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Neighbourhood stigma and social exclusion: the case of two Scottish peripheral estates

Glen Scott Gourlay

Ph.D

Department of Urban Studies
University of Glasgow

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Abstract

As a consequence of economic change and urban decline, stigma has become a feature of many neighbourhoods in western industrialised cities. Based upon the experiences of two housing estates located on the periphery of the Scottish city of Dundee, this thesis investigates the processes involved in the creation of poor neighbourhood reputation and examines the ways in which stigma influences residents. The study uses qualitative data from a large number of in-depth interviews and focus groups with residents, non-residents and professional stakeholders to illuminate how stigma was understood and experienced from different perspectives.

The thesis argues that although the activity of labelling represents a pervasive social enterprise that is generally carried out with no intention to cause harm, it can have inadvertent consequences of negative discrimination and disadvantage. This assertion is demonstrated in the context of neighbourhood stigma and its ability to exert a powerful influence on the material and psychological well being of residents, which contributes towards their experience of disadvantage and exclusion from important aspects of economic, social and cultural life. The thesis also proposes that neighbourhood stigma is more harmful where disadvantage already exists, thereby perpetuating stigma and intensifying social exclusion. The thesis concludes by offering suggestions for tackling the problem of poor neighbourhood reputation and stigma in regeneration initiatives.

Acknowledgements

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Chapter 1   Stigma and labelling: a review of theoretical approaches

Introduction

This chapter provides a review of the theoretical base that underlies contemporary understanding of stigma. The chapter deals with stigma in a broad social context and begins with a discussion of the development of sociological perspectives on social deviance and labelling. It emphasises the contributions of Goffman (1961,1963) and Becker (1963), in particular how they contribute to knowledge of the processes involved in labelling and stigma.

1.1   Social deviance, labelling and stigma: theoretical approaches

Stigmatisation, that is, the process of marking out or labelling individuals and groups according to their distinguishing or deviant traits has long been a focus of sociological study. In the *Rules of Sociological Method* in 1895, Durkheim (1982) explains the concept of deviance primarily in terms of a functionalist approach. For instance, one of his primary concerns was the social transition that took place as a result of rapid industrialisation in western society and the impact this change had upon social stability. Durkheim explained this situation in terms of the concept of *anomie* or state of meaninglessness that he believed took place in times of social change and upheaval. According to Durkheim, this social condition was characterised by a loss of integration and stability and represented deviation from established norms. In Durkheim's work deviance is explained as a normal social activity that is present in all societies and contributes to the general stability of that society. In his approach, deviation from norms is responded to by socially organised punishment, which also benefits the operation of society at large. That is, in a given society, a common understanding of what constitutes normal and abnormal behaviour functions by

highlighting deviation, thus reinforcing common values, social solidarity and ultimately, stability.

In Durkheim's approach, broader social conditions play a significant role in creating deviance. This account also emphasises the interplay between social structure and individual agency and makes a clear link between broad social change and the influence of these changes on human actors and their social organisation. Arguably, however, Durkheim overemphasises the unproblematic aspects of social deviation. For instance, in his approach, being labelled and subsequently punished on the basis of difference is viewed as a largely unproblematic enterprise. No consideration is given to the consequences of being identified as deviant, particularly in terms of the quality of life experienced by those labelled as being different/ deviant.

In the first half of the 20th century, the Chicago School became influential within social theory and took an ethnographic approach to the study of deviance in an urban context. Exponents of the Chicago perspective observed that distinct social problems had resulted from rapid urbanisation; delinquency and crime were considered to result from increased social fragmentation and loss of cohesion. This is evident for instance in Wirth's 1938 work, *Urbanism as a way of Life* (1962) where deviance is explained in terms of the 'natural' evolution of the city and increasing competition for scarce resources and the development of locations within the city that supported deviant behaviour. Although limited in terms of its criticism of structural forces in creating deviant labels, the Chicago approach offers a fascinating insight into social deviance as a consequence of urban expansion. This approach is discussed further in the following chapter. During the 1940s and 50s functionalism re-emerged as the dominant paradigm in social thought and theory was influenced greatly by Parson's structural functionalist perspective (Layder, 1994). In Parson's approach social order and stability was generated from the presence of, and adherence to social values. Deviance was generally viewed in terms of the individual's choice not to conform to dominant social values. However, Parsons appreciation of the social structures that could create and maintain deviant labels is limited. In this respect, the focus of Parson's work emphasises the acceptance of the status quo and the unproblematic nature of deviance.

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1.2 Labelling and the social construction of deviance

By the early 1960s there was clear a shift towards a micro-sociological approach and the socially constructed nature of social problems. The 'labelling perspective' emerged as the main theoretical view in understanding social deviance. Typified in the work of Lemert (1951), Goffman (1961,1963) and Becker (1963), the labelling perspective dominated the sociology of deviance in the United Kingdom and North America from the mid 1950s until the end of the 1960s. The labelling approach was radical in its time and held that deviance was essentially a social construct. This approach challenged the established orthodoxy that generally explained deviance in terms of the individual attributes of the deviant. The labelling perspective's distinct approach is also seen in the way that it advanced the idea that deviance was created by society and culture. That is, the application of a deviant label was no longer viewed as an objective entity as in functionalist approaches. In the labelling perspective, to be labelled as deviant was essentially contingent upon the culture and society in which the labelling took place. That is, social deviance is essentially what is labelled as such and is dependent upon the context of the label and its various social meanings. For instance, definitions of what constituted established norms was no longer constant but was now seen as liable to various interpretations in different time periods and cultures. The labelling approach also brought forth a new emphasis upon the dynamics involved from the perspective of the individual and considered the outcome of the process as being important as the source of a stigmatising label. In the labelling approach, what a label meant for the social deviant and how he/ she negotiated his/her altered social identity became a primary concern.

For instance, this point is clear in Lemert's (1951) concept of primary and secondary deviance and represents a turning point in the conceptualisation of social deviance. Essentially he provides an account of the social response to deviance, namely the initial behaviour of the deviant and the various ways in which he/she responds to being labelled by negotiating the stigmatising label. Similarly, in Becker's (1963) as well as Goffman's (1963) approach, stigma and labelling are essentially viewed in

terms of the same process, namely as an expression of the social reaction to deviance from established norms and the dynamics involved in negotiating this social role.

1.3   Social deviance and the emergence of critical sociology

However, by the late 1960s, neo-Marxist sociological perspectives became influential and there was a clear shift from ideas that were viewed as being liberal (Sumner 1994). As a result, the labelling perspective attracted criticism. For example, the labelling perspective's under-emphasis of the role of those in authority in creating damaging labels in the first place did not correspond to Neo- Marxist ideas of institutionalised, class-based power. It is important to understand this change of perspective within the context of the social and political transition that took place in western society toward the end of the 1960s. Sumner (1994) for instance, highlights this point in his reference to major events such as the involvement of the United States in the Vietnam War and the Warsaw Pact's invasion of Czechoslovakia as being critical episodes in producing widespread social unrest in industrialised society. Popular protest and student demonstrations became a hallmark of the period and is characterised for example, by the rise of the civil rights and feminist movements. Against this backdrop, Neo-Marxist, radical thought became the dominant paradigm in Sociological theory. By the early 1970's an anti-establishment perspective became established in social theory, typified in Gouldner's (1971) work where he attacks mainstream sociology. In Gouldner's view, mainstream social thought lacked critical self-reflection. Gouldner was also explicit in his claim that the labelling approach represented a liberal, uncritical perspective.

In spite of the resurgence of Marxist oriented approaches in this period, the labelling perspective developed into the 1970s and beyond. For example, in addition to Dinitz et al's (1969) account of the societal reaction to deviance, significant components of the social constructionist/ labelling approach are evident in later studies of deviance and stigma. Interestingly, some significant neo-Marxist based perspectives on social deviance contain strong elements of the earlier labelling approach. For instance, the radical criminology of Taylor, Walton and Young (1973) uses both micro and macro

sociological approaches and components of social constructionist / labelling is clearly evident albeit with a structuralist neo-Marxist base.

Likewise, Cohen's concept of deviance amplification in *Folk Devils and Moral Panics* (1972) essentially involves a labelling and social constructionist approach towards explaining the mass media as an agent of social influence and control. In Cohen's work the mass media is viewed as having a crucial role in creating a moral panic in society by labelling social groups as deviant and influencing public sentiment against these social groups. In Cohen's approach, the actual public response in terms of fear and disdain is enhanced or 'amplified' as a result of mass media attention, thereby perpetuating the deviant label. This approach is also echoed in Armstrong and Wilson's (1973) *City Politics and Deviancy Amplification* where key aspects of the earlier labelling approach is evident. In Armstrong and Wilson's approach the mass media is regarded as an institutionalised source of social influence that projects negative images of deviance, thus reinforcing popular disdain towards specific social groups. In doing so the deviant status of these groups is justified and perpetuated. In Cohen's as well as Armstrong and Wilson's work as in earlier labelling approaches deviance is viewed as socially constructed although a clear shift towards examining the power base of labelling is evident, reflecting the radical influence in social theory.

