates the needs of new generations through family strategies of intergenerational redistribution. The groups related to this stock are mainly native Greeks living in these working-class areas for several generations. Outright home ownership and the endogenous social transformation of these areas (Maloutas, 2004; for a similar pattern in Madrid see also Leal, 2004) have gradually transformed them into socially mixed areas, without gentrification.

The second part of the housing stock which remained affordable during the crisis is the large number of small apartments on lower floors of apartment blocks in the densely built neighborhoods around the city center. These apartments have accommodated lower-income households, especially immigrants since the 1990s. The disadvantages of this stock—small size, absence of sunlight, noise, absence of view, etc.—made it undesirable for those with other options. The undesirability of this stock induced the vertical social segregation in most central neighborhoods and even a stigma for lower floor apartments, but at the same time preserved their affordability (Balampanidis & Bourlessas, 2018; Maloutas & Karadimitriou, 2001).

5. Socially Destabilizing Effects for Affordable Housing in the Aftermath of the Crisis

After many long years, the crisis officially ended in August 2018 with the completion of the third memorandum agreement. Some indicators—like the unemployment rate which decreased from 27.5% in 2013 to 19.3% in 2018 (ELSTAT, 2019, pp. 30–31)—were showing that Greece was on a recovery course. During this recovery process, housing has been affected by changes in the real estate market and much less by the presumed positive effects of the recovering labor market. Moreover, positive trends for social inclusion in the labor market have started to be curtailed by the redistributive policies of the new government, which reduce the funds for lower-income groups as well as the number of recipients, increase tax reliefs for entrepreneurs and high incomes, maintain the low level of the minimum wage, etc.

In terms of housing policies per se, the subsidization of low-income tenants is reduced, and all other initiatives targeting social integration through housing, undertaken timidly and belatedly by the previous government, are abandoned or marginalized. Policing and public order are given priority and squatters—regardless of the specifics of each situation—are preferred in detention camps or the street rather than in self-help solidarity accommodation assisted by citizen groups. In the new political environment, the housing needs of vulnerable groups are perceived, in the traditional way, as exceptional issues needing solutions to disappear sooner or later. In this line, social inclusion is demoted by the curtailing of asylum seekers' access to health and education until they are given asylum, even though the process is too long and affects their prospective integration and, even more, their children having to live in a kind of welfare vacuum for an indefinite time (Amnesty International, 2019).

Although recent signs from housing and broader welfare policies are not encouraging in terms of social inclusion prospects, the main destabilizing effects for affordable housing options are coming from changes in the real estate market, which remain partially undetected and completely unregulated. Real estate transactions have multiplied in the last few years and prices have been steadily increasing, an unequivocally positive sign of recovery for many commentators, mainly fueled by the rapidly rising tourist demand for Greece and Athens in particular. The number of international tourist arrivals in Athens fell 22% between 2007 and 2013 but increased by 56% between 2013 and 2016 while Athens turned into an all-year city break destination instead of a transit place to Greek islands (Izyumova, 2017). This new (tourist) demand has provided ample space for developing the short-term rental sector with the decisive assistance of online platforms, such as Airbnb. The number of Airbnb rentals in Greece and the Region of Athens, in particular, increased from only 132 in 2010 to 126,231 in 2018 and from only 54 in 2010 to 30,184 in 2018 respectively (Athanasiou & Kotsi, 2018), while the total income generated by the so-called 'sharing economy' market exceeded 1.9 billion euros in 2018 (Grant Thornton, 2019). Foreign investors and real estate funds are attracted by these new prospects buying the until recently devaluated housing stock—75% of new trans-

actions have a foreign buyer. Many of them are linked to the Golden Visa scheme, providing a five-year resident's visa in Greece for an investment of €250,000, one of the cheapest in the EU. Up to December 2019, 6,300 investors had acquired a golden visa, 70% of whom of Chinese origin, while most investments—usually in real-estate property—are located in the Region of Athens (Enterprise Greece, 2019).

Athens has been able to benefit from the increase in tourist demand by accommodating a much larger number of tourists than its hotel infrastructure could support. Property owners benefited from the income increase and several professional groups—building workers, construction related engineers, internal decorators, etc.—were provided with new activities after being hardly hit by the crisis (Balampanidis, Maloutas, Papantzani, & Pettas, 2019). However, these new developments—which remain unregulated apart from their tax yielding aspect—have brought important shortcomings, in terms of social inclusion. They are intensifying housing unaffordability through rising rents and prices, especially for residents whose wages remain suppressed, and increase income inequalities among landlords depending on the size and location of their properties. Indicatively, during the period 2016–2018, rent prices in the Region of Athens increased on average by 14.3%, while they increased by 20%, 26% and almost 30% in the southern suburbs, the western suburbs and the neighborhoods of the central Municipality of Athens respectively (RE/MAX, 2016, 2017, 2018).

Apart from the above-mentioned general effects, the rise of the short-rental platform has an impact on the city's affordable housing stock, described in Section 4, in direct and indirect ways. The apartment blocks in central neighborhoods have been acting as barriers to gentrification since housing at their lower floor apartments could not become desirable for regular gentrifiers even following some substantial investment in renovation. Under the new conditions of tourist demand, the disadvantageous small apartments on lower floors can be refurbished for the occasional middle-class tourist/gentrifier, who will usually spend a short period of time, without the advantages of view, sunlight, verandas, etc., but with the advantage of a central location, easy access to places of tourist interest and multicultural ambiance. Moreover, prices are also rising in peripheral areas, including the traditional working-class suburbs, due to rising demand by those who can no longer afford to stay in the center.

For the time being, the displacement of lower-income groups is partly potential and partly in process. The driving force is the expectation of small landlords to profit from taking their properties from the regular rental market and joining the short-rental market after refurbishment. Furthermore, although it is quite early to fully understand the scale and long-term impact of recent transactions, a fast process of housing property concentration in the hands of professional/speculative

agents is taking place, potentially leading to considerable changes in the property structure of the rental market in central Athens. The issue is not on the policy agenda although potential consequences for the most vulnerable groups in the city are extremely serious.

6. Conclusion

Housing affordability has not been a major issue in Athens since the second half of the 20th century—apart from the recovery period from war damages in the immediate post-war years—although housing conditions were problematic, and needs were constantly increasing in a city of rapid growth. Like in many other large cities of Southern Europe, housing needs have been dealt with differently from the welfare state approach in Western and Northern Europe. Opportunities for affordable housing were mainly provided in the form of low-cost access to homeownership, initially involving the initiative of the settlers and the assistance of their family networks, and later through a large number of housing units produced by the land-for-flats system.

For most of the post-war period, housing in Athens was a terrain protected from large capitalist interests by conservative political parties who used housing provision both as a way to regulate the economy and as a privileged field of populist social redistribution arrangements providing electoral gains in the clientelist mode it was operated (Economou, 1988). Since the 1980s, inequalities in the access to homeownership—by far the dominant tenure—have increased as market mechanisms completely dominated housing production and allocation and as the social tissue became more clearly divided with the important inflow of immigrants who considerably increased the size of the lower socioeconomic pole. Immigrants represented an even more disadvantaged stratum since they were not only poor and occupied positions at the lower end of the occupational hierarchy, but they also lacked the protection of family self-help networks and housing property that the local working-class usually possessed.

The crisis exacerbated housing inequalities and had immediate negative effects, especially for the most unprotected. Low-means tenants, immigrants, and refugees were the most visible victims of the crisis, with their income losses immediately exacerbating their precarious position in the housing market. Homeowners were also affected since the rules of the game changed with the accumulation of mortgaged debts, the pressure from banks to clear their balances from non-performing loans, and the large increase of property occupation taxes. Despite the severity and the duration of the crisis, two niches of affordable housing have been preserved both for low-income homeowners—usually native Greeks—and for tenants, at the periphery and around the city center respectively.

The spectacular growth of real estate activity in the aftermath of the crisis, induced mainly by the

sharply growing tourist demand, is further destabilizing access to affordable housing. Rent increases have followed the climbing property prices, especially in areas in and around the city center. In these areas, the typical Athenian apartment block will potentially lose its capacity to operate as a barrier to gentrification. As a result, one of the two niches of affordable housing for tenants around the city center is threatened by a process of gentrification/touristification, which could lead to the displacement of a large low-income group without alternative housing options.

Housing exclusion and affordability has become a rising concern in Greece and especially Athens, during the years of the crisis, and even more so during the post-crisis period, since recent trends have revealed that returning to a previous housing model is not possible, while poverty, inequalities, and intensified speculative market activity are eroding previous mechanisms and resources. Affordable housing in Athens has been available under different forms for several decades without policies that explicitly targeted its provision. However, state intervention was crucial through indirect measures. This strategic/conscious choice of 'non-policy'—as long as the market regulates itself—that rejoiced broad social consent, made social housing policies seem unneeded, while also hiding the many invisible, but existing, facets of housing deprivation. In the aftermath of the crisis, as housing markets seem to be failing to address persisting social needs, such policies are needed more than ever. Focusing at the city level can contribute to the hidden resources and mechanisms that allowed affordable housing to be accessed by different social groups, even without being acknowledged as such, and raise concern regarding the protective measures and potential resources that could be part of a new social housing assistance model in Greece.

Housing affordability in the Greek case—depicted through the broad changes in the country's capital city—shows that there is a growing need for social policies across contexts, even where there was no substantial welfare state dismantled by neoliberal policies. The financial crisis of the 2000s, the sovereign debt crisis in Southern Europe and Ireland, and probably even more so the current Covid-19 crisis show that the policy agenda of neoliberalism is only for fair weather conditions. Moreover, this agenda destabilizes social equilibria when implemented by boosting social inequalities and eventually leads to calling back the (welfare) state. The current crisis is an opportunity to impose severe measures on market forces and protect socially inclusive conditions or at least—according to Mazzucato (2020)—to do capitalism differently.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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Article

Is Housing Growth Ever Inclusive Growth? Evidence from Three Decades of Housing Development in England and Wales, 1981–2011

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Abstract

There is global concern about who gains from economic growth, including housing development, and global interest in making growth more inclusive. This article creates a new definition of 'housing growth,' growth in median space per person. It says that this housing growth is 'inclusive' if the worst-off make some gains, and 'just' if inequality does not increase. It applies these terms to data for 1981–2011 on rooms per person for England and Wales, the bulk of the UK, a nation with high income inequality but lower housing inequality. At national level, median housing space increased but the worst-off gained nothing, and inequality rose, so growth was neither inclusive nor just. Sub-national evidence shows that housing growth benefitted the worst-off in most areas, but they generally made very modest gains, and growth without increasing inequality was very rare. There was housing growth in all 10 regions except London, it was inclusive in 6 regions, but not just in any region. 97% of local authorities experienced housing growth, and it was inclusive in 72%, but the average gain for the worst-off was just 0.2 rooms/person over thirty years. Only 3% of local authorities achieved both inclusive and just growth. This suggests that in the UK and similar nations, local initiatives will be insufficient to achieve growth with significant gains for the worst-off, and that substantial change to the national system of housing development and allocation is needed. There may be a policy choice between benefitting the worst-off and reducing inequality. There is potential for further and comparative research.

Keywords

housing development; housing space; inclusive growth; inequality

Issue

1. Introduction

Many high-income countries with relatively good housing conditions face growing problems of housing affordability, overcrowding and homelessness and continued poor conditions for a minority, despite high rates of housing development (Stephens, Perry, Wilcox, Williams, & Young, 2019). These parallel the persistence of wider problems of poverty, unemployment and inequality despite economic growth in countries across the world (Benner & Pastor, 2012; Kohil, Moon, & Sorensen, 2003; Piketty, 2014).

Many people and organisations believe that housing problems are principally caused by insufficient supply and that increased supply is the solution. This article explores the extent to which the nature of supply and distribution are significant to overall outcomes. In parallel with the ideas of 'inclusive' growth and 'just' growth, used to characterise economic growth in general, it sets out definitions of 'inclusive' housing growth and the more challenging 'just' housing growth. It applies these to data on housing space per person in England and Wales for 1981–2011. England and Wales form the main part of the UK, a nation with high income inequality, but low housing inequality compared to EU nations.

The article demonstrates that inclusivity and justness of growth in housing space can be defined and measured, although results are sensitive to the exact defini-

tions and measures used. It shows that for England and Wales 1981–2011, 'inclusive' growth, where the worst-off gained at least some space in absolute terms, was widespread. However, they generally made very modest gains compared to other groups. 'Just' housing growth, with no increase in housing space inequality, was extremely rare, even at the local level, despite considerable local variations in demographics and housing development. However, the England and Wales housing system was able to benefit the worst-off and avoid increases in inequality in decades before 1981. Overall, this evidence suggests that there is considerable potential for making housing supply more inclusive, as a complement, supplement or even alternative to increased supply, but that systematic, national level change would be required to achieve it. It seems likely that similar results might be found for similar nations, for periods when housing development and distribution were dominated by the market, or there was high income inequality.

2. Inclusive Growth

The concept of 'inclusive' economic growth developed after concern about whether economic growth, both in high and low income countries, had provided sufficient employment, income or other benefits to the less well-off (Commission on Growth and Development, 2008; OECD, 2008). In the past, many economic theorists argued that at least some benefit from economic growth would trickle down to less advantaged parts of the population, but a substantial body of evidence from many countries demonstrates that this is often not the case. Five decades of economic growth in the UK have coexisted with increasing income inequality and relative, particularly since the late 1970s (Hills et al., 2010; Lupton, Burchardt, Hills, Stewart, & Vizard, 2016). While the UK has high rates of poverty compared to EU states, similar patterns are seen round the world (OECD, 2018; Piketty, 2014). Traditionally, economists have assumed that there is a trade-off between equity and efficiency, but some have argued that very high levels of inequality themselves create a limit to growth (Benner & Pastor, 2012; Kohil et al., 2003). In response, institutions including the World Bank, the OECD and the European Commission have adopted the idea of 'inclusive growth' as an overarching goal for economic policy (Commission on Growth and Development, 2008; European Commission, 2010; OECD, 2008), and the UN launched a 'sustainable and equitable cities' campaign in 2016 (Phang, 2019).

The World Bank has defined 'inclusive growth' as growth that "allows people to contribute to and benefit from economic growth" (Ianchovichina & Lundstrom, 2009). This does not require that contributions and benefits be equal or even fair. In contrast, the OECD definition is growth that, "creates opportunity for all segments of the population and distributes the dividends of increased prosperity, both in monetary and non-monetary

terms, fairly across society" (OECD, 2018). This includes but does not define 'fairness.' The UK's Royal Society of Arts and Manufactures adopted a maximalist definition for use in the UK, so that inclusive growth was "enabling as many people as possible to contribute to and benefit from growth" (Inclusive Growth Commission, 2017, p. 6). The term 'just growth' is a near-synonym, but definitions and measures of just growth tend to refer explicitly to inequality in income (Benner & Pastor, 2012; Chapple, 2018; Kohil et al., 2003). Evidence shows that inclusive growth, however defined and measured, is difficult to achieve. For example, of the BRICS counties, which all achieved dramatic growth over the 2000s and 2010s, only Brazil avoided substantial increases in income inequality (Vandemoortele et al., 2013). Numerous reports have tried to describe the policies and practices that might encourage more inclusive growth (Benner & Pastor, 2012; Chapple, 2018; Lee, 2019).

Alongside interest in inclusive growth as a policy goal, there is also growing interest in non-growth, on environmental grounds. The value of growth in GDP, particularly as currently measured, has been challenged (Bleys, 2012). In some areas, periods of low or no growth have been associated with stable or even reducing income inequality, for example after the 2008 financial crisis in the UK (ONS, 2019).

3. Housing Growth, Inclusivity and Justness

From the 2000s, independent commentators agreed that the UK housing system had serious structural problems, including persistent undersupply of new homes (Hall, 2011; Stephens et al., 2019; Whitehead & Williams, 2011). For example, household growth exceeded home building by 500,000 in 2008–2015 (Cole et al., 2017). Since the 2000s, there have been all the signs of pent-up demand: high house prices, widespread difficulties with affordability, declining home ownership and marked increases in overcrowding, concealed households, households in temporary accommodation and homelessness (Fitzpatrick et al., 2019; Stephens et al., 2019). Many of these problems are shared by housing systems in other countries (CECODHAS, 2019; Council of European Development Bank, 2017; Scanlon, Arrigoitia Fernandez, & Whitehead, 2015).

Is insufficient supply of new homes the main cause of housing problems in the UK and elsewhere? Would increasing supply help solve the problems? A 2017 UK government housing white paper said that it was "very simple": Undersupply was the problem and more supply was the solution (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2017, p. 9). This argument was repeated in the winning 2017 and 2019 General Election manifestos (Conservative Party, 2019). Similarly, House of Commons researchers (required to be politically neutral) stated that "homelessness is the most visible manifestation of the long-term failure of successive Governments to build enough" (Wilson & Barton, 2019, p. 10). However, recent

decades have seen a substantial increase in the supply of housing space. The England and Wales census shows that over 1981–2011, the number of rooms (including living rooms, bedrooms and kitchens big enough to eat in) grew by 39%. This ran ahead of growth in population (15%) and household numbers (32%).

Some commentators have suggested that insufficient supply may not fully explain problems, and that the distribution of housing also needs to be examined (Dorling, 2014). New housing may have no effect on those on low incomes, who will not be able to afford to live in most, if any, new housing, and it has been suggested that there might even be a trade-off between increasing housing supply and reducing housing inequalities (Robinson, O'Sullivan, & Le Grand, 1985). Housebuilding can be very inefficient at helping the worst-off. It took from 1911–1991 for the worst-housed in England and Wales in terms of housing space per person (people at the 10th percentile of the distribution) to get to 1.0 room per person, which had the national median in 1911 (Tunstall, 2015). There is evidence of increasing inequality in housing space, for example, in countries including the USA (Landis, Elmer, & Zook, 2002) and China (Feng, 2008; Tan, Wang, & Chen, 2016) and increasing inequality in housing wealth (Arundel, 2017; Piketty, 2014; Robinson et al., 1985).

This article focuses on housing space as a key dimension of housing quantity and quality. Housing space is only one way of conceptualising and measuring the consumption of housing and housing inequality, but it is a valid and important one. A century of studies has demonstrated correlations between 'overcrowding' and negative outcomes; from 'immorality' to poor health and worse educational achievement (Marmot Review Team, 2010; Marsh, Gordon, Heslop, & Pantazis, 2000). Overcrowding, or absolute low consumption of housing has been a key preoccupation of housing policy in the UK and elsewhere since its origins (General Register Office, 1904; Goodchild & Furbey, 1986), and it is now addressed in one of the UN's worldwide Sustainable Development Goals. In high income countries like the UK, decades of rising incomes and public investment have meant big rises in average space per person, and big falls in the proportions of residents below absolute minima (Tunstall, 2015). Similar patterns are seen in medium and low income countries. However, even in rich countries a new 'politics of housing space' has emerged as part of debates over housing finance and affordability (Carr, 2016). For example, should there be subsidy for people to have space above legal minimums but not above societal norms? In the UK this issue has taken the form of debates over the so-called 'bedroom tax' of 2012, which reduced housing allowances for low-income social renters with more space than the minimum (Carr, 2016; Gibbons, Sanchez-Vidal, & Silva, 2018).

This article describes 'housing growth' as an increase in median housing space per person over time, just as GDP growth is sometimes expressed per head of population. Although this argument cannot be explored in depth, it should be noted that just as the goal of GDP growth has been questioned, some observers might see housing 'non-growth' as preferable to housing growth on environmental grounds (building additional housing space will almost always mean additional net production of carbon dioxide, even where the homes themselves meet 'zero carbon' standards).

This article uses two measurable definitions of the quality of housing growth:

1. 'Inclusive' housing growth occurs when there is both 'housing growth' (an increase in the median housing space per person), and the worst-off (those at the 10th percentile in terms of housing space per person) make absolute gains.
2. 'Just' housing growth occurs when there is both 'housing growth,' and no growth in housing space inequality between people (measured by the ratio of housing space of those at the 90th and the 10th percentile).

This article aims to demonstrate the application of the concepts and measures of 'inclusive' and 'just' growth to housing, focusing on housing space. It also aims to answer the following questions:

1. Which parts of England and Wales achieved 'housing growth' between 1981–2011, in terms of median housing space per person?
2. Which, if any, achieved 'inclusive' or 'just' housing growth over the same period?
3. What are the characteristics of regions and/or local authorities that achieved inclusive growth or just growth?
4. What are the implications for other nations and areas, and for those who wish to promote more inclusive or just housing growth?

What circumstances might promote housing growth, and inclusive and just housing growth? Firstly, logically, high growth in the quantity of housing and low population growth will necessarily result in a high growth in mean space per person, and should be expected to produce high growth in median space per person, or high 'housing growth,' as defined here. However, depending on distribution, the mean could grow with little or no change in the median. Low growth in the quantity of space and high population growth will necessarily result in low or no growth in mean space per person, and could be expected to produce low growth in median space per person (high housing growth), although again there may not be a direct relationship. Secondly, logically, growth in space per person (whether mean or median) and low population growth could both be expected to give more opportunities for 'inclusive' growth. The worst-off could gain in absolute terms, and the best-off could also gain. Similarly, for 'just' growth, the worst-off could gain in

relative terms while the best-off could still gain in absolute terms. Overall, this suggests we might expect to find more cases of inclusive and just growth in areas with high rates of housing development, low population growth, or growth in mean or median space per person. However, again, results will depend on distribution.

As understanding of the inclusivity of housing growth develops, more formal hypotheses to explain variations will develop. However, tentatively, it might be expected that larger population, more urban and more deprived areas might have a stronger political or systemic orientation towards improving conditions for the worst-off. On the other hand, they might struggle more to do so, or to provide housing growth. In addition, there is evidence that large cities and have higher income inequality that other parts of their nations (Phang, 2019; Trust for London, 2017), and this could apply to housing space.

4. Data and Methods

The UK (comprised of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland) was selected as an example of a high-income, OECD and former EU-28 member country. It has similar amounts of housing space per person to comparable countries: In 2008 the average English home provided 37m^2 internal floorspace per person, compared to 37m^2 in France, 35m^2 in Germany and 61m^2 in the USA (Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government [MHCLG], 2018). It has relatively high income inequality (ONS, 2019; Piketty, 2014). However it appears to have relatively low housing inequality, including in terms of housing space, as the gaps between the housing conditions of poor people and the national average are smaller in the UK than in many EU countries (Bradshaw, Chzhen, & Stephens, 2008; Eurostat, 2020).

Assessing trends in the distribution of housing space alongside trends in housing growth and at sub-national level requires longitudinal and disaggregatable data. While most countries in Europe gather survey data on internal floorspace (Eurostat, 2020), and the Survey of English Housing has recently started to assess floorspace (MHCLG, 2018), in the UK the only suitable long-run and local data on housing space is on the number of rooms, from the census. Although the size of rooms in England appeared to reduce slightly in the 1980s and 1990s (MHCLG, 2018), the number of rooms provides some proxy for overall space, and also suggests how a home can accommodate different uses and users. However, census data have some drawbacks: Results are only comparable for England and Wales, not the whole UK, and the latest datapoint was 2011 so the census cannot be used to assess effects of recent changes such as the 'bedroom tax.'

Numerous measures have been developed to describe the characteristics of the overall distribution of income across societies, including proportions of people below absolute or relative minima, such as the definition of poverty as income below 60% of the median,

ratios between different parts of the distribution, and the Gini coefficient which describes the overall shape of the distribution (Atkinson, 1970; Hills et al., 2010). No one measure of inequality is entirely comprehensive or 'neutral' (Atkinson, 1970). However, most studies of housing inequality have been restricted to categorical measures, counting people without certain amenities or below minima (de Wilde & de Decker, 2016; Hills et al., 2010; Murie, 1983). Measuring inequality in more sophisticated ways, as required by the definitions of 'inclusive' and 'just' growth above, demands continuous concepts and data (Dorling et al., 2005; Robinson et al., 1985).

The analysis in this article creates quasi-continuous data on the number of private households with different combinations of numbers of rooms and numbers of people, from the census. Data on the rooms and people in individual households were extracted from online sources at Casweb (http://casweb.mimas.ac.uk) and Nomisweb (www.nomisweb.co.uk). 'Rooms' include bedrooms, living rooms and larger kitchens (big enough to eat in). The population was divided up into groups according to the rooms per person they had, and ordered from low to high rooms per person, creating quasi-continuous data Because the data includes only people living in private households, excludes second homes, and assumes that rooms occupied by a household are shared equally between residents (not taking account of potential differences in space needs between people), it will generally tend to underestimate inequality.

The article reports the position of the 'worst-off' focussing on those at the 10th percentile of the overall distribution. It reports housing space inequality using the 90:10 ratio, the ratio between the housing space per person of those at the 10th and 90th percentiles. This is one of the mostly widely used measures in the study of income and other social inequalities, is simple to understand, and is more sensitive to the lower end of the distribution than the Gini coefficient (Atkinson, 1970; Hills et al., 2010). Other similar ratios such as 90:50 and 50:10) are also widely used.

Understanding how to develop intentional strategies for inclusive growth "is an important area for comparative research" (Chapple, 2018, p. 793). Comparing local areas allows us to explore the role of local contexts and policies in growth and its distribution (Benner & Pastor, 2012). This article reports data for the 9 regions of England and for Wales, which correspond to NUTS 1 regions used by Eurostat. It also reports data for the 348 local authorities in England and Wales. They are the key planning agencies in the UK, responsible for influencing and approving housing development plans of housebuilders and non-profit organisations. In 2011 they had average populations of just under 200,000, with a range from 2,000 to 1,110,000 (there were boundary changes over 1981–2011 but data shown are for boundaries as they were in 2015).

5. Housing Growth and Inclusivity at the National Level in England and Wales over the Twentieth Century

Over the twentieth century, numbers of people, households and rooms in England and grew in every decade. In every decade, the number of rooms available increased faster than the number of people. However, the most recent period, 1981–2011, stands out for its declining rate of growth in new housing space combined with rising rate of population growth (Figure 1).

Mean space per person grew in every decade as the rate of growth in rooms ran ahead of growth in population. However, median housing space per person grew and there was 'housing growth' in only six decades. In the other four decades (1911–1921, 1921–1931, 1961–1971 and 1981–1991), housing space per person was unchanged, so there was no 'housing growth.'

Housing growth was both 'just' and 'inclusive' in 1931–1951 and 1951–1961. It was 'inclusive' but not 'just' in 1971–1981, as the worst-off gained but inequalities do not reduce. It was 'just' but not 'inclusive' in 1991–2001, as inequalities reduced but the worst-off did not gain. Periods with no growth could also be inclusive and just, and this was the case over 1961–1971 and 1981–1991. In 1911–1921 and 1921–1931, there was another combination: non-inclusive but just non-growth, where the worst-off lost out, the median reduced and inequalities reduced.

This article focusses on the most recent period, on the grounds that the most recent system is of most relevance to today.

6. Which Parts of England and Wales Achieved Housing Growth between 1981–2011?

6.1. England and Wales

Over the whole three decades 1981–2011, England and Wales as a whole experienced a 39% increase in the number of rooms (including living rooms, bedrooms and kitchens big enough to eat in). The number of households increased by 32%, but the population grew by just 15%. The mean people per household reduced, and the mean rooms per household increased. The mean rooms per person increased, and the median increased from 1.5 to 2.0 r/p (rooms per person), amounting to a 33% increase over thirty years. This took the median couple household, for example, from three rooms to four (Figure 2).

6.2. Regions

In 1981, median space was 1.5 r/p in each of the ten regions of England and Wales, except for the South West, where it was slightly higher at 1.7 r/p.

Over 1981–2011, there were strong regional variations between regions in population change, and in the North East and North West, population actually fell (although it started to rise again in these regions at the end of the period). The number of households and rooms grew in every region, and there was less variation in rates of change between regions than for population change (Figure 3). The difference between the rate of growth in numbers of people and numbers of rooms accounts

Figure 1. Rate of growth in number of people, households and rooms, England and Wales, 1911–2011. Compiled by the author based on data from Casweb for 1981 and Nomisweb for 2011. There was no census in 1941 due to WWII, so data for 1931–1941 and 1941–1951 are based on averaging data for 1931–1951.
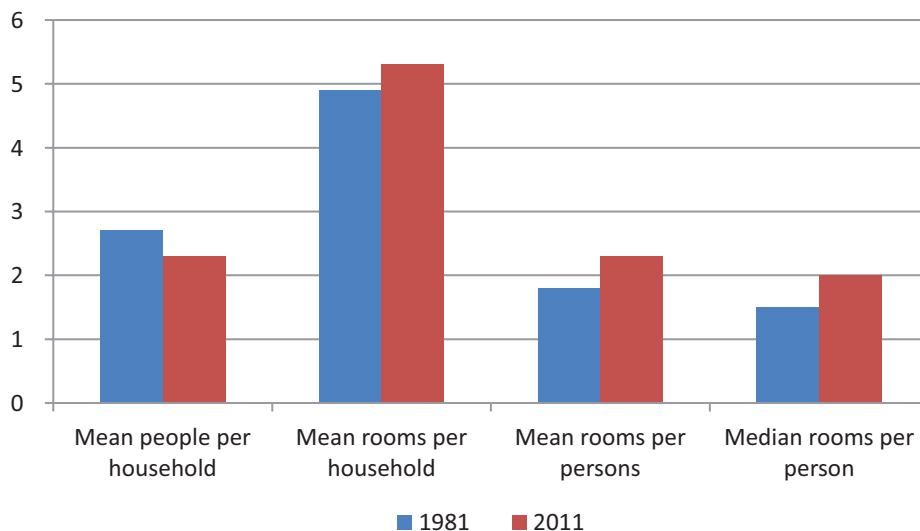
Figure 2. People, households, housing space and housing growth in England and Wales, 1981–2011. Compiled by the author based on data from Casweb for 1981 and Nomisweb for 2011.

for the growth in mean rooms per person (without taking account of actual distribution). London stands out for the small difference between the growth in rooms and growth in population it had.

The median housing space per person reflects the actual distribution of housing space between households and people. Over 1981–2011, the median increased, meaning there was housing growth, in every region but one, London. In most regions median housing space increased from 1.5 r/p to 2.0 r/p (or by 33%). The South West which already had higher median space in 1981 than other areas, had a smaller increase, from 1.7 to 2.0 (20%). Space per person in London was unchanged

1981–2011 at 1.5 r/p, which made it the worst-housed region in 2011 in terms of housing space.

6.3. Local Authorities

In 1981, median space per person ranged from 1.3 r/p to 1.8 r/p between the 348 local authorities of England and Wales. This amounts to the difference between the relatively-crowded three people in four rooms, and the more generous four people in seven rooms. The local authorities with the lowest median space per person included eight of the 33 in London, all at 1.3 r/p. The local authorities with the highest median space per person

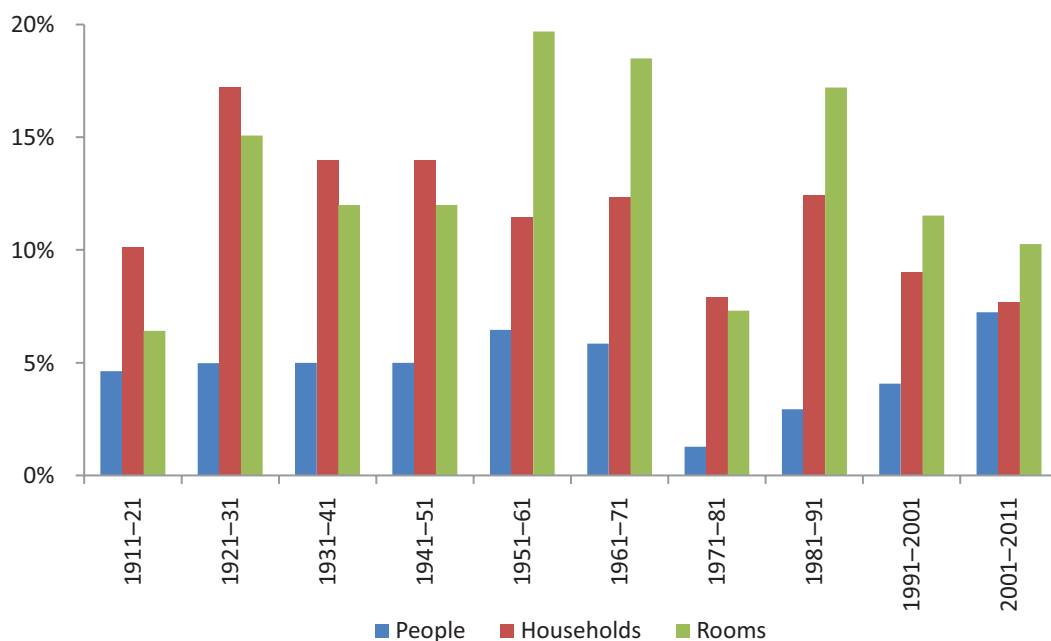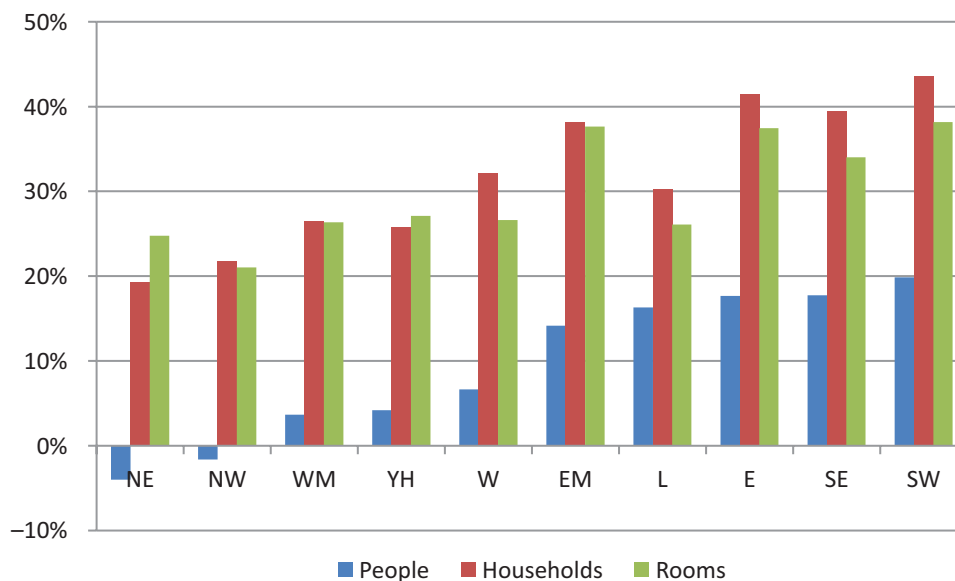**Figure 3.** Rates of growth in numbers of people, households and rooms, regions, 1981–2011. Compiled by the author based on data from Casweb for 1981 and Nomisweb for 2011. The initials identify regions: West Midlands (WM); Yorkshire and Humberside (YH); Wales (W); East Midlands (EM); London (L). The remainder of initials refer to regions named after points of the compass.

were mostly small and rural, for example, Ceredigion in Wales at 1.8 r/p.

Over the thirty years 1981–2011, 339 (97% of the total) local authorities experienced housing growth in median housing space per person. The biggest absolute increases were in rural and relatively advantaged areas which already had higher medians in 1981, like Cotswold in the South East (1.8 additional r/p). They were also urban and relatively deprived areas, which had had low medians in 1981, like Knowsley in the North West (0.8 additional r/p). In two areas in London, Newham and Waltham Forest, already low median space per person in 1981 reduced further by 2011. In 17 more, including 11 in London and four in the South East, there was no change or imperceptible growth of less than 0.1 r/p.

Overall, across all local authorities, there was a small negative correlation between population growth and housing growth. This supports the idea that it might be more difficult for local housing systems to maintain housing growth when there is faster population growth. However, there was almost no relationship between housing growth and two other key characteristics of the local authorities: size in terms of absolute population in 1981 and deprivation (MHCLG, 2019).

7. Which Parts of England and Wales Achieved 'Inclusive' and 'Just' Housing Growth 1981–2011?

7.1. England and Wales

Across England and Wales, housing space for those at the worst-housed 10th percentile did not change 1981–2011. They had 1.0 r/p in 1981 and 1.0 r/p in 2011, thirty years later. Housing space inequality increased. In 1981, those at the 90th percentile had three times as much space per person as those at the 10th, but by 2011 they had four times as much space (an increase in the 90:10 ratio from 3.0 to 4.0). Thus, while there was housing growth at national level over the thirty years, it was neither inclusive nor just (Figure 4).

7.2. Regions

Figure 5 shows mean and median space per person by region. It confirms the differences between these measures, which reflect unequal distribution. It also shows which regions achieved housing growth and whether it was 'inclusive' or 'just.' Six regions (the North East, East Midlands, Wales, South West, North West and East) achieved inclusive but non-just growth. Three regions (the South East, Yorkshire and Humberside, and West Midlands) achieved non-inclusive, non-just growth. London had a third combination: non-inclusive, non-just non-growth (Figure 5).

Regarding inclusivity, in 1981, the worst-housed in every region had 1.0 r/p. Over 1981–2011, the worst-off made small absolute gains of 0.2 r/p in 6 regions (the North East, the North West, the East Midlands, the East, the South West and Wales. In three regions (the South East, Yorkshire and Humberside, and the West Midlands), there was no change. In London, the worst-off actually lost in absolute terms, going from 1.0 to 0.8 r/p.

Regarding justice, in 1981, the 90:10 ratio was 3.0, the same as the national ratio, for every region. Over 1981–2001, the ratio increased in every region, by between 11% and 33%, so no region had 'just' change.
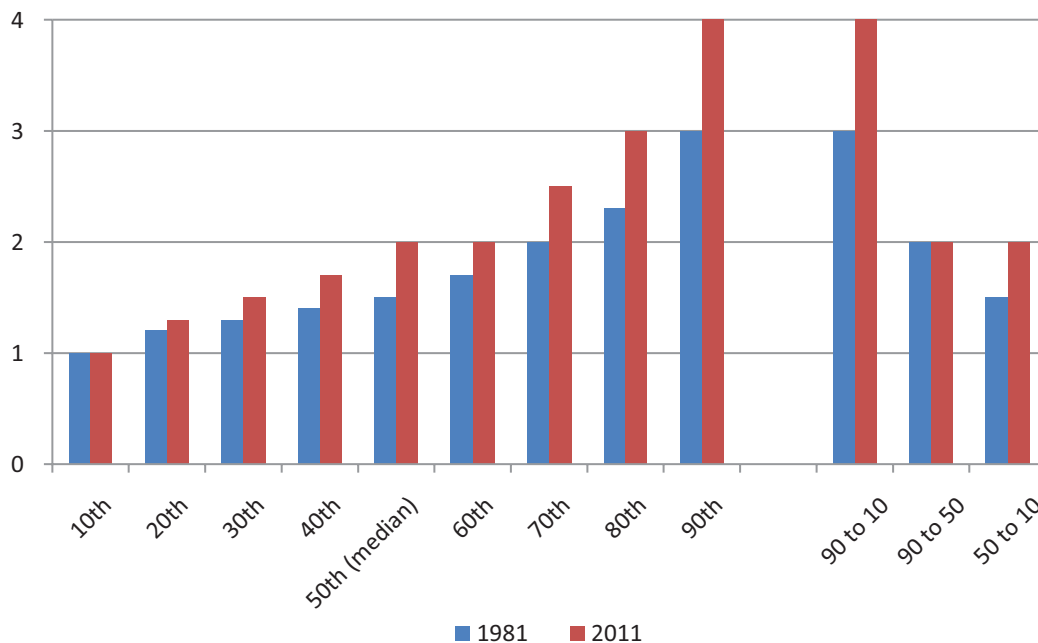

Figure 4. Housing space in rooms per person in England and Wales by percentile and ratios between percentiles, 1981 and 2011. Compiled by the author based on data from Casweb for 1981 and Nomisweb for 2011.
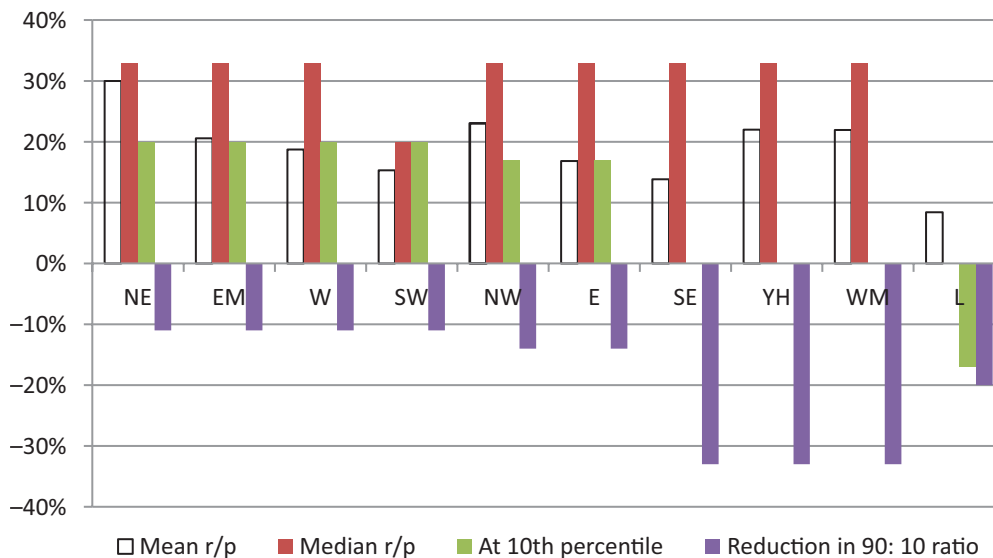
Figure 5. Rates of growth in mean rooms per person, median rooms per person (housing growth), rooms per person at the 10th percentile (inclusivity) and reduction in 90:10 ratio (justness), regions of England and Wales, 1981–2011. Compiled by the author based on data from Casweb for 1981 and Nomisweb for 2011.