Later approaches can also be seen as utilising various strands of earlier constructionist / labelling perspectives although far more weight is given to the structural and class based origins of deviant labels. These critical approaches also demonstrate a greater emphasis upon the use of labels in maintaining power differentials between classes. This approach can be seen in Hall et al's *Policing the Crisis* (1978) where deviance is explained as a justification for social control under the capitalist system. According to Hall et al, deviance is regarded as a social construction whereby the activity of labelling in the mass media reinforces negative stereotypes and images of the deviant that are socially divisive and fragment society on the basis of ethnicity and social class. Similarly, Damer's (1972, 1989, 1992) Marxist approach to explaining the labelling and stigma of disadvantaged neighbourhoods and their residents also takes an obvious social constructionist/ social reaction perspective. Damer's emphasis however is maintained on the power differentials based on social class that he believes is the key variable in creating deviant and stigmatising labels. The accounts

of Damer, Cohen and Armstrong and Wilson are discussed in more detail in Chapter Two of this thesis when labelling and stigma in relation to neighbourhoods is explored.

1.4   Explaining social stigma: Goffman's contribution

Goffman can be viewed as offering one of the most comprehensive sociological studies of stigma to date. For example, his work *Stigma* (1963) remains a sociological classic and is influential in the way that it clarifies important aspects of the processes involved in creating deviant labels as well as the various responses to this activity. From Goffman's perspective, stigma is explained essentially as a consequence of a human propensity to categorise the social world. That is, individuals have a tendency to classify others according to distinguishing features or attributes. In *Stigma* for example, Goffman (1963) suggests that labelling is carried out in the course of social interaction whereby the construction of a schema or theory is made in order to explain difference or deviance from accepted norms (p15). In this respect, Goffman suggests the activity of labelling and subsequent stigma is an ingrained feature of human activity that is used in daily discourse and behaviour. Goffman further indicates that in many instances, stigmatisation is carried out without much regard to the damaging nature of labelling others; it is done 'unthinkingly' (p15). In this respect, Goffman points out an essential feature of the process of labelling and stigma, that is, its capacity to mark out and differentiate those who are different and fall short of accepted social norms.

Stigma, power and social control

In the labelling approaches provided by Goffman and Becker, it is clear that difference or deviance can actually provide legitimisation or justification for labelling and stigma. In this way, activities regarded as deviant may become normalised as well as perpetuating the process. For example, Goffman explains what is perhaps a more problematic attribute of stigma where he points to the application of labels to involve

a conscious, deliberate element. For example, as well as attempting to explain difference, in some cases labels may reinforce deviance and justify the deviant position of those who are labelled, thereby perpetuating the stigma of the person labelled. According to this perspective, the stigma and labelling of people may also arise out of an inherent fear or anxiety existing within society over those who are different or deviate in terms of their threat to normality and social stability. This point is evident in Goffman's comment that "we construct a stigma theory, an ideology to explain his inferiority and danger he presents "(1963, p15).

This aspect of Goffman's (1963) account of labelling and stigma however, suggests that the maintenance of social norms is not always an unproblematic enterprise. From Goffman's perspective, it is clear that while performing an important role in the maintenance of norms and social stability, harmful consequences or side effects are also present. This is evident in Goffman's proposition that responses to being perceived in terms of difference, or being associated with deviant behaviour and the resulting shame constitute crucial components of the process. Essentially, Goffman highlights the idea that the way in which society responds to the person or deviant act and the sanctions imposed against the person or people implicated, both establishes and reinforces what constitutes the parameters of normality and any deviation from this.

Similar aspects of stigmatisation are developed in the work of Dinitz et al (1969), who also point to the significance of the societal reaction to deviance. In this respect, it appears to be the meaning, particularly the negative meaning that is attached to places as well as people and their behaviour, that may produce stigmatising perceptions and activities. In addition to the possibility of being ostracised and excluded from mainstream activities and services, the fear of being labelled in a negative way may also be sufficient to cause distress. Dinitz et al explain this function of stigma by stating that every society defines, explains and acts with regard to deviance (1969, p3). In a similar manner to Goffman (1963), Dinitz et al assert that as well as being an inherent feature of western society; stigma also plays a significant role in the action against the real or perceived threat to the core values in society. That is, people are socialised into norms via rewards to maintain acceptable behaviour and sanctions against unacceptable behaviour. Dinitz et al, (1969) for instance, describe the

pervasive nature of cultural norms in the way that acceptable behaviours become internalised and are taken without question, which makes any difference from this stand out as a challenge to normality, thereby reinforcing the deviant status of the transgressor.

Although Goffman can be credited with highlighting the process whereby deviant labels can be applied to individuals with potential negative effects, a limitation of his work is evident in his failure to acknowledge the deeper structural processes underlying the systematic censure of those subject to stigmatisation. Indeed, Goffman appears vague regarding who is more likely to carry out stigmatising activities. Other than explaining stigma as a function of society, his account of the motives for maintaining power is given little consideration. For instance, he generally remains unclear regarding the varying degrees of influence exerted by different social actors within the labelling process and generally explains this activity in terms of a relatively plain dichotomy between those who are stigmatised, that is, who posses an 'undesired differentness' and the 'normals'... 'who do not depart negatively from particular expectations' (1963, p15). In this respect Goffman does not shed much light upon what constitutes 'normal' other than in relation to what is regarded as mainstream and acceptable. His benchmark appears to be normality, although he acknowledges that this definition is subject to change through time, culture and context. On this latter variable, Goffman however highlights an important issue in respect to the context in which labelling takes place: 'An attribute that stigmatises one type of possessor can confirm the usualness of another...' (1963, p13). Goffman's point is that an attribute that gives rise to stigma need not be discreditable in every case and that what passes for deviant in one circumstance may be regarded as normal in another.

A potential limitation of Goffman's perspective is also evident in the way he remains unclear as to the characteristics of groups of people who are more likely to experience stigma. In this respect, he tends to refer to rather vague, broad categories of people, who are generally labelled as a consequence of their deviation from normality. This specific aspect of Goffman's work is a criticism that has been brought against the labelling perspective in general. For instance, as Downes and Rock (2003) explain, labelling approaches tend to polarise society into a conforming majority and deviant minority.

In Goffman's own terminology, the criteria for this distinction are based upon those individuals who are regarded by mainstream perceptions as being in 'collective denial of the social order' (1963 p179). Interestingly, Goffman includes the urban poor as qualifying for membership of these deviant groups although he does not expand on this in terms of details such as location of the urban poor or the specific activity / attribute that gives rise to their deviant status. He provides no additional explanation of the presence of contributory variables in respect to the dynamics that produce this scenario. In one instance he refers to specific individuals and attributes subject to being stigmatised where he identifies three categories of stigma, namely 'abominations of the body, blemishes of individual character..., tribal stigma of race, nation and religion...' (1963, p14). Sumner (1994) however, responds to this 'rough typology' provided by Goffman and argues that stigma is invariably the 'expression, sublimation or rationalisation of larger social divisions' based upon class, gender, ethnicity, age and geographical area (p225).

In spite of Goffman's apparent lack of detail regarding the variables involved in labelling, he does acknowledge that the activity of stigmatisation has historically involved systematic, social control whereby those deviating from accepted norms have frequently been subject to censure in varying degrees of severity. This issue is perhaps more evident in his study of the total institution in his work *Asylums* (1961). In this context, Goffman essentially explains stigmatisation as a game of political power, whereby incarceration in state run institutions provides a mechanism to ensure social control over those who deviate from social rules. Sumner also illustrates the intentional, social sanctioning nature of stigma in his reference to it constituting an historical activity:

'Branding of people as witches, communists, perverts or lunatics has been fired by vested interests and moral crusades, people with an interest in censure... not the course of the disinterested bystander' (1994, p224).

Goffman's suggestion that stigma can potentially exclude those labelled as deviant provides a further interesting component of the labelling process. For instance, a negative attribute of stigma is illustrated in his reference to:

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'...the attitudes we normals have towards a person with a stigma, and the actions we take in regard to him, are well known... we believe the person is inferior, with this assumption we discriminate effectively if often unthinkingly, reduce his life chances.' (1963, p15).

A notable limitation of this particular aspect of Goffman's work is evident however in terms of the lack of detail he provides in respect to the way that life chances may be limited through being stigmatised. Unfortunately, other than pointing out that to be regarded with less respect and to experience shame is a consequence of being stigmatised, Goffman does not describe or explain the ways in which this takes place. In this respect, his approach to explaining stigma appears to involve more focus on the emotional / perceptual aspects of the process rather than discuss the potential material disadvantage of being labelled. This point relates to the criticism brought against Goffman mainly as a consequence of the way in which he explains the censure of groups of people as a relatively unproblematic aspect of social life. As Sumner points out, Goffman provided little criticism of the use of censure in its capacity to exert power and did not criticise the 'society that allowed this [censure] to take place' (1994, p220).

Stigma and labelling: impact and responses

Goffman's perspective can be seen as containing a strong functionalist element. This is apparent in the way that he explains labelling and stigma as performing an important social role in terms of the regulation of human behaviour. For example, this is clear where he illustrates the desire to maintain social control as being an important factor within in the process of stigmatisation. According to Goffman, this is done in an effort to contain deviance, that is, by labelling those who break, or have been regarded as breaking the moral code. In this way, the desire to avoid sanctions in the form of stigmatising labels can contribute towards the maintenance of conformity to social norms; the fear of being labelled as deviant can act as a deterrent to deviant behaviour. Although a caveat is present with regard to this concept, for instance, this is evident in the various responses to being labelled. Stigma for example, is expressed

and responded to in a number of ways. For example, as Goffman illustrates, individuals can internalise labels and self identify as deviant but they can also challenge or reject the label. In this respect, it appears that in some cases, the fear of being stigmatised may not be enough to produce conformity to accepted norms and there is scope to break away from a stigmatising label. However, the desire to correct a stigmatising feature may itself be driven by a desire to conform to acceptability. From this aspect of Goffman's position, the process of labelling and its outcomes appears to be contingent upon a general societal desire to achieve acceptance and to conform to this state. This issue will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

Although Goffman can be criticised for remaining vague as to the exact involvement of the social actors involved, he points to the related activities of labelling and stigmatisation as being dynamic, human social processes that are managed and negotiated in a number of ways by different social actors. Perhaps more significantly, he offers an interesting illustration of the ways in which those who are stigmatised may respond to the acquisition of a label. For example, Goffman highlights the idea that a label can be denied as well as accepted (1963, pp16-19). Those who are stigmatised may often regard themselves as normal or remain indifferent to the label, indeed some individuals may be labelled but the potential shame or fear that might be associated with this may have little or no impact.

Goffman emphasises a significant feature in terms of the consequences of being labelled by reinforcing the idea that labels can endure and may become a defining feature of certain people or groups. This point is evident in Goffman's assertion that in spite of an individual's attempts to correct the 'difference', stigma may endure; he/ she may still be viewed in terms of the original stigmatising feature. As Goffman asserts, this can result in the 'transformation of self from someone with a particular blemish into someone with a record of a particular blemish' (p20). Goffman explains this attribute of stigma in terms of the propensity of a stigmatising attribute to become a defining feature where other, normal aspects of an individual appear to be played down or ignored in a social encounter. This tendency is also given consideration by Becker in his reference to the concept of 'master status' where an individual's defining feature is established as a consequence of being labelled as deviant (1963, p32). Goffman also believed that a stigmatising label might not have much resonance

in the absence of the shame and fear of being regarded as different. Again, this point reinforces the idea that as well as stigma being a crucial predisposing factor in maintaining social conformity, its effect can also have a resounding and enduring impact upon people and locations labelled as different or / and deviant.

At the same time, Goffman highlights an additional feature of the process, namely that the response generated from a poor reputation may be disproportionate to the actual feature that gives rise to the reputation. For instance, a physical attribute such as a 'mark or blemish' need not be present in order for stigmatisation to be carried out. Goffman (1963) for instance explains this in the way that although stigma is primarily based upon physical difference which marks out as something to be avoided, he also explains that stigma had latterly become applied more 'to the disgrace itself than to the bodily evidence of it' (p10). This point highlights the relationship between the origin of stigma and the subsequent reputation, which appears to be obscure and in some instances they do not correspond. This point is also made by Sumner (1994) for example, who refers to the possibility of a reputation or rumour not corresponding to the reality of the event or characteristic that originally gives rise to the reputation. Goffman explains this scenario further in terms of discrepancy between 'virtual and actual social identity' of those who are stigmatised (1963, p12). Becker also acknowledges this perceptual aspect of labelling with reference to the relationship between Hughes' (1945) concepts of master status and auxiliary status and points out that these two identities do not always correspond. That is, there may be a discrepancy between the key defining features of an individual labelled as deviant and the characteristics we expect to find in that individual.

This issue highlights an interesting dynamic in the process of labelling, namely, that as a human perceptual activity, the source of reputation is subject to variation and distortion and can perhaps be unclear at times. It also points more significantly to an aspect of labelling people that in some cases involves a partial knowledge of those subjected to being labelled. This proposition has important implications for the negative labelling of people where the reality does not reflect the lived experience, where being labelled negatively has been done essentially on the basis of limited knowledge and distorted reality. This scenario is reported in the context of neighbourhood stigma, for example studies by Armstrong and Wilson (1973), Foster

et al (1996) and Dean and Hastings (2000) point to the ability of a location's external negative image to be sustained beyond the attributes that gave rise to the image. In these studies, it was found that many external perceptions of residents and their neighbourhood were disproportionate to the source of the perceptions. The main features of these studies are discussed in Chapter Two. This issue further illustrates the somewhat tenacious and pervasive nature of stigma and points to implications for improving negative reputation.

1.5   Becker's contribution to the labelling perspective

In Becker's (1963) approach to the activity of labelling, parallels can be drawn with Goffman in many significant areas, particularly Becker's explanation of the labelling process as involving a major focus upon the social response aspects of deviant behaviour. For instance, like Goffman, Becker also emphasises social reaction as important in the creation of negative labels. Becker argues for instance that whether an act is deviant or not depends upon the response of others to the act. It also depends on whether the act goes against accepted societal norms and values and how social actors respond to deviation from expected norms. Being regarded as deviant, therefore, is essentially a result of breaking the social rules or norms that are the established patterns of behaviour passing for normal in a specific culture.

In a similar way to Goffman, Becker appears to regard labelling as being an integral feature of society, an every day activity. In *Outsiders*, Becker (1963) highlights the negative effects of labelling and stigmatisation as being carried out inadvertently as well as intentionally. However, Becker is clearer in this respect than Goffman. For instance, he provides a useful insight into the tendency for labelling to be contingent upon power differentials and that the creation of deviant labels favour those who carry out the labelling. This particular point is perhaps summarised most clearly in his assertion that 'rules tend to be applied more to some persons than others' and that groups with most influence are more able to maintain power by creating rules and carry out labelling (1963 p12). In this respect, rather than being a random process, Becker asserts that rules may be applied differently according to distinctions made on

the basis of social class, ethnicity, occupation and culture (p15). As Becker explains, rule making is essentially differential access to power (p17). It appears that labelling and stigmatisation is sometimes a conscious, deliberate process that can be used against specific people, or groups to discriminate negatively and disadvantage them. This point is particularly evident in Becker's concept of 'moral entrepreneur' or 'moral crusader' (p148) Rule makers frequently have an agenda; this is to define deviants in order to elevate their own position and further their own cause. As part of this process, moral entrepreneurs may also highlight the deviant attribute as a public concern thereby reinforcing its deviant status through wider, social anxiety. As Becker points out, those engaged in the process of rule making and rule enforcement have the objective of justifying and maintaining their position and social status through the activity of defining and perpetuating deviant labels.

However, it is significant that Becker's (1963) explanation of deviance does not represent a simple dichotomy between excluded 'outsiders' and moral entrepreneurs. For instance, rule breakers may be labelled and may also see themselves as outsiders, or as being at odds with accepted norms. However they may also regard mainstream, non-deviants as outsiders in relation to their own identity. This tends to illustrate the relative, and indeed, fluid aspect of the nature of labelling. For instance, Becker places a significant emphasis on the agency of those labelled as 'deviants' in either accepting or rejecting a deviant label. This is illustrated in his explanation of the concept of 'deviant career' that is, the process whereby an individual who is labelled progresses through various stages of identification before becoming defined as a deviant (1963, p25). Becker suggests that there is an element of choice involved in the decision whereby an individual accepts a label and pursues his / her deviant career. After initial labelling as a primary deviant (by participating in some infraction of rules), to continue on a deviant career, acceptance of the label (secondary deviance) must take place before establishing a master status, that is, the main defining feature of the deviant.

In this respect, Becker refers also to the concept of self-fulfilling prophecy whereby the labelled deviant may relate with others who share the same status, and associates with this 'deviant subculture'. This potential gravitation towards a shared, deviant identity is reinforced by Dinitz et al (1969, p19) who explain that the stigmatisation of

those labelled as deviant may lead to the individual seeking social support of other deviants that in turn can maintain his/her deviant status. That is, the experience of isolation, or feelings of difference may in fact perpetuate deviance and exclusion via the individual's rejection of mainstream norms and subsequent withdrawal into a separate, 'deviant' set of norms. In this manner, deviance may be created through the actions of those labelled, particularly through a decision to behave in ways they feel is appropriate to their deviant status. This aspect of Becker's (1963) perspective is reinforced in Goffman's (1963) suggestion that labelling and stigmatisation can also amplify deviance and 'create' problems by increased focus on deviant or undesirable behaviour. In this respect, Becker makes an important case for labelling as being self-perpetuating since stigmatisation can lead to further sanctions against those who are labelled.