London experienced a typical increase in inequality, but in 2011 remained among the lower-inequality regions. This contrasts with the evidence of higher inequality in income in large cities and global cities.

However, the results are very sensitive to the exact measure used. For example, using the 50:10 ratio, housing space inequality increased in nine rather than ten regions (the South West was the exception). More radically, using the 90:50 ratio it increased in only one region. This indicates that the choice of definition and measure of inclusive housing growth, and indeed probably of inclusive growth of all kinds, is extremely important to our results. It also suggests that for housing space, the situation of those at the 10th percentile was a key driver of changes in housing space inequality at regional level.

7.3. Local Authorities

In terms of change for the worst-off, in 254 (or 73% of all the 348 local authorities in England and Wales), those at the worst-housed 10th percentile made some absolute gain in housing space per person 1981–2011. However, in most cases absolute gains were very small, averaging a perhaps-imperceptible 0.2 r/p over thirty years. The most the worst-housed gained was 0.5 r/p, in Cotswold, a rural area in the South East with high overall growth.

In 88 (or 25% of the total), those in the worst-housed decile made no gains in space per person. These areas included London boroughs, other smaller towns in the South East and East of England, and large cities and smaller towns in the north and Wales, including Newcastle and Cardiff. In six (2%), all London boroughs, the absolute position of the worst-housed actually deteriorated. For example, in Greenwich, in 1981 those at the 10th percentile had 1.0 r/p, but by 2011 they had only 0.8 r/p.

Regarding inequality, the vast majority of local authorities (84%) had a 90:10 ratio of 3.0 in 1981, although there was a range from 2.5 to 3.8. Over 1981–2011, housing space inequality increased in 325 (or 93% of the total. However, the median increase in the 90:10 ratio was relatively modest at 11%.

Again, the results are very sensitive to the exact measure used. Using the 50:10 ratio, inequality in housing space increased in only 218 (63%) of local authorities. Using the 90:50 ratio, it increased in a bare majority, 182 (52%). Again, this indicates that the choice of definition and measure of inclusive housing growth is extremely important to the outcome, and that the situation of the worst-off was a key driver of changes in inequality at local as well as at national and regional level.

7.4. Summary

There are eight possible combinations of 'housing growth,' 'inclusivity' and 'justice.' Table 1 summarises evidence to categorise change in England and Wales, its regions and local authorities 1981–2011 (Table 1).

In summary, over 1981–2011, England and Wales as a whole achieved housing growth but it was not inclusive or just. Six of the ten regions managed to achieve inclusive housing growth. None achieved just growth, and London did not achieve growth of any kind.

242 local authorities (or 70% of the total 348 in England and Wales), achieved inclusive but not just growth. In these areas, the worst-off made gains, but they were very modest ones. Meanwhile, better-housed people made more significant absolute and relative gains, so inequality increased. The next largest group of local authorities, 76 (or 22%), achieved growth but it was neither inclusive nor just, so in these areas the worst-

Table 1. Housing growth, inclusivity and justice at national, regional and local authority level, 1981–2011.

Inclusivity (Change in Position of Worst-Off and in Housing Space Inequality)	Housing Growth (Median Space per Person)	
	No Growth	Growth
No absolute gain for worst-off, and increase in inequality	Non-inclusive and non-just non-growth 1/10 regions 2% local authorities	Non-inclusive and non-just growth England and Wales 3/10 regions 22% local authorities
Absolute gain for worst-off, but increase in inequality	Inclusive but non-just non-growth (no cases)	Inclusive but non-just growth 6/10 regions 70% local authorities
No absolute gain for worst-off, but no increase in inequality	Non-inclusive but just non-growth 1% local authorities	Non-inclusive but just growth 2% local authorities
Absolute gain for worst-off and no increase in inequality	Inclusive, just non-growth < 1% local authorities	Inclusive, just growth 3% local authorities

off gained nothing, while others gained so there was an increase in inequality. Just nine local authorities (3%) achieved inclusive, just, growth.

In the 15 local authorities where there was no growth, higher proportions (7/15) achieved 'just' outcomes than in the much more numerous examples with growth. However, in these cases, justice was only achieved alongside no gain either for the worst-off or for the median.

8. Characteristics of the Local Authorities that Achieved Inclusive or Just Growth

As noted above, we might expect to find inclusive and just growth in areas with growth in mean rooms per person, median rooms per person, or low or falling populations. Other factors such as regional location, population size, urbanity and deprivation might play a role.

The 242 inclusive but non-just growth areas were varied. The majority were in the 6 inclusive but non-just regions. They were mostly medium-sized and smaller cities and towns, compared to non-inclusive and non-just growth areas which included more in major conurbations (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs [DEFRA], 2011). The inclusive but non-just growth areas were typically slightly less deprived than the comparators (MHCLG, 2019), so deprivation might be some barrier to inclusivity. Population growth in these areas was very similar to that in comparators areas. Housing growth averaged 0.4 r/p, compared to 0.3 r/p in other areas (averages not weighted for population).

The very small group of nine inclusive and just growth local authorities were very varied, and difficult to characterise. They included Hammersmith and Fulham, Islington and Wandsworth in London, Birmingham and Sandwell in the West Midlands conurbation, and four smaller, more rural authorities scattered round England: Rother, Ryedale, South Lakeland and North Norfolk

(DEFRA, 2011). Regional location did not seem to be a significant factor in the distribution, as seven of the nine were in non-inclusive, non-just regions. The inclusive and just areas included some of the most deprived local authorities in England and some more advantaged ones (MHCLG, 2019). Population growth in these areas was again close to the overall average. Housing growth averaged 0.3 r/p or 19%, very similar to that in non-inclusive non-just local authorities.

This small group of local authorities may not provide transferable models for many other areas in the UK or further afield. Firstly, the reductions in the 90:10 ratio they achieved were small, ranging from 1% to 8%. Secondly, all residents in the 5 areas in the London and West Midlands areas were poorly housed relative to national standards, those at the 10th percentile had just 0.8 r/p in 1981, and those at the 90th percentile had 2.5 or 3.0 r/p. Thirdly, the other cases were rural and low population areas very different from places where most people live.

Looking across all local authorities, there was no evidence to support the idea that low or falling population might allow room for more inclusive distribution as, across all local authorities, there was very little relationship between population growth and the position of the worst-off or of inequality. There was a correlation between greater housing growth and greater gains for the worst-off. In contrast, greater housing growth was associated with greater increases in inequality, as those at the 90th percentile tended to gain more in absolute and relative terms from growth. Thus, low housing growth was associated with more just outcomes. This provides support for the idea that there might be policy choices between increasing housing supply and reducing housing inequalities (Robinson et al., 1985). It also underlines the point that results are sensitive to definitions and measures. Across all local authorities, there was small correlation between lower area deprivation and greater inclusiv-

ity and justness, which suggests deprivation may create some barrier to more inclusive housing growth.

9. Conclusion

There is global concern from governments and organisations about who gains from growth, and in how to make growth more 'inclusive' or 'just.' In housing development, concerns about the scale of housing supply are accompanied by concerns about how new supply is distributed. This article has reported evidence on the growth and distribution of housing space over the long-term, in a high-income country with high income inequality but relative low housing inequality.

The concept of 'inclusive growth' can be applied to housing. Housing is an important area of consumption and source of inequality, but one in which simple categorical measures of inequality have so far predominated.

The article has developed and applied new definitions and measures. 'Housing growth' is growth in median housing space per person. 'Inclusive growth' occurs where the worst-off gain from growth. The more demanding 'just growth' occurs without an increase in housing space inequality. A new set of continuous data for England and Wales was developed and applied to show that these concepts can be measured empirically, over time and at national and local level. This could be extended, where data permit, to the many nations that collect data on housing floorspace and other continuous variables.

Over 1981–2011, while England and Wales as a whole achieved 'housing growth' in median space per person, four of ten regions including London failed to so, as did 3% of local authorities.

Housing growth can be achieved in a variety of places, and with different combinations of population and housing growth. However, a small negative correlation between local authority rates of housing growth and population growth suggests it is more difficult to maintain housing growth where the population is growing fast.

Results are sensitive to definitions and measures. This means empirical claims about 'inclusive growth' should be examined closely for details of the definitions and data used. The concept of 'inclusivity' applied here is relatively undemanding, and 'just growth' was much more elusive than 'inclusive' growth. Researchers and policymakers may want to specify that growth is only 'inclusive' if the worst-off make more than trivial gains or might want to aspire to 'just' growth instead. In addition, measuring inequality with different ratios produces very different results. The definitions and measures presented here could be adapted to specific national or local issues, but care is needed in applying measures.

As with inclusive economic growth, inclusive and just housing growth can be achieved. Over 1981–2011, while England and Wales as a whole achieved housing growth in space per person it was not inclusive or just. Six of the ten regions managed to achieve inclusive housing growth, but none achieved just growth. 70% of local authorities achieved 'inclusive' but not 'just' growth. In these areas, the worst-off made very modest gains over the thirty years. Meanwhile, better-housed people made more significant absolute and relative gains. At national level, in every region and in 93% of local authorities, inequality increased. Like the nation, 22% of local authorities had growth that was neither 'inclusive' nor just. Almost without exception, those who gained most from new housing development in England and Wales 1981–2011 were those who were already better housed.

Just 3% of local authorities achieved growth that was both inclusive and just. This small group may not provide transferable models for many other areas in the UK or further afield. They achieved only small reductions in inequality and were either poorly-housed relative to national standards or were atypical as rural and low population areas.

Looking across all local authorities there was no evidence to support the idea that low or falling population encourages more inclusive or just distribution of housing space.

Greater housing growth (in median space per person) appeared to be associated with greater gains for the worst-off. However, greater housing growth was associated with increases in inequality. Deprivation may create some barriers to more inclusive housing growth.

There were a few local areas where 'non-growth' in median space per person, potentially a preferred outcome for those focussed on sustainability, was inclusive and just. This reflects the national experience in decades before 1981 and parallels some cases of economic stagnation in the UK and elsewhere.

The rarity of significant improvements for the worst-off and the ubiquity of increasing inequality at national, regional and local level in England and Wales, suggests considerable scope for improving the inclusivity of housing supply, as a complement or even potential alternative to increased quantity. It should be noted that Inclusive and just housing growth have been achieved at national level in England and Wales in several twentieth century decades. However, results also suggest that, at least in the UK, local initiatives may be insufficient to create change today, and more substantial and systematic national level changes may be required. In addition, while housing growth and inclusivity can co-exist, there may be a policy choice between more housing growth and reduced inequality.

There is potential for further research to explain variations seen across time and space in England and Wales, and for comparative research, where data permit, in nations with different housing systems and different levels of income inequality to that in the UK.

London for comments on presentations based on early analyses of the data presented.

Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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Article

Housing and Ageing: Let's Get Serious—"How Do You Plan for the Future while Addressing Immediate Chaos?"

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Abstract
This article presents findings from the Housing and Ageing programme conducted in 2018 that investigated how the housing sector can effectively plan for an ageing population. The project took a transdisciplinary approach to focus on new, critical insights into the process of decision making concerning housing and ageing across Scotland, England and Wales. A 'Serious Game' methodology was developed that explored over 200 policy maker, practitioner and service user perspectives. This was used as a framework to capture priorities, decisions, negotiations and processes that indicate how a 'sense of place' and 'place belonging' can influence the development of suitable housing for older people. Key housing provision challenges identified were tackling inequality, preserving autonomy, in(ter)dependence, empowerment and accessibility. Such challenges need consideration when strategically planning for the future. The findings recommend placing housing at the heart of service integration to support the co-production of decisions that emphasise the importance of working together across boundaries within social policy, service and stakeholder groups. A place-based approach can support the perception that we are *all* stakeholders in ageing.

Issue
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1. Introduction

Households led by those aged over 85 will double over the next 25 years in the UK (Office of National Statistics, 2016), making planning for future housing provision a top priority. However, the UK housing sector is "woefully underprepared" for an ageing population (Lords Select Committee, 2013; UK Parliament, 2017). The current picture of the housing sector includes perceptions of 'crisis' (Boyack, 2018), 'generational conflict' (Hoolachan & McKee, 2018) alongside the media reporting general 'chaos' around lack of adequate housing (ESRI in the *Independent*; see Doyle, 2018; see also "Housing market falls victim to political chaos," 2019). This perception of 'chaos' is also embedded in the context of austerity (referring to the economic, political and policy climate post global economic crisis in 2008 that has seen a drive to reduce the amount of money the UK government spends on various services) and the political uncertainly arising from 'Brexit' in the UK. 'Brexit' refers to a United Kingdom referendum in 2016 where 52% of the people of the United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union. This has influenced the popular media term 'Brexit,' which at the time of this article submission is still being negotiated by the UK Government. These narratives and perceptions point towards the increasing challenges and conflict between resources given to addressing the immediate and future needs in the housing sector.

This article presents findings from a UK Housing and Ageing programme, led by the Universities of Stirling, Dundee and Heriot-Watt that brought academics, stakeholders, older people, practitioners, and policy makers together to address the current and critical topic of housing and ageing in the UK. A 'Serious Game'—a bespoke, personalised, strategic exercise that captures priorities, decisions, negotiations and processes that relate to how a sense of place and belonging is created for older people—was created and delivered throughout 2018 to allow an examination of how participants negotiated potential obstacles for delivering housing and ageing strategies by 2030. This article outlines this creative methodology in more detail and presents the findings from the Housing and Ageing programme answering the key question: How do you plan for the future of an ageing population while also addressing immediate chaos?

Projected implications for an ageing population in the housing sector include the need for homes that better support health and care needs (Government Office for Science, 2016). Estimates suggest that the older population will account for 60% of household growth by 2030 (Local Government Association, 2017, p. 4). The devolved nations of Scotland, Wales and England have planned for this in different ways, with specific strategies focused on housing and ageing. Our article outlines the current UK housing and ageing context and explores the wider implications of strategic planning around the key themes of negotiation, collaboration and integration to identify co-designed recommendations for the UK housing sector.

2. Housing and Ageing Policy in Scotland, England and Wales

Alongside the UK Government's Housing Strategy, the devolved governments have several strategies that link to housing for older people in Scotland (such as the "Age, Home and Community 2012–2021" strategy; see Scottish Government, 2011a) and Wales ("Strategy for Older People 2013–2023"; see Welsh Government, 2013). Policy review groups emphasise an urgent need to focus on the implementation phase of these strategies and to set up possibilities for collaboration (Welsh Government Expert Group, 2017).

2.1. Policy in Scotland

"Age, Home and Community: A Strategy for Housing for Scotland's Older People 2012—2021" was published by the Scottish Government and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities in 2011 and revised in 2018 with the intention of presenting a vision for housing and housing-related support for older people. As well as the Scotland Act in 2016 devolving a range of social security powers to the Scottish Parliament, there has also been the formation of 31 new health and social care partnerships set up to deliver integrated health and social care services. The housing sector constitutes a key domain of policy integration between health and social care (McCall, Hoyle, & Gunasinghe, 2017). The introduction of self-directed support, following the Social Care Act of 2013, in Scotland, and the "Fairer Scotland" action plan of 2016, includes specific actions directed towards older people to help tackle poverty, reduce inequality and build a fairer and more inclusive Scotland. This highlights the increasingly devolved context for housing and ageing in the UK. For Scotland, when speaking to participants of the Housing and Ageing programme, the Minister for Local Government and Housing, Kevin Stewart (as cited in McCall et al., 2018, p. 3), noted that:

> It's never too early to start thinking about where and how we will live as we grow older. We should all be leading by example and thinking about our future housing requirements early enough to plan rather than reacting to a crisis situation when there are fewer choices available.

He pointed out that by 2030 there will be over 600,000 people aged 75 or over in Scotland, and emphasised the need to ensure and plan for suitable housing and services for individuals to continue living independently at home, maintaining their connections with people and place. The Scottish Government (2019) also launched a visionary housing policy for 2040 that prioritises planning for an ageing population.

2.2. Policy in Wales

Building on the Welsh Government's "Strategy for Older People" (planned for 2003–2013 and 2013–2023), and the recognition of the centrality of good quality housing in supporting older people to live 'independently,' the Welsh Government commissioned an expert group on housing an ageing population to inform the Welsh policy approach. The group reported in 2017, recommending that there should be a better understanding of the housing preferences and choices of older people, closer partnership working, increased investment and financial incentives to stimulate the market and enable creative solutions across all tenures to be adopted, to build new homes and improve existing housing for older people, and increased access to information, technology, community equipment, aids and adaptations.

The Welsh Government's national strategies "Prosperity for All" (implemented in 2017) and "A Healthier Wales" (in 2019) has been influenced by this report, which has sharpened the role played by housing in supporting the wellbeing of older people. In relation to 'ageing in the right place' (Golant, 2008, 2015) the Welsh Government has expanded housing 'choice' and 'voice' through initiatives in association with Care-and-Repair where case workers are helping older people to formulate moving plans and small scale aids and adaptations have been available through the new "Enable" scheme as part of a help-to-stay policy. Since 2012, over £150 million has been invested to improve over 27,000 homes, reduce energy bills and help households to heat their homes at a more affordable cost. However, challenges remain in encouraging the private sector to develop housing in some areas of Wales, to ensure a choice of affordable homes that are age and eco sustainable (Pamment, Jenkins, Morgan, Williams, & Willmott, 2019).

For Wales, as part of the Housing and Ageing programme Minister for Housing and Regeneration, Rebecca Evans, noted that the Welsh Government supported partnership and collaboration between the health, social care and housing sectors. Future-proofing housing stock is part of a strategic program of capital investment with housing at its core (McCall et al., 2018).

2.3. Policy in England

It is now more than a decade since the publication of *Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods* (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2008). This was a game changer and set out the first ever national strategy on housing for older people in England. The Local Government Association suggests a shortfall of 400,000 well-designed, attractive accommodation for later living homes by 2035, and has called for a 'residential revolution' in planning and building suitable homes for an ageing population (Local Government Association, 2017). Recent planning guidance notes encourage local authorities to plan for accessible and adaptable hous-

ing for older and disabled people, including reference to the 'age friendly' HAPPI design principles (Ministry for Housing, Local Government and Communities, 2019). The UK Government has also launched a competition, Home of 2030, to drive innovation in the future provision of affordable, efficient and healthy green homes for all (HM Government, 2019).

The influential Housing our Ageing Population Panel for Innovation (HAPPI, n.d.) reports lay out a new foundation for 'care ready' homes that can adapt to accommodate the changing needs and aspirations of older people in urban and rural areas through a greater diversity of supply and quality design. This has been exemplified in a RIBA publication on age-friendly housing (Park & Porteus, 2018).

Within the overall UK context, the "Industrial Strategy: Grand Challenge" seeks to ensure that people can enjoy at least five extra healthy, independent years of life by 2035 (Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, 2019). This link between housing and health and wellbeing is vital, and it is recognised in the Innovate UK's (2019) Healthy Ageing Challenge; housing plays a significant preventative role in enabling people to age well, stay well and live well while, at the same time, reducing the system pressures on health and social care services.

3. Housing, Ageing and Place

The role of housing in supporting an ageing population to live independently has become a key theoretical and policy driver (Sixsmith & Sixsmith, 2008; Sixsmith, Fang, Woolrych, & Sixsmith, 2017) of the devolved nations. To achieve this, housing supports are needed that enable older adults to live independently, located in a community of choice and surrounded by services and amenities that meet the often complex and changing requirements of old age (Greasley-Adams, Robertson, Gibson, & McCall, 2017; Woolrych & Sixsmith, 2017). If such supports are not available, then ageing-in-place can be a negative experience (Sixsmith & Sixsmith, 2008). Much existing research and housing development has focused on the design of Lifetime Homes and Neighbourhoods and associated physical design guidelines, however the concentration on housing as 'bricks and mortar' has largely overlooked the psycho-social notion of home and its connectedness within the context of community. Taking this more holistic view, ageing in the right place (Golant, 2015) would require housing, home and community to support a sense of place and belonging by creating psychological, social and environmental supports that provide a viable environment in which to age (Phillips, Walford, & Hockey, 2011). Sense of place and belonging is articulated through the availability and accessibility of facilities and opportunities for active living, social participation and meaningful involvement in the community. Here, preserving autonomy, independence, empowerment and accessibility in terms of the provisions of

home and community are key goals. However, the over-65 age group has different needs across different tenures alongside structural inequalities that reduce their housing choices (McCall, Satsangi, & Greasley-Adams, 2019). This makes a clear housing strategy and supporting process for an ageing population particularly difficult, as housing itself needs to be integrated into wider policies (such as health, social care, technology, planning) and involves a complex set of multifaceted outcomes such as 'home,' independence, empowerment, belonging and wellbeing.

The inclusion of housing within integrated care frameworks recognises the importance of homes to people's wellbeing and the vital role that housing and home plays in improving people's health. Living a purposeful life and social participation are also important aspects of living well across the life course (Greasley-Adams et al., 2017; Low & Molzahn, 2007) with a degree of control over the residential environment being fundamental to ageing well in place (Cutchin, 2003). Therefore, putting older people at the heart of local authority decision-making around where they live should be encouraged to support better quality of life.

4. Participation and Co-Production

To understand the integrated role of housing and the needs of older people, research has begun to centralise the voices of older people themselves. Elements of representation, co-production and co-design methods have successfully produced insights into the priorities and resources existing within different communities (Greasley-Adams et al., 2017; Matthews et al., 2015). From this research, home and neighbourhood has been shown to contribute to a 'good' life in older age (Bowling et al., 2003; Greasley-Adams et al., 2017). However, as suggested earlier quality of life is impacted adversely if people age in a place where there is insufficient access to appropriate services, experience social isolation and/or live in housing that is physically unsuitable for their changing needs (Vanleerberghe, De Witte, Claes, Schalock, & Verte, 2017). In this way, housing, health and social care are inextricably linked in maintaining a good life in later years.

Co-production is a term that is increasingly used when discussing citizen engagement and is used as a model within the delivery of public services. It aims to create an equal and reciprocal relationship or exchange between service users and service providers (Realpe & Wallace, 2010). The overarching principles of co-production for public service reform in Scottish policy involve prioritising spending on prevention, public service providers working in partnership with communities, public services being built around people and communities, and focusing on continuous improvement (McGeachie & Power, 2015). In Wales, core principles of co-production in public services have been identified as individuals, families, communities and services working together

to design and deliver products and services (Phillips & Morgan, 2014), while in England the Local Government Association (2019) defines co-production as 'fundamentally about seeing people as assets…no longer passive recipients of services, but…equal partners in designing and delivering activities to improve outcomes.'

Co-production is now considered to be instrumental in improving services by both the Scottish Government and Scottish local authorities (Loeffler, Power, Bovaird, & Hine-Hughes, 2013). The Older People's Commissioner in Wales has produced guidance on how to embed co-production nationally and locally (Ageing Well in Wales, 2015; Older People's Commissioner for Wales, 2014a) as well as a toolkit for older people on how to engage effectively with local authorities (Older People's Commissioner for Wales, 2014b). In England, the value of co-produced approaches in service design and delivery is widely acknowledged in health and social care sectors (Department of Health London, 2010).

Collaborative ways of providing housing are becoming more commonplace to build community resilience through co-producing and co-creating locally driven housing solutions for older people (Stevens, 2016). This commitment to co-production is embedded in strategies for housing and older people (Scottish Government, 2011a, 2011b; Welsh Government, 2013). Mechanisms for capturing and evaluating such information are therefore necessary but can be difficult to execute in practice, especially when the issues are complex and require considerable thought beyond individual experience into future visualisation of possibilities. This was the inspiration for our 'Serious Game' methodology, which centralises the involvement of older people as essential voices amongst a range of stakeholders to explore perceptions of housing in addition to understanding expectations.

5. The Serious Game: Methodology

The innovative 'Serious Game' methodology was based on the design, development and facilitation of a face-to-face participatory game to explore through serious play the potential long-term impacts of different policies and decision-making processes behind it. Games are particularly good at synthesising complex issues, thereby making them more accessible to lay persons or non-experts. Looking at the development of 'Serious Games,' this can involve learning, promoting knowledge, skills, social skills and even behavioural change while also promoting an enjoyable experience (Boyle et al., 2016). This results in a co-production process, which Mitlin et al. (2019) argue is essential to generating insight to urban transformation as it addresses unequal power relationships. The project gained ethical approval from the University of Stirling on 29 March 2018 and adopted a comprehensive transdisciplinary approach. The approach is designed to transcend disciplinary perspectives by attending to knowledge integration, teamwork processes and working across sectoral boundaries to tackle real world problems (Boger

et al., 2017). The game is not a simulation, and so has a significant level of abstraction, but instead is designed to facilitate discussion and reflection. The project enabled participants to think through housing problems for older people, negotiating different stakeholder opinions and agendas to collectively integrate knowledge from academia, policy, and practice and lived experiences of home, housing and ageing to construct housing solutions based on consensus.

The game was collaboratively developed with games designer Stone Paper Scissors and initially piloted with the research team and then conducted in three workshops in 2018 (two games were played at each event), including with service providers (housing, health and social care professionals) in March, older people (mainly including people over 65 years of age, but also community representative groups and organisations) in April and policy makers (such as ministers, civil servants and experts and bodies who influence policy) in May. Overall results of the game were presented at a final conference event in July, where the recommendations were co-designed then shared via an online report (McCall et al., 2018). Participants were recruited via group networks, organisational invitations, social media and snowball sampling. The participants were from across the UK, but mainly Scotland. On average, 50 people attended each workshop with 80 attendees at the final conference, totalling over 200 policy makers, practitioners and service users.

5.1. The Serious Game

The game centres on a fictional town called Hopetown, which is set out on a large board-game-style map (the design was informed by literature, ageing and housing evidence, discussion with experts) and mirrors the layout of a typical small scale UK town. Hopetown was designed to be a generic small town, so participants could apply their own local and personalised knowledge (see Figure 1).

The game represents different areas/neighbourhoods with diverging environmental quality ratings, different housing types available (e.g., bungalows to supported living), rural and urban areas and supporting infrastructure (transport, roads etc). To stay in a home, a person either has to have enough personal income (green tile) or subsidy (blue tile). In some areas of the town certain housing types are unavailable but can be built and added by participants.

The aim of the game is to work together to improve the wellbeing of fictional older people in Hopetown. Each 'counter' (i.e., person) on the board had an individual name and wellbeing track (Figure 2). Wellbeing increased if older people were in appropriate housing, a lifetime home or had access to support services. Wellbeing decreased if people had to move, if they were placed in a lower quality environment and if they did not have access to appropriate services.

There are a range of people in this town (represented by counters with names, wealth, and well-being ratings; e.g., Figure 3). These counters could be moved by participants, or given services, or subsidised if their wealth was not enough to live in current housing.

The services available in the game ranged from care, fixed health services, community transport, housing adaptations and blank tiles for participants to add what they thought were priority services. Service providers had the chance to improve the overall environment for older people or the population in Hopetown, but each had a budgetary cost attached. Limited (and declining) funding was provided in each of the three rounds of the game by the policy maker group.

5.2. Playing the Serious Game

Participants in each workshop were randomly allocated to four groups with different roles and remits (policy makers, older people, developers and service providers).

Figure 1. Participants playing the 'Serious Game.'

Figure 2. Wellbeing track for people in Hopetown.

Figure 3. An example of a counter on the board representing a fictional character, Irene.

Each group had a designated facilitator, as well as a note taker drawn from the research team whose task it was to document the process through observational field notes.

The aim of the game is to work together across the four teams to improve the quality and wellbeing of the older individuals in the town. Each team have specific objectives and powers over the game board (see figure 4). However, to deliver those objectives each team also relies on negotiating with the other teams (for example, developers must have planning permission from policy

makers, service providers must have a budget to deliver services, policy makers must have approval from older people's team). Through this negotiation, insight is provided into participant priorities.

5.3. Data Collection

All data was recorded by the note takers and written up as observational notes and reflections (training and instructions for data capture were given for consistency).
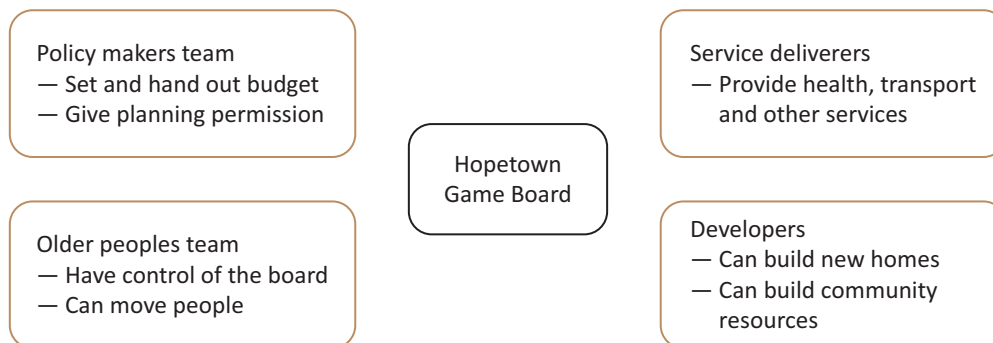

Figure 4. Four groups are allocated for each game: Policy makers, Service deliverers, Older People's team (who represent older people/community in Hopetown) and Housing Developers.

Data was also generated from written notes with associated reflections created by the note takers alongside blog summaries from participants at the end of each workshop.

5.4. Data Analysis

Taking a qualitative approach, notes were taken of the discussions between and across stakeholder groups and the rationale behind decisions made and solutions formulated constituted the project data. The data was collected, transcribed verbatim as appropriate, and then thematically analysed inductively going back and forward between data and theory using a reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2013). The deductive coding (implemented separately by two research team members using QSR nVivo) used the following guiding framework for analysis (Figure 5).

The data gathered was also coded inductively as key themes were constructed that went beyond the scope of the original framework, such as a theme on inequality. The findings and a summary report were presented at the final conference event in July 2018. Over 80 participants then co-designed a set of recommendations to help support delivery of policy and practice at the final conference event. The findings below refer to different team notes (older people, policy maker, service user group and developers' teams) in different workshops (either the practitioner, service user or policy maker focused workshops). In each workshop, games ran simultaneously, so there are multiples of each team (referred to as game 1 or 2 in each workshop).

6. Findings: Enabling Future Planning of Housing for Older People

Findings highlighted that service provision, policy making, development, social participation and meaningful involvement in the community are central to generating a sense of place. Several key interlinked strategic aims for ensuring that older people have adequate future housing emerged during the workshops: autonomy, independence, empowerment and accessibility in terms of housing provision.

However, the tensions between different group perspectives were highlighted in the negotiation process. For example, an experience from one of the older people's teams concerning the provision of community services was that although they did not wish for a community hub, policy makers developed it anyway without consultation. This indicated that it was very difficult to balance the wants, needs and expectations of all four groups. Trying to understand and negotiate with other sectors and to take on board their perspectives and different needs was challenging. Effective action in terms of policy and planning were hampered by the lack of knowledge and understanding of the diversity of the older population.

Instead, decision-makers in the game at times resorted to stereotyping and perceived wisdoms: As was commonly voiced amongst participants, 'all older people want to continue living in their own homes and neighbourhoods,' and older people's wellbeing was simply measured against their ability to stay living in their own homes, leaving the complexity of the concept of wellbeing undisclosed. There were also, however, instances of such simplistic discourses being challenged, with groups evolving and challenging each other on language and understandings.

In this process there were examples of good communication, but also of communication breakdown. This could occur between the policy makers and older people's team, as well as between developers and the rest of the teams. Service providers could be an ignored group within the game:

> Main challenge is having meaningful engagement with other stakeholders—we were neglected, until the very end when used as a stop gap, didn't realise we were needed so were ignored. (Practitioner workshop, game 1, service provider team)

There was constant negotiation over power and team dynamics, prioritising the perspectives of those with financial weight at the expense of other actors around the table, as exemplified in a dialogue among the older people's team in game 1:

Figure 5. Thematic framework for the Housing and Ageing programme.

Participant 1: Let's start with the most important team.

Participant 2: The people.

Participant 1: People with the money.

Similarly, developing partnerships predicated upon trust and reciprocity between stakeholders was a priority to discussing specific policy and practice interventions:

> There was a lot of discussion over everyone, every group stood round the table and argued. A lot of energy was used up during this round (round 1), and there was a failure to develop relationships built on trust and respect. (Policy maker's workshop, game 2, developer's team)

Many of the teams noted that they wanted more collaboration but said that time was restricted to do so with all stakeholders. Negotiation with developers regarding location of housing (need) versus best place for them to build (profit) was a barrier. The relationship with the developers and communication was an interesting and consistent challenge throughout the game:

> We approached the policy makers and they were extremely hostile to us. They insisted we have community consultation—but when asked if they had a vision or done any of their own consultation, they said their priorities were the community's priorities. (Policy maker's workshop, game 2, developer's team)

Positive outcomes for the game happened when groups worked together effectively to establish goals:

> Discussions were quite disorganised but mostly focused on co-creation. The developers discussed building a partnership with service providers to provide easy access to support for tenants. The need to keep people in their areas was also frequently discussed. (Policy maker's workshop, game 1, developer's team)

Here we see that there was a strong 'ageing-in-place' agenda applied by participants to the game. The powerful nature of collaboration came across very strongly. Co-production was discussed as an initial strategy, but this was seen as a challenge to implement.

The two main actions and strategic decisions that the groups decided on to tackle and promote the voices of older people were (1) collaboration in the decision making process and (2) devolving decision making power to the older people's group. The policy makers team saw this as a success:

> The team agreed that this was actually a wise decision and again they elected to give half of their budget to the older people, who in turn allocated it to the

service providers and the developers. The team allocated most of the money left over after spending on public works to the people. They did this because they felt the older people should have autonomy over their spending. (Practitioner workshop, game 2, policy makers team)

But from the older people's teams it was perceived to be negative at times as they interpreted the policy makers as trying to shirk responsibility for decisions and strategy. There was also the 'lip-service' attached to consulting the older people's groups. Many participants reflected that this mirrored real life. There was also miscommunication in the negotiation process:

> Player 4 goes to PM's [Policy Makers] table to request budget. PMs ask if the SPs [Service Providers] have consulted the Older People [OP] group to see what their needs are. Player 4 says they have (they haven't—so far the SP team hasn't engaged with the OP team). Player 4 re-joins SP table. Facilitator prompts group to consult with OP team but they don't. (Practitioner workshop, game 2, service providers team)

Participants took on actions, thinking and understandings and expected 'norms.' Because of this, policy makers and developers' groups dominated and consultation with older people could be tokenistic. It was difficult to come to a consensus within a group, and almost impossible to bring about a consensus between groups in the short time available for discussion and deliberation. When discussions around the table became too complex, some people disengaged and walked away. However, when the voices of older people were integrated this resulted in the wellbeing of the people of Hopetown going up:

> They all agree that hearing local voices is essential in order to understand where they would want to live, could afford to live, and what their wellbeing was. (Practitioner workshop, game 1, older peoples' team)

Decision-making was best when all groups were gathered around the table together. This can initially feel overwhelming for some participants, particularly the older people, but an integrated and collaborative approach provided the best outcomes for the older people in the game in terms of housing provision and wellbeing. What brought the group together was a consensus and a focus on place:

> We want developers to keep people in their areas—'retention of place.' (Policy maker's event, game 2, service providers)

> Ageing in the right place, not ageing-in-place...again stressing that infrastructure is key to successful ageing communities. (Policy maker's event, game 1, developer's team)

The findings indicated two key elements: (1) True co-production and collaboration was challenging but had the best outcomes; and (2) different groups of stakeholders found consensus with a place-based approach through collaboration, which could break down barriers in language and link diverse priorities.

7. Housing for Older People: "How Do You Plan for the Future while Addressing Immediate Chaos"?

The challenges between establishing a consensus between groups also highlighted a conflict between resources given to addressing the immediate needs and desires of the current population of older people, and those of future generations of older people. One of the frequent tensions in the early game iterations was whether to strategically fund preventative services, or to fund transport to a central hub or to locate services in the neighbourhoods, or to provide home-based services. Strategies had to be revised as individuals' needs became more pressing. This was largely due to the real impact of decision-making in the game: people became homeless or sick. One player in the older people's group commented: 'We've got homeless people all over the place!'

Preventing this therefore became the driving force for a lot of decision-making in the second and third round. Visionary strategies got lost in this process, with a participant asking: 'How do you plan while also addressing immediate chaos?'

The game was open enough that any future could be created. The game allowed players to envision what a more equitable society could look like, to implement any desired strategy or service. The following exchange illustrates, however, that for the most part players remained grounded in and limited by 'reality' in their vision for the future:

Participant 1: I believe everyone should be on the same standard of housing

Participant 2: That's not how it works

Participant 1: Aye, I know that's not how it works.

There was constant negotiation between the strategic aims of improving wellbeing, quality of life, etc. with dealing with the current issues of people's incomes not being adequate to house them in their current home and homelessness. One group of service providers found themselves addressing the higher priority needs of older adults, with fewer resources left over to tackle more preventative health and social care agenda:

The team had started focusing on prevention, and this was going well, but then [they] managed to get some more money to fund services for the most in need and in decline—preventative [measures] now forgotten

and can't be funded. (Practitioners workshop, game 2, service providers)

Groups found it a challenge to be change agents and think beyond the micro and individual level. More time was needed to develop a long-term sustainability plan to engage other third-sector groups. With a lack of understanding and recognition of conflicting challenges it was very easy to lose sight of person-centeredness.