Synthesis of Chapter 1: Key features of Goffman and Becker's contribution towards understanding labelling and stigma

This chapter has looked at the conceptual development of stigma in a broad, aspatial context. From the work of Goffman and Becker a greater insight has been provided into understanding the nature of stigma. Both authors provide an important contribution to knowledge of the processes involved whereby people are labelled and experience stigma. This process is primarily explained as being a rather complex and pervasive human social activity. In reviewing Goffman and Becker's approaches the following key features of labelling and stigma are proposed:

- The related activities of labelling and stigmatisation constitute a pervasive, yet generally accepted aspect of social life that is most often carried out with no intention to cause harm, although this activity has inherent negative consequences.

- Labelling and stigma perform the social function of defining and maintaining normal, acceptable behaviour and is an important element in the maintenance of social order and stability. Deviance is also defined in reference to this normality. However, the definition of what constitutes deviance is subject to the context in which the labelling process takes place.

- Moral entrepreneurs or those with an interest in censure, play a significant role in defining deviance as well as maintaining stigmatising labels at an institutional as well as individual level. These social actors may also raise public awareness of undesirable attributes such as 'deviant' behaviour or other contravention of social norms. In these ways, labelling and stigma can reinforce and amplify deviant behaviour.

- Labelling can be used as a justification for the control, and use, of sanctions against those who deviate from accepted norms.

- Stigmatising labels can be rejected as well as accepted. However, the effects of labelling can have resonance, and may persist. In Becker's terminology, being labelled as a deviant can become an individual's 'master status' that is, their main defining attribute.

- A discrepancy can exist between a stigmatising feature and the perception or understanding of the feature. That is, the reputation of an attribute that gives rise to stigma may not correspond to the reality of that attribute, ultimately making knowledge of the stigmatising attribute unfounded.

- Labelling and stigma can limit opportunities by excluding individuals from mainstream social life. This is done perceptually, for instance, those who are labelled may withdraw from established norms voluntarily, as well as through social sanctions. For instance, fear of stigmatisation may contribute to a self-fulfilling prophecy where the stigmatised seek identity with other 'outsiders'. In addition, moral entrepreneurs may also act in ways that control the activity of individuals labelled as deviants. This is evident in law making and other official institutions that have authority to limit opportunities for others.

In spite of changing paradigms, the labelling approach endures as a significant and credible theoretical contribution towards understanding the concept of stigma. Goffman and Becker in particular have arguably provided the most influential sociological contribution towards understanding the inter-related processes of

labelling and stigmatisation. This assertion is reinforced in terms of the volume of work that reflects the attention given to these theorists in sociological literature. These perspectives also have resonance in terms of their clarity in explaining the processes involved in the stigmatisation of those labelled as social deviants. In the following chapter, the focus shifts towards stigma in a spatial context and significant studies of stigmatised urban neighbourhoods are reviewed.

Chapter 2:   Neighbourhood stigma

Introduction

This chapter provides a review of key literature that has sought to explain the process of labelling and stigma in a spatial context. The chapter begins by outlining how the spatial context of stigma has been understood from a sociological perspective. It then focuses upon significant neighbourhood studies and discusses how these contribute to contemporary knowledge of the processes of labelling and stigma. This is discussed in the context of the role of broader structural change and economic decline in creating spatial disadvantage and neighbourhood stigma. Consideration is also given to the policy response to neighbourhood disadvantage and stigma.

2.1   Approaches towards understanding the spatial nature of urban problems

The city as a locus for social problems has long been the subject of sociological study. For instance, the academic interest in urban social problems can be traced to the emergence of the discipline of sociology as early theorists attempted to make sense of social change brought about by the rise of industrial society. As highlighted by Thorns (2002), by the middle of the 19th century increasing urbanisation and population growth created new forms of social organisation and the city increasingly became the site of power and wealth. A dependency upon industrial capitalism made the urban work force more vulnerable to the booms and slumps of the economy. As a consequence, disadvantage and poverty became more marked within urban locations and on a far greater scale than in the past. This situation is illustrated clearly in Engel's (1845, 1987) work *The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844* where he provides a first hand account of the extreme disadvantage and over crowded living conditions experienced in working class areas of Manchester in the 1840s. According to Engels, the disadvantage he witnessed represented a serious flaw within industrial capitalism and that spatial distribution of poverty was a direct consequence of the differential access to wealth and power. In his view, the working class poor had

no alternative but to remain at the mercy of exploitative structural capitalist forces that maintained urban concentrations of poverty.

In the early / middle years of the Twentieth Century, the sociological perspective of the Chicago School generally took a less critical approach towards understanding urban problems and although structural change was regarded as the root cause of disadvantage and the creation of deviant neighbourhoods, these were generally viewed in terms of the natural evolution of the city. This is highlighted for instance in Burgess' (1925, 1967) identification of the 'zone of deterioration' in the city where social problems and slum dwellers could be found. From this perspective, urban problem neighbourhoods and people were understood as being the result of increased competition for space and various social groups were distributed on the basis of territorial advantage. Wirth (1938, 1961), like earlier theorists, regarded urban living to be a different way of life in comparison with the social organisation that was experienced prior to industrialisation/urbanisation. For example, In *Urbanism as a Way of Life* in 1938, (1961) Wirth argued that both density and heterogeneity of cities produced a novel way of life, he also recognised the potential for this to create social disorganisation. Reflecting an ecological approach, Wirth suggested that a rise in population density meant increased competition for space and pressure to yield greater economic return and believed this to be a strong determinant of where different sections of the urban population lived.

Wirth also held the view that in spite of increased physical proximity in urban living, social and emotional ties were reduced due to increased competition. In addition to the transience of urban social relationships, his conception of heterogeneity involved class and ethnic boundaries being complicated with increased differentiation of social groups. This was manifest in small homogenous groups found in distinct local areas of city in which Wirth observed as becoming increasingly segregated on the basis of ethnicity and income rather than choice. From Wirth's perspective structural forces create urban disadvantage and the segregation of urban locations according to ethnic and class boundaries and is generally regarded as an inherent consequence of the natural evolution of the city.

As highlighted in the previous chapter, by the 1960s the labelling perspective represented by Lemert, (1951), Becker (1963) and Goffman (1963) had become firmly established as a significant theoretical approach within the sociology of deviance. Elements of their perspective continued into later studies, although these increasingly took on a more radical slant. This is evident for example in the labelling oriented work provided by Cohen (1972) and Hall et al (1978) who lay greater emphasis upon the structured power basis of stigmatising labels and the ability of these labels to maintain class and ethnic divisions in society. Significantly, aspects of this fairly broad labelling perspective have been applied to the context of understanding the spatial nature of the urban problems of disadvantage and stigma. A review of approaches to understanding stigma in an urban spatial context illustrate various levels of significance upon the role of structure and agency in creating the 'problem neighbourhood', some of which are detailed further in this current chapter. For example, this continuum is illustrated when comparing Murray's (1990) emphasis upon the primacy of individual, behavioural attributes of those labelled as a deviant underclass, with Damer's (1989) stress upon the labelling of residents and neighbourhoods as representing an institutionalised, systematic means of maintaining class control. Perspectives since the 'classic' labelling approach of Goffman (1963) and Becker (1963) have also placed more importance on the role of institutional actors such as the mass media and local authority in the labelling of urban locations as deviant places housing deviant people. This particular angle is found in both Armstrong and Wilson's (1973) and Gill's (1977) neighbourhood studies in which the labelling of estates and residents is argued as being primarily a consequence of institutional based labelling. Again, these perspectives have a more critical edge than earlier labelling accounts and they are clear regarding the role of labelling in maintaining power differentials and creating negative discrimination and disadvantage. The perspectives just outlined will be discussed in more depth later in this current chapter.

2.2   The history of neighbourhood decline

In attempting to understand the spatial context of stigma more clearly, and in particular the 'creation' of neighbourhood stigma, a useful starting point is to consider the decline that has taken place in much of Britain's urban social housing over the last three to four decades. This is increasingly evident by the 1970s where the consequences of slum clearance policies of the 1960s subsequently emerge as a focus on the 'problem' estate (Power and Mumford 1999). Since the 1970s, a continued reduction of social housing construction and a corresponding increase in owner occupation has combined with economic restructuring to produce a general decline of the social housing sector (Merrett 1979). This process is highlighted by Lee and Murie (1997), for instance, who illustrate the trend of increasing social polarisation that has emerged between tenures whereby local authority housing has become a residual tenure, catering mainly for those of lower socio-economic status.