No group tackled inequality even though it was raised as a specific issue as it was both an immediate challenge and needed a full strategic focus. Even with initial strategic decisions that prioritised tackling inequality, people had to react to the current needs, demands and chaos:

While subsidies focused on the lower income older people, the service provision (e.g., advice) seemed to be targeted at more affluent older people (e.g., financial advice on re-mortgaging/equity release). Those on lower incomes were much more likely to have to move house/neighbourhood than the more affluent who were supported to remain in their affluent village/neighbourhood. (Policy makers event, game 1, older people's team)

Visions are compromised because councils are always dealing with more immediate problems and conflicting priorities of the different stakeholders. (Stakeholder workshop, game 2, policy maker's team)

Decided to focus on community voice—but these community services were the first to go once the budget was tight, which the team felt was realistic. (Stakeholder workshop, game 1, older people's team)

Another conflict was felt between the policy makers' whole city approach to addressing inequalities, and the other groups' primary concern with improving a particular neighbourhood for the older people living there, or area-based interventions. However, all groups agreed that more investment was needed in the more deprived areas, and that the more affluent areas would look after themselves—no policy attention was needed in these areas:

During general chat it seems that the main concern of the older people and service provider teams is to develop/improve the lower quality areas. Policy makers are unwilling to spend a lot of money in a small area. Would rather distribute more widely. There seems to be a tension between longer term strategic thinking and short-term reactions to older people unable to afford where they currently live. Time runs out before round is resolved! (Practitioner workshop, game 2, service provider team)

Inequality was a very consistent theme, with groups motivated by values such as investment in the poorer ar-

eas of town and discussions around equity and wealth. However, although these values were discussed and expressed the reality of the game did not challenge the inequality in the town. There were key environmental investments in some areas, but the vast majority of games ended up subsiding those to live at home in wealthy areas.

It took a lot of effort and time to gather sufficient information to attempt to predict the future housing (and care) needs of our ageing society. Decisions could be made based on insufficient facts or unreliable evidence. In the game, decisions were made on little information and players were 'hoping for the best.' However, even when strategies are based on a wide range of factual information, those predictions came with a degree of uncertainty. Enabling a place-based community focus was difficult to plan for as the focus was on immediate needs:

> Older people [group] want classic social work, helping the people worst off. [They said:] "Stabilise those worst off" and full assessment but my team are depressed by this particularly 1 [member of the group] who is keen on prevention….Reacting more than planning by the end… (Practitioner event, game 2, service provider team)

Therefore, although there was scope to tackle any challenge within the 'Serious Game,' strategic thinking for the future was still a key challenge for participants. Immediate housing needs took priority, and structural changes—such as tackling inequalities and planning prevention services—were side-lined as other priorities such as preventing homelessness took the groups' attention.

8. Discussion

The findings give key insight into how co-production is evolving within different methodologies. In this particular context, older people themselves were the key service users and stakeholders central to the co-production process. What the 'Serious Game' was able to do was create scenarios that mirrored key power relationships and negotiations. It also allowed service users to take on and understand different roles—such as developers, service providers, policy makers—and engage with the barriers and restraints to planning that they face. The findings above show how central the older people's groups were and reinforced the importance of partnership working for positive outcomes in Hopetown. However, it challenges the idea that co-production can be an equal and reciprocal relationship (Stevens, 2016). The 'Serious Game' methodology and setup provided a scenario to show that in these power relationships, priorities are continuously negotiated and difficult to implement. It allows room for realistic engagement with service users with scope for clear influence in decision-making processes hand in hand with policy makers, service providers and developers.

The interactions between the different groups and participants saw challenges to conventional thinking, assumptions and norms. The stakeholders playing the game that began from different perspectives were engaged in a learning process, which saw the language they were using evolve and become more nuanced to consider different perspectives.

The overall conclusion and focus on versatility and flexibility in housing also linked to the finding that there was, overall, limited vision in regard to planning for the future of housing and ageing. The 'Serious Game' set out a fictional town, and participants tended to be more critically engaged than visionary. Although there were no restraints as to what could be implemented, the overall planning and implementation tended to stay within the confines of current housing practice and policy. Clear conflicts in the findings that participants were negotiating included:

1. Tackling inequality vs staying at home.
2. Targeted services for individuals vs improving overall environment.
3. Ambitious future focused strategies vs immediate need.
4. Developing on a needs-based analysis vs new innovative housing developments.
5. Proactive budgeting for services vs devolved power to older peoples group.

The final co-designed recommendations saw participants try to address this, such as by linking housing to wider structures in health and housing through a commissioner for ageing. However, a consensus of a future vision needs to be built through ongoing communication, discussion and prioritisation of planning processes. This would mean people investing in the important perception that we are all stakeholders in ageing.

Current restraints in implementing visionary housing and ageing strategies were shown clearly in the failure to prioritise and implement tackling inequality in Hopetown. Tackling both inequality and enabling the desire for people to stay at home seemed to be a key challenge. Although all groups were led by redistributive visions, especially at the beginning of the 'Serious Game,' this was always circumvented by the reality of keeping people at home as long as possible. Strategies that encouraged equality and focused on poorer areas in the town were almost universally abandoned as groups battled to address the 'immediate chaos' of addressing pressing needs such as homelessness. This suggests the current approach to housing and ageing could reinforce structural inequalities in the ageing population and does not facilitate planning for the future.

9. Conclusion

The Housing and Ageing programme shows that creating future housing for older people has to include visionary

individuals and groups capable of an integrated service approach. Future strategy must have a multi-pronged approach: on the one hand servicing current needs, and on the other creating ambitious strategies that centralise tackling structural barriers. Strategic thinking for the future has to be prioritised, and cross boundaries between key services. By mainstreaming ageing into all other policy areas, some of this vision can also be implemented in social policy, housing, planning, health and social care. In this way, a place-based approach could support awareness that everyone is a stakeholder in ageing (not just older people, or particular services).

Placing housing at the heart of service integration is potentially a way to overcome the stagnation in a 'woefully underprepared' housing sector for ageing (Lords Select Committee, 2013; UK Parliament, 2017). The narratives and perceptions relating to the increasing challenges and conflict over resources highlight the need to plan for the future as well as addressing immediate chaos. The creative approach taken in the programme shows that through negotiation, co-production and breaking down barriers between services such as housing, health and social care can support planning for the longer term and support investment in early intervention and prevention. The 'Serious Game' worked well in breaking down language barriers and silos between stakeholders and services and we recommend developing this on a wider scale. Working from a place-based approach, such as with Hopetown, enables us to consider a more holistically what supported people to age-well-in-the-right--place and live in(ter)dependently.

We believe a place- and housing-based approach to ageing can open avenues for service integration. The most important step to making that happen would be breaking down the barriers we saw between policy makers, service providers, developers and people living in communities. A unifying focus on ageing that can work across silos and boundaries could support more integration, partnership, collaboration and inclusion, bringing everyone together for the essential work of preparing for ageing, and seeing house and home as central within communities.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Article

Who's Homeless and Whose Homeless?

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Abstract

What does the persistent construction of 'the homeless' and the revitalised term 'our homeless' include, imply, and exclude in Swedish political debate? And how is it politically and morally related to other houseless groups in the country? These questions are approached through an analysis of minutes from the Swedish Parliament 2015–2019. Inspired by Simmel's (1908/1965) definition of 'the poor' as those who get (or would get) public assistance as poor, I claim that in Swedish political discourse, '(our) homeless' comprise only those to whom the society acknowledges a responsibility to give shelter, thereby excluding the tens of thousands of people without homes that are temporarily accommodated by other authorities, private providers or individuals—or not at all. Although official definitions are housing-related, migrants without homes tend to be defined outside the 'homeless' concept, as well as from the municipalities' responsibilities. I will argue that the reasons for this are institutional: regulations and their interpretation, coupled with traditions to care for only 'our' people which, in turn, are fortified by current nationalist sentiments.

Issue

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1. Introduction

Many years ago, when I went through old records of poor relief in the 19th century in a little Swedish town I was surprised to see the consistency of the list of recipients. The same widows, disabled men and orphans received alms by the church by Midsummer and Christmas every year. These people were called 'our poor.' When poor relief in 1848 was regulated as an obligation of the secular Poor Board, there was initially some discussion on whether the 'regular poor' would continue to get poor relief, even though they sometimes did not qualify according to the new legislation. Simmel (1908/1965) referred to this kind of obligation as 'moral induction,' i.e., the duty to continue to give alms to someone one has habitually given to previously.

Another common distinction in the 19th century concerned local connectedness. At that time, the Poor Board was obliged to provide for the local poor, but not for the 'non-residential' ones, who could be expelled or transferred to their hometowns. This practice was common in all European cities as a means to delimit the municipal costs for the poor and the number of beggars, as well as a measure to keep contagious diseases out, ever since the 16th century (Geremek, 1994). It is today reflected in the European refugee policies, where a residence permit is a minimum requirement for access to housing and shelter.

These considerations tell us something about the weight of institutionalised conceptions of poverty, poor people and obligations to assist them, and I will argue that similar tendencies prevail regarding homelessness today: institutions, comprising both traditions and legal-rational definitions, determine homeless people's rights and entitlements and, by extension, who will be seen as homeless.

While the balance and dominance of individual versus structural causes of homelessness have been debated continuously in political fora, in planning for inter-

ventions and prevention, as well as in research (see, e.g., Bullen, 2015; Fitzpatrick, 2005; Neale, 1997; Somerville, 2013), the *institutional* causes and perspectives are less highlighted. These include what kind of housing situations, citizenship, national and local belonging, etc., that qualify a person for being counted, regarded and treated as 'homeless' in a specific local and historical context.

This article aims to investigate the meanings and political use of the term 'homeless,' and in particular 'our homeless.' I will argue that even though official definitions of 'homeless' are rational and based on objective housing situations, the selection of people who are actually counted, assisted and included as homeless in the political debate is related to the traditional view of the poor, as well as to current nationalist sentiments.

In his classic essay "The Poor," Georg Simmel (1908/1965) reflects on the definition and position of the poor and concludes that "what makes one poor is not the lack of means. The poor person, sociologically speaking, is the individual who receives assistance because of this lack of means" (p. 140). As such, the poor are related to society in a way similar to the stranger: he is both outside (confronting it), and inside it (a member of the collective). Being confronted and an object of actions by a community, however, is also a kind of relationship, and hence "a particular kind of being inside" (Simmel, 1908/1965, p. 135). Simmel further highlights that the obligation to provide for the poor does not imply a corresponding right to poor relief. Instead, the Poor Board is accountable to the tax-payers; regulation and rule-bound services are developed to satisfy this constituency, rather than the wanting poor. Accordingly, public assistance is aimed at preventing trouble and unrest, rather than at the poor as individuals. He asks: "Where do the poor belong?" Of course, they may be members of a family, an occupation or a church. "But if they are no more than poor, where do they belong?" (p. 127).

The problem of different definitions of homelessness has attracted substantial research interest over the years (Benjaminsen, Busch-Geertsema, Filipovic Hrast, & Pleace, 2014; Busch-Geertsema, Culhane, & Fitzpatrick, 2016; Jacobs, Kemeny, & Manzi, 2004; Sahlin, 1992) but here, I will primarily focus on their political functions and implications. Here, I will take Simmel's definition and delimitation of the poor as a point of departure when discussing the definition of 'homeless,' as well as the expression 'our homeless' in political debates. What does it mean, when and why is it used, and who is included in or excluded from this term? While this wording might be specific for Sweden, the practical distinctions between homeless groups are probably not (see Baptista, Benjaminsen, & Pleace, 2015).

My empirical data are primarily excerpts from the Swedish Parliament (Sveriges Riksdag, n.d.-a, n.d.-b, n.d.-c) September 2015–December 2019. Parliament debates and committee reports are important data in political and social science research and frequently subjected to discourse analysis (Davidsson, 2010; Kronick &

Rousseau, 2015; Verkuyten & Nooitgedagt, 2019). Right-wing and racist discourses, in particular, have been studied in several countries since the 1980s (Fairclough, 2001, 2003; Potter & Wetherell, 1987; van Dijk, 1998). In this study, I make use of a mixture of discourse analytical tools and pay special attention to implicit moral accounts and judgements.

Data and methods used in this article will be further presented in the following section. Who is regarded or referred to as homeless by concerned public authorities in Sweden will be presented next, in Section 3, "Who's Homeless," which includes brief information on other houseless groups of people, who are named and counted differently and targeted by other policies and authorities. The section "Whose homeless?" is about belonging: who—if any one—is ascribed responsibility for accommodating people without homes. The fifth section, "If not Homeless—What?" deals with how houseless groups that are not called homeless are characterised and positioned in the political debate. Apart from the summary, the concluding discussion returns to Simmel's claim that definitions are institutionally determined by obligations, while at the same time reflecting and affecting our thinking and feeling about vulnerable groups and their entitlements.

2. Data and Method

The Swedish Parliament has 349 members, distributed across eight political parties in proportion to the results of the election that takes place in September every fourth year; the latest were in 2014 and 2018. The Social-Democrats (S) and the Green Party (MP) have formed a minority government since 2014. However, after the 2018 election, another S-MP Government was accepted by the Parliament only after an agreement with the Liberals (L) and the Center Party (C) in January 2019. The new government promised then, inter alia, to abstain from any cooperation with the Left Party (V) or the Sweden Democrats (SD).

In the 2018 election, the extreme-right party SD grew substantially (from 49 to 62 mandates) and has a pivotal role in the assembly. After the last election, it has occasionally scored as the most popular party in opinion polls. However, because of its aggressive xenophobic or 'migration-critical' policy, this party has—as yet—no close allies in the Parliament, although it has approached the two conservative parties: the Moderates (M) and the Christian-Democrats (KD).

The parliament year runs from September to June. For this research, I have studied various kinds of Parliament documents from September 2015 to December 2019, covering 4.5 parliament years and parts of two mandate periods. Most materials for this study were gathered from the website www.riksdagen.se, which contains verbatim transcriptions of all debates, discussions and decisions in the Parliament, as well as motions (i.e., written suggestions to the Parliament by

its members), written questions and interpellations to ministers in the Government (and their replies), and reports and opinions from the parliament committees. It is possible to search for specific words in certain kinds of documents for a specific period.

The word 'homeless*' (in Swedish: *hemlös**) was found in 324 documents during this time, whereof 70 were chapters in committee reports and 22 propositions from the Government. Of the rest, 80 were minutes from the Parliament, 112 motions and about 30 interpellations and questions to ministers and their replies. I opened all of them and excluded a few as irrelevant, for instance, if 'homeless/ness' referred to consequences of war or natural catastrophes in other countries, runaway cats or notes on postponed debates. I copied the rest, saved them in word files and read through them several times before subjecting them to a more systematic, qualitative analyse. Since I was especially interested in how '(our) homeless' was applied, defined and delimited implicitly or explicitly, I singled out several posts for closer analysis. The aim of qualitative analysis, especially in an explorative study like this one, is not to determine the frequency of a phenomenon or the validity of a claim, but rather to explore varieties and nuances of its meaning. To get an impression of the contexts in which the expression 'our homeless' was used elsewhere, I also searched for the term on Google and in news media archives online.

On riksdagen.se, minutes from Parliament debates are identified with date and number and divided into sections reflecting the topics of the discussion. Each speech, in turn, has a heading with the number of the post, or entry, and the speaker's name and party belonging. The first post of the day gets number 1, and the following ones are numbered continuously, regardless of the topic. References to the quotes presented in this article comprise the number of the post, name and party of the speaker, and the date of the discussion.

As recommended by, for instance, Jørgensen and Phillips (2000), I have formed my package of discourse analytical tools, adjusted to this kind of material and research questions. As I am interested in political distinctions and categorisations of homeless people, I have looked for *contrast structures*, a concept coined by Dorothy Smith (1978) in a famous article where she showed how the deviant or strange might be constructed through contrasting them to the 'normal' ones in a narrative. In political debates, speakers tend to start by presenting 'facts' to motivate the urge, plea or call for action that ends their posts. *Modality*—that is, to what extent the speaker/writer seems to agree with and be certain of the factuality of a statement, or presents it as a possibility or an opinion, respectively—is an analytical instrument elaborated by critical discourse analyst Norman Fairclough (1992, 2001, 2003). *Agency*—who is made accountable or credited for a situation, and if any agent at all is implied—is another tool gathered from the same method school (Fairclough, 1992, 2001).

Accounts (Scott & Lyman, 1968) refers to how speakers excuse or justify something they have been (or fear that they will be) accused for. Just like blaming, this is a common device in political debates. *Subject positions*, i.e., how individuals position themselves and others in relation to each other, to a problem, or to society, is another useful analytical tool (Davies & Harré, 1990; Fairclough, 2001; Laclau & Mouffe, 1985). It is employed by a wide range of discourse analysts, regardless of their main affiliation. For instance, homeless people can be positioned as 'one of us,' as victims of the market, as 'deserving poor,' miserable losers—or as a burden or even a threat to society. *Chains of equivalence* (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985) or *lists* (Fairclough, 2001) refer to the repeated enumeration of attributes or phenomena, which shapes the reader's/listener's associations. Since politicians participate in debates to argue for an opinion or an action, these tools can also be used deliberately as rhetorical means.

3. Who's Homeless?

Municipalities in Sweden are obliged to plan for housing provision for their inhabitants and to see to it that no one within their borders suffers. The individual is entitled to assistance to be assured of a reasonable standard of living. However, there is no social housing in Sweden, no enforceable right to housing, and homelessness is not defined in any legislation.

3.1. Official Definitions

Since 1993, the National Board of Health and Welfare (NBHW) counts homeless persons, 18 years or older, a week in April every sixth year. Its current definition of homelessness is partly influenced by the ETHOS definition (see FEANTSA, 2006), which departs from the actual housing situation. Four such situations are defined as 'homeless': "roofless/emergency shelter"; "staying in institutions with no home by discharge"; sublease contract with social services; and private, short-term lodging (NBHW, 2017, p. 7). The mapping comprises persons with citizenship or a residence permit in Sweden who are open cases with the local social services, care institutions or NGOs. By this definition and its explicit elaboration, asylum-seekers, undocumented migrants and "persons from the rest of Europe who reside in the municipality but lack anchorage/rootedness there (EU/ESS-third country citizens)" (NBHW, 2017, p. 13) are excluded.

Comparisons between countries, municipalities, or over time are complicated by the fact that the recorded number of people with a certain problem is related to the number of services offered, resulting in a higher number of homeless people being counted in cities and countries with a great number of shelter places than in places where no or few homeless services are provided—the so-called service statistics paradox (Busch-Geertsema et al., 2016; Habitat, 2000; Tipple & Speak, 2005).

More importantly, the results of mappings and counting are affected by the choice of survey respondents and the ways municipalities are organised. Local and national counts both primarily target persons who are viewed as entitled to assistance to accommodation through social services, and when guidelines for such assistance change, so do the statistics. Today, a common interpretation of the Social Services Act is that the social authorities have no obligation to provide accommodation for adults who are 'only' homeless, or for whom other agencies are responsible. As a result of this institutional delimitation, homeless people counted through the local authorities or NGOs often have additional problems (e.g., with substance abuse or mental health).

3.2. Other Houseless Categories

Four large groups of people born abroad are excluded from regular local and national homelessness mappings even if their housing situations would be defined as homelessness according to the NBHW.

The Migration Agency is responsible for *asylum-seekers'* accommodation and subsistence. In January 2020, 40,312 persons were registered in the reception system. Of these 42% were staying in reception centres ('ABO') and 55% in private accommodation ('EBO'; Migration Agency statistics, 2020). The latter group is usually lodging with relatives and acquaintances, often in overcrowded conditions. They get no accommodation allowance and in certain residential areas, they may also be deprived of their allowance for daily subsistence.

Refugees who have been granted residence permits and are registered in a municipality are called 'newly arrived' for the first couple of years (the establishment period). Previous EBO households often remain under similar conditions as when waiting for asylum, while former ABO-residents since 2016 are assigned to municipalities that are expected to settle them permanently and are obliged by law to accommodate them for at least two years. Even if their housing conditions are deficient and insecure, they are not regarded or counted as 'homeless.'

Citizens of other EU/EES-countries without work in Sweden are allowed to stay in the country for three months, but no central or local authority is obliged to see to it that 'vulnerable EU-citizens' have accommodation. Since Romania and Bulgaria became members of the EU in 2007, several people from these countries have come to Sweden to beg. Surveys estimate their number to be 4,500–5,000 ("Antalet utsatta EU-migranter," 2019). Although a few charities and NGOs in the big cities, sometimes with limited municipal subsidies, have arranged night shelters and provisional facilities for hygiene, rest, and food for these migrants, they are generally left to themselves, staying in tents, caravans, cars or sheds in circumstances that could be categorised as sleeping rough. They are not entitled to regular social services or shelter.

EU-citizens can be rejected before three months have passed if they have "shown to be an unreasonable burden to the welfare system according to the Social Services Act" (SALAR, 2014, p. 2). Since this group is part of the same European Community but not registered as Swedish inhabitants, its situation is similar to 'the alien or non-residential poor' and the vagrants in the medieval European city-states (Geremek, 1994), who were the first ones to be excluded, punished and sometimes physically expelled when towns and cities regulated begging.

Because of the high number of rejected asylum-applications in recent years, the number of *undocumented migrants* is assumed to be several tens of thousands. Many are quite well-anchored in municipalities where they may have lived and worked for many years (see, e.g., Holgersson, 2011). Nevertheless, the police are expected to expel people whose asylum applications are rejected or who enter Sweden without the right documents or without applying for asylum.

'Structurally homeless' people, whose lack of homes is appreciated to be caused only by poverty or shortage of affordable housing, are in some cities not eligible for homeless accommodation but may get temporary shelter in emergency cases. The fact that the vast majority of structurally homeless families come from abroad confirms the tendency to exclude non-Swedish people without homes from the 'homeless,' as Simmel would define this word, i.e., from those who (should) get assistance as homeless.

4. Whose Homeless?

When Simmel asked where the poor belonged, he referred to who was responsible for providing them with support and relief. The formal definitions and categorisations of people without homes are in part related to authorities' official obligations, but in the public debate, boundaries are also drawn between 'ours' and other homeless. The latter may be declared to be somebody else's homeless, but sometimes it is left open if anybody at all is responsible for them.

4.1. 'Our Homeless'

'Our,' like 'belonging,' has a dual connotation of property and community. It is sometimes aimed at underlining ownership and implies exclusion, as in the following post:

> People exploit the free movement in the EU to come here and support themselves through begging….It is a very bad solution for all parties involved that poor people from other countries are begging on our streets and outside our shops. (Post 4, Mikael Eskilandersson, SD, 2017, May 17)

By emphasising that streets and shops are *ours*, this speaker indicates that the poor foreigners are transgressing, illegally staying in places that are not theirs.

Being someone's property is associated to protection and care but may also entail subordination, while belong-

ing to a group, a 'we,' connotes to inclusion and solidarity. These meanings of 'our homeless' will be highlighted first. Next, I will explore how homelessness in the public debate is being associated with other individual problems and, finally, what functions this expression may fulfil for the political opposition.

4.1.1. Our Protégés and Friends

The expression 'our homeless' is sometimes used by NGOs, especially by charity organisations. In such a context, 'our' has a somewhat paternalistic flavour and connotes to protection, but at times also to nationalism. When blamed for only providing soup and Christmas presents to "Swedish citizens" and for being connected to the extreme right party (SD), the leader and founder of the organisation Vid din sida (By your side), declared that her only focus was to "help our homeless pensioners" (Skoglund, 2019). In recent years, SD, in particular, has used this expression in Parliament debates and statements, as well as in motions. In a debate article, journalist Carl Öström (2016) warns against this party's possible plan to put refugees' and asylum-seekers' needs against the ones of Swedish homeless:

> Hasse is a homeless Swede and has spent the last night on commuter trains….Naturally, people's indignation about newly arrived refugees' temporary sleeping places upsets Hasse and other homeless people. It is about standard—what is regarded as unacceptable for refugees, is commonplace for the homeless. (p. 6)

Note that the author himself distinguishes between 'refugees' and 'homeless.' Later, he argues that it is "about time for other political parties to revise their treatment of our homeless" (Öström, 2016, p. 6).

'Our homeless' often translates into 'homeless Swedes.' A debate article with the heading "Who Engages in Homeless Swedes?" had a similar argument:

> A generous Swedish refugee policy provides many advantages. We show solidarity and compassion, enrich and internationalise our society, make our population younger and improve our demographics. But if we do not take concrete, effective measures for our own, already vulnerable groups we will add fuel to xenophobia and antagonism grows. (Swärd & Eriksson, 2015)

None of these texts argues against better provisions for non-Swedish people without homes, and 'refugees' constitutes one of the 'groups of homeless people' in the last quote, but they are nevertheless discursively excluded from 'our' homeless or groups.

4.1.2. Substance Abuse, Misery—But not Crime

Combinations of attributes that appear so often that one of them gives immediate associations to the others con-

stitute 'chains of equivalence' (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985) or 'lists' (Fairclough, 2001). Although the context and syntax may help to define the relations between the words, such as if one property causes, includes or is caused by the other, the nature of this relationship remains obscure while the association is consolidated. Not least in the Parliament debates, 'homelessness' is combined with several other problem terms and qualities representing misery:

> Because of substance abuse, mental illness, debts, insufficient economy, relational problems etc., about 35,000 people in Sweden are homeless. (Post 32, Sofia Modigh, KD, 2017, March 16)

> An NGO…working with people who have ended up in homelessness, substance abuse, psychiatric problems or several parts of this simultaneously. (Post 55, Roland Utbult, KD, 2017, March 22)

> The substance abuse policy…has seriously reinforced stigmatisation and exclusion. It's a lot about shame, guilt, punishment, refusing clean syringes, refusing care and treatment, deficient social care, homelessness. (Post 31, Karin Rågsjö, V, 2016, June 16)

In the first quote, homelessness is presented as a result of other individual problems, in the second as coexisting or alternating with these problems and in the third as caused by faulty drug policy, but they all underline the association of homelessness with individual problems, especially substance abuse.

Although 'homeless' is often combined with drug abuse, it is not connected to crime. On the contrary, homelessness is sometimes clearly dissociated from criminality. This is from a debate on punishment:

> Almost all these criminals live on welfare today. None of them is homeless or has to commit a crime to get an income or their daily food. (Post 47, Adam Marttinen, SD, 2016, December 7)

> There are no homeless criminals today, but these persons [the criminals] have, in most cases, an apartment… (Post 49, Adam Marttinen, SD, 2016, December 7)

Note the objective modality—this is presented as facts, not as estimates or personal opinions. By presenting homelessness and criminality as mutually exclusive conditions, this speaker seems to argue that criminals deserve no compassion and, indirectly, that homeless people do.

4.1.3. Homelessness as Signifying Government Failure

In Parliament, 'our homeless' may be used to underline a national duty in contrast to other demands and commit-

ments, as in the following post from a debate about the fee to the EU:

> The number of homeless people is increasing. Mental health is declining among young women. Cancer patients die while waiting for surgery. We have blasts, shootings, executions. Let us secure our own streets before we build roads in other countries. Let's warm our homeless people before sending tax money to the EU. Let's give our elderly food before we fight injustices in Europe. Let's first save Sweden, before we save the world. (Post 26, Dennis Dioukarev, SD, 2019, December 18)

While he places himself somewhat above the listeners, like a preacher addressing his parish, this speaker rhetorically lists social problems neglected by the Government to the benefit of the EU and the rest of the world. Our streets, our homeless, our elderly and Sweden are all positioned as something we should care for in the first hand.

The SD's political goal is to stop refugee immigration, which is seen as the cause of domestic homelessness. In the following quote, the same speaker gives his point through comparing the sheer numbers of homeless people (whose difficulties are emphasised with concrete pictures) to the number not of human migrants, but of 'residence permits':

> We talk about 107,000 residence permits—there are 30,000 homeless people in Sweden. They sleep on park benches and stand in food queues. Where is the justice in this? (Post 45, Dennis Dioukarev, SD, 2018, December 12)

Homelessness is highlighted as a symptom of government failure by other political parties with other agendas, too. The following excerpt is from a Liberal's argument for deregulated rents and more owner-occupied dwellings:

> I can guarantee that people are not homeless in Oslo, Copenhagen, Helsinki and Reykjavik….Go for study visits in Oslo, Copenhagen and Helsinki and see for yourself whether people are homeless there. They are not….It is, in practice, ever so easy to get housing in Oslo or Copenhagen. (Post 127, Robert Hanna, L, 2016, March 23)

Note the objective modality regarding the non-existence of homelessness and easy access to housing in other countries' capitals ("people are not homeless," "they are not"), which is rather underlined by the subjective additions ("I can guarantee"; "see for yourself").

In summary, '(our) homeless' is generally used for homeless Swedish residents who are mentioned with a certain degree of compassion, sometimes reinforced by combining and integrating the term with other in-

dividual problems, resulting in an image of miserable, helpless, maybe old people, worthy of sympathy, pity and help. This impression is further strengthened by the fact that they, unlike other houseless groups, are not associated to—and occasionally clearly dissociated from—criminality. As homelessness is an indisputable problem, the term is also used rhetorically to indicate the Government's failure to protect, care for and house its citizens.

4.2. Other Countries' Homeless

So where do the homeless belong, if they are not ours? If 'homeless' only refers to the target groups of the municipal social services, who is responsible for accommodating other people with similar deficient housing situations?

In Parliament, as well as in many public declarations, the responsibility for homeless people from other countries is often explicitly placed on the countries of origin, like in the following statement by the organisation for municipalities and regions, SALAR (2015, p. 2):

> The individuals who beg in Sweden are a result of the discrimination against Roma people in Romania and Bulgaria. SALAR thinks that international cooperation must be reinforced in order to put pressure on the concerned countries to take responsibility for their citizens.

'Vulnerable EU-citizens' are repeatedly discussed in Parliament, but not because of their homelessness. Rather, they are positioned either as acting subjects (see below) or as victims of their home country's neglect.

> Several of the EU member countries do not do enough to support their citizens. Instead, they continue to discriminate against and force citizens—especially Roma people—to lasting exclusion, where the only alternative becomes to go to countries where there is an opportunity to earn a little for themselves or for those who remain at home. (Post 10, Ola Johansson, C, 2017, May 17)

Note that homelessness is not mentioned in these quotes, only citizenship, ethnicity, begging and discrimination in the countries of origin. Even though beggars from other EU-countries are indeed homeless when in Sweden, and this situation is described, they are rarely ascribed this attribute. The point made is that Swedish authorities are not responsible for other countries' citizens.

4.3. Nobody's Homeless

This section is about two related phenomena: First, the tendency to pass a given responsibility on to other actors or institutions and, secondly, the fact that problems

caused by the market tend to be left without any political measure if these imply interventions in property rights. In a neoliberal society, which supports free markets of labour, housing and capital and where the individuals' free choice and responsibility for their situation are underlined, no statutory body is accountable for market failures.

4.3.1. The Dislocated Newly-Arrived

Although municipalities have the ultimate responsibility to see to it that those people who stay within its borders do not suffer and are obliged to receive and accommodate newly-arrived refugees who are assigned to them by the Migration Agency, several municipalities try to pass over these responsibilities to others. Many of them require as a condition for accommodation that the assigned refugees seek and accept housing of all kinds throughout the country, and evict them after two years if they fail. Even before two years have passed, some place their assigned refugees in neighbouring municipalities that are expected to provide accommodation and support, if needed, when the state allowances end.

The news agency TT has reported that several newly-arrived homeless people have been dislocated from Stockholm to municipalities in the north of Sweden ("Dumpad I Kramfors," 2019). In January 2020, the chair of the councils in 113 (of 290) municipalities met with the Minister of Public Administration to complain about the 'social dumping' of unemployed refugees. This tendency was previously highlighted in Parliament through a written question on "Export of socially vulnerable people":

> Several homeless persons from the Stockholm area claim that they have been forced by various social service administrations to move and to sign leases in, for instance, Hagfors [municipality] if they want continued support from the social services….The pattern is that one moves from larger cities at the end of the establishment period to smaller municipalities that already have a tough situation regarding unemployment and integration. What measures do you intend to take to overcome the problem of exporting socially vulnerable people to smaller municipalities? (Written question 2018/19:702 by Mikael Dahlqvist, S)

While the social services in Stockholm are positioned as the acting perpetrator, and the minister is urged to act, both the small municipalities and the dislocated refugees are positioned as victims of this city's strategy. Note that the speaker called the latter homeless, but the minister (from the same party) to whom the question was addressed did not. She answered that although it is not acceptable that municipalities pass on their responsibilities to others or force people to move, "the Government is prevented from having views on how a municipality should act in an individual case or giving instructions on how laws and other regulations should be interpreted"

(Lena Hallengren, S, 2019, June 12). The minister's account was an excuse—she could not intervene—but at the same time, a justification—these people were not the Government's responsibility.

So, although they have residence permits and are assigned to and registered in a certain municipality, refugees risk deportation to other municipalities. Sometimes neither the state nor any municipality is willing to include them as 'their homeless.'

4.3.2. 'Structurally Homeless'

In the last decade 'social homelessness' has been statistically separated from 'structural homelessness.' The causes of the latter are judged to be structural, i.e., shortage of affordable housing, poverty and landlords' requirements. As mentioned above, social services tend to reject the structurally homeless as not eligible for accommodation. In a Parliament debate on child poverty, this problem was highlighted:

> A problem is that the structural homelessness, which is due only to the lack of housing and money, has increased. Can the Government develop how you intend to work with this? (Post 37, Rasmus Ling, MP, 2018, February 8)

The minister answered that "the municipal social services are commissioned to prioritise families with minor children" but that she was "following this issue closely, because it is extremely important that children do not experience this" (Post 38, Åsa Regnér, S, 2018, February 8). Again, the municipalities alone are responsible. 'Homeless children' is not a state issue.

However, the concerned cities' social services, in turn, claim that they are only accountable for the 'socially homeless,' often called 'our target group.' Hence, no statutory body at the local or central level accepts responsibilities for this group—they are nobody's homeless.

5. If not Homeless—What?

As shown above, many houseless people are discursively excluded from the 'homeless' category, even if their housing situation and inability to improve it fits well with the NBHW definition of homelessness. Paraphrasing Simmel (1908/1965), the homeless are only those who are entitled to support as homeless. But how are the other categories named and characterised, and how are they morally related to (our) homeless?

5.1. Rivals and Enemies of Our Homeless

Newly arrived migrants, asylum-seekers and EU-citizens are not only excluded from the 'homeless' concept but sometimes also positioned as antagonists to the "homeless Swedes"—especially by the SD party:

Young people…cannot leave their homes due to the shortage of housing…students forced to stay in tents all over the country. Swedish Television reported recently that residents of a nursing home in Värmdö [municipality] had to stay in containers….At the same time, Sweden has in recent years received hundreds of thousands of asylum-seekers, most of whom without real refugee reasons, which is also the main explanation of the current situation….We can see today how municipalities give precedence in the housing queues to so-called newly arrived, while other municipalities choose to offer them single-family houses and owner-occupied flats. In many municipalities, the newly arrived are also offered expensive hotel rooms. This occurs at the same time as the proportion of homeless Swedes increases. The situation is deeply unfair and discriminating….Minister Eriksson, what measures are you prepared to take to improve the situation for the Swedes who are displaced in the housing market? (Written question 2016/17:730, Rickard Jomshoff, SD, 2017, January 26)

In this post, the blame is primarily put on the municipalities as agents that 'choose to offer' attractive housing and 'expensive hotel rooms' to the newly arrived, but also on the state for letting too many asylum-seekers in. The repeated 'at the same time' underlines both the asymmetry and the correlation between refugee reception and "homeless Swedes." While the state and municipalities are positioned as perpetrators, and asylum-seekers and the newly arrived as privileged favourites, "homeless Swedes," young students and nursing home residents are positioned as victims.

The image of old, frail people living in "containers" and refugees ("without real refugee reasons") in luxurious housing makes up a 'contrast structure' (Smith, 1978), aiming at underlining the injustice to "homeless Swedes."

EU-citizens, too, have been positioned as favoured competitors concerning shelter places in comparison to (Swedish) homeless people, who are again positioned as being discriminated against, as in the following letter to the editor:

What about our homeless?

Why are Swedish rough-sleepers treated differently than poor people from Romania/Bulgaria?

During the whole of the 2000s (15 years), it has been reported that in Gävle [municipality], there is no room for homeless people in the local shelters, there is no accommodation. But now suddenly places have been arranged for foreign EU-citizens who have travelled here! Now we want to see that Swedish homeless also get accommodation, immediately.

Justice for us Swedes! ("Våra hemlösa då?," 2015)

The absence of responsible agents is striking—people are "treated," problems are "reported," "there is no accommodation"—but the words "now suddenly places have been arranged" indicate that somebody is deciding and acting after all, and implicitly, could have acted before. "Swedish rough-sleepers," "homeless people," "Swedish homeless" and "us Swedes" seem interchangeable; all are positioned as disfavoured to the benefit of "foreign EU-citizens," the antagonists that do not belong, but "travelled here." Again, 'homeless' is only used for Swedes, and 'us Swedes' at the end of the letter further underlines the antagonism.

These EU-citizens are occasionally positioned as dangerous enemies to Swedish homeless people, as in the following post:

These beggars enter staircases, they beg, they pollute in parks and woods…they attack and steal from our homeless. And the Government just stands watching all this. It's shameful! (Post 45, Kent Ekeroth, SD, 2016, February 4)

Here, the victim position of 'our homeless' reinforces the beggars' positions as villains and antagonism between the two groups is established while the Government is positioned as a passive bystander.

5.2. Illegal Squatters

Although the last quote is somewhat odd, the general image of EU-citizens as a source of crime and disorder prevails in Parliament. In 2015, the Government appointed a national coordinator to propose measures for this group. However, his final report had no suggestions on housing or accommodation but was rather occupied with eviction measures:

The message from the Swedish society should be clear. EU-citizens are welcome here, at the same time Swedish legislation shall be applied. It is prohibited to reside in parks or other public places or on private land. (National Coordinator for Vulnerable EU-Citizens, 2016, p. 9)

In the Parliament debates, too, EU-citizens are primarily characterised as intruders and a nuisance for the police to act against:

Mr Speaker! Huts, tents and caravans—temporary settlements on private land prevent the owner from using the land. Often the landowner has to clean, sanitise and restore the land afterwards. But whoever settles on someone else's land without permission is guilty of a crime. (Post 1, Caroline Szyber, KD, 2017, May 17)

These temporary settlements are not associated with homelessness, but with violation of ownership. The word

'homeless' is not found at all in the bill that suggests facilitation of 'removals' of these settlements, and in the 50-page-long Parliament Committee report (Sveriges Riksdag, 2017) discussing the bill, 'homeless' occurs only once–in a critical motion by the Left Party. Eventually, the Parliament accepted new legislation that facilitated eviction of houseless EU-citizens from private and public land.

5.3. Criminal Outsiders

If criminals are sometimes compared to homeless people as two mutually exclusive categories, vulnerable EU-citizens are, on the contrary, often associated with various crimes and illegalities. A Parliament debate on an interpellation by a member of the Moderate Party provides an example:

> The Swedish Prime Minister has said that begging in Sweden shall and must cease….Despite this, the problem with crime coupled to the vagrant EU-migrants continues. In the city and county of Stockholm, it has gone so far that people who work in park cleaning have to carry assault alarms with a direct connection to SOS Alarm… (Interpellation 2016/17:571 by Jesper Skalberg Karlsson, M)

No backing or reference is given to the association between begging and park cleaners' assault alarms. In the debate, more crime images were added:

> I want to highlight the part of begging where criminal actors control vulnerable people's lives, expose them to human trafficking and oppress them for their economic gain….Men, often the head of the family, who force wife and children to beg in Sweden….We must recognise that many activities surrounding begging and beggars are criminal and problematic. (Post 30, Jesper Skalberg Karlsson, M, 2017, June 26)

The Minister of Home Affairs replied that "above all, we shall sharpen the enforcement of the law" (Post 31, Anders Ygeman, S, 2017, June 26), and the interpellant added that it would not be sufficient to prohibit begging, since "most of the things these people are occupied with are already illegal" (Post 32, Jesper Skalberg Karlsson, M, 2017, June 26). While the begging women in his previous quote (Post 30, Jesper Skalberg Karlsson, M, 2017, June 26) are positioned as victims of men's trafficking and oppression, they are in Post 32 themselves positioned as criminal actors alongside their husbands. Thus, the equivalence between begging and crime is gradually established.