The changing composition of local authority housing is particularly evident from the 1980s where the process accelerated as a consequence of the broad policy objectives of reducing council housing stock and expanding owner occupation. This was conducted through the transfer of local authority housing stock to the private sector as well as by incentives involving a decrease in capital spending and housing subsidy to local authorities and the maintenance of mortgage tax relief (Cole and Furbey 1994). These policy initiatives contributed to the council rented tenure becoming a less attractive housing option and produced widespread change in tenure patterns. In addition, tenants' 'right to buy' their homes was introduced in the 1980 Housing Act (Glennerster 1995, p187). One notable outcome of this initiative is evident where between 1979 and 1994, 1.5 million additional homes became owner occupied through the sale of local authority houses to sitting tenants (Page, 1995 p5). However, as Power (1993) highlights, sales of former local authority stock generally involved higher income tenants buying better quality homes in desirable areas, leaving concentrations of low-income households in some neighbourhoods. This process is highlighted in the tendency for lower income households (as measured by receipt of benefits) to be increasingly found in the council rent sector. For example, in the 1960s

and 1970s less than half of those living in local authority housing were in the poorest 40 per cent of the population, by 1991 however, this had risen to three-quarters (Hills 1995, p92).

The process of tenure residualisation has also been compounded by the impact of economic decline and has contributed towards the physical and social decline of many neighbourhoods. Glennerster et al (1999) for instance point to the interplay between wider, macro economic decline and neighbourhood decline that can intensify the local experience of economic and social stability, in many cases concentrating poverty and disadvantage in specific locations. As highlighted by Darton and Strelitz (2003, p7), economic restructuring has had an uneven influence where in spite of a general rise in the standard of living and increase in prosperity for the majority of the UK population, the poorest groups have benefited least and remain in poverty. This point is expressed in the increased dependency on state benefits and a growth in individuals with low income that has taken place particularly since the 1980s (Joseph Rowntree Foundation 1995, p6). Although benefits initially lessened the impact of inequality between gross incomes, by the 1990s the gap between those on benefit and those in work had increased (p7). As Gordon et al (2000) illustrate, in Britain, the proportion of low income households increased from 14 to 21 per cent over the period 1983-1999 (p5).

As suggested earlier in this chapter, the economic disparity between incomes has a strong geographical component. For instance, the impact of these changes has been felt more strongly in 'economically weaker regions' (Geddes 1997, p206). Pacione (1997) also highlights the distinct spatial element that is evident in this process of economic polarisation where this change has exerted a specific influence in urban areas by creating more obvious concentrations of disadvantage (p43). Income levels between deprived neighbourhoods and more affluent neighbourhoods have become increasingly marked since the 1980s (Joseph Rowntree Foundation 1995). As Parkinson (1998) points out, in an urban context, patterns of disadvantage are evident in concentrations in the inner city and peripheral estates. At a neighbourhood level, Green (1994, p3) suggests that a focus on regional and urban-rural disparities obscures local variations in poverty within urban areas. For example, the economic disparity between affluent and deprived neighbourhoods is particularly evident at

ward level where a greater degree of concentrated poverty is apparent, as measured in respect of unemployment and educational attainment.

The trends of tenure residualisation and socio-economic change have produced patterns of social and physical decline of neighbourhoods that in turn have contributed to the increasing unpopularity and negative reputation of these areas (Power and Mumford, 1999, Lupton, 2003). Indeed, it is widely accepted that stigma has increasingly become a feature of social housing in general. For example, writing thirty years ago, Griffiths asserted that 'All council houses carry a social stigma' (1975, p10). A similar suggestion is reinforced in later neighbourhood studies that invariably regard social rented housing as being an important determinant involved in the generation of negative neighbourhood reputation. This is evident for instance in Parkinson's (1998, p2) assertion that poor image has become increasingly associated with neighbourhoods where social housing is the predominant tenure. Similarly, Power and Mumford (1999, p71) implicate the 'general decline of council estates' in producing negative image. Dean and Hastings echo this assertion in their statement that points to a British trend of 'stigmatisation of social renting in general' (2000, p2).

This consensus is also reinforced in a wider international context where the issue of image and changing perceptions of social housing estates is a characteristic evident in many urban areas throughout Western Europe and North America. White (1998) for example refers to the stigmatisation associated with residence in the Habitation à Loyer Modéré (social housing sector) in his study into social exclusion in Paris. Murdie (1998) also refers to a similar process in terms of the increasing residualisation of Toronto's Metropolitan Housing Association accommodation where stigma has become a significant feature. These studies support the view that a trend of general decline has taken place in the social housing sector. However, it is also clear that a disparity exists in relation to the experience of neighbourhood decline and stigma, which is more severe in areas of social and economical disadvantage.

2.3   Urban neighbourhood decline and stigma: the policy response

The main thrust of post-war urban policy in Britain was concentrated on physical and environmental interventions. A major activity within this approach involved attempts to clear cities of the problem of slum housing and the creation of new towns and overspill areas (Keating and Boyle 1986). The expansion of large areas of council housing on the edge of Scotland's cities became a distinct feature of the urban landscape during the late 1960s. In Scotland the peripheral estates became established as the primary site of urban social problems. In many cases the term peripheral estate has become synonymous with the 'problem estate'. Since the early 1970s the issue of the 'problem estate' is evident as an ever-present concern within urban policy intervention as well as in sociological research. For instance, the expansion of local authority housing that had been a characteristic feature of post war housing policy slowed down by the 1970s and a shift in emphasis upon targeting problem areas took place (English 1992; Lee and Murie 1997). It is within this policy context of inner-city slum clearance that many of Scotland's council estates were created. However, by the early 1970s solutions to tackle urban decay and deprivation began to illustrate tensions and the limitations of social housing and slum clearance measures became evident. There was a growing concern that earlier attempts to tackle slum and crowded conditions of urban locations had merely shifted problems rather than alleviate them. By the mid 1970s the impact of structural unemployment and economic decline became more marked in neighbourhoods where social housing was the predominant tenure, thus exacerbating the problem of urban decline and disadvantage.

These changes in the broader sphere instigated policy interventions that have targeted deprived locations with an increased focus on the social and economic aspects of urban renewal. In Scotland, there was a shift towards addressing wider social and economic as well as physical improvement. This is manifest in strategies that took a comprehensive approach, for instance in the widespread area renewal carried out under the Glasgow Eastern Area Regeneration (GEAR) project initiated in 1976. A major part of the GEAR project involved increasing economic infrastructure and job creation as well as environmental improvement (Cullingworth & Nadin, 1994). The later *New Life for Urban Scotland* initiative commenced in 1988 also involved a

broad strategy to area renewal and targeted four of Scotland's more problematic estates. As well as recognition of the interdependency of neighbourhood problems with its inclusion of social, economic and physical regeneration activities, the New Life strategy also involved the partnership between multiple agencies from both the private and public sector.

More recently, intervention in Scotland's problem estates has continued with an area based / partnership approach which follows a general trend throughout the U.K. This collaborative response reflects the government's initiative of joined-up policy between agencies and allows local authorities and other agencies to co-ordinate their activities and investment (Parkinson 1998). In Scotland, this approach has mainly involved the targeting of resources in the most deprived areas and was manifest in the Social Inclusion Partnerships initiated by the New Labour administration in 1998 (Hutchinson, 2000). The targeting of deprived locations has continued in recent approaches to urban regeneration. For instance, in 2006 government funding for the Social Inclusion Partnerships were replaced by Community Planning Partnerships, these locations represent the most deprived 15 per-cent of zones in a partnership area.

With regard to neighbourhood stigma, other than Dean and Hastings' (2000) comprehensive study of three British housing estates, there is a dearth of research concerning the issue of poor image within regeneration activities. This seems to be a reflection of the way in which neighbourhood stigma has been approached in urban regeneration policy in the UK. Essentially, it has not been considered as a primary focus. For example, the problem of stigma has not been addressed as a distinct problem, but has been incorporated into broader packages designed to improve the quality of neighbourhood life in general. As Dean and Hastings argue, there is a prevailing assumption within renewal policy that poor image will be alleviated as the general fabric of a neighbourhood is improved. However Dean and Hastings also point out that there is merit in the physical, economic and social regeneration of a neighbourhood in respect to benefits towards improving image. For example, the removal of derelict and unpopular buildings is beneficial in creating a more attractive environment that in turn helps to portray a positive external neighbourhood image. Dean and Hastings' study also illustrates that an approach aimed at general

improvements should also incorporate specific strategies to publicise positive change in order to encourage inward investment and potential in-comers to neighbourhoods.

This approach is regarded as being beneficial in terms of improving poor neighbourhood image. For instance, the benefits associated with publicising positive neighbourhood change is documented in Cole et al's (1996) research into the regeneration of the Bell Farm estate in York. A key component of the estate's regeneration involved improving local press coverage of the estate by informing journalists of the area's transformation. Likewise, in Dean and Hastings' (2000) research, the employment of a public relations officer in the Pilton estate in Edinburgh was thought to have been an important factor in improving the estate's image externally. In addition, positive media reporting of events in the Castle Vale estate in Birmingham was monitored as part of the regeneration strategy and this was regarded as being a key factor in conveying positive change taking place in the neighbourhood (Dean and Hastings, 2000).