Undocumented immigrants, too, recur in the Parliament debate as an outsider group, associated with crime. According to the quote below, they need to be more strongly monitored and deported more efficiently to avoid a "permanent shadow society":

> Sweden currently has no control over the number of people staying illegally in the country….If this is not stopped, it will lead to a permanent shadow society that can be characterised by vulnerability, exploitation and crime….Many choose to lead a life beside the Swedish society. For them, income often comes from illegal work and criminality….What does the Government intend to do to see to it that more of those who have been rejected, return instead of staying illegally in Sweden? (Post 6, Christian Holm Barenfeld, M, 2018, February 8)

Although the undocumented migrants are initially presented as victims of exploitation, just like the begging women above, they are primarily positioned as criminal actors themselves: They earn their living through "illegal work and criminality," remain "illegally" and "choose" a life aside. In her answer, the Minister of Labour Market and Establishment confirmed the seriousness and scope of the problem, called it "unacceptable," and declared that "the Government is intensifying its work in terms of resources for the police to enable them to execute expulsions of people" (Post 7, Ylva Johansson, S, 2018, February 8).

6. Conclusion

The official definition of homelessness in Sweden departs from certain deficient housing situations, but in actual counting, reporting and mapping of the homeless population in Sweden, several groups are explicitly excluded in the survey instructions and/or implicitly excluded since they are not attended to by the social workers who report homeless people in the surveys. Just like Simmel (1908/1965) wrote more than a century ago about the poor, 'the homeless' are in practice delimited to those who get (or should get) assistance because of their housing situation. Asylum-seekers, undocumented migrants, newly-arrived refugees and vulnerable EU-citizens from abroad are not eligible for shelter, either because they are targeted by other institutions, such as the Migration Agency and the police, or because they are defined as the responsibility of their home countries—they are others' homeless, not 'ours.' Just like in 19th century Sweden, the blame and obligations are placed on the jurisdiction in which the problem first emerged. The same kind of reasoning is often applied to asylum-seekers and, outside the Parliament, sometimes even to refugees who have been granted asylum, who may be told to "go home." Also, and despite still being called homeless, many migrant families are defined out from the social services' target groups as 'structurally homeless.' As victims of poverty and a deficient housing market, they are nobody's responsibility.

This institutionally motivated and regulated exclusion of houseless people in Sweden from the category 'homeless' is reflected and reinforced in the political debate. Analyses of questions, replies and debates in

the Parliament show that the term 'our homeless' often refers only to Swedish citizens, especially when they are contrasted to migrants. Reflecting the tendency in social services, 'homeless' is often associated with misery and problems like substance abuse and mental illness (although not with morally condemned qualities like criminality and violence).

According to Simmel (1908/1965), 'the poor' are both inside and outside the community, which is obliged to assist them, but being outside is also a kind of membership in the group (cf. 'our' homeless). But—to paraphrase him—if they are only homeless, where do they belong? Simmel concludes that they belong to the "largest effective circle," which "has no other outside it to which to transfer an obligation" (p. 127). In his view, this was the nation-state, but in our time it would rather be the EU. However, this community does not provide housing for its citizens.

While the 'homeless' are embraced with certain compassion and empathy in the discourse, other terms like EU-citizens, beggars, refugees, migrants, newly arrived etc. do not seem to carry the same kind of protective imperative. On the contrary, some of these categories tend to be associated with trafficking, crime, disorder and violation of property rights. When '(our) homeless' are positioned as victims of these other groups' crime, or as put aside or discriminated against to their benefit, the Government is urged to take side through exclusionary measures, e.g., remove them from public and private land, expel them from the country or stop them from entering Sweden. In this respect, 'our homeless' is used as a tool in xenophobic rhetoric.

From this limited, explorative study, it is clear that a new political discourse on homelessness has emerged, which ascribes more weight to ethnic belonging and national origin than to the actual housing situation and needs. This discourse is in line with the different treatment of groups with similar, deficient housing situations in social services and national legislation. Both the institutional change and the new discourse reflect and might reinforce nationalist and xenophobic sentiments. For social research into homelessness, it is an urgent task to follow the development of this discourse in political assemblies at national as well as local levels.

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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Article

Inclusive Social Lettings Practice: Opportunities to Enhance Independent Living for Disabled People

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Abstract
Appropriate housing is a key element of independent living for disabled people, yet research evidence confirms the continuing, often negative, impact of unsuitable housing on their lives. This article examines access to social rented housing as a route to independent living, through a study of lettings practice for accessible and adapted homes. Drawing on the social and social-relational models of disability, the study adopted a disabled-led, co-production approach. Qualitative research methods were used to compare social landlord practice and track home seeker/tenant experiences. While housing providers were proactive in reviewing policy and practice to better meet the housing needs of disabled people, there remained some 'distance' between landlord goals and applicant experiences. Disabled people's extended lived experience of inappropriate housing, while waiting for a more accessible home, impacted negatively on their quality of life and physical and mental health. Social lettings policies and practice were necessarily complex, but often difficult for applicants to understand. The complexity of disabled people's housing needs meant that the matching process for suitable housing was also complex, often requiring individualised solutions. Recommendations to improve practice include making better use of technology to improve data on accessible/adapted properties and applicant needs; flexibility in lettings practice to facilitate effective matches; and flexibility in fully recognising disabled people's housing and independent living needs. Social rented housing remains an important mechanism for achieving disabled people's independence. Explicit recognition of the social-relational interpretation of disability could deliver more inclusive lettings practice and achieve more sustainable tenancies.

1. Introduction

This thematic issue focuses on home, housing and community as foundations for an inclusive society. For disabled people, reasonable accommodation and community living are recognised under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CPRD; United Nations, 2006) as crucial elements for independent living on an equal basis with others (Ferri, 2018; Šiška, Beadle-Brown, Káňová, & Šumníková, 2018). In many countries, housing policy increasingly reflects the demographic trend of an aging population; an increasing number of disabled people; and the need to enshrine disabled people's rights to independent living across the life course (United Nations, 2006). In countries which have developed social rented housing, the

sector represents an important resource offering disabled people appropriate accommodation and independent living in a community setting (Mackie, 2012). This article presents new findings from research in Scotland, where social rented housing let by local authorities and non-government housing associations, to eligible households at below-market rents, accounts for 23% of the total dwelling stock (Stephens, Perry, Wilcox, Williams, & Young, 2019, p. 113, Table 17d).

In 2018 the population of Scotland was approximately 5.5 million (National Records of Scotland, 2018), with an estimated 22% of the population (1.1 million) reporting they were disabled (Equalities and Human Rights Commission [EHRC], 2018). The number of people over 75 years of age is projected to continue to increase, alongside the number of people with impairments due to long-term health conditions or frailty (Fitzpatrick, Lees, McDonald, & Galani, 2018; Skidmore & Davis, 2017). Consequently, the number of people using wheelchairs and other mobility devices will increase, mirroring international trends (Gell, Wallace, Lacroix, Mroz, & Patel, 2015; O'Hare, Pryde, & Gracey, 2013). Within the UK, housing policy and law is a matter devolved to the Scottish Parliament since its creation in 1999. This has led to some variation in housing law and policy across the UK, but the broad findings of this research are applicable across social rented housing settings.

In the UK, research to date has argued for a 'three-pronged' approach to meeting disabled people's housing needs across tenures: development of new wheelchair standard homes for owner-occupiers and tenants; support for home adaptations across tenures; and efficient allocation of accessible and adaptable homes in the social rented sector (Fitzpatrick et al., 2018; Joseph, Perry, Watson, & Vickery, 2010; Watson & Joseph, 2012). The research reported here focused on the third strand, seeking to better understand the processes behind applying for and moving into social rented housing, from the perspectives of disabled people and housing providers. Section 2 critically reviews the research evidence on accessible housing in relation to the social and social-relational models of disability, prior to setting out the research questions addressed. The research methods for the study are set out in Section 3 and the main findings in Section 4. Conclusions on inclusive lettings practice are presented in Section 5, with a discussion of the implications for achieving independent living for disabled people.

2. Disability, Lived Experience and Access to Housing

In this article, we use the term disabled people in line with affirmative language used by disabled-led organisations, emphasising the ways that society can disable/disempower individuals with impairments. The approach draws on Oliver's (1990) social model of disability which criticised medical assumptions that disability was a product of physical impairment that needed to

be cured or managed. Rather, disability arose where structural barriers were considered to hinder the capacity of some individuals with impairments to fully participate in society. The Union of the Physically Impaired against Segregation (UPIAS) distinguished between impairment as "lacking part of or all of a limb, or having a defective limb, organ or mechanism of the body," whilst, disability denoted "the disadvantage or restriction of activity caused by a contemporary social organisation which takes no or little account of people who have…impairments and thus excludes them from participation in the mainstream of social activities" (UPIAS, 1976, pp. 3–4). That is to say, people with impairments are disabled by social structures and physical environments which constrain their ability to lead their lives independently. However, we also recognise limitations of the social model of disability and criticisms which have been debated over the decades. Whilst there is an extensive literature on disability theory, we draw here on Thomas' (2004) discussion, which argued that a more social-relational approach to disability pre-dated the purely social model. Acknowledging the creativity of the conceptual shift from the medical to the social, Thomas argued that structural barriers did not explain all of the problems disabled people faced. 'Impairment effects'—the role of impairment and illness in restricting life experiences were also important. A social-relational model conceived disability in relation to the social relationships between those with and those without impairment in society, "between those socially constructed as problematically different because of a significant bodily and/or cognitive variation from the norm and those who meet the cultural criteria of embodied normality" (Thomas, 2004, p. 28).

Focusing on the housing pathways of younger disabled people, Mackie (2012) also responded to criticisms that the adoption of the social model by user-controlled groups, particularly independent living centres (Barnes & Roulston, 2005) focused too much on structural constraints and failed to deal adequately with impairment (Shakespeare & Watson, 2002). Drawing on Clapham's (2002) housing pathways framework, Mackie emphasised the importance of examining the interaction between structure and agency in negotiating access to housing. Developed from social constructionism, Clapham's framework assumed that housing pathways were shaped by both agency and structure, and both should be considered in housing research (Clapham, 2002, 2003). While social constructionism has been criticised as relativist and of limited use to policymakers and practitioners (Collin, 1997; Jacobs & Manzi, 2000), Clapham's pathways approach has nonetheless been widely adopted in housing research, including the ways societal and individual influences interact to shape the housing experiences of disabled young people (Mackie, 2012).

Accepting the above caveats in relation to disability theory and housing, we use the term 'disabled' here

to denote how society and the environment can render pan-impairment groups less able to live independently. The term impairment is used when referring to any difficulty in physical, mental or sensory functioning which people experience. Intellectual impairments (or learning disabilities) include reduced intellectual ability and difficulty with everyday tasks; the term 'mental disability' is similar, though it can include mental disorders, such as depression or schizophrenia. Locomotional/mobility impairment includes difficulty with walking or moving around (e.g., necessitating use of wheelchairs or walking aids, or extra time or support to move around). Sensory impairment refers to visual and/or hearing impairment.

Adapted housing refers to social rented properties which have been modified in some way to improve accessibility for an individual's specific housing needs. Accessible properties are those constructed to meet inclusive design or accessible standards, such as Housing for Varying Needs (Scottish Homes, 1998; Watson & Joseph, 2012) or Lifetime Homes (Goodman, 2011). Accessibility can also refer to the degree to which information, a service or a device/product is available to people with different impairments. Lettings practice is the process for letting vacant properties to new tenants, including both allocations schemes and choice-based lettings. The key focus of this research was on the process of matching a suitable adapted/accessible social house to a disabled housing applicant. However, individual lettings are part of a broader process that encompasses applying for housing, matching to a suitable property, offers of a property and viewing, and settling into a new tenancy. The research findings reflect this interpretation of the lettings 'process,' encapsulating the notion of a 'housing pathway' (Clapham, 2002; Mackie, 2012) to independent living, although the research did not exclusively adopt a pathways approach.

The co-production approach to this research emphasised the involvement of disabled people, embracing an emancipatory perspective (Barnes & Sheldon, 2007; Stone & Priestley, 1996). Focusing on the lived experiences of disability, disabled people were accepted as experts on what must change to achieve independent living. Our approach included working with Peer Researchers and disabled persons organisations, as well as local housing provider mechanisms for service user involvement. Although Peer Researchers may require skills training for a research role, participatory research can highlight voices of groups overlooked by policymakers, provide historical and conceptual awareness of an issue, and create reflexivity among participants that can lead to individual or collective empowerment (McCartan, Schubotz, & Murphy, 2012; Meakin & Matthews, 2017; Pleace & Mitchell, 2015).

Previous accounts of disabled people's lived experiences of housing in Scotland have identified system barriers to finding a suitable home including: waiting years for a suitable house or adaptation; delayed hospital discharge, or time in residential care due to lack of housing; being inappropriately discharged into an inaccessible home; and finding it impossible to find an accessible home to rent or buy (Independent Living in Scotland, 2017). These barriers largely reflected a lack of adapted/accessible housing and problems accessing information about housing availability. Such shortcomings in the housing system also placed additional costs on NHS and social care budgets. Living in inappropriate housing prevented disabled people from fully contributing to society and constrained their participation in the economic and social life of their communities. People with learning disabilities in Scotland were found to be more likely to live in social housing (52% compared with 21% of the population as a whole) and less likely to live in a home they or their family owned (39% compared with 66%), with a significant proportion living in an institutional setting (Ormston, Eunson, & McAteer, 2017). Disabled people were also disproportionately affected by post-2010 UK Government austerity measures including restrictions to housing and disability benefits (Beatty & Fothergill, 2018; Manji, 2018) introduced into what was already a complicated landscape of living situations from independent living, through supported living to residential care (Šiška et al., 2018).

Research by Satsangi et al. (2018) on disabled people's housing experiences identified key factors for successful independent living including suitable adaptations, feeling safe in a location, access to transport and services, family and community support, and freedom from harassment. Interviewees reported that suitable housing helped positively transform their wellbeing and economic prospects. Conversely, unsuitable housing situations increased the risk of accidents, led to stress and ill health, and imposed costs on health services. Lack of social support, financial constraints and anti-social behaviour from neighbours were also reported as harmful to participants' sense of wellbeing. Satsangi et al. (2018) contributed to the EHRC (2018) Housing Inquiry, which called for local authorities and registered social landlords to embed independent living principles into lettings policies for social housing, to ensure real choice and control for disabled people.

A substantial body of Scottish legislation and policy underpins strategies to meet the housing needs of disabled people, from the introduction of 'Housing for Varying Needs' (Scottish Homes, 1998) to the Scottish Government (2019) guidance on delivering more wheelchair accessible accommodation across all tenures (Anderson, Theakstone, Lawrence, & Pemble, 2019, pp. 7–20). Nonetheless, research evidence and literature to date has confirmed the continuing, often negative, impact of unsuitable housing on the lives of disabled people (Anderson, Theakstone, Baird, & Jago, 2017; Anderson et al., 2019). Analysis by Fitzpatrick et al. (2018) identified 87,340 households with a wheelchair user in Scotland (3.6% of all households), of which 17,226 (19.1% of all wheelchair user households) had unmet housing needs. New housing therefore needed

to incorporate higher accessibility specifications while the social and financial benefits of home adaptations were also recognised (Heywood & Turner, 2007; Powell et al., 2017). The Scottish Government's consultation on a 'Housing to 2040' vision included a commitment to increasing accessible and adapted homes (Chartered Institute of Housing, 2019).

Disabled people seeking to access social rented housing often require particular design or adaptation features. The process of matching applicants to suitable properties is a critical element in meeting the housing needs of disabled people which has received relatively little research attention. This study contributes new evidence by examining disabled people's lived experiences of the social housing application system, alongside social landlord lettings practices. The research built on a pilot study that designed and tested a co-production approach (Anderson et al., 2017), which was further developed to address the following research questions:

- How can social landlords achieve more effective routes to independent living for disabled people?
- What improvements to lettings policies and practices will deliver equal housing opportunity for disabled people?
- What support do disabled house seekers require in the social housing application and lettings processes?
- How can adapted and adaptable housing better enhance independent living?

3. Research Method

This study addressed the above questions by examining the systems for matching disabled home seekers to adapted and accessible social housing in order to provide robust evidence to improve lettings policy and practice. Importantly, disabled people co-produced the research and recommendations through a participatory partnership involving a social housing landlord, a disabled person's advice and support organisation, a disabled-led Project Advisory Group, Peer Researchers, and close collaboration with the participating local housing providers. Qualitative research methods were adopted to understand the processes and experiences behind the quantified need for accessible housing revealed by Fitzpatrick et al. (2018). The research received ethical approval from the University of Stirling and compared landlord practice and applicant/tenant experiences in three local authority areas in Scotland. These were chosen to provide a mix of urban and rural geographical areas and contrasting population sizes (two in the central belt of Scotland and the third in the North of Scotland). All three managed their own social rented housing stock and worked in partnership with housing associations in their areas. The experiences of, and outcomes for, disabled social housing applicants seeking a suitable home, were examined over the study period (2017–2019) enabling 'real-time' expe-

riences to be captured. Within each local authority area, the following research methods were adopted:

- Contextual research on local lettings policy and practice.
- Semi-structured interviews tracking the experiences of a cohort of disabled home seekers/new tenants.
- Observations and discussions of lettings practice in the three local authority areas (focused group discussions).
- Feedback sessions in the three local authorities to discuss emerging findings with co-production stakeholders and build consensus on conclusions and recommendations through triangulation (combining analysis of different data sets and perspectives) to ensure the quality and rigour of the study outputs (Flick, 2007).

The research partners also recruited a disabled-led advisory group (12 participants) of self-identifying disabled people or carers with lived experience of the social housing system and professional/advocates with expertise in meeting disabled people's housing needs. The group met three times, contributing to the research design, reporting and recommendations. Some members also facilitated discussions in the local authority feedback sessions. Three self-identifying disabled Peer Researchers were recruited to assist with interviewing disabled home seekers/tenants. Each completed a training session covering fieldwork safety protocols, gaining informed consent and interview skills. Twenty-six out of the forty-three semi-structured interviews (over two waves of fieldwork) were conducted by the Peer Researchers, with support from the research team. Most interviews took place in participants' homes. Where these were inaccessible for Peer Researchers, alternative locations, such as an accessible library or café were used, or a University Researcher conducted the interview.

3.1. Tracking Experiences of Disabled Home Seekers and Tenants

The study adopted a longitudinal approach to following the experiences of disabled people applying for social housing or who had recently moved into social housing, captured through qualitative semi-structured interviews in order to understand participant perspectives (Creswell, 2009). The target was to recruit up to ten participant households in each area, and to follow-up after 2–3 months and then up to one year from the first interview. Table 1 shows the characteristics of the 28 participant households successfully recruited for first interviews, all of which contained at least one disabled adult or child. Participants were split fairly evenly across the three local authority areas. Around one third of households (8) had recently moved into suitable social housing while the majority (20) were housing applicants seek-

Table 1. Characteristics of participants at first interview (N = 28 households with at least one disabled person).

Local Authority of Residence

Local Authority Area	N
Local Authority 1	8
Local Authority 2	10
Local Authority 3	10
Total	28

Housing Application/Lettings Status

Status	N
New/recently housed tenants in suitable social rented housing (local authority or housing association)	8
Applicants seeking suitable social rented housing (all tenures, including seeking transfer from unsuitable social rented housing)	20
Total	28

Housing Tenure

Tenure	N
Social Rented (Local authority 14, Housing Association 2)	16
Privately Rented	5
Home Ownership	4
Tied Accommodation	2
Staying with Family	1
Total	28

Interviewee Status

Status	N
Interviewed alone	19
Interviewed jointly/as a couple	9
Total	28

ing suitable social rented housing. More than half of participants (16) were already living in the social rented housing sector (eight of these were suitably housed and eight were seeking a transfer to more suitable housing). Of the remaining 12 households, five were renting privately, four were homeowners, two lived in tied accommodation and one was sharing with family. In 19 households, one participant was interviewed alone while in the other nine cases two participants were interviewed together/as a couple.

Local housing providers identified potential disabled housing applicants and asked if they would like to take part in the study. Contact details for those interested were passed to the research team who provided additional information and gained informed consent. Recruitment proved a complex and lengthy process, with partners continuing to seek participants until recruitment targets were reached or the pool of potential participants was exhausted. The achieved sample of 28 was sufficient to provide depth of comparative analysis of experiences of different households, broadly attain-

ing saturation in understanding (Dey, 1999). Disabled applicants/tenants who took part in initial interviews were contacted again by telephone two-three months later for an update on their housing situation (Table 2). Of the 28 initial interviewees, 22 (79%) were successfully re-contacted, with just six not responding to an invitation by phone or a follow-up email. This proactive approach helped assess optimum timing for a second interview (Table 3).

Second semi-structured interviews were successfully conducted with 16 households (73% of the 22 successful follow-up contacts, and 57% of the initial 28 interviewees). Second interviewees included one suitably housed tenant who had only lived in their property for two weeks at the time of the first interview, providing new information on their experience of their home. Second interviews were not appropriate for the other suitably housed first interviewees as they had already given full accounts of their experiences. Most second interviews (15 participants) were applicants still seeking suitable housing at the time of the first interview

Table 2. Outcome of follow-up contact (N = 22 successful contacts, 2–3 months after first interview).

Participant outcome	N	%
Total first interviews	28	100
Successfully re-contacted by telephone call/email	22	79
No response to follow-up telephone call/email	6	21

Table 3. Housing application/lettings status of participants at second interview (N = 15 households, up to one year after first interview).

Status	N	%
Tenant in suitable social rented housing (local authority or housing association)	1	
Applicants seeking suitable social rented housing (all tenures, including seeking transfer from unsuitable social rented housing)	15	
Total Second Interviews	16	
Second interview not appropriate after follow-up contact or participant withdrew	6	
Total Second Interviews as percentage of successful follow-up contacts (16 out of 22)		73
Total Second Interviews as percentage of first interviewees (16 out of 28)		57

and a small number withdrew because of health reasons or did not respond to further contact. Interviews were conducted face to face wherever possible and mostly lasted around 45 minutes. Discussions explored the processes of applying for housing, waiting for an offer, and accepting a tenancy. Some interviews touched upon stressful situations and interviewers were trained to respond sensitively, including pausing or ending an interview and providing contact information for support services. Participant pseudonyms were used in reporting to preserve anonymity.

3.2. Local Context and Discussions of Lettings Practice

The research design also included discussions of lettings practice in the three areas to ensure an accurate understanding of local policy and practice. Sessions were arranged by key contacts and informed consent was agreed with each participant. Four sessions were conducted, with between 2 and 9 people, in private meeting rooms. Discussions included housing professionals, occupational therapists and support staff workers and lasted 90–120 minutes. All discussions were audio-recorded and participants were allocated an identifier code to ensure anonymity in reporting (e.g., LA1, P2 refers to local authority 1, participant 2). Participants in these sessions were also invited to the local feedback sessions.

3.3. Local Authority Feedback Sessions

Local authority feedback sessions were held to share emerging findings and offer an opportunity to respond to issues and help co-produce recommendations. Across the three areas, 60 participants attended these sessions, including Peer Researchers, advisory group members, housing and service providers, tenant group representatives and local organisations/individuals involved with disabled people's housing issues. All gave their informed consent to participate.

3.4. Analysis and Reporting

Topic guides for first and second interviews with disabled home seekers and tenants covered the following areas, as appropriate to the interviewee's housing situation:

- Past/present housing situations, location, household, property, length of stay, changes between interviews.
- Reasons for looking to move, needs for adapted housing, impairments, critical requirements.
- Experience of applying for housing, offers, moving to new accommodation, input to design or adaptations.
- Experiences of managing in inappropriate housing, time waiting.
- Understanding of systems, help received, suggestions for change, any further issues.

The topic guide for local authority lettings practice covered local policy, organisational structure, application and property databases, decision-making processes, matching applicants and vacant adapted/accessible homes, disabled people's participation, collaborative working and suggestions for change.

Interviews and discussions were digitally recorded and all data was analysed thematically to address the study research questions and triangulated across the different local contexts and perspectives of disabled home seekers, and housing providers to ensure quality and rigour (Flick, 2007). A thematic coding frame was developed drawing on the framework method for qualitative analysis (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). Due to the inaccessibility of qualitative software packages for visually impaired researchers, the team used Excel worksheets to manage the data analysis process. Researchers listened to the audio recordings and coded salient experiences and verbatim quotations under thematic headings, in line with the topic guide questions. A sample of coded interviews were cross-checked to ensure consistency and the team discussed patterns emerging from the data to ensure capture of all pertinent themes, in a format that could be tracked and was accessible for all researchers. Although resources constrained data collection to three case study areas (rather than a national study), the combination of data sets, systematic analysis, and co-produced developmental discussions resulted in a degree of consensus on the study findings and conclusions in which the research partners had considerable confidence. The following section presents the key research findings summarised from the thematic analysis.

4. Research Findings

4.1. Applying for Housing

The three local authorities used different systems to assess and prioritise applicants including awarding 'points' for homelessness, sustainable communities, and applicants transferring within the landlord's stock. All three also had distinctive mechanisms for assessing needs for adapted and accessible housing. In one case, housing staff made the assessment as a matter of housing need (not a medical assessment). A second authority utilised 'Health and Housing Priority' forms, scrutinised by a panel, which included housing, social work and occupational therapy staff. In the third approach, if required, housing staff sought assistance from social work and health professionals. Importantly, none of the authorities requested medical practitioners to assess health-related housing need, recognising that where applicants were previously assessed for a medical condition, this did not always affect what sort of property they needed. Assessments were shifting towards establishing whether functional ability was affected by housing (for example, stairs that they were unable to use) and whether this could be improved in a more suitable property. Such moves to a social, or social-relational, model of housing needs assessment corresponded better with disability rights frameworks than prior, more medical, approaches. All three systems relied on staff knowledge of applicant needs and local properties to generate appropriate housing offers. Participants discussed competing pressures on the social rented housing system and it was recognised that not all vacancies could be adapted to meet the needs of disabled applicants. Accurate information was vital so that disabled people were offered a property that improved their current housing situation. While some applicants had to widen their choices of location from higher demand areas, the potential benefits of social rented housing were clearly articulated by applicants such as Tina.

Tina had lived in a 3-bedroom private rental house for seven years. Her two sons, aged in their twenties, were on the autistic spectrum and Tina herself required wheelchair accessible accommodation and was struggling to use the stairlift installed. Her youngest son had experienced anti-social behaviour in the area and Tina felt that a social tenancy would provide greater security and stronger rights for repairs to be carried out since their private rented property had dampness and other safety issues. As Tina explained:

> I'd feel more secure in a Housing Association or Council house because you don't want the phone to go and our landlord wants his house back. And all of a sudden you become homeless and there's a rush to move. The anxiety of having perhaps 2 months to move, I'd feel more secure. (Tina, Housing Applicant)

Other opportunities to improve practice included more fully reflecting the overall needs of the household, notably where more than one individual had housing needs. Applicants also favoured having a single named contact to support them through the application process, and in two local authorities this was considered beneficial to the landlord, although the third considered it might be too resource intensive.

4.2. Lettings: Matching Up Applicants and Vacancies

Effective matching of disabled applicants to adapted/ accessible properties involved reletting vacant properties, recovery of properties no longer occupied by a disabled person, nominations to Registered Social Landlords, and letting newly built dwellings. To make best use of stock, social landlords require a comprehensive audit of property adaptations and potential to be adapted. This ideal was not always available and such data could be routinely collected during property visits to better inform planning for accessible housing. Participants in all three areas discussed the potential effectiveness of new technologies in facilitating up-to-date information on tenants' needs and property characteristics in order to achieve more effective matches. Different methods of procurement of new build housing appeared to result in different standards of specification and therefore of adaptability and accessibility of homes for disabled people. Practitioners also discussed the housing management conflict between minimising rent lost on vacant properties, and acknowledging the extra time needed to match disabled applicants to suitable homes. In one local authority, pre-approval of required adaptions removed some of the delay in re-letting an adaptable home and the case was also made for flexibility in target letting times for adapted or accessibly designed vacancies, as illustrated in the following quotes:

> The problem that we sometimes have is that we have a fully adapted house, but nobody wants to live there. It depends on the area. We've had a situation where five or six people on our waiting list have been offered a property—the house is suitable for all their needs, but it is not in the area that they want. Sometimes we end up letting adapted houses to somebody who does not need one because we have to get the house allocated. (LA3, P4)

> It's common sense really. If there are good transport links, health centre, shops, schools and all the amenities that folk want….We have some rural areas that have few facilities, so they are in lower demand. But usually we can come up with something. (LA1, P2)

> We're lucky because we still work a points-based system, so it is quite easy to pull up a mock list for another area to have a look to see if there is anybody

waiting, so if the housing officer was off that day there are ways around having a look. (LA2, P1)

4.3. Offers and Viewings

A high proportion of participant home seekers received inappropriate housing offers, or no offers at all, during the tracking study. Of the 28 first interview participants, only two accepted an offer of suitable housing in the study period. Interview evidence indicated strongly that disabled people's extended lived experience of inappropriate housing had a negative impact on health and wellbeing. For example, a number of participants were effectively confined to just one or two rooms within their home for feeding, bathing, toileting, sleeping and socialising. Access to more rooms was sometimes at a cost, such as risk of falls or climbing stairs they could not safely manage. Even adaptations, such as a stairlift did not always 'fix' the problem, with one participant daily enduring numerous transfers between wheelchairs and stairlift to access the toilet, leaving her exhausted and meaning wounds relating to kidney dialysis took longer to heal. Other disabled applicants who remained without an offer of a suitable accessible/adapted house over a significant period indicated that they experienced emotional and mental distress.

Practitioners highlighted that up-to-date property information helped minimise unsuitable offers, saving scarce housing resources and preventing unnecessary frustration for disabled applicants. Participants advocated that assessment of the suitability of an adapted/accessible property should include the external environment and local support networks, as well as the physical access and internal features. Some disabled interviewees argued that access to a garden also should be recognised as key to emotional and mental wellbeing. Practitioners and applicants highlighted the need to proactively manage housing applications with more frequent reviews, especially where there had been no offer of suitable housing for 6–8 months. This could reassure those in need and enhance the accuracy of information held on housing applications. George and Gayle's experience illustrated some of the complexities in considering an offer of housing:

> When George [tenant] came to view his adapted bungalow, he was unable to get inside with his wheelchair since there was a step at the front door. He had to look through windows and discuss what adaptations were necessary for him to be able to move in. George and Gayle accepted the keys with a list of adaptations still required, including widening doorways, cooker installation, an accessible bathroom and an accessible front path, but experienced a lack of coordination during the installation of these adaptations. They planned to make a pathway around the side of the property so that George could enjoy wheelchair access to the back garden, but this was not deemed a housing need by

the housing provider and not included on their list of home adaptations. The couple also felt pressurised to carry out redecorating without assistance. They were informed that someone would check how the redecoration allowance had been spent. George pointed out that he would need longer as a wheelchair user who required assistance with painting tasks around the property.

A potential area identified for improved practice was the use of new technologies to provide virtual property viewings for disabled applicants unable to attend due to health or accessibility reasons. Local authorities could also make more effective use of nominations to suitable housing association properties and all social landlords could develop mechanisms to seek nominations from other providers where they had an adapted/accessible vacancy but no suitable applicant. This could be extended to seeking nominations from hospital discharge units and third-sector organisations (including from outside of the local area). Additionally, support could be provided to help disabled housing applicants navigate the schemes to arrange a home swap.

4.4. Moving in and Making a Home

Some disabled tenants needed support to move into and sustain their tenancies. This could be achieved by social housing providers ensuring tenancy sustainment strategies were inclusive of disabled people, empowering them to make a new tenancy into a sustainable home. However, effective lettings could prove transformative for disabled people, with participants emphasising the social and emotional benefits they gained from moving to a suitable accessible/adapted property:

> I can do the dishes now, cook, move unaided around the house—and I'm rediscovering my relationship with my husband, whose stress is reduced by having fewer caring tasks. (Sam, New Tenant)

Inclusive practice can also involve disabled people in strategic approaches to the provision of accessible social housing and communities. There was a considerable consensus that the construction of newly built accessible and adaptable properties provided significantly greater scope to meet housing needs, compared to adaptation of older housing stock:

> In LA2, two double storey houses were identified at the design stage of a new development as being suitable for a large family that were unlikely to be housed in existing Council stock. The properties were converted into one seven-bedroom house for the family which included adult twins who had complex needs that meant that they needed their own bedrooms. The mother believed a younger son also showed signs of having additional needs. The twins required major

adaptations in their bedrooms, including the floors being reinforced, smooth fittings, integrated blinds and specially designed windows and wall finishing and a wetroom for easier bathing. The conversion was designed to be reversible (to two properties) if household needs changed in the future.

This was quite an extreme case and there were lots of professionals involved saying what was required to meet this family's needs—we had looked for years to find suitable housing for them and had not come up with anything. (LA2, P4)

5. Conclusion

Overall, our study showed that that while housing providers were proactive in reviewing policy and practice to better meet the housing needs of disabled people, there remained some 'distance' between landlord goals and applicant experiences. Thomas' (2004) social-relational model of disability aided interpretation of the ways in which disabled people's extended lived experience of inappropriate housing exacerbated impairment effects on their daily lives. The length of time some disabled people spent waiting for more suitable housing was associated with long-term negative impacts on their physical and mental well-being. Equally, a move to appropriate housing could very significantly enhance independent living. The housing profession could draw on the social-relational model of recognising impairment ef-

fects, to design more inclusive lettings practice where the experiences of disabled people inform housing solutions. Lettings processes remain complex and often difficult for disabled people to understand. Depending on their impairments, disabled people needed support with the application, viewing and moving-in processes, as did new tenants in Garnham and Rolfe's (2019) study of housing provided through social enterprise. The complexity of disabled people's housing needs meant that the matching process for suitable adapted or accessible housing was also complex. What worked for one household or property may not work for another—so there was often a need for quite individualised solutions. Nevertheless, a number of broad recommendations for policy and practice emerged from the study (Box 1).

Implementing these recommendations could speed up access to housing and facilitate more sustainable tenancies. Lettings systems should recognise the needs of all household members and the importance of the external environment as well as housing design for disabled people's wellbeing. Adaptations can make some older housing stock more liveable for some disabled people, but newly built accessible housing offers significantly more potential to appropriately meet complex mobility and other impairment related housing needs. The research identified housing solutions which maximised choice and control and enabled more disabled people to live independently, while also delivering more cost-effective lettings. As well as developing more inclusive lettings practice, our research recognised the importance of a na-

Box 1. Key recommendations for housing policy and practice emerging from the research.

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1. Recognise that lettings periods for accessible/adapted social housing may require additional time to achieve an effective match and carry out necessary adaptations before an applicant is able to move in.

2. Where a vacancy cannot be matched to one of their disabled applicants, landlords should canvas widely for nominations among disability organisations and housing providers in and beyond the local area.

3. Improve involvement of disabled people by establishing local co-production groups in order to inform decisions on housing and its interconnections with independent living.

4. Explore the use of new technology to improve intelligence on adapted/accessible properties and to enable remote viewing for applicants who are unable to visit in person.

5. Recognise wider housing-related needs of disabled people, for example, access to a garden, public transport, and services such as retaining the same GP.

6. Review allocations systems to ensure that applicants who make some 'liveability' improvements to their homes while waiting for an accessible property are not disadvantaged in lettings schemes.

7. Develop peer support networks where a disabled tenant who has experienced the lettings process can support disabled home seekers.

8. Ensure local housing need assessments include targets that are proportional to the amount of new accessible/adapted housing required across tenures.

9. Develop minimum accessibility standards for new build social housing so that it is more economical and easier to adapt in the future.

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tional strategy to improve the provision of accessible homes to meet the needs of disabled people with a wide range of impairments. Design standards ideally should meet universal design and full wheelchair access within mainstream housing (Centre for Excellence in Universal Design, 2020), so that disabled people and their families have equal housing opportunities and the human right to an accessible home in an accessible and sustainable community. Different methods of procurement of new build housing appeared to result in different standards of specification and therefore of adaptability and accessibility of homes for disabled people. This could be addressed as an equalities issue in commissioning procedures drawing on Scottish Government (2019) guidance on increasing wheelchair accessible housing. Participants also recognised competing pressures on the social rented housing system, such as the needs of homeless people (Anderson, 2019), necessitating a national strategy which is inclusive of differing groups facing housing exclusion.

Our research findings on social lettings practice have reinforced those of other recent studies (EHRC, 2018; Ferri, 2018; Independent Living in Scotland, 2017; Satsangi et al., 2018; Šiška et al., 2018) which acknowledged progress, but not sufficient progress, towards independent living for disabled people. Šiška et al.'s (2018) international study demonstrated the challenges of evidence gathering and meeting the goal of community living for disabled people. Similarly, Ferri's study of Article 2 of the CRPD, on reasonable accommodation, duty to remove barriers "as *an individualised* response to the particular needs of *an individual with disabilities* to ensure equal opportunities" (Ferri, 2018, p. 48; emphasis added by Ferri) indicated there was still "a long way to go before the cross-cutting application of reasonable accommodation can be assured in practice." These findings were mirrored in this study of accessible social housing lettings, with disabled people continuing to experience lengthy periods of living in inappropriate homes despite some progress in seeking to improve supply and lettings practice. Our study identified a progressive shift in practice towards a social model of disability. However, it is recognised that organisational structures and individual practitioners may accommodate impairment and disability, but still hold a medical view of their causes. An explicitly social-relational approach (recognising impairment effects and structural barriers) might further enhance outcomes. Adopting the findings and recommendations from this study could deliver a more inclusive lettings practice offering significant opportunities to develop more effective routes to independent living. Inclusive design and lettings practice may not overcome all impairment effects faced by disabled people, but a social-relational practice which builds on the empowerment of disabled people and the positive practice of housing providers can make a significant difference in overcoming environmental structural barriers to independent living.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Article

Creating Community and Belonging in a Designated Housing Estate for Disabled People

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Abstract

In recent years there has been an ideological push within social care away from segregated housing provision towards supported housing integrated within the wider community (McConkey, Keogh, Bunting, Iriarte, & Watson, 2016; Merrells, Buchanan, & Waters, 2019; Overmars-Marx, Thomése, Verdonschot, & Meininger, 2014). Despite this, many housing solutions for older and disabled people continue to be built on a designated basis, with physical and emotional wellbeing outcomes being both contested and mixed. After reviewing key policy relating to social care housing alongside some of the theoretical and ideological positions, this article explores the social and emotional outcomes of a diverse group of disabled people living with mental health difficulties, physical and intellectual impairments, illnesses and age-related conditions, who moved into a small, purpose-built estate of smart homes. Drawing primarily on qualitative data collected from tenants prior to moving and again seven months following relocation, the impact of moving into the estate on tenants' sense of wellbeing and feelings of inclusion will be analysed and discussed in relation to efforts to build a new community.

1. Introduction

Housing arrangements for older and disabled people have been the site of contention for a long period. There has been conflict between policy makers and older and disabled people over affordability and personal choice, as well as arguments within academia over the (de)merits of clustered, specialist and mainstream housing within the wider community (cf. Bigby, 2004; Cummins & Lau, 2004; Emerson, 2004a, 2004b).

Whilst much of the recent discussion has been around provision for people with learning difficulties, similar issues apply to older and disabled people and indeed, the UK government conflates older and disabled

people within policy (Ministry of Housing Communities & Local Government, 2019). In addition, an ageing population of disabled and non-disabled people has driven demand for independent living within mainstream communities. However, the impact of austerity on state provision of social housing and concurrent neoliberal imperatives to monetise social care provision over the past decade (Power & Gaete-Reyes, 2019) has resulted in the increasing use of specialist accommodation tied to provision of support by multinational organisations and large charities.

This article explores the establishment of a community of disabled people who moved into a designated housing estate of SmartBodes in Scotland. We outline

the UK policy and practice for housing solutions aimed at disabled people and some of the tensions that arise, particularly with regard to housing that is tied to support, in order to contextualise how the SmartBodes represent a different approach before introducing the site of the SmartBodes and its residents. We go on to analyse the key themes of loneliness, community building and support, finding that this new, hybrid form of social housing helped to promote feelings of social connection and community for many of the residents.