Evidence points to the importance of tackling neighbourhood stigma as a distinct component within a holistic approach to regeneration. However, it seems that in general, stigma is largely viewed as being one of many neighbourhood problems within broad regeneration approaches and efforts to change poor image and stigma remain as isolated activities within strategies. It is clear that scope remains for further investigation into the dynamics of neighbourhood labelling and stigma with the aim of informing knowledge of practical measures for improving this specific problem.

2.4 Neighbourhood stigma: A review of significant studies

Research carried out in relation to explaining neighbourhood stigma over the last four decades points clearly to the impact of broader social and economic change and considers a wide range of contributory factors in the process, however this is also mediated by variables at a micro level that contribute to the local experience of the labelling process. For instance, the role of institutional agents such as the local authority, social workers and mass media in labelling estates and residents in stereotypically negative ways is implicated in perpetuating neighbourhood stigma and

disadvantage as well as the impact of structural changes stemming from de-industrialisation and restructuring of employment.

For example, Griffiths' (1975) study of several English local authority housing estates illustrates some interesting attributes of stigma within the context of 'problem' neighbourhoods. Although neighbourhood reputation was not a primary focus of Griffith's research, the study devotes a chapter to explaining the presence of stigma within her case study neighbourhoods. Griffiths essentially takes a structural perspective and identifies poor neighbourhood reputation as originating from a number of sources, although points to the tendency for housing built for slum clearance purposes as being particularly vulnerable to stigma. As was outlined earlier in this chapter, Griffiths (1975) regards stigma to be an inherent feature of the council rent sector. This is explained in terms of the impact of economic change inter-linking with other aspects of social and physical decline, combining to create increasing unpopularity of estates. In addition, the subsequent loss of older residents who had held a stabilising influence on the estates by maintaining important social networks were also regarded as crucial factors of social decline. Change in terms of the socio-economic make-up of the estates was also regarded to have been a major variable in producing poor reputation and stigma in her research. Griffiths' study highlights the impact of neighbourhood stigma in terms of the potential for economic disadvantage faced by estate residents. For example, she found that neighbourhood reputation was a disincentive for existing tenants to become owner-occupiers and was primarily based upon the reality that there would be little chance of reselling property in the estate. In this case it was widely acknowledged that the neighbourhood's poor reputation deterred potential in-comers to the estate.

A notable aspect of Griffiths' study is seen in her clarification of the activity of key players in the process of creating labelling and stigma. In this respect, Griffiths provides a clearer indication of the role of the individuals responsible in the process of labelling than is provided in the earlier accounts of Goffman (1963) and Becker (1963). In Griffiths' (1975) study, stigma is seen as being maintained through the attitudes and behaviour of agents such as local authority housing officials. For example, Griffiths found that in spite of some officials denying that problems existed, tenants were routinely categorised in negative ways, in some cases actively excluding

residents from housing. For instance, this activity disadvantaged residents by not only providing a poor level of service but also in terms of restricting access to better quality housing (p23). In another study, Gray (1979) suggests that the tendency for housing officials to grade tenants on the basis of subjective, negative judgements was common practice in the allocation procedure of many local authorities, although was an activity that is denied by housing managers (p224). He suggests that this 'paternalistic' approach to housing management was a feature that often involved the 'aggressive and abusive treatment' of tenants from housing managers (p208). Gray further explains this in terms of the need to allocate a scarce supply of better quality housing as well as in terms of the autonomous nature of the local authority that provided scope for such 'informal practices and discretion' to take place (p206).

The activity of institutional actors in the labelling and stigmatisation of residents is also evident in Armstrong and Wilson's (1973) research in the Easterhouse estate in Glasgow which highlights the significant role played by moral entrepreneurs such as the mass media and police in generating a moral panic by overstating concern about the deviance of the estate. In Armstrong and Wilson's study, this activity alone is suggested as having sealed the fate of the residents in terms of their experience of stigma and disadvantage. For example, in their application of Cohen's (1972) concept of deviancy amplification that in turn borrows rather heavily from earlier labelling perspectives, Armstrong and Wilson explain labelling in its capacity to induce amplification of deviant behaviour. In their study the deviancy of local young people was portrayed in the local and national press as constituting an integral aspect of life in the neighbourhood. The press in particular conveyed selective images of life on the estates as involving gang warfare and crime. Although the estate's negative reputation had been generated through economic, physical and social decline, social problems such as youth gang 'warfare' had existed in the estate prior to the mass media's activity and was not considered by residents to be a serious problem. Armstrong and Wilson argue that this aspect of life in the neighbourhood only became an issue when the press labelled the estate as being predominantly characterised by these negative attributes. For example, increased levels of police activity in the estate meant that more young people were singled out and subsequently arrested, likewise, the behaviour of the youth on the estate involved a self-fulfilling prophecy and lived up to the expectations of the press by participating in additional 'deviant' behaviour. A

result of this process was that not only did the estate's problems become a strong defining feature, the poor reputation of the area and its residents was perpetuated. Although physical and social decline had contributed to poor image, it is clear that Armstrong and Wilson's study emphasises a strong social reaction basis for the construction of deviant labels that were generated through the mass media and played a crucial part in shaping the lives of residents in the estate. In their study deviant labels and behaviour were essentially created and maintained out of a public concern over behaviour defined as deviant.

The involvement of the mass media and other institutional actors in contributing towards poor reputation is also evident in Gill's (1977) study of the stigmatised Luke Street in Liverpool. As in Griffiths (1975) and Armstrong and Wilson's (1973) studies, similar explanations are provided in Gill's (1977) work where his research findings sheds light upon some primary aspects of the origin of neighbourhood reputation in terms of predisposing factors, role players and impact of stigma on residents. Gill's study also reinforces the interplay between the various factors involved in creating the negative reputation of Luke Street. For example, in Gill's study, neighbourhood reputation had developed processes of economic and physical decline in the estate and illustrates the impact of various neighbourhood problems upon the experience of residents. In addition to the impact of stigma on the quality of life, the negative reputation of Luke Street was exacerbated by its geographical location. For instance, being physically cut off from services and infrastructure reinforced feelings of division and disadvantage between the neighbourhood and more affluent areas (Gill, 1977).

An obvious component of Gill's study emphasises the fate of Luke street as having been largely determined by the labelling process, specifically the role played by officials including the local press, police, social workers and housing department staff in reinforcing negative attributes of residents. For example, residents were negatively discriminated against and disadvantaged by routine labelling from officials. Gill (1977), like Armstrong and Wilson (1974), highlights the perceived deviancy of the local youth that was represented by the local press as being a major component of life in the estate. However, as a result of media focus and police harassment, mutual mistrust between the police and local youth escalated into confrontation and more

deviant behaviour. His study however emphasises the self-fulfilling prophecy response of the estate's youth who were believed to have lived up to social expectations of deviant behaviour. A similar approach is reinforced in Damer's (1972, 1989, 1992) studies of the Moorpark and Blackhill estates in Glasgow in which he emphasises the role of institutional actors who are represented as the most important determinant in the process of labelling and creating negative discrimination and disadvantage of neighbourhoods.

The activity of the mass media in contributing to neighbourhood reputation is also evident in more recent studies although these are less deterministic in terms of their evaluation of the role of the mass media in creating and shaping deviant behaviour. Cole and Smith's (1996) research in the Bell Farm estate in York refers to the activity of the local press in covering local events taking place in the estate. In the course of their reporting, journalists frequently played up the more negative aspects of the estate at the expense of its positive attributes. Cole and Smith's research also highlights a tendency for the media to apply sensationalist headlines and terminology in their reports of the estate as well as utilise out of date images and events. By doing so, the reality of life in the neighbourhood was obscured, adding to the negative external perceptions and stigma of residents. The mass media's role in generating poor image is also a significant factor in Dean and Hastings' (2000) study of three British housing estates. Dean and Hastings suggest that the role of the mass media in facilitating poor image was particularly implicated in estates where negative reputation is regarded as being more persistent and difficult to change. Their study also suggests the idea that popular understanding may be influenced by representations of events in the wider social sphere which in turn, tends to be influential in reinforcing negative perceptions of neighbourhoods. In Meadow Well in Tyneside, Dean and Hastings (2000) explain that the area's poor reputation had been exacerbated by social problems and crime reported through the mass media. Similar factors were involved in Pilton in Edinburgh. However, in 1995, its portrayal in the film *Trainspotting* as a run down estate, housing drug addicts had been compounded by the drugs and A.I.D.S reputation associated with Edinburgh. This created a negative reputation that resounded beyond the estate and the city.

Reynolds's (1986) study of the processes involved in the designation of the Omega estate in the English Midlands as a 'problem' neighbourhood reinforces some notable recurring themes. This is the case in respect of Reynolds' explanation of the predisposing factors involved and also in terms of her illustration of the impact that the estate's reputation exerted on residents. Reynolds views the physical attributes of the mainly social rented housing and the estates geographical location, being segregated from the wider city, as playing an important part in reinforcing isolation and perceived difference. She also identifies factors of problematic housing allocation and conflict between tenants as well as between residents and officials such as housing staff as important issues contributing to the negative image and lack of cohesion within the estate.