2. The Policy Context

Scotland, the location of this intervention, has a different policy context to the rest of the UK. Since 2002, personal care has been free for those over 65, provided they have been assessed as requiring it by social services. In April 2019, the Scottish Government brought in Frank's Law, entitling all adults over 16 to claim free personal care. Someone assessed as requiring personal care receives this whatever their income or marital status. Conversely, in England and Wales, most people pay some or all of their personal care costs (NHS, 2018).

Depending on financial assessment, people can still be charged for the following services which are not deemed to be personal care: telecare (e.g., community alarms), lunch clubs, care home accommodation/food, housework, laundry, shopping services, day services and transport. People living at home can choose how they receive these services, which are listed in individual care plans. Care at home services can be offered by the local authority or by an external organisation under contract to the local authority. In Scotland disabled people access Self-Directed Support which aims to give people more control over their care delivery. The following options are offered:

1. Direct payments enabling people to buy care and support themselves.
2. Care and support arranged and paid for by the local authority on the person's behalf.
3. The local authority can choose, organise and pay the service provider directly.
4. A combination of the above.

The equivalent in England and Wales is a personal budget.

3. Housing for Disabled People

The process of deinstitutionalisation characterised one of the most substantial changes in policy for disabled people (Bigby & Fyffe, 2006; Ericsson & Mansell, 1996; Kozma, Mansell, & Beadle-Brown, 2009). This legislative change is now recognised as an international right under article 19 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (United Nations, 2006). In England, the Care Act 2014 discourages residen-

tial settings which are separated from general communities and emphasises person-centred approaches and the use of community-based options (Department of Health and Social Care UK, 2014). In Scotland, since the enforcement of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968, local councils have a duty to assess and ensure the person's community care needs and their preferences are taken into account when working with them (Social Security Directorate, 2019). This approach is carried through in the Adult Support and Protection Act 2007 and in the Social Care (Self-Directed Support) (Scotland) Act 2013.

After these changes took place, several reviews (Ericsson & Mansell, 1996; Kozma et al., 2009; Mansell & Beadle-Brown, 2009) reported that people with intellectual disabilities experience better outcomes in community-based and personalised housing solutions. These settings can vary significantly depending on where they are placed. Stereotypically, institutions would be large buildings, segregated from the local community, with a regulated and restrictive environment. Conversely, community-based and personalised housing puts the emphasis on a person-centred approach and enables the use of community-based services. There are usually ordinary or purpose-built group homes, that could either be dispersed or clustered, and potentially with supported living (Mansell & Beadle-Brown, 2009). The outcomes in these housing solutions are, however, influenced by the support provided within these settings with Bigby, Knox, Beadle-Brown, Clement, and Mansell (2012) finding support staff engage in practices resembling those of institutions, such as centring work practices on staff rather than residents. This is, in part because a significant proportion of housing for disabled people, and indeed other marginalised and/or vulnerable groups such as homeless people, those with mental health needs or managing drug or alcohol addiction in the UK is provided by charitable organisations as part of their supported housing offer. As such, tenure of accommodation is linked to the exclusive provision of support (Mencap, 2018). This limits choice of provision for marginalised groups and means that the provision is frequently inflexible. In practice this results in residents being unable to leave their homes without support worker permission and service provider applied bed and meal-times to fit in with staff change-overs and medication, thus reproducing institutional practice under the guise of providing 'person-centred' support. This leaves residents unable to change support provision without changing accommodation provision, effectively rendering them captive. As such, supported accommodation in the UK is exempt from rules limiting the maximum housing benefit payable.

This form of housing also provides a significant level of income for providers and is under-regulated (Raisbeck, 2018). As per the United Nations Special Rapporteur for housing, housing for disabled people ought to be centred within communities, be accessible and fit for lifetime occupancy, and allow freedom of choice and flexibility about provision of support (Farha, 2017). The Equality

and Human Rights Commission report into the housing experiences of disabled people in the UK found that housing for disabled people across the UK is mostly social housing provision and many disabled people have inaccessible homes. For example, in 2015, there were 40,000 Scottish households where individuals could not get in and out of their own home (Satsangi et al., 2018, p. 68).

In attempting to define different housing alternatives available to disabled and/or older people, the picture is complex with various terms describing seemingly similar forms of support. Scholars have attempted to define various housing approaches, and their impact on residents (Felce, Lowe, & Jones, 2002; Finlay, Walton, & Antaki, 2008). Another focus has been the size of setting and profile of the people supported (Mansell, Knapp, Beadle-Brown, & Beecham, 2007). This terminology can be arranged in terms of location within the community and level of choice and control (Harflett, Pitts, Greig, & Bown, 2017).

The key forms of housing are:

1. Mainstream: Housing not specifically designed for disabled/older people.
2. Designated: Housing specifically designed for and available to, disabled/older people.

Designated housing can be segregated or dispersed (Kozma et al., 2009; Mansell & Beadle-Brown, 2009) with dispersed housing consisting of group homes in which small numbers of people live together in the wider community supported by staff (Mansell & Beadle-Brown, 2009).

Segregated housing can be categorised thus:

1. Campus settings, aimed at people with higher support needs, often located within the grounds of former institutions.
2. Cluster, or 'clustered housing,' aimed at disabled people living on the same site, in a relatively small number of houses within a mainstream community.
3. Intentional communities, for people with intellectual disability (characteristically mild) to share their space and daily life with support workers. Examples are Camphill and L'Arche communities.

Independent or supported living falls between mainstream and designated housing. This form of housing responds to the rights of disabled people to rent or own a home. The support can be offered as a domiciliary service, from a provider of their choice and as required (Harflett et al., 2017).

The level of choice and control disabled people have is closely linked to the form of housing tenure:

1. Full choice of care and support: Residents have complete control of their support, as it is sep-

arate from housing provision and therefore not interdependent.
2. Some choice of care and support: Residents have some freedom in choosing care services. Some may be linked to housing provision.
3. Minimal choice of care and support: Residents have no control over care provision, as it is linked to accommodation.

4. Background and Method

4.1. The Housing System Developed for This Intervention: SmartBodes

The data for this article is taken from an evaluation of a new estate of technology-enhanced homes pseudonymised as SmartBodes. SmartBodes were developed in coproduction with manufacturers, housing society, healthcare providers and tenants. SmartBodes were designed to be highly functional, easily adaptable and suitable for a wide range of health and mobility needs and aimed to promote wellbeing and preventative health solutions including end of life care. The technology within the homes is a combination of passive sensors, such as movement sensors, 'internet of things'-enabled devices such as fridges, cookers, showers etc, and bed and chair sensors. The data generated is anonymously analysed by researchers at Robert Gordon University to help aid prediction of events which impact upon health, such as falls (Massie, Forbes, Craw, Fraser, & Hamilton, 2018). It is important to note that, at the time of interviewing, this data was not actively used to support residents' health by health services. All residents were given a secure link to the live data stream for their home and could, if they so wished, share this with family, friends or carers. The live data stream was accessed by some families and at least one family reported that they had been alerted to a relative falling by the data feed.

Although SmartBodes were envisioned as 'lifetime' homes (Imrie, 2006), this first iteration was piloted with residents who were all identified by professionals as disabled and in need of various levels of support, either due to old age, physical illness and cognitive or physical impairment, with several residents living with multiple conditions. Thus, only disabled people were eligible to be allocated a SmartBode.

Residents in the SmartBodes access various forms of support. Unlike many forms of designated housing for disabled people, although one has to be disabled to be eligible for a SmartBode, tenancy is not tied to an individual support provider and the accommodation is not officially designated as supported accommodation. Indeed, one of the assumptions in the design of the SmartBodes, was that the need for support would be reduced given the improved accessibility afforded by lower surfaces, walk in/wheel in wet rooms and sliding doors. In total six residents interviewed had some form of professional support (either paid for from a care agency or free from

a charity). This ranged from a cleaner coming in a couple of times per week, paid for privately, to 1:1 support 24 hours per day. Eight residents, including three who had access to formal support, also had informal, family support. Only one resident reported having neither formal nor informal support. Of those five residents who only had access to informal support, only one said it was insufficient. One resident who received formal support, felt the support received was insufficient to live independently and had to rely on family to fill the gaps. Another resident, who previously had dwindling levels of support and who lost all support following the move, reported the informal support was sufficient most of the time.

The research team conducting the evaluation of this intervention developed a bespoke methodology, drawing on the principles of Realist Evaluation (Pawson & Tilley, 2004), Theory of Change (Harries, Hodgson, & Noble, 2014) and Social Return on Investment (SROI; Nicholls, Lawlor, Neitzert, & Goodspeed, 2009) to produce overall evaluation findings, which were presented to the Housing Association that developed the SmartBodes. Interviews with SmartBode tenants were nested within this overall evaluation methodology—and the research presented in this article draws only from the qualitative interviews with tenants. As our wider evaluation was grounded in the principles of Realist Evaluation, it was mixed methods—collecting questionnaire, interview and other contextual data. In being cognisant of context, our underpinning methodological framework allowed us to collect information on the key questions of Realist Evaluation—what works, for whom, in what circumstances and why—and in doing so, we simultaneously collected the data required for an SROI calculation that was disaggregated by different types of tenant. Realist Evaluation is theory driven and was appropriate for our evaluation which firstly mapped a theory of change (or programme theory) for the SmartBode development—this mapped the intended and anticipated outcomes of the development from the point of view of the different stakeholders.

We were able to use this theory of change to inform the questions that were included in our tenant questionnaires and interviews, as well as the different types of wider, contextual data that we collected and to compare the actual outcomes with those that were anticipated by stakeholders at the start of the project. Thus, the key characteristics of our overall methodology for the evaluation research resulted from our combination of Realist Evaluation and SROI—it was mixed methods, involved the identification of key stakeholders as well as their roles and experiences of involvement in the SmartBode development and was cognisant of context and how experiences differed between individuals. However, this article considers the experience of tenants in-depth by drawing on our qualitative data and our interview methods are outlined in detail below.

Ethical approval was obtained from the University of the Highlands and Islands. A user-friendly participant information sheet described the evaluation and was provided to the participants by the housing provider who then obtained consent from the residents for the researchers to contact them. Those who agreed (n = 13) were then contacted by telephone to arrange interview times at which point the researcher went through the information sheet again, together with the consent form. The consent was signed before the interview commenced. It was made clear that participants could refuse to answer any questions without giving a reason, and that they could terminate their participation at any time. It was emphasised that refusal to participate would not impact on their offer of a SmartBode.

Interviews were audio recorded with prospective residents (n = 13) in their previous home or in a relative's home before moving into their allocated SmartBode. Residents were then re-interviewed 6/7 months after moving (n = 12). Interviews consisted of a short questionnaire delivered orally, followed by a semi-structured interview which probed questionnaire responses. Not all respondents from the first stage of interviewing relocated and three respondents in the second stage were unavailable to interview for the first stage. Thus, in the second interview phase, nine residents were interviewed for the second time and three for the first time. In the second round, from which the analysis is taken, three participants were interviewed with carers or family present at their request. Recordings were transcribed verbatim and then analysed using thematic analysis. Because of the unique nature of the project, small sample size, diversity of residents and sensitive nature of some of the data, we have not used any identifiers to connect quotations and have removed impairments, ages and genders to protect the anonymity of respondents.

5. Analysis

5.1. Loneliness

Tenants were asked to quantitatively rate their levels of loneliness before and after relocating and were also asked about loneliness and their social interactions during the semi-structured part of the interviews. It is notable that whilst some tenants did not report high levels of loneliness in the questionnaires prior to relocation and afterwards, examples of social isolation were significant during the interviews. For example, one resident said the only person they used to see in the week was the milkman. For some residents, isolation was a consequence of ageing or impairment and was therefore normal:

> Loneliness, I wouldn't say it's a factor, no. I'm not lonely. Well I suppose you do get lonely sometimes…but I'm used to it.

One respondent, a wheelchair user in an inaccessible property, found the social isolation before moving was extreme despite reporting in the questionnaire that they

seldom felt lonely:

> I haven't been in a shop since years. I'm not talking about weeks but years….The nurse was quite right when she said, "you're a prisoner in here." I cannot go out the back [door] and I can't go out the front [door].

In this case, the long-term social isolation from before moving continued well after relocating, so, although the new home was wheelchair accessible, the psycho-emotional impact (Reeve, 2004) of previously being housebound, was profound:

> I just *canna* bring myself just to go out….It left a mark on me, yes. That hurts, up there [points to head]. I think I've said—well, I was a prisoner in there.

This did not, however, reduce their desire for human company:

> That [resident] next door…[they] came in here after me, and I said all along I need to go and speak to [them]. I haven't done it.

But despite this, going outside felt like an insurmountable task:

> I was going to go across and see [resident B] that came out [resident B was observed through the window during the interview] but I could find different reasons for not going, which was a lot of rubbish actually.

In total four residents interviewed continued to experience loneliness and isolation. The reasons were complex, but key factors were reduced mobility, lack of local connections, psychological barriers and, in one case, overt exclusion by others in the community. Some isolated residents found even seeing others in passing or through the window an improvement on their previous situation:

> Well the only one I really see is [resident], [they] live in the house just there….It's just nice just to go out sometimes and you see somebody. Whereas before, where I was, apart from carers coming in, I never really saw anybody….I mean I couldn't just sit like just now and look out glass and see people passing.

Some residents made concerted attempts to include others. These overtures were received very differently, depending on the individual. This resident, who was well known to other residents and their families before relocating, made selective contact with other residents:

> I was never really one for going in and out of people's houses or vice versa, I pick, I choose…

They reached out to a fellow resident they had known for a long time previously:

I went over one day and I went, "Hey you, what are you still doing in here?" [Y] knows me. [Y says] "I can't explain it, I don't want to go out." I says, "Look, don't let anybody force you, I'm just saying if you feel like coming out, everybody is out and about." I go over now and again and see [Y].

They also had regular contact with their neighbour, one of the more isolated residents, visiting them most days. Both residents regarded these interactions positively:

> I went over to see [resident] yesterday and I took the [grandchildren]….They gave [resident] a wee hug when we were coming away and [resident] says, "Och, I've never did that in a long time," and I think [they were] happy that the bairns had…[provided human contact]

Attempts at contact by two isolated residents were unsuccessful, however, and involved 'policing' by both neighbours and housing officials—in one instance for not making attempts to engage, and in another, for attempting to engage too much:

> Somebody said that I haven't spoken to anybody here, well the day I came, I walked down to the bottom and spoke to every one of them in the houses as I walked down, and said hello and who I was. And not one soul came up or anything, they've never been here either.

In this instance the resident eventually developed a good connection with their neighbour although they did not report any interactions with other neighbours. The following quotes from another resident (resident X) who made attempts to get to know the other residents, had a significantly more negative outcome:

> I get into bother because I knocked on half a dozen doors and introduced myself. "Just keep yourself to yourself," you can't believe that, can you?

Resident X acknowledged they may have been somewhat culpable in trying to interact with a resident inappropriately:

> [They've] backed off from me, I went to the door probably more than I should have and [they] didn't answer.

The policing, which arose following a complaint by another resident, had a significant impact on the isolation and emotional distress felt by resident X:

> It's so petty. I got quite upset, especially when they'd said, "Just keep yourself to yourself." And I got so upset and I thought "How dare you try to control my life and tell me what to do and what not to do?" So much for community spirit.

This isolation and exclusion from the community felt by resident X was underlined by other residents, some of whom, such as this respondent, spoke disparagingly about them:

> Basically, most of the neighbours are really nice, there's one neighbour that I don't like and nobody really around here likes [them].

Such instances of social isolation were only relieved by family or formal carers. Despite this, only resident X, discussed above, explicitly reported higher levels of loneliness and isolation, qualitatively and quantitatively, compared to before relocating:

> I probably would have been quite isolated up at [area] as well…if it wasn't for this group of carers, I don't know what I'd do. They are all different individual personalities…and I need that because I'm a people person.

Most residents interviewed, however, reported decreased loneliness and feelings of social isolation since moving, as the following quotation indicates.

> No, I don't feel lonely and there's always someone about here that I can see…just lots of people walking about.

5.2. Building Community

A possible reason loneliness generally decreased since relocating was because it appeared that residents had rapidly established a nascent community.

> Other people get on with other people so it's a real community, you can see that. And you can see it more in the summer because everybody was about.

This can partly be attributed to most residents moving in simultaneously, although this did not mean that residents who moved later necessarily found it difficult to connect with neighbours:

> Most of the other neighbours had moved in [x weeks] before, so they all knew everybody but there was the [resident] who is living in number [x], I knew [them] from when I was up at the old place because [they] was one of my…neighbours.

Another factor in helping to establish the community is indicated towards the end of the quote above. Most people who moved into the estate also came from the same area and many knew each other beforehand. In some instances, these networks were quite extensive, the stable communities supporting the development of far-reaching kith (Ellis, 2017) networks:

> I know a lot of people…that's moved from my end down to [here]—[resident A] I'm quite pally wi,' I was pally with [their] brother…[resident B]…I'm pally with [their] sons.…About 98% of them know me and my family, we're quite well known.…I know [resident C], [their] father stays straight across from my mum's, that's where [they] used to live until [they] got [their] own accommodation down here. I know [resident B], I know [resident A], I know [their] parents too and [their] dad quite well.…[Resident D] that's up there, I know [them] too.

These prior connections helped support neighbourliness and most residents reported getting along well with their neighbours. Neighbour interactions varied in their level of interpersonal intensity. Community organising engaged all residents and there was a communal concern for each other's wellbeing. For example, the communal outside lighting was considered inadequate. One resident expressed concern, although not personally affected, because they believed it constituted a fall risk for other residents. However, the use of the outside lighting attached to the homes was also considered to be anti-social, so there was a consensus on not using them:

> We don't want to put these big lights on because they shine right across into somebody else's window and you don't want to do that.

Residents communicating with each other on a regular basis acted to alert others of potential issues. This use of chat as a form of social glue (Ellis, 2017; Falk & Kilpatrick, 2000) strengthened the community itself, with residents being alert to outside threats such as strangers peering into windows.

Whilst residents were keeping an eye open generally, there was an awareness of being respectful of personal space:

> I know one or two of the people that have moved in. But I don't go knocking on people's doors and inviting myself in, I just don't do that.

5.3. Building Support

The prior social links and informal communications within the estate, resulted in residents feeling supported and more confident:

> I wasn't going to go in [to hospital] but now there's somebody here to look after the animals I will go and get things done. That gives me more confidence.

This often resulted in direct instances of neighbours providing practical, informal support particularly for those who had physical or mobility impairments:

And I'll take parcels in the post for [them] if [they] needs that…and I can see the lights are on so it's fine.…We all help each other out and if I wasn't feeling safe, I could phone some of them [neighbours].

This watchfulness increased feelings of independence and confidence for some residents, particularly those who were not receiving formal forms of support. This informal support varied from providing support in a psychological crisis to more personal support:

I was quite upset one day, I was roaring and greeting like a banshee and the windows must have been open because the lot down there, [resident's] relatives heard me and they came in.

I dress myself and all that and obviously I put my arm in first, but twice I got tangled up in my shirt.…So it was [resident B and resident A] that helped me out.

Some housebound residents also report feeling connected to their neighbours and able to show concern for them in addition to purely social interactions:

If [they] can see me through the window, [they'll] go like this [waves], and I'll know [they're] alright! No, it's nice having someone that close that you can talk to, and then [they] pops in.

5.4. Socialising

Many residents interviewed reported engaging in significant levels of social interaction, which can partly be attributed to self-organising by residents. The interview data demonstrated that much of the community organisation, from petitions to arranging games nights was carried out by one very active resident within the estate:

We're quite good at doing that [self-organising].…If we say we're going to have something we always say "anybody want to come down, just come down" and we have a good laugh.

Socialising between residents was also supported by good weather that first summer on the estate, with many residents using the outside spaces and congregating together:

Everybody seems to come down here and sit and have coffee and tea or whatever, so it's been really good, this summer has been fantastic and I absolutely love that decking out there.

Some residents expanded the socialising during daytime into the evenings with residents reporting having games nights and even going to play bingo in the local town:

It's good that we all…meet up and talk and have a coffee or a blether or have a wee night [out].

The active community has resulted in people creating new friendships:

I have got a friend now, the lady next door, we chat every day and she comes in.…[Resident] is a good woman she is, she is nice. She always comes in, every day.

5.5. Pets as Social Glue

Pets were an important element within the estate, providing company for owners and, in the case of dogs, encouraging residents to exercise and leave the house:

Well I take the dog for a walk every day, maybe two or three times a day…

Pets also worked as a form of social glue, with residents either visiting their pet-owning neighbours or helping with dog walking:

Neighbours, I see them all the time. I see [resident] every day.…Because I take [their] dog [for] a walk every day, depends on the weather. If it's wet I don't.…I still go over, but not to take the dog [for] a walk.

The social value of pets is thus recognised by non-pet owners with some neighbours expressing a desire to own a pet. In this quote, the response by the support worker highlights the further potential of pets to provide social interaction:

Respondent: I feel like if I had a dog, it would give me an incentive to go out because I have to take the doggie out. You just felt "I've got to." But och, they are good company when you are by yourself.

Support worker: What we should do is speak to your neighbours who have got dogs and get them to come by and see if you want to go out for a walk with them when they take the dog out and start there.

6. Discussion

6.1. A Hybrid Housing Type

We have presented the thematic analysis of qualitative data collected through interviews with tenants of one smart home social housing development in Scotland. This housing development has characteristics of several of the existing categorisations of housing present in the academic literature (Harflett et al., 2017; Kozma et al., 2009; Mansell & Beadle-Brown, 2009). Thus, it can be considered a hybrid housing type; simultaneously designated, segregated, clustered and a form of independent living in which residents have a high level of control over support provision. Its physical design, and the design of the associated tenancy allocations process, mean that it

is 'designated' as only available to disabled people, usually identified as potential tenants by a health/social care professional; 'segregated' from other homes within the social housing estate as the SmartBode homes are located next to each other and stand out in terms of their innovative and unusual design; 'clustered' as people live on the same site in a small group of homes; and 'independent living' as all SmartBode homes are rented by the disabled people. However, they are first and foremost designated as technology supported life-time homes (Imrie, 2006). They are segregated, but their occupiers are diverse in terms of age, impairments and support needs. They are clustered, but a cluster of Smart Homes. It is hard to put a label on them and this, in itself, perhaps prevents negative (self) labelling by their occupiers.

6.2. Loneliness and Social Isolation/Connection

Our interviewees indicated that levels of loneliness generally decreased following their move to a SmartBode. This was sometimes not explicitly noted in their quantitative responses, but in their qualitative data it was apparent that their amount of social interaction had increased following the move—they saw and talked to more people. This was often partly due to the physical structure of the SmartBode, meaning they could move around and in/out of their homes more easily. We have seen that many of the SmartBode tenants made relatively short distance moves into their new homes and, thus, were able to maintain existing social connections within the local community—this connection has been shown to be generally positive for mental wellbeing (Wilkinson & Ortega-Alcázar, 2019). However, we also saw that, after moving to the SmartBodes, some residents continued to experience social isolation and loneliness, demonstrating its complex nature (ONS, 2018).

6.3. A Community That Supports Itself

Our analysis has shown that a move into clustered-style housing is not necessarily associated with feelings of self-stigma or ghettoisation. It appears the SmartBodes manage to be both clustered and individualised enough to meet people's needs and maintain their sense of self, so that negative connotations are not evoked. We have seen that a sense of community amongst the SmartBode tenants had rapidly developed (Dinnie & Fischer, 2020). For most people, this was a positive experience although our analysis shows that a good proportion of the more formal 'social organising' was done by one tenant, without whom things may have progressed differently. In addition, the fact that most tenants relocated at the same time, helped to foster a shared sense of community. Those who relocated later, tended to be less well connected to their neighbours. Our analysis also suggested the rapid formation of a sense of community was at least partly dependent on the fact that some tenants had existing connections to each other prior to

relocating. The level of support experienced by participants, be they formal or informal, appeared to have little to do with feelings of connection with each other or the wider community, although it is arguable that for some residents who had no formal support, this factor prompted informal support from neighbours. However, socialising with neighbours was not contingent upon having support from family or carers. The resident who had 24-hour formal support was as active in the community of SmartBodes as some residents who had no support at all.

It would be disingenuous to say that all residents felt included in the nascent community, but generally there was a feeling of mutual concern for each other's wellbeing. Our interviews revealed that tenants were cognisant of the fact that they were part of a housing cluster for people with additional support needs and, therefore, often took it upon themselves to 'care' for their neighbours in different ways. The clustered aspect of the SmartBode development seemed, therefore, important in building peer-to-peer support. It is positive that, as a community, everyone looks out for each other, but this informal community support is no substitute for statutory care because people who are excluded can miss out (Overmars-Marx et al., 2014).

7. Conclusion

Within the context of a wider shift from segregated housing, towards supported housing within the wider community, this article has considered the experience of a particular cohort of social housing tenants who recently moved into a hybrid type of clustered housing. We have shown that this cohort of people had varying characteristics, but all were living with some form of disability, age-related impairment or long-term condition. Our cohort moved into a cluster of purpose-built homes within a new built social housing estate. These homes were designed to be 'lifetime homes,' able to adapt with the shifting needs of the cohort. They incorporated elements of smart home technology. In many ways, they therefore meet requirements set out by the UN for disabled people's housing to fulfil their rights to adequate, accessible housing and the right to community life (Farha, 2017). A new term is needed to describe this emergent housing type of accessible, lifetime estate homes aimed at people with diverse levels of support need—perhaps Clustered SmartHomes?

Through the analysis of qualitative data, collected through interviews with tenants, this article has identified the social and emotional impacts of the move from the perspective of the tenants themselves. In particular, we have explored what impacts on their individual wellbeing, sense of social connection and community. The hybrid nature of the SmartBode housing development may be one of the things underlying the generation of social connectedness and community that has not been observed in some other clustered housing developments,

as they provide independent living; a sense of security, watchfulness and social interaction for those who want it; and independent privacy for those who do not.

However, communities are simultaneously inclusive and exclusive. It would be easy to romanticise the way that this community has rapidly developed and drawn together—the significant reductions in loneliness and wellbeing improvements make it seductive, but to do so would be to turn a blind eye to the loneliness that some residents continue to experience, not to mention the deliberate ostracising of one resident.

Nevertheless, the SmartBode development allowed many of the residents to make relatively short distance moves into the homes, allowing them to maintain existing social networks. Generally, this helps people maintain informal and communal forms of support by kith (Ellis, 2017) and family. Our analysis also suggests that the clustered element of the SmartBode development contributed to positive feelings of watchfulness and security for some tenants, that sat alongside the facilitation of peer-to-peer support through residential proximity. In a way, the SmartBodes show us what all communities could be: the integration of life-long homes with technological support to enable people to age in place; to foster and maintain the social networks and linkages they want and need within the communities in which they have already built them. Having developments like SmartBode available locally, even on a small scale such as the 16-home development considered in our research, would go some way towards helping people age in place whilst reaping the benefits of maintaining established social networks. Future housing policy may wish to consider an obligation on new build developers to include not only affordable, life-time housing but an area of clustered SmartHomes.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Article

"Listen to What We Have to Say": Children and Young People's Perspectives on Urban Regeneration

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Abstract

There is an important body of research that explores the contested understandings of urban regeneration programmes in areas of socio-economic disadvantage. While poor housing and living conditions must be tackled, regeneration programmes have been criticised for their destructive and displacement impacts on communities, their lack of public consultation and their reinforcement of the stigmatization of poor areas that draws "attention away from the structural and institutional failures that produce and reproduce poverty" and inequality (Hancock & Mooney, 2013, p. 59). However, much of the literature focuses on the understandings and perspectives of adult residents in regeneration areas. This article explores the views of young residents from ages 6 to 19 in Knocknaheeny, one of the largest social housing estates in Cork City in the South of Ireland, which is undergoing a regeneration programme. Through a series of creative methods, the research reveals the distinctive analysis these children and young people have on their community, the change it is undergoing, issues of poverty, stigma and exclusion, and their lack of involvement in the decision-making process. Taken together, these children and young people generate an analysis that is strikingly reminiscent of Wacquant's (2008) concept of 'territorial stigma.' They clearly cite how the misrecognition and devaluation of their neighbourhood and community shifts responsibility for decline away from the institutional failings of the local authority and state, back toward the people who live there.

Issue

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1. Introduction

Many cities in advanced capitalist economies have experienced a process of economic transformation which has seen the loss of long-established sources of employment such as heavy industry and manufacturing with consequent impacts on working class communities and neighborhoods which were historically dependent on such sectors for employment and regular incomes (Drudy & Punch, 2000). In many instances such communities are not in a position to access the new employment opportunities which have replaced those which have been lost and often face into long term unemployment, reliance on poorly paid and precarious jobs compared to what went before, and face the increased risk of poverty and marginalization (Loftman & Nevin, 1995; Moore, 2008).

Such neighbourhoods are frequently monotenurial and dominated by social housing built by local authori-

ties or approved housing bodies which is specifically targeted at low income households and was built apart from private tenures thereby creating patterns of spatial segregation. Therefore, the impacts of decline are often evident spatially as particular neighbourhoods bear the brunt of unemployment and loss of economic viability (Douceta & Duignan, 2012). Economic and spatial marginalization can be accompanied by disinvestment by public bodies (who themselves experience a revenue crisis due to falling taxation revenues) and private enterprise who may see diminishing scope for profitable economic activity and depart such neighbourhoods thus resulting in further loss of services. Combining these factors can result in a more general loss of quality of life and liveability for residents and at household level this can trigger a 'churn' as residents who can leave do so, often to be replaced by more disadvantaged newcomer households (Norris, 2013).

Wacquant (1996, 2008) has described this as leading to a situation of advanced marginality being experienced by such neighbourhoods and he identifies a number of features which encapsulate the experiences of these neighbourhoods and communities. These include "flexible, unstable patterns of wage labour and the production of insecurity and social disintegration; the functional disconnection from macro-economic trends" (Wacquant, 2008, pp. 236–237), which according to Hancock and Mooney (2013, p. 52) leads to "the most marginal groups remaining untouched in periods of economic growth and life chances remaining persistently depressed." Another feature highlighted by Wacquant (1996, 2008) is 'territorial stigmatization' whereby the concentration of marginal groups in particular locations leads to such places being regarded as dangerous places by those who reside within and outside them. According to Wacquant (1996, p. 129), one of the tasks of "research on advanced marginality will be to establish how each of these variables or processes presents itself differently in different countries and/or types of urban environment."

While many of the problems faced by marginalized neighbourhoods are macro in nature and related to the structural changes in the capitalist economy, local interventions are often proposed as a remedy. One of the remedies proposed for disadvantaged areas is the concept of regeneration which Robert and Sykes have defined as:

> A comprehensive and integrated vision and action which leads to the resolution of urban problems and which seeks to bring about a lasting improvement in the economic, physical, social and environmental condition of an area that has been subject to change. (Roberts & Sykes, 2000, p. 18)

Though regeneration is now an established strategy for addressing the problems experienced by disadvantaged areas it is not uncontested as a theory and practice and can be challenged at a number of levels. Firstly,

it has clear limitations in terms of capacity to address what are in essence the symptoms of the structural failures of advanced capitalism as mentioned earlier. It may frame problems which are structural in nature as emanating from 'deficits' in infrastructure, education, households and neighbourhoods. A meritocratic rather than redistributive ideology underlies many regeneration interventions which focuses on mitigating these deficits (Imbroscio, 2016) so that residents can compete more effectively for scarce resources in the wider economy.

Regeneration may not solve problems but displace them and Imbroscio (2016) has also criticised regeneration programmes for their destructive and displacement impacts on communities and the compounding of stigma and marginalization of affected neighbourhoods. While we have argued elsewhere that poor housing and living environments must be tackled (Byrne, O'Connell, & O'Sullivan, 2020), others have expressed concerns that regeneration can serve to legitimate existing socio-economic conditions. For example, according to Hancock and Mooney (2013, p. 59) regeneration can work to:

> Divert attention away from the structural and institutional failures that produce and reproduce poverty, as well as neglecting any sense that the workings of the capitalist economy, whether in a period of crisis or not, also create the conditions for emerging social problems as well as social and economic inequality.

Bissett (2009) has analysed the power differentials in the relationship between the State which is generally the sponsor of regeneration and local communities who are the subject of it. Whose opinions are sought and whose voices are heard when regeneration programmes are being devised and implemented must also be considered. While regeneration may be informed to some degree by resident opinions, the degree to which this is fulfilled in a meaningful and sustained manner is questionable and good intentions are frequently not followed through as the official agenda dominates over community concerns (Hearne, 2013; Taylor, 1995). Furthermore, when consultation with communities does occur it may be tokenistic, i.e., informing residents of what will happen rather than asking them what should happen, be limited and narrow in scope, and make assumptions about which voices are representative of the community. Established voices such as community representatives, development workers and local politicians tend to dominate as these are seen to represent 'the community.'

The concept of 'territorial stigma' (Wacquant, 2008) can explicate how these good intentions become subdued over time. Recent research in the UK highlights the operationalizing of stigma where certain social housing estates, estates that would otherwise be prime real-estate sites, become targets for big business and gentrification programmes (Paton, 2018; Slater, 2018). Slater argues that:

Symbolic defamation provides the groundwork and ideological justification for a thorough class transformation of urban space, usually involving housing demolition, dispersal of residents, land clearance, and then the construction of housing and services aimed at a more affluent class of resident. (Slater, 2018, pp. 891–892)

Slater (2018) goes on to highlight ample evidence that this is done quite purposefully. While this analysis is reminiscent of Bissett's critique of public–private partnerships of a type proposed for St. Michael's Estate (Bissett, 2009) in Dublin, this is clearly not the case in Knocknaheeny.

Knocknaheeny is a large social housing estate in Cork City, in the South of Ireland. As with many other working class neighbourhoods in the city, the estate, which was originally constructed during the 1970s, has seen the loss of employment as a result of the collapse of traditional industries such as car and tyre manufacturing and ship building from the 1980s onwards. It fulfils many of Wacquant's indicators of advanced marginality and is one of the most deprived areas of the city with high concentrations of socio-economic disadvantage. According to the census survey of 2016, this includes an unemployment rate that continues to be more than double that of the city (falling from 23.8% in 2011 to 18.2% in 2016), high levels of lone parent families (53% of families with children are headed by lone parents, mainly mothers), low levels of education (with 28% of the population having no formal education or completing primary level education only), and deteriorating housing quality. Since 2012, the estate has been undergoing a major regeneration and refurbishment programme led by the local council involving a number of strands which include the knocking and reconstruction of housing stock, environmental and public space redesign, and social, economic and community development programmes (Housing Agency, 2011). The Knocknaheeny regeneration programme seeks to replace the existing social housing stock with a much improved, higher quality social housing stock. While there has been displacement, existing residents are offered an opportunity to return to the estate once the new homes are rebuilt.

However, Knocknaheeny and other similar estates throughout Ireland have also been subject to discursive labelling, both in the media and in localised cultural discourses (McNamara, Muldoon, Stevenson, & Slattery, 2011). These same processes of stigmatization can help account for the subduing of good intentions and the abandonment of serious plans for deep and sustained partnership and consultation with communities subject to regeneration. As Slater argues, territorial stigma results in policy makers and regeneration processes underestimating the capacities of the community, falling into the trap of re-pathologizing that community:

This derogatory designator, signifying social housing estates that supposedly create poverty, family

breakdown, worklessness, welfare dependency, antisocial behaviour and personal irresponsibility, has become the symbolic frame justifying current policies towards social housing that have resulted in considerable social suffering and intensified dislocation. (Slater, 2018, p. 877)

There is also the question of unheard voices, especially those of children whose views are seldom elicited or considered (Speak, 2000). This reflects a more generalized practice in urban planning that consultations between local authorities and communities is an adult space and that they adequately represent the views of everybody (Goodwin & Young, 2013). The marginal position of young people in terms of the political process has meant that it is only very recently that children have emerged as a focus of urban regeneration programs. Fitzpatrick, Hastings, and Kintrea (2000) suggest three main reasons for this including acknowledgement of the particular disadvantages faced by young people in deprived neighbourhoods, perceptions that they are the source of problems in their areas, and a recognition of the need to increase community participation opportunities for them. It is also argued that children's participation leads to better decisions for them, provides insights for policy making, and makes adult decision-makers more accountable (Lundy & Stalford, 2013). However, UNICEF (2012) has expressed concern that children and young people remain absent from community consultations despite the impact public policies and interventions have on their lives and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) emphasises the right of children to be heard (United Nations, 1989). From a methodological point of view a central concern is finding the appropriate means to ascertain the views of the children and the remainder of this article outlines a case study of a regeneration area.

2. Methods

The article presents the findings of research undertaken in Knocknaheeny in 2013. There is a particularly large young population of children in the estate with 32% of the population under 19 according to the census survey of 2016, many of whom come from single-parent families with high levels of dependence on social welfare transfer payments and supports. The purpose was to contribute to the development of national consultative processes by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and to share the findings with the local council responsible for the regeneration programme.

The research methodology was informed by Lundy and McEvoy's (2011) recommendations that children's participation in research should be voluntary and safe, that research should be creative and child-centred, that children's views should be listened to and acted upon, and feedback given and children engaged in research outcomes. In line with these criteria and drawing from the work of other child-centred research (Fargas-Malet,

McSherry, Larkin, & Robinson, 2010; Greene & Hill, 2005; Veale, 2005), the project developed a range of qualitative, participatory and creative research methods. The research centred on an activity developed by the researchers themselves called 'the Wheel.' Its purpose was to guide ten focus groups held with 78 children and youth, ranging in age from 6 to 19 years. 'The Wheel' created an open-ended but systematic process of data gathering, like the studies of Goodwin and Young (2013) and Smith and Kotsanas (2014) with Australian children in urban areas. It involved a circle divided into four quadrants, each denominated as such: (1) What I like about my area; (2) What I don't like about my area; (3) What I'd like to change about my area; and (4) How I should have a say. Participants were encouraged to write whatever they liked on 'the Wheel,' including drawing and art. 'The Wheel' is described in more detail in O'Sullivan, O'Connell, and Byrne (2017). While focus groups have some limitations—for example, some views may not be stated or some participants may be more dominant—there are also particular advantages to using focus groups with children, mainly that they create a safe and encouraging space and mirror the group settings that children are familiar with in their everyday lives (Hennessy & Heary, 2005).

The research also incorporated a rap project involving nine of the children (aged 11–16) who wrote and recorded a rap song in a temporary recording studio in the estate run by a well-known local rap producer, analysed in detail in Byrne et al. (2020). The research also involved a Photovoice project with 18 young people (aged 15–16) in a local school who took photographs of their area following the themes of 'the Wheel,' and discussed and selected the photographs most important to them in a follow-up session. A number of observers have asserted that creative methods facilitate children and young people to express their experiences and opinions more easily than in focus group settings alone (Curtis, Roberts, Copperman, Downie, & Liabo, 2004; Darbyshire, MacDougall, & Schiller, 2005).

Of the 78 children and young people, 48 were male and 30 were female. Thirteen of the participants were aged 6–8 years, 29 aged 9–13 years, 26 aged 14–17 years and 10 aged 18–19 years. The researchers recruited children and young people from local primary and secondary schools, but in an effort to ensure a broad representation also accessed more 'difficult to reach' young people. These were drawn from a combination of early school leaving initiatives, training workshops and youth projects and were recognised by youth workers as being very marginalized within their area and the city more widely. Project workers and teachers attended the focus groups due to their familiarity with and support for the children and young people. This strategy is recommended by Curtis et al. (2004, p. 171) who state: "As well as offering encouragement and support to the young people, we found staff able to spot where their difficulties with the research process might lie."

Before the research began, informed consent was sought from the children and young people and their parents, and permission to record proceedings was also secured at the beginning of each focus group. Ethical approval was granted by the university research ethics committee and the researchers were vetted under national police vetting procedures prior to beginning the research to ensure child protection. To ensure anonymity of the young people, no names have been used in this research.

The analysis was based on thematic coding by age cohort, whereby what was important to each group was identified and categorized. The findings include illustrative quotes, pictures and photographs and an analysis of the raps, the full lyrics of which are included in the Supplementary Material.

3. Findings

The articulation of the experience of advanced marginality is evident in the opinions of the young people. The research reveals the distinctive analysis these children and young people have on their community and are presented under thematic headings and subsections related to advanced marginality. Additional themes of environmental decline and exclusion from decision-making that were significant to all the children and young people also emerged.

3.1. Stigmatization

The issue of stigma and experiences of stigmatization was a significant theme for the older teenagers, namely 17–19 year olds. They recognize that their area has been subject to 'discourses of vilification' particularly around danger and disorder (Wacquant, 1996, p. 125). However, they think that Knocknaheeny has become a safer place in the past few years and that it doesn't deserve its continued reputation. One boy said that "Knocknaheeny does have a bad name, but a lot of that was over Joyriding, and a lot of that was over eight years ago. It has changed big time since then" (Boy 1).

Yet the area's negative reputation affects them in daily life, for example:

> Boy 1: Like when you used to play soccer, like if we play against some team, you'd have all lads calling you Knacker and that.

> Boy 2: Yea. That's cause we are from Knocknaheeny. Scumbag and that.

The ascription of the term 'scumbag' to all from Knocknaheeny is deeply felt especially given their pride in the area. This older group takes a nuanced a view of the area and acknowledge that while some may cause trouble to tarnish everyone with the same bad name is highly problematic in their view.

Facilitator: And do you feel proud about being from Knocknaheeny?

Boy 1: Yea.

Girl 1: Yea….Because you know the way people say scumbags and all that, Knocknaheeny like?

Boy 2: So, f**k them.

Girl 1: There are scumbags out there, but we are not scumbags. Like do you know what I mean? So we are getting a bad name for what those people are doing.

Deal with It, a rap song by six 14–16-year-olds, also tackles this on-going issue of stigma and estate reputation. Immediately, in the first verse, the rap asks the listener: 'What do you see when you look at me, a young teen or a Feen from Knocknaheeny?' In the recorded version the rapper exaggerates the Northside Cork accent to represent the stigma of being low status, that he recognises is attributed to him and his community by the rest of the city/society. Addressing this stigma, the rap argues that people don't truly know them: 'Our place it's known as a disgrace. People haven't took the time to see our real face.'

The rap also offers a critique of regeneration by linking the themes of neighbourhood stigma and the policy of regeneration when two of the girls rap: 'We know Knocka has a bad reputation, but there is no need for a mass evacuation.' These young people see the stigmatization of their neighborhoods as a justification for regeneration's current form, but argue that this underestimates how much the local resident's value their community as a positive that needs to be protected, rather than destroyed. Slater (2018, p. 877) identifies how territorial stigma can become an instrument of urban politics:

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

3.2. Employment Insecurity

Many of the young people from age 15 are concerned about the lack of employment opportunities available to them. They anticipate difficulties in securing work locally which impacts on their sense of the future and of remaining in the area as described in the extract of the focus group of young people aged 15–16:

Facilitator: And you were saying you would like to stay in the area, that you'd like to be able to work and that.

Boy 1: If I got work like, it is hard to say. I wouldn't mind staying here.

Facilitator: And what do you think about prospects for employment up here?

Boy 1: Work is hard to get.

The disconnection of the area from macro-economic trends evident in long-term unemployment is highlighted when the young people aged 17–19 express worry about their parents' expulsion from the labour market.

Girl 1: My Mam doesn't work at all. Your Mam doesn't work either.

Girl 2: Sure, you couldn't even get a f****** job up here.

Girl 1: None of them have jobs.

Girl 2: Yea, no jobs.

Girl 1: Not enough jobs.

For the rapper in *Deal with It* this sense of exclusion from the economy leads them to propose that 'livin' up here you have to make opportunities.' However, the males in the group of 17–19 year olds also see potential in the prospect of jobs associated with the regeneration programme, which they suggest should be connected to the community:

Boy 1: They are developing Knocknaheeny, so Knocknaheeny people should build it.

Boy 2: And then get a trade out of it. A carpenter.

Boy 1: Plasterer, Electrician…

Boy 2: Or a handyman like.

The extent of unemployment in the area is related to the issue of drugs according to this oldest group. They argue that those who are excluded from paid employment must resort to dealing, the shadow economy/underground commerce that Wacquant, among others, refers to. In their view, unemployment is also a factor in drug addiction:

Boy 2: There are fellas that are drug-dealers. That's what they have to live like. Because there are no jobs out there, everyone has to go dealing like.

Facilitator: Do you think the jobs issue is a big issue up here?

Boy 2: That's the reason people take drugs as well like.

Facilitator: Ok.

Boy 1: There is one fella, sitting at home with nothing to do we'll say, I'm on my own so I'd be smoking gear, like that's what happens.

Facilitator: Do you think jobs would eliminate a lot of the problems in the area?

Boy 1: If you are working nine to five, you don't have time to be thinking, and then taking drugs and that.

3.3. Personal and Community Safety: Territorial Alienation

The sense of continuity between economic exclusion and territorial alienation was evident in the discussion of drugs, drug dealing, safety and anti-social behaviour. Younger children, such as those age 6–8, were concerned for their safety because of public fighting and drunkenness and the noise and disruption caused by parties and by motorbikes:

Girl 2: There are people having a party and they are right next to my bedroom….Imagine, my Mam was sleeping in my bed with me and the baby was screaming and my Mam and Da sleep next to where the dog is barking. Everyone is screaming when they walk around, they wake my baby brother.

For 9–13-year-olds, their sense of personal safety centred on intimidation. One boy said: 'We were walking on the road and a fella came up to me, grabbed me by the shirt, started mocking me, tried to fight me and everything.' The same issues arose in a focus group of 15–16-year-olds who have also had direct experience of these matters, which shape their everyday realities in the area and make them feel vulnerable:

Girl 1: Alcoholics drinking like.

Facilitator: Drinking on the street is it?

Girl 1: It's people lying on the ground….Fights.

Girl 2: And fires.

Girl 3: Junkies, seriously junkies.

Facilitator: And is that getting worse, do you think?

Several voices: yea…

Girl 1: Way worse.

Facilitator: Why?

Girl 1: Because there are always fights and everything.

Part of the problem in their view emanates from services such as drug treatment and rehabilitation which releases people back into the community without appropriate follow-up supports:

Girl 2: My brother came home and he was saying that a fella was trying to sell him tablets.

Facilitator: Really? And why do you think the drugs problem is getting worse?

Girl 1: There are too many young fellas coming out of rehab at the same time and coming back together….And the last time two fellas in a car tried to drag my brother into the car.

Drinking and drugs impacts on their access to local amenities and sports and recreational facilities, in particular the basketball court and soccer pitch. This captures Wacquant's (1996, p. 126) concept of the 'perilous battlefield' where a contest is waged between different elements in the community, and children, young people and other marginalized groups are alienated from their own place:

Facilitator: You don't like the basketball court?

Boy 1: It's pointless like. There are all gangs up there. And all they are doing is smoking up there and taking drugs.

The two raps synopsise these issues around safety with *Deal with It* also highlighting the hazards associated with criminality and drugs: 'When we're playing soccer in the park and it's dark, And it's full of needles. Like getting bitten by a shark.' In *No More*, the rappers, aged 11 and 12, desire an end to drinking, fighting and drugs, three issues they see as being intertwined, and an end to criminality and antisocial behaviour: 'No more drinking, fighting and drugs No more kids growing up into thugs.' They recognize that their area is particularly marginalized, and they implicate how social problems are spatially concentrated with people living in other wealthier areas not subject to the same experiences, such as:

A junkie living with the rats in his gaff.

Always on drugs, always off his head

Spending everyday just lying in his bed.

I don't wanna live next door to that!

You'd never see junkies living by fat cats.

Despite the territorial alienation of the area, the young people were intent on challenging this. Verse 3 in *Deal with It* describes the joy of community life, evident of

a place 'suffused with shared meanings, emotions and practices' (Wacquant, 1996, p. 126) and they refuse to be defined by the alienation and marginality they experience. This was summed up by one rapper who stated: 'This is where I'm from I keep real with it. I'm Knocknaheeny born just deal with it.'

3.4. Environmental Decline

The issue of environmental degradation and decline in the area was reiterated by children and young people in every focus group and is a key matter in what children don't like and what they'd like to change about their area, ranging from derelict and boarded up houses to dumping of rubbish and deteriorating public realm. The children from group B in our research (6–8 years old) stated:

Boy2: Up the hill there, there are a few houses that are knocked.

Girl 1: There's bags of nappies up there and cans.

Facilitator: How do ye feel when ye see the bags of nappies?

Girl 2: Disgusting.

Girl 1: I feel I'm going to puke.

The poor quality of the environment negatively impacts on their use of local amenities, especially the park which was the most important amenity for the younger group

of children, some of whom aged 6–8 drew pictures of slides and swings on 'the Wheel' as shown in Figure 1. They identified broken glass and broken swings in the park is a big issue, which they think is due to anti-social behaviour—people being drunk and smashing bottles on the ground. One boy stated: 'The last time I sat down I cut my leg there on the glass.' Another girl, from group A in our research (6–8 years old), commented:

Girl 4: Swings are broken in the park.

Facilitator: Did they fall down, by accident?

Girl 4: No because two ladies pushed them all down. On purpose.

In the rap *No More*, the 11–12-year-olds also rap about environmental degradation and the significant impact it has on their social world, in particular the loss of a space for them to play because of glass on the basketball court:

Glass on the b-ball [basketball] court kid's fall.

It's for us to play in because we're small.

They are frustrated both with their own community and also with the lack of action from the local council about this issue despite the 'glossy' regeneration plans:

Glossy plans from the corporation man

Cans on the grounds no I'm not a big fan.

Figure 1. Child's drawing on 'the Wheel' reading 'Park swings are broke.'

Of all the trash outside on the grass.

The council just needs a kick up their ass.

This is similar to the older groups (17–19 years old) who are critical both of their community for their lack of care of the environment and the council for its inaction (as shown in Figure 2 from the Photovoice project):

Girl 1: They don't even clean it, it is a manky place.

Boy 1: People be throwing rubbish and naggins [bottles] in the ground and that.

In *Deal with It*, the rappers aren't afraid to state the truth as they see it:

The truth's harsh, like biting a lemon its bitter

But the truth is the place is destroyed in litter.

Trying to avoid broken bottles in front of you

Jumping around the place like it's Just Dance 2.

Evident in the opinions of these young people is a strong environmental consciousness and a critique of the diminution of public services, which is a reflection of the inconsistent treatment of this area by the local state which has tended to intervene only when matters reach a crisis point rather than sustaining services on an ongoing basis.

3.5. Exclusion from Decision-Making

The children and young people want to be heard but felt excluded, disempowered and alienated from the decision-making process in their community on regeneration. All of the children and young people, from the youngest to the oldest, have numerous ideas of how consultation could proceed with them, from regulator meetings, involvement in the design and planning, regular surveys, employment opportunities including working on the building, and regular distribution of information.

The 9–13 year-olds in particular are conscious of their rights as children in the here and now writing on 'the Wheel' that:

We should know what they are doing cos we live here/We should be heard/We are children and we have our own rights/Children should be allowed to say what happens in the area/Adults should listen to children.

When the researchers probed the origins of this awareness, it emerged that their teachers and youth workers had introduced them to the UNCRC and its relevance to their lives and experiences:

Facilitator: How would ye like to have ye're say?

Boy 1: We'd like to be heard like.
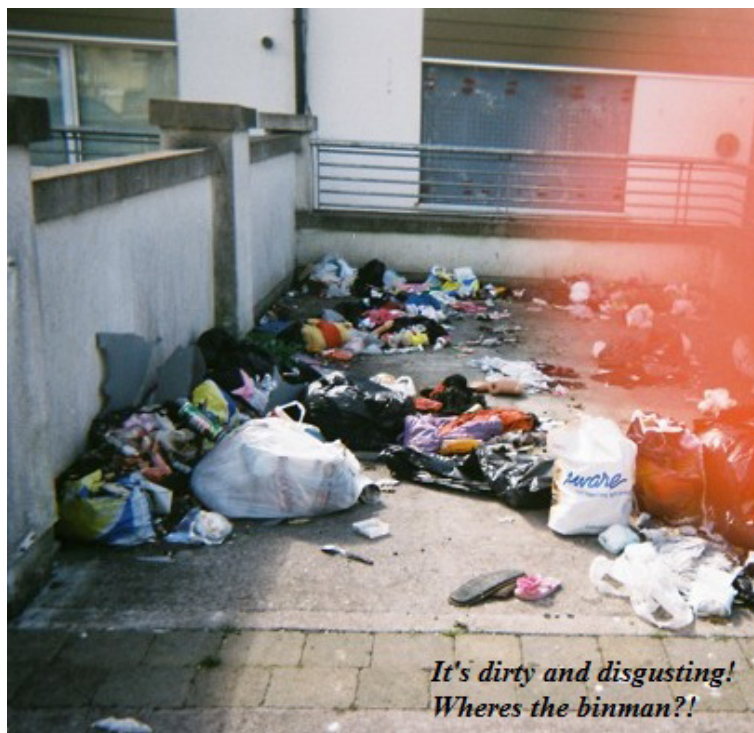
Boy 2: We should have our own say.

Figure 2. Photovoice: 'It's dirty and disgusting! Where's the binman?!'

Boy 1: The only people being heard on this project are adults like. We want to be heard as well.

Facilitator: Should ye tell the council, should ye get to meet the council?

Boy 1: Yea, we have our rights.

Girl 1: We are here too.

However, many were sceptical of how their input might be addressed. 15–16 year-olds are particularly cynical about the potential for participation, with one girl stating that the council 'don't care what we think about it.' They wrote on 'the Wheel':

It might be a waste of time to talk to the council because if they wanted us involved in it, we would already be involved/Even if they don't know we feel like this, they should have still considered the young people and they're opinions.

The conversations in the focus group demonstrate this further:

Facilitator: Would you go if there was a meeting called? Or could you have a council in your school or something?

Several voices: Yea.

Girl 1: But wouldn't that just be a waste of time, because if they wanted us involved they would have already involved us.

Girl 2: Yea, but they won't take us serious anyway.

Facilitator: Why do you think they won't take you seriously?

Girl 2: Because they would just look at us and think, 'they are just kids.'

The raps also express their frustration with their exclusion from decision-making. In *No More*, the children rap 'Stop ignoring me, listen to what I gotta say.' While in *Deal with It*, the young people strongly critique the lack of consultation:

We know that there's issues that need to be dealt with.

But your masterplan never asked us SHHHH!

IT doesn't matter though about what we think.

Why's it always the youth are the missing link?'

4. Conclusion

Neighbourhoods that experience economic decline are often subject to regeneration interventions in an effort to upgrade their infrastructure, amenities and economic sustainability. Within these programmes, provision is often made to consult with residents in the community. However, where this occurs, it is normally adults who are included. This article shows that children and young people are just as vulnerable to the effects of advanced marginality and have distinctive perspectives about their area and the challenges it faces. This analysis presented in this case study bears out the themes identified by Wacquant in relation to stigmatization, employment insecurity and territorial alienation as being of concern to children and young people and adds an additional theme identified by the children and young people in relation to environmental decline. Innovative research methods also show that the children and young people are not short of ideas on how they can get involved and have a say on matters that affect them and they are critical of their exclusion from the decision-making process.

While there are common concerns shared between the different age groups in this research, in particular that of environmental decline and how regeneration ignores the views of themselves and their families, the analysis has also revealed distinctive views. When they are younger, children are profoundly disturbed by safety issues, while the older age groups are also concerned with their employment prospects and the misrecognition, labelling and stigmatization of themselves and their community. The children and young people express deep levels of frustration from being underestimated and ignored as regeneration in action becomes overly paternalistic. When given an opportunity to speak, the children and young people create sophisticated analyses, identifying criminality, drug dealing, violence, etc. as huge problems, but they also recognise that regeneration, the city, society and state judges 'them' on the basis of this 'minority of the worst'; overextending the label to the entire estate. They clearly say how can anything change 'if you won't listen.' As argued above, the key social science literature highlights that neighbourhood decline is precipitated by exclusion, disempowerment and marginalisation, and regeneration programmes can feed into this same exclusion and disempowerment, and thereby not only fail to tackle deep rooted territorial stigmatization and marginality, but also reproduce it.

The analysis demonstrates that children and young people have their own valuable insights on regeneration that belies their stigmatization and underestimation, including critical perspectives and awareness of the impact of structural inequalities. The research highlights that the principles of children's rights as articulated in the UNCRC, are as relevant to neighbourhood regeneration as any other setting and there is an obligation on authorities to ensure that the voices of children and young people are heard and that their opinions are valued. As a result

of the research the Irish Government's National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-Making (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2015, p. 40) states that 'local authorities will integrate local children and young people's participation into Housing Regeneration Programmes funded under the National Regeneration Programme.' Implementing such strategies through creative and participatory methods is essential to ensure a more inclusive approach to regeneration programmes so that children and young people can be heard and their opinions valued in similar regeneration projects now and in the future.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

Supplementary Material

Supplementary material for this article is available online in the format provided by the authors (unedited).

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Article

(Re)Building Home and Community in the Social Housing Sector: Lessons from a South Australian Approach

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Abstract

Australia's social housing sector is under great pressure. Actions to improve social housing sector capacity and responsiveness have occupied the minds and endeavours of many policy makers, practitioners and scholars for some time now. This article focusses on one approach to challenges within the sector recently adopted in a socio-economically disadvantaged area within Adelaide, South Australia: transfer of housing stock from the public to the community housing sector for capacity and community building purposes (the Better Places, Stronger Communities Public Housing Transfer Program). The discussion draws on evaluative research about this northern Adelaide program, which has a deliberate theoretical and practical foundation in community development and place-making as a means for promoting and strengthening social inclusion, complementing its tenancy management and asset growth focuses. Tenants and other stakeholders report valued outcomes from the program's community development activities—the focus of this article—which have included the co-production of new and necessary social and physical infrastructures to support community participation and engagement among (vulnerable) tenants and residents, confidence in the social landlord and greater feelings of safety and inclusion among tenants, underpinning an improving sense of home, community and place. Consideration of program outcomes and lessons reminds us of the importance of the 'social' in social housing and social landlords. The program provides a model for how social landlords can work with tenants and others to (re)build home and community in places impacted by structural disadvantage, dysfunction, or change. The article adds to the literature on the role of housing, in this case community housing, as a vehicle for place-making and promoting community development and social inclusion.

1. Introduction

Australia's social housing sector is under great pressure. Waitlists for social (public and community) housing properties remain substantial, resources for sector growth and redevelopment are limited and the housing and other needs of sitting and new tenants are increasingly diverse. This array of challenges facing the sector are not unique to Australia and reflect broader structural changes in western democracies related to neoliberal ideology, the well documented rollback of traditional welfare states and concurrent roll out of

other forms of social and private provision (Pawson, Milligan, & Yates, 2020; see also August, 2019; Housing Europe, 2019; Whitehead, 2015). As Robinson, Green, and Wilson (2019, p. 5) note:

> In relation to housing, this has involved the weakening or dismantling of traditional state housing assistance programmes through processes of deregulation, privatisation and reduced spending….Funding for the construction and maintenance of social housing has been cut, stock has been privatised through sales and transfers, and tenant protection has been weakened.

Building social housing sector capacity and responsiveness to address the demands being faced has occupied the minds and endeavours of many policy makers and scholars for some time now. A range of strategies has been trialled or rolled out to meet the challenges facing the sector.

All jurisdictions across Australia have engaged in demand management approaches for some time now (most since the 1980s), tightening eligibility criteria for social housing. Such policy and practice has resulted in larger numbers of people with complex needs among applicants and tenants, for example, people with mental health and substance abuse issues, people with challenging behaviours, disability and lived experience of homelessness, including people moving on from chronic rough sleeping and women and families impacted by domestic and family violence (Flanagan et al., 2020; Muir et al., in press). In South Australia, the shift to tighter targeting to need has been particularly challenging, a legacy of the traditionally much larger public housing sector locally, and the sector's strong foundation as housing for workers and to support industry.

Most jurisdictions have also engaged in stock redevelopment and/or divestment to improve the appropriateness (design and quality) of housing for tenants, as well for neighbourhood redesign and destigmatisation, and to release capital for further redevelopment and new acquisitions (Pawson, Milligan, Wiesel, & Hulse, 2013). In some jurisdictions, housing authorities have pursued the direct transfer of housing stock within the social housing sector—from state (public) housing authorities to the community housing sector (housing associations)—to build capacity in a multi-provider social housing sector where opportunities exist for both increased asset leverage for growth/redevelopment and for improved housing outcomes for tenants. Such strategies have been pursued with more or less vigour depending on prevailing political ideology and the availability of dedicated resourcing for such programs in a context of inadequate government investment in social housing (Pawson et al., 2020).

This article adds to the evidence bases on social housing stock transfer to build sector capacity, as well as the literature on the role of housing, in this case community housing, as a vehicle for promoting community development and social inclusion. It does this by specifically looking at tenant and community building outcomes in a social housing stock transfer program in Adelaide, South Australia. Such a focus within social (largely public) housing sector capacity building activity, and related research, has largely taken a back seat in Australia; contrasting with some international experience (Miller & Russell, 2012). The preoccupation of policy makers with stock transfer for asset growth and leverage purposes—efficiency and performance metrics and outputs, over more qualitative outcomes for people and place—in part explains the current Australian situation. So too does the relative newness of broadscale stock transfer initiatives, and the limited resourcing for evaluating and documenting broad program outcomes. The intrinsic and evolving differences in both purpose and values between the public and community housing sectors also clearly play a significant part here. While public housing providers have arguably not involved tenants in the design, delivery and management of housing as much as they could (with some involvement preserved through tenant advisory structures), Australia's community housing providers, and the sector collectively, have maintained and defended their traditionally more inclusive role. As the Community Housing Industry Association (2018, p. 35) notes: Not only do they provide "rental housing for households on very low to moderate income, or people with special needs," community housing organisations also encourage tenants to participate fully in the social and economic life of their community. This underpinning ethos supports tenant wellbeing and strengthens communities through social inclusion and building social capital and social cohesion (Farrar, Barbato, & Phibbs, 2003).

Broadscale transfer of stock from the public to the community housing sector in South Australia is a recent phenomenon, unlike in some other Australian jurisdictions and in the UK (Pawson & Gilmour, 2010; see also Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, 2017; Pawson et al., 2013). A significant foray into stock transfer by the South Australian government (almost 1,100 properties) occurred from late 2015 through the Better Places, Stronger Communities Public Housing Transfer Program. Program evaluation reveals promise in the approach (Blunden, Liu, & valentine, 2017; Bullen, Liu, Pawson, & valentine, 2017; Skinner, Tually, & Goodwin-Smith, 2018), which, as discussed herein, has seen positive outcomes for tenants, as well as for the local community. Such outcomes have been promoted through the program's deliberate theoretical and practical foundation in community development and placemaking, situated alongside focuses on tenancy management, asset improvement and growth.

The community development focus within the program is described in work on the future of communities by Kenny and Connors (2017, p. 5):

> Community development involves the quest for processes and structures that, as far as possible, will en-

sure that people who are affected by decisions have collective ownership of, control of and responsibility for those decisions, and that they are based on mutual respect and trust, and on sharing of knowledge, ideas and resources.

Kenny and Connors (2017, p. 5, emphasis added) see community development practitioners as working "*alongside* communities to identify community members' collective needs and priorities; to develop assets, talents and resources; and to access new resources." Placemaking—as a concept and as implemented within the Better Places, Stronger Communities Program—envelops community development theory and practice, bringing to the fore the importance of geography and place-context in the lives of individuals and communities. It is the:

Collaborative process by which we can shape our public realm in order to maximise shared value….With community-based participation at its centre, an effective placemaking process capitalizes on a local community's assets, inspiration, and potential, and it results in the creation of quality public spaces that contribute to people's health, happiness, and wellbeing. (Project for Public Spaces, 2018)

The concepts are complementary and practice-driven, supporting co-production of programs, assets and planning for the future. International examples around both community development, and especially place-making, like the case study presented, tie housing more explicitly into community and place-making efforts than has been the case in Australia generally (Miller & Russell, 2012; Silberberg, Lorah, Disbrow, & Muessig, 2013).

The present article focuses on the outcomes and key lessons from the community development and place-making activity from the case study. The discussion considers the role that place-making approaches can play in repairing some of the frayed social fabric of Australian society of which housing is a central strand. It reminds us of the need to prioritise the 'social' in both social housing and social landlord; especially, as this case reinforces, in communities impacted by structural disadvantage, dysfunction or change.

2. Background and Literature

2.1. Social Inclusion and Community Development

While community development approaches have historically tended to emphasise the building of community capacities as a whole, and usually in relation to a specific spatial or geographic area, Shucksmith (2000) argues that such an approach has tended to mask the inequalities between individuals that are exacerbated by neoliberal processes of modernisation, leading to increasing social marginalisation for some (see also Giddens, 1991). He suggests instead a focus upon social inclusion that is linked to the development of social capital among individuals. Community development, in this view, should be a primarily endogenous process stemming from the increased participation, skill development and actualisation of community members themselves (Shucksmith, 2000).

In 2008, the now-defunct Australian Social Inclusion Board was established to advise government on how to achieve better outcomes for disadvantaged people and track progress towards building a 'socially inclusive' community. Social inclusion, under their definition (Australian Social Inclusion Board, 2012), means that:

People have the resources, opportunities and capabilities they need to:

- Learn (participate in education and training);
- Work (participate in employment, unpaid or voluntary work including family and carer responsibilities);
- Engage (connect with people, use local services and participate in local, cultural, civic and recreational activities); and
- Have a voice (influence decisions that affect them).

It is this broad model of social inclusion as a driver for community development that Better Places, Stronger Communities promotes and aims to support. This program underpinning is reflected in the overall program goals, as outlined in the following sections.

2.2. Better Places, Stronger Communities

The Better Places, Stronger Communities Program was announced in 2013, with a threefold intersecting rationale: to expand and strengthen the community housing sector; provide more diverse tenancy options for low income and vulnerable people; and relieve pressure on the public housing system. The underpinning logic model for the program specified five long-term outcomes as overall program goals (captured in Blunden et al., 2017, p. 7):

- The multi-provider housing sector is stronger and more vibrant;
- Access to affordable and appropriate housing for vulnerable people is increased;
- Choice and quality of housing for service users is improved;
- Tenants have improved financial and social wellbeing;
- There is an improved sense of community and social inclusion.

Following a competitive tendering process, two non-government community housing organisations (social housing providers) were awarded management of the nearly 1,100 properties transferred under the program. Junction Australia won management of the tranche

of 608 properties housing 986 tenants in southern Adelaide, contained in/around the suburb of Mitchell Park (Junction Australia, 2018). AnglicareSA Housing (AnglicareSA's community housing arm) won management of the tranche of 479 properties housing 918 tenants in northern Adelaide, concentrated in the suburbs of Elizabeth Grove and Elizabeth Vale (AnglicareSA, 2019). These residential suburbs south and north in Adelaide (South Australia's capital and major city) are within areas that have traditionally contained high concentrations of public housing (scattered and contiguous). Such housing was developed many decades ago now, to support regional industrial growth and development, including to house the workers (and their families) employed at now-defunct nearby automotive manufacturing or assembly plants: Chrysler/Mitsubishi Motors Australian Limited, Tonsley, which ceased operations in 2008, and General Motors Holden, Elizabeth, which ceased operations in late 2017. The locations tell the story of industrial growth, decline and restructuring locally in South Australia and reflect the decline of car manufacturing in Australia generally (Beer, 2008, 2018; Peel, 1995; internationally see Bailey & de Ruyter, 2015; Chapain & Murie, 2008). The areas are case studies of the impact of global forces and structural change, translating to high regional rates of unemployment and long-term unemployment. They are also case studies of the changing faces, needs and expectations of social housing tenants over recent decades, in terms of such things as experience of disability and desire to age in place (Flanagan et al., 2020; Muir et al., in press). The northern Adelaide (AnglicareSA Housing) Better Places, Stronger Communities experience is the foundation of this article.

The Better Places, Stronger Communities Program was offered for an initial period of three years, commencing October 2015. As noted earlier, and somewhat unusually for the Australian context, the program came with funds for the successful tenderers to use to facilitate and support community development within the locations. Such funds were used to appoint community development workers to work alongside teams of tenancy officers, enabling processes, infrastructure and actions to support community development.

The design of the overall Better Places, Stronger Communities Program included the South Australian government's intention and option to extend the management transfer contracts for a further 20-years, pending assessment of contract compliance and outcomes. Contract extensions were awarded to both housing providers in late 2018. Notably, the contracts preserved some resourcing for ongoing community development work. The 20-year contract duration supports leverage opportunities for the providers, meeting lender/loan requirements (Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, 2017). It also affords Junction Australia and Anglicare SA opportunities to support and facilitate community development and place-making, improve poor quality stock and its environmental and economic efficiency.

2.3. The Northern Adelaide Better Places, Stronger Communities Program

The specific approach for the Better Places, Stronger Communities Program in northern Adelaide is captured in Figure 1, drawing explicit connections and in-

Harnessing community potential

Co-design and co-delivery of activities to create pride in place.

Participation and connection in a vibrant, safe and cohesive community.

Sustainable, accessible, appropriate

Stable, safe and affordable housing successfully tenanted and maintained.

Decisions made close to the people they affect.

Inclusive principles and practices.

Connecting people to place

People's needs shape activities, programs and services.

One person, one system.

Social inclusion.

Place
Place-making through community development

Property
Asset, dwelling and tenancy management

People
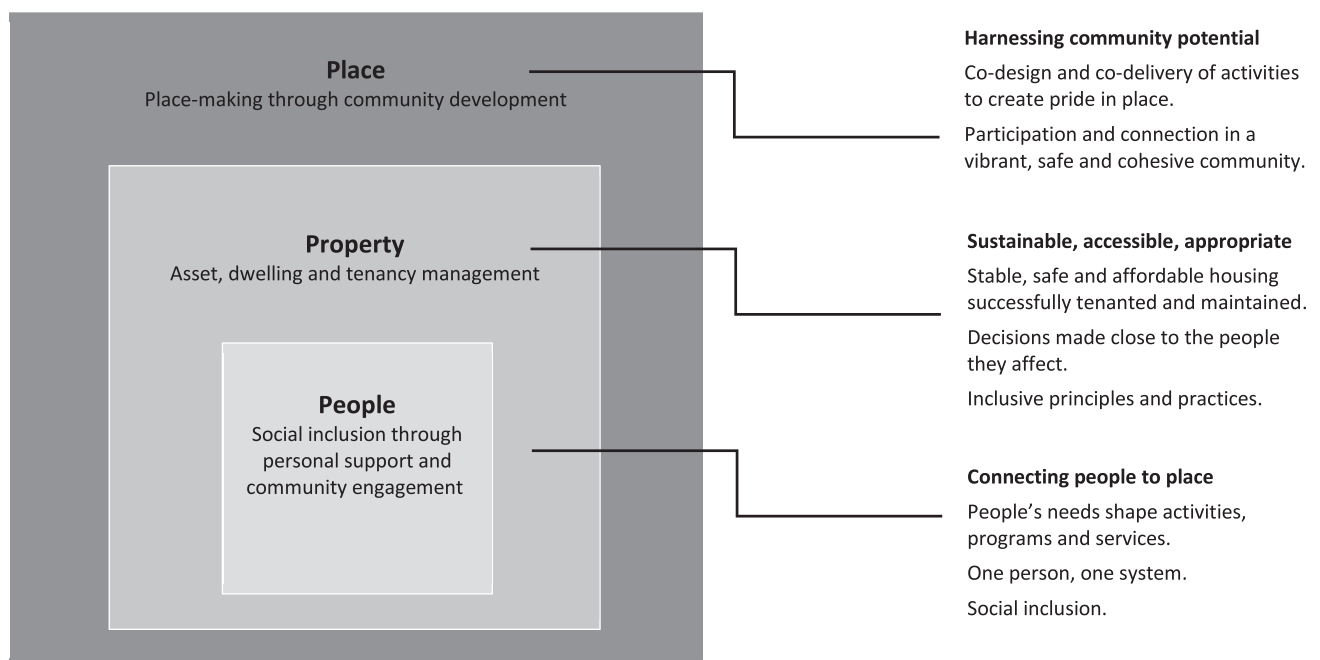Social inclusion through personal support and community engagement

Figure 1. Better Places, Stronger Communities model (northern Adelaide): people, property and place. Adapted from AnglicareSA (2016).

terrelationships between residents and tenants (people), dwellings and their management (property) and the broader physical, socioeconomic and cultural landscape (place). People, property and place are also reflected in the three key impact objectives distilled in the logic model for their version of the program (AnglicareSA, 2015b):

Working alongside community members and partners, AnglicareSA's vision for the Better Places Stronger Communities Program…is to create:

- A safe, vibrant and engaged community;
- A diverse and proud tenant population;
- Affordable, quality homes.

Table 1. Community development activities, northern Adelaide Better Places, Stronger Communities Program.

Activity	Description	Outputs/Outcomes
Foundational work (people, property, place)		
Community Leadership Group	Vehicle for co-production of program. Comprised of tenants/residents (approximately 12 members).	2018–2019: 9 meetings
Community services/Infrastructure audit	Audit of local social, physical and cultural infrastructure (services, groups, networks, buildings, spaces) in conjunction with local stakeholders.	Documents and maps identifying services/infrastructure capacities and gaps to inform planning.
Better Places, Stronger Communities News (and other communication outlets)	Outlets for program information, including tenant contributions.	Newsletter, mailbox and text-message alerts services for activities, events, information.
Events/special-purpose activities (people, place)		2018–2019: 137 community events/activities held 2018–2019: 2,361 people engaged.
Services Expo	Large-scale event showcasing local services.	2018: 700 attendees; 50 service providers. Improved understand of local services and networks.
Community Christmas celebration	Family-focused event to celebrate the festive season.	2018: 300 attendees.
Neighbourhood events, i.e., for Reconciliation Week, Harmony Day, neighbourhood picnics, barbecues, cat and dog microchipping days	Smaller-scale events responding to community ideas/needs.	Building community connection and identity.
Ready Steady Cook (cooking) group Craft group Women's wellbeing group	Interest groups to build networks and skills among tenants and residents.	Opportunity for tenant/community connection. Fora for sharing experiences. Developing and sharing life/living skills.
Cuppa Crew	Regular event for tenants/other residents to connect over tea/coffee (tenant-run) in designated places.	Weekly social engagement opportunity. 2018–2019: total 243 attendees.
Neighbourhood Watch	Establishment of local Neighbourhood Watch group.	Strengthened links with SA Police. Improved crime reporting, resulting in greater policing presence.

Table 1. (Cont.) Community development activities, northern Adelaide Better Places, Stronger Communities Program.

Activity	Description	Outputs/Outcomes
Linkages (people, place)		
External, i.e., Playford Men's Shed Community tool (lending) library United We Read (literacy program) Internal, i.e. Intensive Tenancy Support (at risk tenancies) Playford Communities for Children (support for children/families in disadvantaged areas) Thread Together (free stylist service and fashionable clothing for people in need)	Active promotion of links to practical and social supports for tenants and residents.	Greater tenant awareness and connection with local agencies, services and networks for access to specific support and for wellbeing, social engagement/inclusion. Links with churches, local government, schools, children's services, frontline services, existing and new sporting and social clubs.
Amenity/streetscaping (place)		
Street clean-ups Community tree plantings Working bee at neighbourhood shops (installation of street furniture, beautification work) Large wall mural	Opportunities for tenants to collectively engage in building amenity and improve appearance of place.	Improved property conditions and visual amenity. 2016: 36m^3 waste material removed from one housing estate.
AnglicareSA shopfront (in Elizabeth Grove neighbourhood shops)	Shopfront/office in Elizabeth Grove neighbourhood shopping centre.	2018–2019: 3,002 visits. Point of access to workers, other staff and for community information. Space for community meetings (outgrown).
Affordable living initiative (people, property)	Actions aimed at improving energy efficiency of dwellings and building tenant understandings and behaviours for addressing escalating costs of living.	Four education sessions (157 tenants attended). $805,000 of cost-saving improvements to homes (roof insulation, ceiling fans, window tint, external door seals, LED light fittings, water saving shower heads).

Notes: The affordable living initiative was a central plank during the initial term of the Better Places, Stronger Communities Program. Through the initiative modifications were made to make homes energy efficient, specifically to reduce energy costs. Tenants had some input into the types of modifications made. The initiative offered an avenue for engaging with tenants. Improvements to properties have not only been appreciated by tenants, but also helped build their confidence in the program, workers and landlord. Source: AnglicareSA (2015a, 2019) and Skinner et al. (2018).

Table 1 outlines the breadth of activities and structures co-designed and co-delivered under the umbrella of the Better Places, Stronger Communities program by AnglicareSA workers and residents (mostly AnglicareSA housing tenants) to meet stated objectives. The table also presents outputs/outcomes data for each activity, demonstrating reach and progress. The structures/activities tie to the four key elements of social inclusion as generally defined in Australia: learn, work (including volunteer), engage and have a voice.

The essence of the AnglicareSA Housing model, and its aims, are grounded in the complementary principles,

theory and practice of community development and place-making (for social inclusion purposes), see Figure 1 and Table 1, as summarised in the earlier discussion.

3. Methods and Data

This article uses the findings of a qualitative process and implementation evaluation of the community development component within the northern Adelaide Better Places, Stronger Communities Program to show how such an approach can support (re)building home and community within and through the social housing sector (Skinner et al., 2018). The key impact objectives and five long-term outcomes set out in sections 2.2 and 2.3—with their clear social inclusion orientation—provided the criteria against which the evaluation was framed, and outcomes considered. The evaluative work on which the article draws was commissioned by AnglicareSA to document the approach and learnings as a case study and to evaluate the model for continuous improvement purposes.

The theoretical framework developed for the evaluation deliberately prioritised expert/participant knowledge, organically capturing the voices and perspectives of residents, workers and representatives of other community organisations involved with the program generally and its community development component specifically. Data were collected via either one-on-one interviews (25 participants) or focus groups with up to eight participants per setting (23 participants). Interviews/discussions were largely participant-led, allowing expert identification of key issues/matters, community development impacts, value and most significant change (Dart & Davies, 2003). Comprehensive notes were taken during all interviews and focus groups, along with audio recordings and fieldnotes detailing researcher reflections. Data were collected during September and October 2018.

A purposive sampling methodology was employed to recruit the relevant participants (Lavrakas, 2008), with the community housing organisation directly promoting the evaluation to residents and other stakeholders through their program and other networks. Some participants were recruited via snowballing/word of mouth. Resident participants were mostly tenants of the community housing organisation (with some non-tenant residents also participants), ten participants were workers of the community housing organisation or other local agencies and two informants were local business owners who were also long-term residents of the area. Efforts were made to recruit people more and less engaged with the program and its community development focus for balance in the evaluation. Some bias exists in the data towards the former group for unsurprising reasons: ease of identification, access and willingness to participate.

Notably, data saturation was reached early on in the fieldwork (Heneker, Zizzo, Awata, & Goodwin-Smith, 2017; Saunders et al., 2018; Seale, 2004). This is an important factor in the evaluation, triangulating value and

impact and indicating data rigour. Data saturation also assisted with developing the framework for analysis.

Ethics approval for the evaluation was received from the Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee at the relevant research institution prior to data collection (Flinders University SBREC project number 8121). All participants provided informed consent. Significant care was taken to ensure the anonymity of participants across all stages of the research from initial contact about the research, through to fieldwork participation and reporting. Identifying information has been removed from all commentary provided, including context commentary that could identify any individual respondent.