As in Reynold's (1986) and Griffith's (1975) studies, Foster et al's (1994) research into the experience of the Priority Estates Project in London and Hull highlight the collective impact of physical and social decline that contribute to poor reputation. Further similarity is present in terms of Foster et al's account of officials in their institutional based labelling of tenants. Foster et al explain this through the tendency for housing officers to focus on the estate's most negative attributes. According to Foster et al, officials seemed to be more interested in issues such as crime and problem tenants when less stigmatising issues such as littering was more of a concern for residents. Like Griffith's study, the findings reinforce neighbourhood stigma as an important factor in maintaining the exclusion of residents from important aspects of social life. This is evident in the instances where the decision to re-house tenants in better accommodation often rested on subjective, negative judgements made by housing staff.

Foster et al (1994) also point to an additional consequence of this issue, for instance, in some cases residents avoided being confronted with stigmatising attitudes of staff, this affecting the level and quality of service experienced as well as having the potential to exclude residents. Foster et al explain that resident's experiences with officials also contributed towards their low expectation from service providers and led to residents' withdrawal from services. The issue of social withdrawal appears to be a recurring feature in studies of stigmatised neighbourhoods. For example, as Costa Pinto (2000) found in her study of municipal estates in Lisbon, Portugal, residents

awareness of their neighbourhoods' negative attributes and internalisation of poor neighbourhood image can exert a negative influence towards levels of attachment. In Costa Pinto's study, a process of internalisation of poor neighbourhood image directly contributed to feelings of insecurity, instability and poor neighbourhood attachment. These feelings of low attachment were also believed to have translated into vulnerability and was reported as having reduced residents ability to 'perceive themselves as makers of their own destiny' (p17). In light of these specific findings, neighbourhood image can be understood as being a significant influence in residents' level of personal association with their neighbourhood. This point is reinforced in Lupton's (2003) recent study of neighbourhood decline that found many residents held an awareness of neighbourhood stigma that had translated into low confidence. Lupton also highlights the role of stigma in reinforcing resident's social isolation through their reduced access to social networks.

It is evident that many factors are at play in influencing residents' feelings of security, their level of attachment and participation in their neighbourhood. In this respect, the precise role of poor image and stigma has not always been made clear in neighbourhood studies. It is necessary to tease out factors involved in creating stability / instability in neighbourhoods in order to understand the role played by poor neighbourhood image. As highlighted by Lowndes (1995), those already discriminated against, for instance, those dependent on state benefits as well as ethnic or sexual minority groups are particularly vulnerable. According to Lowndes, the activity of such groups tends to be limited to their immediate geographical location. This socio-economic dimension to neighbourhood participation and attachment is also reinforced in the *poverty and social exclusion survey* conducted by Palmer et al (2002). Their study reported lower levels of civic engagement in low-income households with this general pattern being repeated throughout Britain (civic engagement referred to involvement in social organisations including political parties, parents associations, community and tenant groups).

Continuing on this theme, the potential for concentrations of poverty to either constrain or provide opportunity to residents living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods is an issue that has been raised in community studies over the last few decades. Gans (cited in Jones 1975, p185) for instance discusses the benefits of social heterogeneity

as a measure in tackling concentrations of economic and social homogeneity within urban locations. Likewise, Wilson's (1987, 1996) and Wacquant and Wilson's (1993) studies of the black, urban 'ghetto underclass' in the United States have made a significant contribution to understanding the processes involved in producing distinct, geographical concentrations of disadvantage and the impact this has upon the life chances of 'ghetto' residents. Like other neighbourhood studies, for instance Foster et al (1994), Dean and Hastings (2000) and Lupton (2003), Wacquant and Wilson (1993) highlight the tendency for resident's excluded position to be perpetuated through their low expectations, particularly in terms of their dependency on state aid. Their research illustrates that resident's expectations involved anticipating long-term unemployment and their dependency on state benefit. It is thought that resident's expectations had emerged as a result of their experience of disadvantage and negative discrimination.

An alternative approach towards understanding the spatial context of deviance and stigma is provided in perspectives that emphasise a cultural basis for the production of disadvantage. This approach has also involved a focus on the primacy of individual, behavioural attributes of those labelled as deviant in perpetuating their disadvantaged situation. This approach also emphasises a distinction between the morally weaker and those who are regarded as normal/respectable. This perspective characterised in the approach taken by the right wing sociologist Charles Murray (1990). In Murray's view those who choose to participate in morally unacceptable behaviour essentially do so out of individual choice. In his approach, deviant or socially undesirable behaviour characterised by unmarried mothers, unemployment and criminal activity is concentrated in the lowest strata of society that composes an underclass. This perspective has been debated widely and in many cases discredited mainly in terms of its capacity to 'blame the victim' and its failure to consider wider economic conditions upon the differential opportunities available in society (Rodger 1992). Bagulley and Mann (1992, p119) for instance argue that Murray's thesis 'blames the victims' for their own situation and ignores structural inequalities in creating poverty. For example, it plays down structural conditions such as policy and prevailing economic circumstances that are likely to contribute towards the opportunities available to those who are less fortunate. It also groups people together under the assumption that they are homogenous in terms of their behaviour and attitudes and

fails to consider the actual diversity present in disadvantaged social groups. As Rodger (1992, p60) suggests, as a negative label, being regarded as belonging to an 'underclass' may potentially further exclude and stigmatise those who are already marginalised from mainstream society. In addition to his over emphasis on moral individualistic factors, Murray's approach fails to explain the broader processes involved in creating disadvantage. His approach also says little about the spatial expression of disadvantage and the role of stigma in perpetuating this.

Returning to Foster et al's (1994) study, an interesting feature of their research can be seen in respect to the ways in which stigma is negotiated by different social actors. This is highlighted for instance in resident's responses to poor neighbourhood image that involved some residents challenging the estate's poor external reputation by expressing that the reputation is undeserved and not representative of life in the estate. In other instances, residents were shown to adopt strategies to counter some of the negative effects of the estate's stigmatising reputation. For instance some residents used an alternative address when applying for employment in the belief that their own address would disadvantage them. A further response to the neighbourhood's reputation involved residents categorising other residents as problem families in this respect, applying stigmatising label to such families (p48). This perspective tends to reinforce the idea that internally, estates are not homogenous but more diverse in their experience than external images would suggest. Likewise, these points suggest the labelling process as representing a more dynamic enterprise than a two-way activity between the stigmatised and those who do the labelling.

The wide variety of responses to neighbourhood stigma is also a significant component of Dean and Hasting's (2000) study of three British housing estates. Their research similarly emphasises the varied responses in terms of how neighbourhood image is managed by residents and other social actors who have a stake in the neighbourhood. An interesting point raised in their research is seen in the way that although neighbourhood image is negotiated by a number of individuals, very few tend to challenge the problem of image in a way that would facilitate its improvement or change. They identify a number of residential responses to poor image. One response in residents was to accept the negative image as representing a true evaluation of life on the estate. However, in spite of accepting the negative label of

their estate, in some cases residents expressed their powerlessness to change it. In some instances and at different times residents also avoided the issue of poor image through the desire to prevent embarrassment. In other cases, residents also challenged the estate's reputation by rejecting it. Perceptions of neighbourhood illustrate a similar diversity within Dean and Hastings study and is reflected in the suggestion that rather than there being one single image of the estate, images were 'fractured' in that various images were found to exist, this mainly depending on individual experience.

Dean and Hastings (2000) also provide a useful insight into the potential exclusionary aspects of residence in stigmatised estates. This is the case in respect of specific facets of exclusion that are clarified in the study outlining the nature and extent of social actor's involvement in the process. Dean and Hastings also highlight the related nature of these dimensions in terms of the reinforcing effects of these combined impacts. The influence of neighbourhood image is illustrated in a number of dimensions across the inclusion/exclusion continuum and provides a broader scope than earlier studies have tended to offer. Exclusion was evident in Dean and Hastings research in relation to residents' financial /economic status, service access and psychological well-being. These included residents expressing difficulty in accessing work, the inheritance of poor credit status and paying higher insurance premiums as well as encountering disadvantage in buying and selling property. In addition, residents experienced a reduction in the quality and / or availability of services such as getting housing repairs done. Residents also reported feelings of embarrassment, poor self-perception and level of attachment to neighbourhood.

In many cases, residents had experienced overt negative discrimination, although this expression of stigma was also considered to be covert. In some instances residents' experiences of the disadvantaging effects of their estate's reputation was not found in service providers (p14). Dean and Hastings' study points to scope for further for investigation into this specific feature of neighbourhood stigma. This corresponds to a closely related situation evident in McGregor et al's (1998) study of employment and training patterns in Scottish regeneration areas. For example, the study found that some employers were reluctant to recruit individuals with a history of long-term unemployment. This activity however tended to exert a particularly negative effect upon many local residents living in council estates with high concentrations of

unemployment. In spite of this apparent discrimination however, employers stated that local residents made good employees but also believed that stigma was an obstacle for local people getting work.