3.1. Analysis

The original transcripts and fieldnotes from the evaluation were revisited for this article, and (re)interpreted and (re)analysed using adaptations of Ritchie and Spencer's (1994) framework analysis methodology (see also Spencer, Ritchie, Ormston, O'Connor, & Barnard, 2014) and Halcomb and Davidson's (2006) iterative approach for thematic analysis. This approach to data analysis involved four steps: First, familiarisation with the project data through close review of transcripts and fieldnotes, documenting researcher/evaluator reflections about the data; second, content analysis of the data to identify/map overarching (key/repeated) themes as the basis for a thematic analysis framework; third, sorting overarching themes into a logical order for the thematic analysis framework, which in this case showed strong interconnectedness between themes; and, fourth, interpreting themes or demonstrating/reinforcing their prominence by matching key quotations from experts/participants consulted against each theme.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1. Outcomes

The data collected about the community development activity within the northern Adelaide Better Places, Stronger Communities Program identified a number of positive outcomes of such work within the program (Table 1) and its value to tenants and the local community (see Blunden et al., 2017; Bullen et al., 2017). These program outcomes can be adequately summarised as follows:

- Development and promotion of tenant and community participation and engagement infrastructure, via a group for co-production of community development and place-making activity itself and by establishing other local social groups/networks (and the resources/training needed to support their establishment and functioning);
- Development and promotion of a program of regular and special-purpose events and activities of

interest to tenants and the broader community, building a sense of place and identity;

- Delivering or facilitating the delivery of new physical infrastructure to activate streets, building pedestrian navigability and neighbourhood amenity and maximising opportunities for social interaction locally;
- Establishment and strengthening of links and pathways between key organisations for social, economic and cultural engagement and development in Elizabeth Grove/Elizabeth Vale and beyond;
- High levels of tenant and stakeholder satisfaction with the design, implementation and delivery of community development and place-making activities within the program.

Beneath these more 'collective' outcomes are also highly individual outcomes for many tenants (and some non-tenant residents), centred specifically on increasing social inclusion, overcoming social isolation and extending or building people's life and living skills.

The community development and place-making outcomes identified above sit alongside four clearly related outcomes from the program more broadly. First, tenancy and asset management, which means ensuring tenants understand and comply with their responsibilities (payment of rent, property standards and condition, socially acceptable behaviour), meeting benchmarks for urgent and long-term maintenance requirements and requirements around allocation of vacant dwellings (tenant diversity). Second, affordable living, i.e., designing, delivering and/or facilitating delivery of initiatives to reduce the costs of living for tenants. Third, safety, which means actions to improve tenant safety, including perceptions about community safety. Fourth, (maintaining) high levels of residential satisfaction among tenants (AnglicareSA, 2019).

Consideration of the structure and processes underpinning the delivery and evolution of the community development component within the program, logically leads to a number of conclusions about the approach as a vehicle for improving inclusion outcomes related to people, property and place. Such outcomes are also important for social housing sector capacity building, as foundational principles for public housing stock transfer. The remainder of the article outlines the key lessons from the approach, supported with statements from stakeholders. Lessons are highly interconnected, and all play an equally important part within the whole picture of (re)building home and community within and through the social housing sector.

Before moving onto such lessons however, it is pertinent to point out that discussions with key stakeholders about the development and implementation of the northern Adelaide program revealed some challenges, barriers or tensions. Challenges reported included the time it has taken to build trust and connection with tenants/residents (a challenge for both

community development workers and tenancy officers); the challenge of finding appropriately skilled community development workers and explaining community development and its purpose; and some turnover of tenancy workers. Arguably the core challenges for the program generally—impacting program outcomes and tenants/residents' views about the program and area—have been the poor quality of transferred housing stock, and issues with neighbours, mostly related to antisocial behaviour. These factors were highlighted as impacting people's sense of wellbeing, connection and place. They were also core motivations for the development of the program by the housing authority, with redevelopment and better maintenance of dwellings seen as occupying a core role in (re)building pride in place and therefore (re)building 'community.'

4.2. Lessons

4.2.1. Theme 1: People and Relationships Matter

The northern Adelaide Better Places, Stronger Communities experience strongly demonstrates the importance of people and relationships in the delivery of both human services and community development. Put simply, people and relationships matter, and in a range of ways:

> I talk to the Anglicare people in the office and I see them out and about. The staff are very helpful. We feel like a family. I can't say enough good things about Anglicare. They made me feel like a human again. (Tenant)

The high value ascribed to people and relationships by tenants reflected experiences with their former landlord, the state housing authority (known at different time points as the South Australian Housing Trust, Housing SA or, now, the SA Housing Authority). For some tenants this was a relationship of many decades, reaching back to when public housing was provided for working class families. For others it was a much shorter relationship, commencing after experience of an acute crisis or change in life circumstances impacting on their housing, a period of homelessness, for example. Regardless of duration, tenants noted a much more distant and disconnected relationship with the public housing provider compared with their current arrangement. The overwhelming majority of tenants felt they were no longer cared about or cared for by the state landlord, reporting significant challenges with accessing relevant staff and information and landlord preoccupation with compliance ('ticking boxes' on forms) over people's needs. Many felt worn down by inappropriately met or unmet requests for property maintenance and repairs, a key housing concern. Tenants highlighted and criticised the highly impersonal experience of attending the regionalised local state housing authority office for whatever reason, where they were "just a num-

ber" and (too) often redirected to a computer screen for service, an overwhelming experience for many (older) tenants with poor or no technology literacy. Tenants also felt they had no genuine pathway to action about disruptive neighbours engaging in antisocial behaviour, impacting on their feelings about personal and community safety. Some longer-term and older tenants lamented the loss of their past stronger and consistent connections with their housing authority tenancy officers, who were, for a time, considered a trusted source of advice and community information; a resource to draw on in times of crisis or need.

Care and caring, listening, respect, trust, accessibility, responsiveness and reciprocity were identified consistently among tenants as critical factors in how they felt about their new landlord and what characterised their positively viewed approach to tenancy and asset management, and to community development:

> I'm very glad I applied to Anglicare. There is a family relationship that didn't exist with Housing Trust. Visibility and accessibility is really important in the community. You see [workers] frequently, and it feels like they care, and as a result you have more sense of responsibility. (Tenant)

Relationships built with tenancy officers were the foundation of engagement for many tenants:

> It's more friendly than it was with Housing Trust. I feel like I can talk to them, I've been able to go to my tenancy officer about things like financial counselling help. With Housing Trust you would only see TOs [tenancy officers] during inspection time [yearly], when they would go through everything that's wrong with the property. (Tenant)

Tenancy officers were viewed as trusted individuals within a cohesive and complementary Better Places, Stronger Communities team. Understanding of the respective roles of workers in the program was evident. People noted they could easily access program workers for information and advice and depend on them for follow-up and action:

> The team [is] now trusted and known in the community. (Tenant)

> There's trust and belief now in getting things done, that if an issue is raised, something will be done about it. (Worker)

Relationships between tenancy officers and tenants provided an important avenue for identifying people interested in greater involvement in local activities but unsure of opportunities. Such relationships (rapport and trust) were also the basis for identifying socially isolated or lonely tenants who might benefit from engagement

and other social supports offered through the program's community development work (or other pathways). The Cuppa Crew (Table 1), is one structure built within the program, 'staffed' by tenants/residents, to build neighbourhood engagement.

Addressing social isolation among tenants has been a core approach within—and outcome of—the program generally, aided by community development workers and activity. The following vignette, assembled from our fieldwork, demonstrates impact and value here.

> Jan [pseudonym] is a mother of adult children in her 50s who has resided in Elizabeth Grove for 25 years. The property she occupies was transferred to AnglicareSA Housing as part of the Better Places, Stronger Communities program in late 2015. Jan's story is one of experiencing and overcoming social isolation. As a long-term sufferer of social anxiety and depression Jan found it hard to leave her house: "I stayed at home and did my own thing—I was in a routine, and I felt safe."

> Jan described immediate changes in the way things were managed with her new landlord, acknowledging the most significant changes for her have come through AnglicareSA's work with and in the community. She credits becoming more connected to her community to the support and approach of workers: "I felt like I could go out and meet new people. I went to the Craft Group, and then also to the Women's Wellbeing Group. The groups are diverse and they're welcoming. Anglicare have also put on their Christmas show, and that's been really great. Now, I'll get involved with everything where I can. You can get the community out to free events—it's the first, initial step for people to take to get out there and get involved. That's the hard part. Participation is important, and often a couple of kind words from someone will start it off." She also highly valued Anglicare's role in "letting you know what's going on in the community, and in connecting you with other services and things.''

> Jan's experience summarises the core and success of the program: her participation in groups and activities has given her "a sense of responsibility to pay it forward and it makes me feel good that I can give back….I feel like I'm needed in my community." She is now actively involved in co-producing community development activities in the community.

Notably, social isolation was identified by some as a consequence of the breakdown or absence of connections between tenants and between tenants and their landlord. In fact, some tenants had decided that isolating themselves within their homes was the best option for feeling safe in their home and community. A small number of people reported being advised to do this by Housing SA staff in the past, especially when experienc-

ing antisocial behaviour from neighbours. For others, social isolation or exclusion was related to medical or other personal issues, circumstances or vulnerabilities that determined their eligibility for a social tenancy in the first place. This program focus speaks to the diverse needs of social housing tenants. It fits with findings of an increasing body of work around the growing and costly epidemic of loneliness and social isolation in Australia (Franklin & Tranter, 2011). Such isolation is masked by houses and front doors, resulting in disconnected and dysfunctional communities (Kearns, Whitley, Tannahill, & Ellaway, 2015). The prevalence of social isolation highlights the need for responses from social landlords that are built on understanding tenants' individual as well as collective needs, including being able to support co-existing needs such as ageing or disability and loneliness, trauma, mental health and social isolation.

The skills and character of the people fulfilling community development worker roles in the program were considered key elements in program successes. One tenant said: "[The workers] are the heartbeat of it….Nothing is too much for them….They like your feedback." Another concurred: "We give them ideas, they [the community development workers] run with them!"

Inductive analysis of the evaluation data allowed us to determine workers' core skillsets and characteristics for supporting community development and social inclusion:

- Approachability, reliability and consistency for following through on actions, processes, thinking;
- Ability to listen and support people from a range of backgrounds and viewpoints to articulate their wants and needs;
- Cultural awareness and tolerance;
- Vision and project planning ability, seeing how small components fit together and at different scales to achieve outcomes;
- Problem solving ability;
- Ability to prioritise issues and actions;
- Empathy, strong conflict management and resolution skills;
- Persistence and a 'can do' attitude;
- Resourcefulness to make something from nothing or very little;
- Willingness to take a chance on things that might otherwise be considered risky or unrewarding.

Our observations about the program also show the increasing need for community development workers to possess systems thinking mindsets: to understand how to navigate complex systems and pathways with tenants, with other agencies and with networks in the community and beyond. A core component of the community development work within Better Places, Stronger Communities has been what we describe as 'social wayfinding.' That is, workers pointing or referring residents in the direction of necessary local social and other

supports in order to build individual and community capacity for engagement, participation and, ultimately, wellbeing. Wayfinding strengthens links between people and local infrastructures—sporting clubs and facilities, support groups, cultural hubs, local authority supported forums and meeting places, education and training opportunities, among others—building a sense of place attachment and identity.

4.2.2. Theme 2: Property (Home) Matters

While by design the Better Places, Stronger Communities Program is deliberately about much more than property or dwellings, it is also a program about the management of social housing tenancies (occupied and vacant) and social housing assets (dwellings). It is not surprising then that property was a recurrent theme, even with its explicit focus on the community development work within the program.

Property mattered in some key ways. Most prominently, the fact that AnglicareSA Housing delivered on maintenance and repairs built trust between tenants and workers/the landlord. Commitment to action around maintenance and repairs provided a foundation for relationships between workers and a level of trust in the program generally:

> They repainted the house, fixed the floors, cleaned the gutters…there was a lot of maintenance that wasn't being done under Housing Trust. (Tenant)

Improvements to dwellings, including through the program's affordable living initiative (Table 1), developed tenants' confidence and respect in the program, workers and landlord. Property improvements further supported growing feelings of pride in streets, community and place; stakeholders noted that properties were being kept to a better visible standard by the landlord and tenants, improving the look of streets and areas within the suburbs. A number of the tenants actively co-designing and driving community development activity with workers noted that some of their willingness to do this came from the positive care and attention they and their homes were receiving under the program, along with the sense of place emerging with the support of the program, workers and other tenants.

4.2.3. Theme 3: Place and Community Matter

> You can have a million houses, but nothing is going to change without community. (Tenant)

Elizabeth Grove and Elizabeth Vale are more than the stereotypical disadvantaged communities they are often depicted as by outsiders and the media. They are neighbourhoods, a community and a place that represents the complex interplay of loose and tight, strong and frayed, formal and informal connections among resi-

dents (many of whom are social housing tenants) and between residents and local physical and social infrastructures and institutions.

Community development and place-making practice has provided vehicles for necessary and valued grass roots level examination of the appropriateness of community assets, identifying where opportunity exists to (re)build channels for community connections:

> [Better Places, Stronger Communities] has had a big impact. People are a lot more aware of other people…talking to each other more….People are more relaxed. (Tenant)

> Anglicare is [a] positive in the community. There's a real family atmosphere at the community events. Everyone has a story, and it's good to have the chance to get to know one another. (Tenant)

> With groups like this and events you get to know more people in the area, you can stop and talk. A lot of people have anxieties and life issues, you need to get out and make friends. It's all about community. I'm not lonely anymore. I was pretty much housebound—when people stick to their houses it leads to depression and mental health issues. (Tenant)

Locating the entire Better Places, Stronger Communities team—tenancy officers, community development workers and management—at premises within Elizabeth Grove clearly reinforced agency commitment to tenants, place and the program. As well as giving easy access to workers, the shopping centre location has provided a focal point within the community for community development and place-making activity, with workers and residents (mostly tenants) working together to improve amenity by beautifying the environment surrounding the shops (landscaping), stocking an outdoor lending library and grow cart with locally grown and acquired produce, and constructing and installing street furniture to make it a more welcoming place. The Better Places, Stronger Communities office also provides a much needed and well-utilised meeting space for the community (albeit outgrown by most of the groups using it as they have expanded in size and membership).

The findings about the community development activity in the area show that together the suburbs are a place with a re-emerging shared identity. And, this identity has been both founded in, and continues to be influenced by, social and economic development (including restructuring), population and institutional diversity and change:

> Community is starting to come back now. People are wanting that sense of community. (Worker)

That tenants and other stakeholders spoke so passionately about their 'place' in their world, and the need to

rebuild it socially and physically with help from others, speaks strongly to the fact that place and community matter, and have a very personal impact on people's lives.

4.2.4. Theme 4: Program Design, Delivery and Ideology Matters

The design, delivery and underpinning ideologies of the northern Adelaide Better Places, Stronger Communities Program has been central to the successes evident from the community development activity; from tenant, stakeholder and researcher perspectives. The program's underpinning people, property and place model captures its essence well, acting as a logical conceptual framework for designing and implementing actions and against which to monitor outcomes (and outputs). It also encapsulates the difference in how social housing is viewed from AnglicareSA's organisational perspective (a non-government, community housing sector perspective) and their view of their role as a social landlord: walking with tenants to support them to create home within a vibrant, safe and cohesive community.

AnglicareSA's belief in co-producing (co-designing, and co-delivering) actions, strategies and plans to build home, community and place is about building a person-centred program, which can be, and is being, shaped in an ongoing way by the people whom it affects. This fits with observations about practice in "the most successful placemaking initiatives [which] transcend the 'place' to forefront the 'making'" (Silberberg et al., 2013, p. 3). AnglicareSA's role has deliberately involved scaffolding some of the supports residents who are not in AnglicareSA housing also need to rebuild community in an area that has been significantly impacted by global economic restructuring resulting in the decimation of the local car manufacturing industry.

Mutuality, responsiveness and iteration (commitment to continuous improvement) defines the model, rather than conditionality and compliance. In many ways, this represents a reversal of approach from that taken by the state housing authority in the area over the last two or three decades.

Participants spoke positively about the future for their suburbs, having a level of confidence in their own, their peers' and agencies' ability to collectively (re)build a more cohesive and inclusive community, with an identity reflecting the past and looking to the future. The community development work has effectively developed the social resources needed to rebuild community. The 20-year extension to the management transfer contract offers some resourcing consistency for co-developing a more sustainable path ahead. Sustainability for the model, however, will always rely on both keeping abreast of changes in the social and services landscapes locally, which are constantly evolving, and, the commitment of residents to community building work, including commitment from people not currently engaged with the work that is ongoing in the area.

5. Conclusion

Today's placemaking represents a comeback for community. The iterative actions and collaborations inherent in the making of places nourish communities and empower people. (Silberberg et al., 2013, p. 3)

The northern Adelaide Better Places, Stronger Communities Program has had enormous value and impact for many people and agencies in Elizabeth Vale and Elizabeth Grove, two suburbs within a broader region experiencing the impacts of structural change and socioeconomic disadvantage. The program, of course, is not a panacea for all the challenges facing the social housing sector. Nor is the program a panacea for the economic and social challenges facing the Elizabeth region. Not all residents in Elizabeth Vale and Elizabeth Grove are reaping the benefits of the program. The model, with its foundation in co-production per the ideology, theory and practice of community development and place-making, however, is a big step forward in social housing practice, with tangible impacts as discussed throughout this article. It stands as an exemplar of why strategies to address significant and ongoing capacity challenges in the social housing sector in Australia must prioritise outcomes for tenants, including supporting social participation and inclusion, alongside necessary focuses on tenancy management and asset growth and improvement (a long-game). Forefronting outcomes for tenants requires more explicit recognition in policy, and in practice, of the nexuses between people (residents), property (dwellings) and place (community). This triad clearly works to support the four key elements of social inclusion as generally defined in Australia: learn, work (including volunteering), engage and have a voice, at least from the perspective of those people engaged in the program. Building positive outcomes for tenants is the core business of social housing and social landlords—a fact certainly recognised in the ethos of community housing and which arguably makes it an appropriate vehicle for such sector, tenant and community capacity building. Tenants and housing agencies are powerful assets in (re)building home and place.

The approach outlined, and this article, are a clear reminder of the value of community development and place-making in housing practice, and in housing research. Room clearly exists to expand practice and research bringing together these fields for individual, agency, neighbourhood, community, social housing sector and system-wide benefits.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Article

Neighbourhood Impacts on Wellbeing: The Role of Housing among Low-Income Tenants

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Abstract

The existing literature on neighbourhood effects suggests that a number of factors within local areas can have an impact on health, including environmental hazards, social networks and the socio-economic status of the area. However, there is minimal evidence regarding the role of housing organisations in shaping these effects. This article sets out the findings from a three-year longitudinal, mixed methods study of tenants of three housing organisations operating in the social and private rented sectors, examining different aspects of neighbourhood experience and their relationship to health and wellbeing outcomes. The findings demonstrate impacts of the immediate environment in terms of close neighbours, the wider neighbourhood environment, and social support networks, which are heavily influenced by tenant characteristics, previous experience and expectations. The services provided by housing organisations, themselves shaped by regulation and market factors, are also important. The findings will have relevance for tenants, housing providers, public health professionals and policy makers.

Keywords

home; housing; low-income tenants; neighbourhoods; social capital; wellbeing

1. Introduction

The notion that location is everything in relation to housing choice has become a cliché, particularly in relation to middle-class owner-occupiers (Karsten, 2007). However, for low-income households in either social housing or the private rented sector, locational choice is considerably constrained by both allocation procedures and cost. In this context, it is particularly important to understand the potential effects of location on tenants' health and wellbeing since problematic neighbourhood effects may contribute to existing health inequalities. In this article we explore the effects of the neighbourhood on health and wellbeing, drawing on a longitudinal, mixed-methods study of predominantly low-income tenants

from three housing organisations operating in west central Scotland, UK. We examine the differential effects of various aspects of neighbourhood quality and local social capital, as well as the ways in which housing organisations can influence such effects across the social and private rented sectors.

1.1. Neighbourhood Effects on Health and Wellbeing

The effects of the neighbourhood on health and wellbeing are intertwined in complex ways with the impacts of household socio-economic status. This creates a degree of difficulty, particularly for quantitative studies, in unravelling the differential effects of individual and household poverty from neighbourhood-wide concentrations

of poor households and the physical and social contexts that neighbourhoods provide. There is nevertheless an extensive literature that sets out to identify the key aspects of the neighbourhood that influence health and wellbeing, some of which attempts to control for or take account of attendant impacts of individual or household deprivation in a variety of ways.

There is strong evidence that there are negative health effects of neighbourhood noise (Braubach, Jacobs, & Ormandy, 2011; World Health Organization Europe, 2007), environmental hazards (Braubach & Fairburn, 2010), and crime and violence (Anderson & Barclay, 2003). While these factors demonstrate a socio-economic gradient, being more prevalent in more deprived neighbourhoods (Braubach & Fairburn, 2010), there is also evidence that there is a small but significant additional impact of neighbourhood socio-economic status on health outcomes, independent of such neighbourhood characteristics (Pickett & Pearl, 2001; Sellström & Bremberg, 2006). Moreover, some US programmes demonstrate positive health effects from moving low-income families to less disadvantaged areas (Acevedo-Garcia et al., 2004; Gibson et al., 2011).

Alongside this, there is more complex evidence of an association between the social capital available within neighbourhoods and health outcomes (Kawachi, Subramanian, & Kim, 2008; Vyncke et al., 2013). Social capital can be usefully defined as 'networks together with shared norms, values and understandings that facilitate co-operation within or among groups' (OECD, 2001, p. 41). Social networks are understood to deliver health and wellbeing benefits by providing a sense of belonging, as well as through the "stress-buffering" effects of social support (Cockerham, Hamby, & Oates, 2017; Kawachi & Berkman, 2001).

The evidence for a link between neighbourhood social capital and health is reasonably strong (Helliwell & Putnam, 2004; Lochner, Kawachi, Brennan, & Buka, 2003). However, there are complications in terms of which aspects of social capital are most likely to be important in shaping health outcomes (Veenstra, 2000), as well as the extent to which social capital may mitigate or exacerbate socio-economic inequalities, partic-

ularly where it is unequally distributed between neighbourhoods (Uphoff, Pickett, Cabieses, Small, & Wright, 2013; Vyncke et al., 2013). Moreover, there are likely to be differential effects of neighbourhood social capital within neighbourhoods, for example the health and wellbeing of women may be more likely to be affected by the presence or absence of local social ties, due to their greater likelihood of having caring responsibilities (Kawachi & Berkman, 2001).

In considering social capital as a key driver of the impacts of the neighbourhood on health and wellbeing, three conceptual issues and critiques need to be addressed. Firstly, many studies assess the social capital that operates within the neighbourhood to understand its strength and impact on health and wellbeing (Vyncke et al., 2013). However, in reality, the social connections of residents typically extend (well) beyond the neighbourhood's (imaginary) boundaries (Cummins & Kim, 2015), particularly given that social capital encompasses three distinct types of social connection—bonding, bridging and linking (see Table 1).

Thus, in examining the potential impacts of neighbourhood social capital on health and wellbeing, it is important to recognise that different neighbourhoods may provide different opportunities across these three levels and that they have the potential to impact on health and wellbeing through diverse pathways. These opportunities are likely to intersect with socio-economic deprivation at both the household and neighbourhood level (Subramanian, Lochner, & Kawachi, 2003).

Secondly, it is important to note that social capital faces critiques both as a concept and as a measurable category. Alongside the different forms of social capital, there are concerns that it encompasses too many different aspects of social networks and interaction in its various definitions to be a useful term (Poder, 2011). Hence, in examining the role of social capital in terms of potential impacts on health and wellbeing, it is important to consider the different aspects, such as trust, friendships and loose networks.

Thirdly, the meanings of "neighbourhood" are highly diverse and the term is often used interchangeably with the much-contested notion of "community."

Table 1. Types of social capital.

Type of social capital	Description	Example
Bonding	The connections between similar people within a "community," which act as "sociological superglue" tying people together (Putnam, 2000)	Family, friends, neighbours
Bridging	The connections between people who are more different and less closely linked, operating a "sociological WD-40" lubricating broader social activities (Putnam, 2000)	Work colleagues, people living in different neighbourhoods or forming part of other communities
Linking	The relationships between people and those in a position of power, particularly relationships between service users and service providers (Szreter & Woolcock, 2004)	Politicians, service providers

As Cummins and Kim (2015) have argued, in order to be clear about the role of neighbourhood and community in people's lives, we need to consider the scale at which people themselves understand and experience these constructs, including the scales at which they create and maintain social connections. As such, an examination of the health and wellbeing impacts of both physical and social aspects of the neighbourhood necessitates a careful consideration of the processes involved and the potential for differential impacts within geographically-defined areas. Understanding the potential role of housing organisations in relation to such neighbourhood effects is important, given their key role in placing and supporting tenants, and especially low-income tenants, within particular neighbourhoods. This requires an exploration of procedures and practices around housing allocation, housing service, area regeneration and tenancy support. Whilst the existing evidence in these areas is somewhat equivocal in terms of health and wellbeing impacts (e.g., Flores et al., 2018; Thomson, Thomas, Sellstrom, & Petticrew, 2013), a more differentiated analysis may help to identify which tenants benefit from different forms of housing provision and support in relation to the neighbourhood. This article attempts to do just this, utilising mixed methods data to identify organisational practices and their effects, and examining the causal processes involved.

2. Context for the Study

The study followed new tenants from three housing organisations operating in west central Scotland, over the first year of their tenancy. The organisations were selected to enable an exploration of diverse approaches to tenant support across the social and private rented sectors. All three organisations focus on providing housing to low-income and vulnerable households, but have different opportunities and approaches in terms of neighbourhood aspects, as outlined in Table 2.

West central Scotland encompasses the city of Glasgow and its surrounding suburbs, as well as a number of semi-rural towns and their surrounding countryside. Whilst there is considerable variation across the region, the area as a whole is significantly more deprived than the rest of Scotland or the UK. For example, during the study period, the proportion of Glasgow's population claiming out of work benefits was 16%, against a Scottish level of 11%, whilst 21% of Glasgow's population were living in income deprivation, against a Scottish level of 12% (Glasgow Centre for Population Health, 2020). In terms of housing, both Glasgow City and its surrounding local authorities have historically held relatively high proportions of social housing (in a UK context), reaching a peak of around two-thirds of all housing stock in the early 1980s. This proportion has reduced significantly in the last four decades (to around 30%), whilst the private rented sector has grown substantially since the turn of the century, to nearly 20% of households. The housing locations available to tenants of the three organisations involved in this study reflect the extent to which social housing and low-cost private rented properties are inevitably in the more deprived neighbourhoods of a generally deprived region. As a result, more than 80% lived in the most deprived quintile of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, spread across locations within the region.

3. Methodology

All new tenants were invited to participate in the study, being given initial information by housing organisation staff prior to a more detailed conversation and opt-in consent process with the research team. Participation was voluntary, with around 50% of new tenants agreeing to take part in the study. Participants were interviewed at three time points over the first year of their tenancy, as shown in Table 3. Semi-structured interviews collected a mix of quantitative and qualitative data, covering aspects of the housing experience, neighbourhood and social support, as well as health and wellbeing, finances and demographics.

The drop-out rates between the waves are largely due to two factors. At Wave 1, data was collected

Table 2. Participant organisations.

Organisation	Description
Community-based Housing Association	Social housing provider, with around 5500 properties in a small area of a large city. Operates points-based allocation process, where greater housing need results in more points. Undertakes some environmental/regeneration work in areas around its properties. Delivers a range of community development activities through a subsidiary.
Letting Agency	Social enterprise letting agency, managing around 250 properties for the private rented sector landlords and owning a further 200, purchased and refurbished with social investment finance. Properties are dispersed across west central Scotland. Provides intensive tenancy support service to vulnerable tenants.
Rent Deposit Schemes	Voluntary sector organisation running two rent deposit schemes, facilitating access to the private rented sector for around 100 households at risk of homelessness per year, through provision of a deposit guarantee. Provides support to tenants for first year of tenancy. Properties are dispersed across two local authority areas in west central Scotland.

Table 3. Data collection.

Wave	Time point	Focus	N
1	Start of tenancy	Previous housing situation and baseline health and wellbeing	121
2	2–4 months into tenancy	New housing situation and short-term impacts on health and wellbeing	75
3	9–12 months into tenancy	Established housing situation and long-term impacts on health and wellbeing	45

through a short telephone interview (around 15 minutes), whereas Waves 2 and 3 involved more onerous face-to-face interviews in the tenants' home of around 30–60 minutes in length. The attrition at Wave 3 was exacerbated by the timescale of the project—some Wave 3 interviews could not be scheduled before data collection had to be completed. These patterns were relatively consistent across the three organisations and the number of tenants moving on or losing their tenancy was very small ($< 5\%$).

The outcome variables measuring health and wellbeing were the World Health Organization's 5-point wellbeing scale (WHO5) and a self-report question regarding change in overall health and wellbeing. We opted for these measures because of the practical difficulties of accessing clinical health data and the low likelihood of significant changes in such data within a year. Whilst there are inevitably concerns about the objective validity of any self-rated measure, there is an established evidence base which suggests that self-rated health and self-rated change in health are reliable predictors of morbidity and mortality (Gunasekara, Carter, & Blakely, 2012; Idler & Benyamini, 1997). Moreover, there is also robust evidence to show that subjective wellbeing as measured by WHO5 is a reliable predictor of wider health outcomes, as well as being an important measure in itself (Steptoe, Deaton, & Stone, 2015; Topp, Ostergaard, Sondergaard, & Bech, 2015).

The independent variables were a 4-point self-rating question on neighbourhood quality and a set of four Likert-style statements related to social support drawn from national surveys (Understanding Society and Scottish Household Survey). These social support statements were converted into a single index on the basis of substantial consistency (Cronbach's Alpha from 0.77 to 0.86 across the three waves), although analysis was also conducted on the constituent variables to address concerns regarding the blanket nature of social capital as a concept. More detail on the variables is included in the Supplementary File.

The quantitative data was analysed using bivariate tests in SPSS, to identify possible connections between aspects of neighbourhood and social support, and health and wellbeing outcomes. These relationships were then further explored through Nvivo using thematic qualitative analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) of the qualitative data to examine the processes involved, combined with framework analysis (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994) to connect the quantitative and qualitative analysis in order to examine any differential patterns between groups of tenants.

4. Findings

Analysis of the quantitative data indicated connections between tenants' perceptions and experiences of the local neighbourhood, and their health and wellbeing. Tables 4 and 5 summarise the results of tests carried out (using Spearman's Rho for non-parametric data) on the data from Wave 2, when participants had been in their new tenancies for 2–4 months (the tests were also carried out on Wave 3 data, but the much smaller sample size (N = 45) inevitably produced weaker correlations—testing on this smaller cohort at both Waves produced no significant results at either Wave. In order to avoid providing a false impression of reducing effect over time, the Wave 3 data is not presented here). The first table shows the correlations at 2–4 months, whilst the second table shows the change that tenants experienced from their previous housing situation to 2–4 months into their new tenancy.

The significant positive correlations in Table 4 suggest there is a strong relationship between tenants' perceptions of neighbourhood quality, as well as their local social support networks, and their wellbeing outcomes. Thus, individuals who rated their new neighbourhood highly, or exhibited a strong sense of social support in their new neighbourhood were significantly more likely to have higher wellbeing than those tenants with lower social support scores. The significant correlations in Table 5 suggest that there is a relationship between a change in neighbourhood quality and social support and a change in health and wellbeing. This means that those individuals who rated the quality of their new neighbourhood as being higher than the area they had moved from,

Table 4. Summary of full sample tests at Wave 2.

Independent variable	Dependent variable	Rho	Sig.
Rating of neighbourhood quality	WHO5 Wellbeing Score	0.46	0.001***
Social support index		0.33	0.005**

Notes: *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001. N = 75.

Table 5. Summary of full sample tests across Waves 1 and 2.

Independent variable	Dependent variable	Rho	Sig.
Change in rating of neighbourhood quality (Waves 1 to 2)	Self-rated change in health and wellbeing	0.25	0.04*
Change in social support index (Waves 1 to 2)		0.28	0.02*

Notes: *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001. N = 75.

or who exhibited an improved sense of social support following their move were significantly more likely to show an improvement in their wellbeing than those tenants whose social support scores had gone down.

The analysis of correlations between the individual social support variables and health and wellbeing outcomes (out using Spearman's Rho for non-parametric data) are provided in Tables 6 and 7.

These tables show that health and wellbeing appear to be particularly related to trust, given the significant correlations both as a static variable and as a measure of change when tenants move between neighbourhoods. In other words, the data suggests that tenants who feel that they can trust their neighbours are likely to have better health and wellbeing than tenants who do not trust their neighbours. There are also significant correlations regarding help and friendships within the neighbourhood. The fact that some elements of social support show significant positive correlations with health and wellbeing, whilst others do not, suggests two things. Firstly, it provides some support for the critiques of social capital as an ill-defined, excessively broad concept, indicating that it may be important to examine different elements of social support and networks to understand potential impacts on health and wellbeing. Secondly, it suggests that examination of the qualitative data may be particularly valuable in elucidating these differences. The remainder of this article explores the possible causal pathways underlying these correlations by drawing on the qualitative data from this study.

4.1. Neighbourhood Quality

Participants highlighted the value of local amenities, shops, greenspace and transport links in their home neighbourhood. Notably, perceptions of these physical aspects of the neighbourhood were often couched in relative terms and contrasted with areas participants had lived previously:

> I was staying in [another area] before and it's like the middle of nowhere, there's no shops or anything. So, it's like we've got shops five minutes away. Go a walk up there all the time…-I've got the two schools and the weans go into the nursery and it's just a walk along there….So, kind of, close to everything. (Rent Deposit Scheme tenant)

Alongside amenities, aspects relating to crime, anti-social behaviour, noise and personal safety were frequently highlighted by participants as contributing to neighbourhood quality. In particular, feeling safe in the local area was described as reducing worry and stress:

> It's a nice area….There's never any trouble round here so that makes for a lot. You know, you can go out at night, go along to the chippy or whatever and you're not going to have to worry about a gang of boys at the top of the street. It's good that way as well. (Rent Deposit Scheme tenant)

Table 6. Summary of tests at Wave 2 for individual social support variables.

Independent variable	Dependent variable	Rho	Sig.
Neighbourhood trust	WHO5 Wellbeing Score	0.32	0.007**
Neighbourhood conversations		0.16	0.2
Neighbourhood help		0.29	0.02*
Neighbourhood friendships		0.21	0.07

Notes: *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001. N = 75.

Table 7. Summary of tests across Waves 1 and 2 for change in individual social support variables.

Independent variable	Dependent variable	Rho	Sig.
Change in neighbourhood trust	Self-rated change in health and wellbeing	0.42	0.001**
Change in neighbourhood conversations		0.14	0.2
Change in neighbourhood help		0.21	0.1
Change in neighbourhood friendships		0.25	0.03*

Notes: *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001. N = 75.

As with the physical characteristics of the neighbourhood, participants' views of these more social aspects were strongly shaped by their previous experiences, as well as by their expectations, and their personal and household characteristics. Where a new tenancy involved a move to an area with lower perceived levels of crime or anti-social behaviour, participants highlighted the impact this had on their ability to feel at home, which in turn affected their wellbeing and quality of life:

> [I'm] 100% happier. I'm basically not depressed anymore, as soon as I moved out of that flat in [previous area] and moved here it was such a huge change, it was like a weight had been lifted off my shoulders. I don't need to deal with all the idiots and the polis [police] at the weekends…here is just a far cry from how I felt before, I mean, I can actually go outside, I want to go outside and meet people and stuff like that, whereas back there it was 'I don't want to go out, I just want to curl up in a ball, I'm dying for this to all go away.' So now it's just like, aye, bring on life! (Letting Agency tenant)

Further examination of the quantitative data reinforces this relative nature of tenant perspectives and experiences of neighbourhood. Tenants' rating of neighbourhood quality was not, in and of itself, significantly correlated with the neighbourhood-based measures of deprivation, using Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation deciles ($2p = 0.58$). However, where tenants relocated to a more or less deprived neighbourhood as part of their move into a new tenancy, this change in area deprivation was significantly correlated with a change in how they felt about the quality of their neighbourhood ($2p < 0.001$). This suggests that tenants' perceptions of neighbourhood quality are more heavily shaped by any contrasts with their previous neighbourhood than they are by neighbourhood-based measures of deprivation.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, then, familiarity with the neighbourhood was also important in shaping perceptions of its quality. For some, familiarity meant that crime and anti-social behaviour levels were less of a concern because they fitted with expectations of the area:

> Well I've lived here on and off since I was 18 so I know the neighbourhood pretty well. It's a quiet place during the week [laugh], but at the weekend with the pub out there it does get a wee bit lively but…I don't sit here in fear, you know, when I hear voices outside or anything like that. (Letting Agency tenant)

Some of those tenants who moved to a new and unfamiliar neighbourhood were pleasantly surprised when the area proved less challenging than its reputation suggested. However, others found the change of environment more difficult to deal with:

> It's not bad but it's not a good neighbourhood as well, it's like they have a lot of fights during the night you can see, but that's all over [this city] I think…they are fighting during the nights, like, you can hear them in the street fighting and screaming. (Letting Agency tenant)

Further, tenants' fears and sense of safety were heavily influenced by their sense of vulnerability, both for themselves and their family members. Thus, participants with existing mental health problems or with children were more likely to express reservations about safety, whilst young, male tenants were often dismissive of such risks:

> It's not even the neighbours that are noisy. I think it's the walls that are just thin. I can hear what he's watching. Her buzzer goes, I can hear her dog bark….See, as long as I feel safe, I'm alright with noise. But I think 'cause of my [mental health] illnesses and all that, I'm like, oh I don't feel safe in here. (Housing Association tenant, young female)

> There was actually a murder a couple of weeks back there, a 24 year old boy got stabbed to death over drugs, but that was way over that way, over by the shops and…It doesn't bother me, I grew up in [city] so I'm used to it all, I mean, nothing up here bothers me…I mean, if I seen somebody my size walking about I'd be like, I'm not going to **** with him, know what I mean. (Rent Deposit Scheme tenant, young male)

Alongside previous experiences, expectations and personal characteristics, tenant's evaluation of the quality of their neighbourhood was made more complex by perceptions of different geographic scales within the local neighbourhood. Some participants felt positively about the very local space around their property, despite concerns about the wider neighbourhood:

> It's good yeah, somebody tell my wife [she had] left the key on the door and my neighbour knocked on the door tell the key there, so it's good yeah, very good….But out there it's not that good. Down there so many, you know, young boys, always try to get you some trouble. (Housing Association tenant)

By contrast, other participants were more positive about the wider neighbourhood, whilst expressing concerns about their immediate locality. As such, the salient characteristics of the "neighbourhood," including the ways in which they influenced health and wellbeing, operated at multiple scales and were often not entirely coherent or consistent across those scales. These findings suggest that the relationship between "neighbourhood quality" and health and wellbeing is therefore mediated by participants' previous experiences and expectations of their local neighbourhood, their household characteristics, and the multiple scales at which they inhabit the neighbourhood.

4.2. Social Networks and Support

Turning to the social networks within the neighbourhood, participants described the importance of both proximity to family and friends, and having successful relationships with their immediate neighbours. For many tenants, living near to those family members who could provide positive social contact and support was of significant benefit to their quality of life. It allowed them to draw upon the bonding capital they already had and convert it into practical support:

> I've got family round about me anyway if I need them. As I say, my sister's there, my cousin's there, my nephew's round there—they're all intermingled. That's why I love it; it's great here. I should have done this years ago, so I should have. (Housing Association tenant)

Notably, the importance of proximity to family support could also be two-way, with some participants (predominantly women) emphasising the value of being near to vulnerable family members in need of support.

However, opportunities for social support and socialising extended beyond family for most participants and relationships with immediate neighbours were often pivotal. For some, this relationship almost resembled that of a supportive family:

> I've got a good relationship with [neighbour] and her husband, yeah, in fact, she checks in on me every other day and the dog checks in on me too so, they're lovely people….If there was ever an emergency I know who I can go to now and it's nice to know that if anything happened to me I wouldn't lay in here for three weeks. (Rent Deposit Scheme tenant)

Such close neighbourly relationships typically developed not just from the physical proximity of living next door, but because of pre-existing social networks across the local community. Nevertheless, many tenants were able to develop relationships with their neighbours, without holding any pre-existing connections with them, through the first year of their tenancy:

> I didn't really know [my neighbours] apart from—hello, how are you doing [when I first moved in]. Now it's, meet them at the shop, meet them at the post office and they all speak more now. You spend maybe five minutes longer than you would have in the past speaking to them, asking what you're up to, what you're doing, you know. (Housing Association tenant)

Importantly, physical places in which neighbours can interact with one another, beyond the immediate vicinity of the building in which they live, appear to be central in helping these relationships, and the bonding capital they provide, to develop.

Nevertheless, there were a significant minority of participants for whom local social relationships were either less important or, indeed, problematic. For some, a substantial social network that extended across the wider city, country or world meant that local social connections were less relevant, so long as they had the resources and mobility to maintain such friendships:

> My friends quite like the location of this [property]…because then I'm kind of in between everybody. So, I've got people who stay sort of at [one side of the city], and people that stay like [on other side of the city], and all that. So, it's somewhere in the middle. (Letting Agency tenant)

The importance of these networks, albeit for a minority of tenants, demonstrates the intersection between neighbourhood amenities (e.g., transport) and extra-local social capital, as well as highlighting the potential limitations of analyses that examine social networks only within a geographically-determined neighbourhood.

There were also a number of participants who deliberately avoided building close relationships with their neighbours, because they were concerned about problems that might arise. These concerns were typically based on previous, negative experiences with neighbours:

> You just keep your distance over there, I'll say hiya, I'll just be in my own wee world, I don't need you. Well, in the past and growing up, my mum was kinda like really neighbourly, if you want to call her that. But it always backfired on her, so whether it be my mum's young children arguing with the other young children in the neighbourhood or whatever, then…all the adults end up fighting….So from that experience I've learned don't talk to your neighbours, it's not worth it. (Letting Agency tenant)

By contrast, a third group of tenants appeared to want to build a supportive local network in a new and unfamiliar area, but felt themselves excluded by what they perceived as a community closed to incomers, which made it very difficult to establish new social connections:

> It's not somewhere to settle unless you're from here probably. 'Cause everybody knows everybody about here….They're all cliquey. If you're not known from here you get stared at. I don't want to be in a place like that. (Housing Association tenant)

Hence, whilst bonding social capital within the neighbourhood is clearly of great importance for some tenants, others may draw on more dispersed networks, be resistant to local connection or see themselves as excluded by a close-knit but unfamiliar community.

4.3. Role of Housing Organisations

There were a range of ways in which the housing organisations examined in this study played a role in enhancing tenants' perceptions and experiences of the neighbourhood, as well as their ability to build bonding capital within it.

In terms of the physical and structural characteristics of the neighbourhood, the community-based Housing Association had the most significant scope to create improvements to the built environment, since it owned a large number of properties within a concentrated area. For example, their tenants highlighted the improvements made to the physical appearance of high-rise blocks and the landscaping around them in improving their enjoyment of the neighbourhood. The ownership of various parcels of land surrounding tenants' homes was a pre-requisite to these extensive environmental improvements, although investments in the common parts of apartment blocks, such as CCTV and concierge staffing, also had significant impacts:

> The older ladies…a pair of them have stayed here 50 years, and they love it. I've said, why did you never move, and they said, I'm safe, and…the concierges are really, really good and they feel safe. That's what it comes down to, it's the safety. (Housing Association tenant)

By contrast, the other two housing organisations, whose private rented sector stock was spread across a much wider geography, had much more limited scope to influence neighbourhood quality. However, they were able to offer tenants much greater opportunities to choose the area in which they wanted to live, for example an area they were familiar with or had pre-existing social networks within:

> There were other [properties] they offered me as well. They were in the pipeline but the three of them were in [another area] and I didn't really want to live [there] to be honest. It's rough, a bit rough nowadays but that one came up and I thought, [this area], lovely area, nice area. (Rent Deposit Scheme tenant)

They also had greater capacity to help tenants avoid taking up a tenancy in a neighbourhood in which their historical social networks and relationships were potentially problematic. For participants in this study, this flexibility in the private rented sector was not only evident at the start of tenancies, but throughout. Where tenants faced significant difficulties settling into a new neighbourhood, housing organisations were able to support them to move to a new tenancy in a different area:

> I got quite depressed and I knocked on [neighbour's] door and I said to him 'I don't think I can hack this, I don't think I can do this for six month' and he said

'listen son, this is not the place to be if you don't have transport, you're really out in the country here'….So I would commend them for the help that they've given me….They didn't have to get me out of [area] after three months…but they have a housing officer who's also a psychologist so I think she could probably tell, you know, 'this guy's struggling a bit, we've got to get him out.' (Letting Agency tenant)

However, the private rented sector landlords have far less capacity to offer choice in neighbourhoods dominated by social housing. Moreover, whilst social housing organisations may be able to help prospective tenants to stay or return to such areas, the combination of points-based allocation processes and lifetime tenancies in the sector means that some participants in this study struggled to gain access their ideal neighbourhood:

> Researcher: What stops it feeling like home?

> Housing Association Tenant: It's just not the place I wanted to be. I wanted [different area] but you can't get what you want all the time can you, wanted near my sister-in-law and where I was from years ago and where I know most people and I feel comfortable down there.

Beyond creating improvements in the physical environment of the neighbourhood or offering a choice of suitable neighbourhoods, there was one final key way in which housing organisations in this study supported tenants in their new neighbourhoods. For those tenants who lacked bonding capital provided by supportive local social networks, some housing organisations were able to step in and provide social, emotional and practical support, through their own staff:

> They've been able to run me out to the hospital to get my dressing changed, take me to the bank….It's general support from them. It's next to none…just a gem of a fella [my housing officer]. Absolute diamond, you know. Anything that he can do to help, he's always asking….That's where I'm getting my help from. (Letting Agency tenant)

These aspects of housing service were particularly important in helping more vulnerable tenants to settle and feel at home in their new tenancy, with long-term implications for health and wellbeing.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

At a broad level, this study echoes the findings of existing studies of neighbourhood impacts on health and wellbeing. It supports the role of crime, anti-social behaviour and personal safety issues in affecting tenants' health and wellbeing, particularly in situations where a house move involves a change of area (Acevedo-Garcia

et al., 2004; Anderson & Barclay, 2003; Gibson et al., 2011). Moreover, it underlines the importance of social capital, and especially bonding social capital, in providing tenants with a sense of home and belonging, as well as practical and emotional support (Cockerham et al., 2017; Kawachi & Berkman, 2001).

However, whilst the quantitative data demonstrates a clear connection between neighbourhood quality, social networks and support, and health and wellbeing outcomes, the more detailed quantitative and qualitative analysis demonstrates the complexity and non-linearity of these relationships. The impacts of neighbourhood aspects such as crime and anti-social behaviour are heavily mediated by tenants' expectations, previous experiences and personal/household characteristics. Similarly, within-neighbourhood social capital may provide a relatively poor guide to the social connectedness and, therefore, the health and wellbeing influences of the neighbourhood on its inhabitants. Indeed, the instances of tenants choosing to avoid previously problematic social networks and of being excluded from close-knit communities point towards the so-called "dark side of social capital" (Portes, 1998). Analyses of neighbourhood effects therefore need to do more than control for differences between individuals and households and examine these differences as a route to understanding causality.

Moreover, these findings highlight the ways in which neighbourhood quality and social capital intersect and operate at multiple scales within the neighbourhood, which adds significant complexity to their impacts on health and wellbeing. Again, this has implications in terms of research into neighbourhood effects, emphasising the importance of defining what is meant by neighbourhood in area-based analyses (Cummins & Kim, 2015), whilst taking cognisance of the varied meanings and geographies experienced by individuals and households. Indeed, there is an extent to which geographically-bounded variables are of limited value in mapping real-world causal processes, raising fundamental questions for exclusively quantitative analysis in this field.

In terms of understanding social capital as a determinant of health and wellbeing, the differences in statistical relationships between the individual social support variables emphasise the need to consider different aspects of social capital, alongside analysis of the broad concept. In this respect, the qualitative evidence around the importance of personal safety chimes with the quantitative evidence regarding neighbourhood trust, suggesting that this may be a particularly important aspect of social capital in influencing wellbeing, at least in the early stages of a new tenancy. Moreover, the role of prior experience and personal characteristics in shaping the impact of neighbourhood and social support points to the importance of examining the relationship between social capital and other forms of capital (Schuller, 2007).

The study also demonstrates the range of ways in which the actions of housing organisations may influence neighbourhood effects. Clearly there are differences across the social and private rented sectors in west central Scotland. Social housing providers operating in concentrated geographic areas may be able to invest in amenities and the built environment, and potentially in supporting healthy social relationships between neighbours, although this latter aspect was not evidenced through our study. Organisations working in the private rented sector have less power to influence such neighbourhood aspects, but may be able to offer prospective tenants significantly greater choice of area, enabling them to have some agency over their neighbourhood of residence, albeit within areas constrained by affordability issues for low-income households. Evidence from tenants in this study therefore provides some support for the shift in Scotland towards choice-based lettings policies, which give tenants greater agency to choose their area of residence. However, the Scottish Government appears to have moved away from its earlier emphasis on maximising choice and there are now questions about whether this policy will come to fruition (Scottish Government, 2011, 2019).

Cutting across both sectors, this study highlights the ways in which housing services can operate to mitigate neighbourhood stressors by responding quickly to problems and even, in some instances, to fill gaps in support networks. Arguably this highlights the particular value of linking social capital (Szreter & Woolcock, 2004) for low-income and vulnerable tenants, in the form of their relationships with housing staff. In neighbourhoods where some individuals may struggle to draw on bonding social capital and where the environment causes stress, the opportunity to elicit support from housing services may have significant health and wellbeing benefits. Moreover, in the context of findings showing the substantial individual variability in neighbourhood effects, housing staff may be particularly well placed to understand both the neighbourhood context and the specific needs of vulnerable tenants.

To conclude, this research suggests that many different aspects of the neighbourhood play an important role in shaping health and wellbeing, from the practical to the social. These impacts vary substantially from tenant to tenant, reflecting their needs, previous experiences, expectations and current resources. Crucially, this study has demonstrated that this variation exists across low-income tenants, who are not a homogeneous group, but individuals who use and benefit from their neighbourhoods differently. Being able to exercise some choice of the location of the home appears to be a critical foundation to ensuring that the neighbourhood has the potential to meet tenants' diverse needs. Finally, where housing organisations recognise these differences between tenants, they can play a valuable role in enabling tenants to get the most benefit from their neighbourhood, including the amenities and social opportunities it has to offer.

5.1. Limitations and Future Research

Whilst this study was able to follow participants for the first year of their tenancy, it would clearly be of value to undertake a longer study, since health and wellbeing impacts may develop, fade or change over time as tenants become more established in their neighbourhoods. Such a study could also incorporate more "objective" measures of health, such as use of health services, since such changes may be visible over a longer period. It would also be of value to replicate this study across different housing contexts and with different housing organisations in order to examine the role of neighbourhood choice and service provision in more depth.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

Supplementary Material

Supplementary material for this article is available online in the format provided by the authors (unedited).

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COGITATIO

Article

"It Is Part of Belonging": Walking Groups to Promote Social Health amongst People Living with Dementia

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Abstract
People with dementia often report experiencing a 'shrinking world' connected with reduced opportunities to access physical and social spaces. This article applies the framework of social health (Dröes et al., 2017; Huber et al., 2011) as a theoretical lens through which to consider how inclusive walking groups can facilitate access to places and spaces to support people with dementia to remain connected in their communities. Findings are reported from walking interviews and focus group discussions with people with dementia, family carers, volunteers and walk leaders who participated in a national programme of dementia-friendly walking groups in Scotland. Thematic analysis of the data demonstrates that participation has a positive impact on social health, supporting people living with dementia to fulfil their potential, to engage in meaningful activity and to manage both their condition and their wider lives. Benefits include providing a context for continuing social participation and relationships for people with dementia and family carers. Additionally, groups provide a safe space where people with dementia can walk with autonomy and help to reinforce a sense of capacity and agency. Wider implications include the role of walking groups in fostering interdependencies between people with dementia and their wider communities by promoting an enabling ethos of dementia 'inclusiveness.' The benefits of developing an inclusive and supportive approach to involving people living with dementia in walking groups could extend more broadly to the wider community, with such initiatives acting as a catalyst for growing levels of social participation.

Keywords
dementia; community; environment; inclusion; outdoors; social health; walking

1. Introduction

Dementia represents a growing health and social care challenge facing most Western societies, including the UK where 800,000 people currently live with dementia (Prince et al., 2014). Recognising that people with dementia want to be supported in the community, attention is turning towards the question of how people with dementia can 'live well' throughout their lives (Alzheimer's Disease International, 2019). Difficulties associated with cognitive impairment and its social stigma

mean people with dementia frequently experience a 'shrinking world' characterised by reduced opportunities to access physical and social spaces (Duggan, Blackman, Martyr, & van Schaik, 2008). This restriction can lead to a loss of pre-existing social relationships, and limit access to outdoor spaces and to meaningful activities enjoyed prior to dementia's onset (Noone, Innes, Kelly, & Mayers, 2017). Providing opportunities to sustain social relationships through access to outdoor spaces is, therefore, integral to enabling people to remain as members of their communities as their dementia progresses.

Dementia policy increasingly frames this aim in terms of 'dementia-friendly' communities; an approach adopted across many countries including the UK (Department of Health, 2015). Dementia-friendly communities, it is argued, value participation, inclusion and accessibility as well as human rights and social inclusion (Bartlett, 2016). In doing so, dementia-friendly communities support a shift in focus from institutional to community-based support. As aspirational as these efforts are, they are not without flaws. Serious concerns, for example, remain around whether these efforts put too great an emphasis on the physical environment, thus failing to address significant social and structural factors that may isolate or exclude people with dementia (Wright, 2014). Such perspectives argue that what is needed is not a community that is dementia 'friendly' but one that is 'dementia-enabling' (Swaffer, 2015). This phrasing posits that the opposite of a 'dementia-friendly' community is not one that is 'unfriendly' but a community that actively disables and inhibits the rights and agency of its residents with dementia (Shakespeare, Zeilig, & Mittler, 2019).

There is some evidence for this within the literature. For example, Phinney, Kelson, Baumbusch, O'Connor, and Purves' (2016) study of a neighbourhood walking initiative demonstrates how an ethos of 'dementia-friendliness' can lead to circumstances in which initiatives are provided exclusively for people with dementia, with less focus on the interaction between participants and the wider communities in which they are situated. As they argue, this can lead to tensions regarding how dementia may define (or not) those attending such group activities. Such structures, arguably, serve only to introduce a sense of geographic diversity to otherwise rigid 'grey ghettos' (Wild, Clelland, Whitelaw, Fraser, & Clark, 2018) despite the best intentions of those involved. With such arguments in mind, therefore, there is a requirement for activities that are meaningful, enjoyable and beneficial for people with dementia to be provided in a way that promotes inclusion over isolation, and access over restriction. Walking groups, we argue, have the potential to achieve exactly that, attending to the potential value of outdoor spaces, which have received less attention in the literature compared to the built environment when considering how communities might facilitate participation.

Accessing outdoor spaces as part of a meaningful activity has been identified as a powerful mechanism for enabling people with dementia to remain socially and physically engaged (Ward et al., 2018). Indeed, a growing body of literature demonstrates that these can take many forms, such as tending and cultivating green spaces (Noone et al., 2017), accessing woodland (Gibson, Ramsden, Tomlinson, & Jones, 2017) or walking (Phinney et al., 2016). In doing so, these activities support the well-documented benefits of being outdoors, which include improved affect, wellbeing, sleep and functional abilities (Blake & Mitchell, 2016; Gonzalez & Kirkevold, 2013). These complement the benefits of social engagement in meaningful activities, such as improved physical, mental and social health (Genoe, 2010), alongside reduced levels of agitation and a more coherent sense of self (Hendriks, van Vliet, Gerritsen, & Dröes, 2016). As such, meaningful activities that encourage both outdoor access and socialisation have the capacity to support not only psychological and physical wellbeing, but also the social health of people with dementia.

The concept of 'social health,' put forward by Huber et al. (2011), Dröes et al. (2017) and Vernooij-Dassen and Jeon (2016) is one means of incorporating rights, capabilities and citizenship of people with dementia despite cognitive or functional decline (Dröes et al., 2017). Emerging in part from the application of social models of health and disabilities within dementia studies, social health can be defined as (1) capacity to fulfil one's potential, (2) ability to manage life with some degree of independence, and (3) continued participation in meaningful activities such as work, hobbies or leisure (Dröes et al., 2017; Huber et al., 2011). Such a model goes beyond the social model of health, by recognising that social processes and relations can also facilitate health activities, behaviours and outcomes leading to good health (Yuill, Crinson, & Duncan, 2010). Vernooij-Dassen and Jeon (2016) argue that the core benefits of the social health paradigm include its recognition of people with dementia's ability to participate in social life and its focus on people's capacities, rather than conceptualising health/illness according to a deficit-based model. The concept of social health itself seeks to acknowledge the potential for personal wellbeing and meaningful engagement with one's needs and interests to occur alongside and in the context of long-term and degenerative health conditions, including dementia.

Indeed, emphasising the importance of social health alongside traditional biomedical concerns serves to highlight the vital role that rights, capabilities and citizenship play in maintaining a person with dementia's broader health (Dröes et al., 2017; Huber et al., 2011; Vernooij-Dassen & Jeon, 2016). This article therefore investigates the experiences of people with and without dementia who attend a national 'dementia-friendly' walking group initiative. The overarching research question for this project was: What is the impact of attending dementia-friendly walking group initiatives on the social health of attendees (both people living with dementia and their family carers)?

2. Methods

2.1. Methodological Design

The study adopted a co-produced, participatory methodology, drawing on an existing community research partnership forged between the first three authors, who are academic researchers, and the last three authors, who are trained in qualitative research methods (Greasley-Adams et al., 2017, 2019). This approach seeks

to distribute power more equitably within research relationships and encourages greater engagement between the research as a conceptual and practical project and the communities involved (Ottmann, Laragy, Allen, & Feldman, 2011). This approach ensured every member of the research team played a significant role; from research design, collecting and analysing data, to reporting results (Vaughn et al., 2018). Ethical approval for the study was awarded by the General University Ethics Panel at the University of Stirling (GUEP62 and GUEP296).

2.2. Setting

"Paths for All" is a Scottish charity that supports National Health Service trusts, local authorities and community organisations to run a range of free walking activities for local people. 'Dementia-friendly' walks represent a small but significant subset of a wider group of free-at-the-point-of-delivery 'health walks' which aim to promote activity amongst people who live with long-term health conditions. To be classed as 'dementia-friendly,' walk leaders must receive dementia-awareness training and cascade that knowledge across walking group volunteers. Projects are also required to review and risk assess their walking routes with a specific focus on the impact a dementia diagnosis can have on an individual's physical abilities, perception and cognition.

At the time of the study, "Paths for All" supported 23 walking groups across Scotland to offer 'dementia-friendly' walks in a range of urban green spaces and rural locations, with six groups selected by the charity group to take part in the study. These walking groups typically met weekly, taking a circular route lasting approximately one hour, with a set end-point usually at a local café. While all six groups sought to be 'dementia-friendly,' in five groups people with dementia and carers attended walks alongside the wider local population within each area. The goal of these groups was to ensure that people with dementia who chose to attend were supported by walk volunteers. Attendance of people with dementia varied in each group, but usually comprised a minority of total attendees, with one to three couples (people with dementia and carers) attending each of the walks attended by researchers. One group was set up exclusively for people with dementia and their carers to attend, with approximately 20 people attending this group. In all cases people with dementia who attended walks were accompanied by an informal carer. One group took place in a rural setting, another in a semi-rural area near water, with the remaining four groups operating in natural spaces within towns and villages. These 'blue' and 'green' spaces provided opportunities for participants to walk in nature within both urban and rural environments.

2.3. Participants and Methods

Primary fieldwork took place between April and June 2017 and involved research dyads containing one academic and one community researcher attending six walking groups. Where possible, walking interviews were conducted concurrently with two participants from each group, one person identified as having dementia alongside a carer, friend or relative. A focus group followed each walk, wherein walkers, volunteers and walk leaders were invited to discuss the key facilitators, barriers and benefits of participating in each of the walking groups. Informed consent was collected from all participants using principles of process consent (Dewing, 2007). All people with dementia who took part demonstrated capacity at the time of their involvement. Focus groups also took place in December 2017 with health walk coordinators.

2.4. Walking Interviews

Walking interviews were the key method used in this study. The practice of interviewing participants about their experiences of walking with the group while doing so is inherently facilitative, as it allows participants to reflect on their experiences in situ, aiding recall and supporting participation (Ward & Campbell, 2013). This method allowed the act of walking itself to elicit insights and reflections between participants, as being in and around the group while walking in the local area stimulated memories of their past (Clark & Emmel, 2010). The presence of naturalistic prompts helped participants identify what was and was not meaningful for them as they reflected on their experiences of attending walking groups, as well as what they liked or did not like about the initiative. As such, walking interviews supported social interaction between interviewers and interviewees (Odzakovic, Hellström, Ward, & Kullberg, 2018) without limiting the naturalistic interactions between group members or compromising the social nature of the groups themselves.

2.5. Focus Groups

At the end of each walk, attendees, volunteers and walk leaders were invited to take part in a focus group to explore experiences of walking among the whole group. These six focus group discussions supplemented walking interviews and provided invaluable insights into the perspectives of walkers more broadly. Separate focus groups were conducted with paid coordinators from health walk projects to explore the practical and pragmatic issues surrounding the delivery and facilitation of 'dementia-friendly' walking groups.

2.6. Coproduction Methods and Data Analysis

The first workshop brought together academic and community researchers to develop research questions and interview schedules, while the second focused on data analysis. During initial analysis, academic and community researchers worked in pairs to identify initial codes and themes relating to perceived benefits and expe-

riences of participating in a 'dementia-friendly' walking group (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The themes identified were: being with other people; being outdoors; atmosphere, ethos and accessibility; safety and security; leadership and organisation. The academic researchers wrote up the analysis based on these themes, which was reviewed for accuracy by the community researchers. A secondary analysis was conducted by the academic researchers to apply social health as a theoretical lens through which to analyse the data, based on the following two questions:

1. What contribution does a community-based walking group initiative make to the social health of people living with dementia?
2. What are the experiences through which an inclusive 'dementia-friendly' walking group is judged to improve social health?

In the secondary analysis, interview and focus group data were subjected to thematic analysis, using the two questions listed above and informed by the constant comparative method. The first two authors worked together using these research questions to organise the analysis. Grant Gibson searched for initial themes, with Jane M. Robertson reviewing these themes and developing them into a thematic map. The authors then worked together to refine these themes, with initial themes organised into an overall analytical framework. Catherine Pemble reviewed the framework and worked with the first two authors to refine the themes further. The identified framework relating to social health comprised three overall themes: being with others; reciprocity and looking out for each other; and promoting agency and capacity. After this stage, quotes from transcripts were identified to support these identified themes, as set out in the findings below.

3. Findings

Supporting quotations are differentiated by whether collected in a focus group or during an individual walking interview, with the group the participant attended indicated as FG1–FG6, and FG7 used to indicate the discussion with health walk coordinators.

3.1. Being with Others: Social Inclusion, Participation and Confidence

The most prominent benefit discussed by walking group attendees was the increase in their social integration and their social health more broadly. Central to this discussion was the idea that individuals interacted with a more diverse group than might happen elsewhere. For the majority, attending the walks gave people the opportunity to meet and spend time with other people, in a relatively safe, supported environment. Many people with dementia experienced a declining social sphere as a result of

their condition, the groups alleviated this trend by providing attendees an opportunity to develop existing and new social relationships despite their dementia.

> FG1 Participant: That is why I joined.

> Interviewer: For the social bit?

> FG1 Participant: Yes, because I am just on my own, usually—I think it is a way of meeting people.

The act of walking in the groups encouraged group members to "speak to different company" (FG6), emphasised by a person with dementia who reported "anybody" could join "no matter if there [was] nothing wrong with them" (individual walking interview, FG6). This combination of a predominantly open membership combined with group norms that encouraged informal engagement between different members meant that people were recognised and valued as 'full' members, irrespective of the presence or absence of dementia:

> Everybody has become good friends: we are all very aware of individuals' abilities within the group, so it is not just us—you are looking out for each other. Some of you come with your partners, but you do not stay with your partners. You maybe use it as an opportunity not to and walk with other people. It is not just us. You all do, as I say, look out for each other now. (FG2)

This sense of reciprocal social support simultaneously facilitated and was facilitated by a practice of open and frank communication between those walking about the challenges they were facing in their lives. While participants reported feeling respected and supported by those they confided in, irreverent humour and good-natured 'banter' often became a key feature of such discussions when they occurred. This humour was observed during fieldwork and discussed at length by participants, on a range of subjects from situational humour to more sensitive subjects such as ill-health, dementia and death. That these conversations could occur in a way that allowed walkers to express their feelings and experiences without becoming unnecessarily maudlin was discussed as a function of their relationships. One person, a former carer of a person with dementia who had passed away, captured this when discussing feeling guilty over choosing to move the person they were caring for into a care home, saying:

> I lost my wife in the last couple of years...and I have found this has been absolutely brilliant to come to something like this, meet all these people, and get out the house. It gives you something to focus on instead of sitting at home feeling sorry for myself. It is of great benefit to me. (FG3)

That such support was available at a point where an individual's social role, identity, and networks may be particularly vulnerable highlights the value of walking groups as a locus of support, especially for those who lived alone. Being part of such a group often offered an opportunity to connect organically with others who had shared a similar experience, or who expected they might do so in the future. This allowed a greater level of understanding between members and fostered enabling (rather than disabling) practices. The value of such a resource is particularly clear for those with dementia, for whom the journey is often uncertain and who often face a reduction in social support and a 'shrinking world.' By attending the walks consistently over time, group members were able to form their own sense of community, as one focus group participant remarked:

> It is part of the group—it is part of belonging. When you come to our group, we end up belonging to one another. You are brothers and sisters in this group because we all talk to one another and we all have fun together in whatever way we can—just being there for each other. (FG6)

The mechanisms for this belonging and inclusivity presented in a number of ways. Friendships emerging from the walking group frequently extended beyond organised sessions, with participants reporting attending additional social activities, such as going to the pub, attending exercise classes or taking part in cultural activities separate from the walking group. Walking group members used the time before the walk began to 'catch up,' a process that allowed those who walked at different speeds or on different routes to maintain relationships. Once the walk had begun, different group members were observed (and later reflected upon) moving between clusters or partners as their energy or the terrain changed. Some of the most influential interactions occurred after the walk, as each group was arranged to finish at a café where participants could sit and socialise informally. Rather than a supplementary aspect to a walking group otherwise focused on physical health, these café stops served to support social health, cementing the social bonds grown during walks.

3.2. Reciprocity and Looking Out for Each Other: Creating a Safe and Secure Social Environment

A secondary theme at once distinct from and contingent on the theme of social inclusion and participation was that groups created a safe and secure social environment where participants engaged in meaningful activities supportive of their physical, mental, and social health. The importance of the walking group as a formal activity facilitated by volunteers and designated walk leaders and populated by supportive and accepting groups of individuals was reflected in individual interviews and focus groups. One person with dementia, for example, gestured to the

industrial estate the group was passing, expressing to the researcher that they would not come there themselves: "I would never get out of here. I would need to run into one of those offices and shout for help" (individual walking interview, FG3).

Despite explicitly discussing the role of the walking group in addressing an aspect of her dementia (challenges with disorientation and wayfinding), this person did not view this as a function of the dementia-friendliness of the group, but its facilitative nature overall, later noting:

> [The group] gets the people out—people that cannot get out on their own—and somebody is looking after them while they are out. When I am away on the likes of these things, he [my husband] does not bother about me because I am with people that are looking after me. I am getting looked after while I am there. (individual walking interview, FG3)

Discussions of safety and security were as important to walkers with and without dementia as they were to walk leaders. One volunteer related the following experience where they had supported a couple who were anxious about entering a new social space and new activity. After receiving encouragement and support, both demonstrated greater levels of social health, with the walk leader reporting:

> [The person with dementia] never used to speak; now [she] can speak for Scotland. She came along in the very first walk and he [her husband] was very anxious—he wouldn't leave her. He did and literally after the third walk, he said that he was fine with these people—you go with your group. (FG3)

Not only did the carer experience and accept the walking group as a safe space where both he and his wife could participate, but he recognised the group as somewhere where his wife could experience belonging and social integration as she walked with 'her' group. Such reflections are indicative of a wider ethos of dementia-inclusiveness, and as such supported people with dementia to connect and remain connected to others within their community. This practice of considering the needs of people with dementia alongside more familiar concerns around physical mobility, access and risk assessment by those who had adopted this inclusive ethos was carried forward into other spaces and activities where people with dementia might encounter barriers to their participation, as one health walk coordinator noted:

> I think for us [becoming dementia-friendly] brought dementia into focus more, and, actually, it made…us think about our other activities because we have not only walks, we have other different activities…cropping up from our buddy swimming programme [to] our indoor curling. (FG7)

Participants also valued the walking groups as a place where family carers and the person they cared for could spend some time apart, gaining some respite from each other during walks as they spoke to and accompanied other people during the walk itself. That groups provided opportunities for mixed abilities (such as by offering different length walks depending on a person's mobility), as well as support from other group members who attended walks, meant carers could feel comfortable that their partner would be looked after by others, while they could spend some time with other people.

As such, people with dementia and their carers could gain different things from walking groups, from simply being in the outdoors with other people for people with dementia, while carers also gained some respite from the demands of care. Groups therefore became a potential catalyst for people with dementia to develop new social relationships and networks, while supporting them to be active participants in their local communities.

3.3. Accessing the Outdoors: Promoting Agency and Capacity through Physical Activities

Having discussed the social benefits of walks and the factors that ensure walkers experienced the activity as safe and supportive, this section highlights how walking groups functioned as part of a wider initiative to support attendees to take proactive steps to maintain their health. Such an extension represents not only a shift in analytic theme, but what was often an evolution of discussions that occurred in focus groups with walkers and walk leaders, where walking was discussed as both a proactive and reactive response to health concerns. Indeed, one health walk coordinator highlighted the impact of the wider cultural push towards social health and integration on their ability to recruit new members, with different stakeholders recognising the value of walking groups as a resource:

> With the whole health and social care agenda going on, we are starting to make more contacts and more inroads into services, who, traditionally, have just done it their way and [with] medication. (FG7)

This positioning of walking groups as a valuable and valid method of promoting and maintaining health was reflected by other participants who emphasised that, while the group might be dementia-inclusive, it was not itself a 'dementia group.' This was epitomised by one participant who explained:

> We are here to get fit. It is nothing to do with dementia as far as I am concerned....We have noticed that everybody has got fitter over the year because we are actually going round the courses a lot quicker. [We] have been talking about trying to extend them a bit longer for the Thursday walk. There is a big difference in your health. (FG3)

Such sentiments were shared across groups, even within the group that had been explicitly arranged to support people with dementia and carers rather than the wider community. Walking, they argued, was an activity that could be made accessible for people at various stages of their dementia journey, but that did not itself mean the walking group needed to pivot to focus on dementia. Instead, walking groups functioned as spaces where the challenges faced by people with dementia were validated and respected alongside the challenges faced by other members rather than in isolation from them. Even those who did not explicitly link walking with fitness acknowledged the physical gains they received. Such activities could reassert confidence, agency and capacity and were socially-situated; exercise was more enjoyable when taking part with other people, highlighting the holistic benefits of integrating physical and social health in one activity: "If you are on the bike or if you are on the treadmill, it is just you, whereas when you are out on the walk, you have all the others" (FG1).

This focus on enabling continued participation via walking as a healthy and meaningful activity reinforced a broader commitment to and acceptance of adaptation and enablement for all members irrespective of formal diagnosis. The following example was provided in a group that regularly accessed natural spaces and uneven walkways:

> Some people...were unsteady so [a member] advised that somebody try using a pole, which I think [someone] offered to do and she benefited from that. The next time we were out another one of the members...was a bit unsteady and I asked him if he would like to try a pole. He said he thought it would help. So, we thought we would get some for the group and just leave them here so that if anybody is having a bad day or wants to try one, they are here. (FG2)

First the pragmatic recognition of poor balance shows up as an issue of a body-in-space that *might* be effectively addressed with a mobility aid, and the willingness of a group member to test out this approach. This enabling focus had a positive impact on other group members who were encouraged, without judgement, to try similar practices. These changes were framed as being facilitative of continued engagement with walking rather than as responses to dementia per se, opening up further avenues for support to others for whom such steps are useful.

The reassurance that, ultimately, walking groups were a health activity with a valued and valuable social component encouraged members to recognise that they were "not going for a race" (FG2) ensuring that members could seek support and adapt to changes in their abilities without judgement or exclusion. The walking groups supported social health by enabling a person to maintain capacities, fulfilling their potential by promoting physical fitness and thereby their identity as active, capable and autonomous individuals.

4. Discussion

Providing much-needed insight into how national initiatives can be enacted at the local level to support the social health of people with dementia as both individuals and citizens in their own right, this analysis offers new insights regarding walking groups as a 'dementia-enabling' activity that supports social health by enabling the inclusion and integration of people with dementia within the wider community. While literature on 'dementia-friendly' communities has tended to focus narrowly on the built environment, we extend the notion of 'dementia-enabling' environments to report on how walking initiatives can support people living with dementia to remain connected to their communities via valued outdoor spaces. This study advances our understanding of how a dementia-inclusive outdoor initiative supports continued social participation for people living with dementia. A supportive, inclusive walking group that integrates people with dementia in their local community has the potential to promote continued social participation by providing a place where new social relationships can flourish despite a person's dementia. Specific benefits were in providing people with dementia with a relatively safe and secure place to socialise and interact meaningfully with others, while providing carers with opportunities for a brief period of respite from their caregiving role, simultaneously exerting the person with dementia's autonomy while supporting them within the group. In doing so, walking groups supported the continued social health of people with dementia and carers by providing an opportunity to maintain existing and create new interdependencies despite the 'shrinking world' commonly associated with the condition.

The concept of social health, as applied to dementia, provides a useful tool through which to capture the health and related benefits of social 'interventions' such as 'dementia-friendly' walking groups (Dröes et al., 2017). Far from Swaffer's (2015) experience of prescribed disengagement, walking groups promote social health by giving attendees with dementia the opportunity to engage in physical activities which sustain physical health, while both maintaining existing and building new meaningful relationships within the physical and social spaces of their communities, thereby supporting a person's remaining capacities and reinforcing normalcy in their lives. The walking group initiatives gave attendees the opportunity to maintain a coherent self-identity, to participate and contribute to their communities, and continue to both receive and give support within the social relationships existing within the initiatives (Dröes et al., 2017). Such benefits were also strongly associated with groups as being inclusive of people with dementia as part of their wider communities. When compared to more traditional service-led models where support for people with dementia can be segregated from the rest of their communities (e.g., residential care), or which may be labelled as activities exclusively or predominantly for people with

dementia (e.g., dementia cafés or support groups), such activities promoted continued social engagement and civic participation, with the expanded horizon experienced by attendees made possible by the integrative and inclusive, community-focused approach adopted within the initiatives. Few people with dementia spoke of walks as being explicitly targeted at them, nor did any participants speak of joining walks specifically because of their dementia. The general feeling was that walking groups created a place where a person's dementia did not pose a barrier to their participation, rather than being a space exclusively for people with dementia, or where dementia was the reason for their presence. Walking groups were dementia 'supporting' spaces, without being dementia exclusive spaces. Such groups thereby supported attendees to fulfil their potential as participating members of their communities, rather than as a person diagnosed with dementia; as a patient, 'sufferer' or individual defined through their needs (Vernooij-Dassen, Moniz-Cook, & Jeon, 2018).

A key characteristic of five of the six groups were that walks were not limited to people with dementia and their carers, but supported people living with dementia to engage with the wider population of individuals attending walks. This inclusive basis, in which activities were not framed as being specifically dementia—related activities, became one of the key facilitators of continued social health among attendees. Groups were generally perceived as being inclusive and encouraging to all people, with 'dementia-friendliness' being a secondary benefit of the inclusive atmosphere attached to groups. Perhaps counter-intuitively, and unlike Phinney et al.'s (2016) example of a walking group designed exclusively for people with dementia but which discouraged people from discussing their dementia, the inclusive and integrated model supported attendees with dementia to find a place for themselves socially as people with dementia, but within an inclusive rather than exclusive social milieu. Dementia was a presence in the walks, but the reciprocal nature of walking groups, in which volunteers and other walkers supported each other regardless of whether a person was affected by dementia or another long-term condition, engendered the community affiliations attached to each group. Those who were most vulnerable to social isolation, for example those bereaved or living alone, found groups to be particularly valuable. Extending Odzakovic et al.'s (2018) conclusion that walking in one's neighbourhood can support social relationships, this analysis establishes that a structured and inclusive walking group goes further by facilitating continued community participation among people living with dementia, especially those isolated in their communities.

The study illustrates the complex interdependencies linked to social participation which can be strengthened through links to the outdoors and the natural environment. The potential benefits of access to nature has been underplayed in the literature on 'dementia-friendly' communities, which has tended to focus narrowly on the

built environment. In this article, we extend the notion of 'dementia-inclusive' environments to demonstrate the benefits of accessing nature: 'blue' or 'green' spaces in the environment. With the structure of groups supporting capacity and abilities as opposed to deficits and loss, walking within these environments was framed as an activity that built fitness, promoting agency and active participation within a social and physical space that encouraged people to feel secure, whilst also having fun. The practice of walking could help re-instil pride in the accomplishment of embodied health, which dementia may erode. The focus on broad physical health as opposed to dementia was helpful as a frame of reference—acknowledging and recognising the condition yet not defining membership of the group as based on their dementia. Socially, walking groups supported people to fulfil their potential by focusing on their abilities, maintaining autonomy and supporting both social networks and meaningful activities, defined by Huber et al. (2011) and Dröes et al. (2017) as core dimensions of social health.

5. Conclusion

Our findings provide new insight into how social initiatives and interventions embedded in communities, and which facilitate continued participation of people with dementia with other people within these communities, can improve the social health of people living with dementia (Vernooij-Dassen et al., 2018). Inclusive walking groups such as those discussed here provide valuable opportunities for people living with dementia to access outdoor spaces and engage in meaningful social interactions. In doing so, this enables people to fulfil their potential and obligations, maintain a degree of autonomy and independence despite their illness, and continue to be socially involved within their local communities (Dröes et al., 2017). From the analysis conducted here, the place where walks took place was important, for example in terms of supporting an individual's ability to access both green spaces, as well as maintaining a connection with the local communities in which they dwelled, in some cases for most or all of their lives. The adoption of an inclusive community-based approach in which social interventions for people with dementia are socially situated and embedded within their local communities is illustrated as an important element of such social interventions in promoting social health. Walking groups gave people the opportunity to mix and socially participate in a supportive environment, but which was not labelled as being in a physical or social space seen as exclusively for those with dementia. In doing so, such interventions reinforced a sense of normalcy, rather than of a dementia-based 'exceptionalism' which can be a feature of many dementia-specific interventions. Our findings highlight the value of viewing 'dementia-friendliness' in relation to the wider inclusiveness of initiatives that might involve people living with dementia with their wider communities, rather than building distinct but potentially ghetto-ised 'dementia-friendly' spaces within communities. This demonstrates the value of designing support for people with dementia that integrates them in local communities. This standpoint is reinforced by wider evaluations of 'dementia-friendly' communities, which argue for the normalisation of people with dementia in services where possible, rather than creating dementia 'exclusive' services or spaces (Buckner et al., 2019). Future initiatives could benefit from focusing on inclusivity within wider communities rather than focusing on interventions specifically and exclusively for people with dementia. To this end, we suggest that the term 'dementia-inclusive' may be a more appropriate term for initiatives to adopt when compared to the phrase 'dementia-friendly' so that such initiatives can act as catalysts for growing levels of community participation.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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