Similar themes are also presented in Damer's (1972, 1989) research into the decline of the Moorpark housing estate in Govan, Glasgow and also in his study of Blackhill (1992), another Glasgow estate. This is the case in terms of factors producing stigma where Damer explains this as being a consequence of the physical and social decline of the estate as well as through the actions of institutional officials, including the mass media. A significant feature of Damer's approach is evident in the way that he departs somewhat from other perspectives in terms of his greater emphasis upon the contribution of structured inequalities in creating and perpetuating stigma. This is particularly the case in his Moorpark study where he regards the activity of labelling estates and their residents in terms of their 'difficult' or 'problem' status as being a symptom of a wider, historical process of class control inherent within the capitalist system (1972, p16). Damer's broader, structural perspective is characterised in his assertion that the basis for socio-spatial division is 'bound up with the social, political and economic history of the country as a whole and not just its cities' (1972, p1).

As in Griffith's (1975) and Foster et al's (1994) consideration of institutionalised labelling, Damer similarly regards housing officials as playing a key role. Damer however, perhaps overstates the role of institutional actors in this activity and goes further in terms of emphasising the intentional, structured basis of labelling. According to Damer, the labelling of housing estates represent an inherent systematic bias against the working class. This approach is typified in Damer's reference to the 'contemptuous manner' in which housing officials respond to tenants does not represent the isolated activity of a few individuals, rather, it is symptomatic of a pervasive ethos that informs council policy (1972, p9). As in Gray's (1979) suggestion that the supply of scarce housing requires measures that categorise and label tenants, Damer also asserts that disadvantage is maintained through the housing system. Damer's approach differs from Gray's in that it takes a more obvious Marxist slant:

' it is in the local authority housing estate that the massified forces of capitalist society and its institutions are most frequently at work' (1972, p39).

Damer illustrates this concept in his suggestion that labelling represents a 'coherent ideology' that seeks to maintain authority over residents who are predominantly unskilled, working class (1972, p39). He regards this is as being a systematic process that is conducted through the supervision and hard line management of housing areas (p39). In his Moorpark study, Damer points to the negative response of officials that had been evoked through their low expectations of tenants, although he suggests that these were additionally influenced by wider perceptions and attitudes that 'officially permeate the entire local authority housing world in central Scotland' (1972, p9). Damer argues that such pervasive attitudes and strict supervision have a long history in Scotland and that institutionalised labelling as an attempt to supervise and control neighbourhoods and residents is an activity that underlay 19th century sanitary and housing acts. As Damer points out, such acts dictated moral standards regarding tenants behaviour (1972, p9). Damer suggests that the legacy of this 'moral and judgmental stance' exists today and is manifest in the official distinction made between acceptable and unacceptable tenants as well as in the council's 'bullying warnings about cleanliness...and evictions...' (1972, p39).

Damer's research however highlights further, notable attributes of the labelling and stigmatisation of 'problem' estates and their 'deviant' residents. This is evident in his explanation of the tendency of those who label others to generalise, misrepresent and homogenise diverse areas into unitary wholes. In some cases these areas become associated with 'myth', that is unsubstantiated stories of events projected on to areas to reinforce their status as dangerous places (1972, p17). As Damer asserts, there is often a general belief present in those living outside 'problem' areas that entire neighbourhoods are homogenous in terms of types of people and their behaviour. This assertion is perhaps most clear in his citation of Walters (1972) reference to the 'Dreadful enclosure...' as being 'identified totally with danger, pain and chaos'. Damer, suggests that the activity of projecting generalised perceptions tends to reinforce the divisive nature of categorising people and locations regarded as different, thereby perpetuating their stigma (1972, p17). The enclosed geographical situation of the estate aggravated the situation where outsiders from the immediate

area of Govan remained unaware of the reality of life on Moorpark reinforcing its perceived deviant status. Damer's assertion that perceptions of problem places and people are invariably selective and stereotypical also reinforces the idea that a discrepancy can exist between perceived negative image and direct experience. As Damer explains, in spite of outsider's definition of the estate as a place of problem people and their anti-social behaviour, such activity involved occasional 'incidents' rather than regular patterns (1972, p30).

This argument is reinforced by Mooney (1999, p73) who suggests that 'problem' estates are often viewed as homogenous entities in terms of their problems and that the diversity present within these areas is ignored. According to Mooney, literature involving neighbourhoods regarded as problem estates invariably misrepresents these areas in a negative way, particularly in terms of a tendency for such locations to be viewed in the absence of objective understanding of the circumstances involved. Such problem estates are invariably seen as representing the 'site of urban disorder' and 'other' (Mooney, 1999 p73). The literature on problem estates illustrates that perceptions of problem places involves a large degree of subjectivity, as highlighted by Skifter Andersen (2003) perceptions of neighbourhoods invariably differ between people who live in estates and those who live outside. Whether this variance between perceptions is based upon imagined or perceived ideas rather than actual lived experience is an important point for consideration. The discrepancy between perceptions existing between outsiders and residents may also be mediated by knowledge or experience of the stigmatised estates, which is often partial, out of date or in some cases absent. This issue reinforces a central aspect of the work of Becker (1963) and Goffman (1963) who both illustrate that the perceptions of a stigmatising feature do not always correspond with the actual stigmatising feature.

Synthesis of chapter

The spatial nature of stigma has been a concern within urban sociological research since at least the 19th century. However, an increased level of interest in the subject area is evident over the last three to four decades and is reflected by the numerous neighbourhood studies that have sought to explain the processes involved. In most cases, the origins of neighbourhood stigma have been explained in terms of combined economic and social factors that underpin the process. A recurring explanation involves economic decline that translates into disadvantage and poor neighbourhood reputation. For instance, most studies point to stigmatised estates as being areas of social housing, particularly where residualisation of the local authority rental sector has taken place. This is combined with the loss of employment in areas that are already depressed with a corresponding increase in benefit dependent households. The movement out of stabilising influences such as employed households and loss of important infrastructure leads to unpopularity of estates or certain areas of housing within estates. As a result of these circumstances, along with the presence of physical decline and dereliction, a negative reputation is generated which in turn stigmatises residents.

The above chain of events represents a common explanation for the generation of poor neighbourhood reputation. What is less clear from the literature is where stigma stands in relation to the multiple other neighbourhood problems. Although it is generally widely acknowledged that poor reputation and stigma are intricately linked to neighbourhood decline, few attempts have been made towards unravelling the exact processes involved. In terms of understanding the dynamics of the stigmatisation process, the literature does not clarify whether stigma is always an inherent consequence of neighbourhood decline. Indeed, the inter-linked nature of variables involved makes understanding of neighbourhood stigma difficult. A tendency of studies involving negative neighbourhood reputation and stigma is to view these as one of many neighbourhood problems, rather than being approached as an issue in its own right. Indeed, studies of problem neighbourhoods that involve a specific focus on stigma as a distinct entity remain few in number. It is necessary to examine neighbourhood stigma in terms of its origins and course of development so that a more precise understanding of its nature can be established.

This is also the case in respect of fully appreciating the exclusionary potential of stigma. For instance, this specific issue requires to be disentangled from other processes that predispose disadvantage and exclusion. In many cases, although recognition of stigma as a barrier to social inclusion and quality of life is evident, generally the issue of stigma is dealt with as an accepted, although problematic, aspect of life in a disadvantaged neighbourhood. There is a particular need to clarify the exact features of stigma that are problematic; that is, the activities associated with stigma that are more likely to give rise to disadvantage and exclusion. This is also the case in terms of establishing whether stigma is the primary variable in producing exclusion in neighbourhoods or if this necessarily combines with other problems to have a negative impact. For instance, is residence in a stigmatised estate enough to limit the opportunities of residents or are there additional factors involved? Similarly, an indication of the characteristics of those who experience the more serious effects of poor neighbourhood reputation is also limited in neighbourhood studies. It is necessary to examine this aspect of stigma in more detail, namely, to examine whether some groups are more inclined to experience the effects of stigma than others.

In terms of understanding the impact of stigma, research illustrates that neighbourhood responses to stigma vary. For example, as in Dean and Hastings' (2000) research it is clear that stigma is a problem that is acknowledged by many social actors, although there does appear to be some variation in terms of its impact and how residents respond. One significant component of this point can be seen in the low expectations and withdrawal of residents from various aspects of social life as in the studies of Costa Pinto (2000) and Lupton (2003). However, it remains unclear whether stigma alone is a root cause of low attachment and social withdrawal. For instance, there is debate present concerning the extent to which social withdrawal is forced or voluntary. In light of this, there is a need to examine the role of stigma in contributing to social withdrawal as well as exploring the nature of residents' withdrawal. A further aspect of this issue concerns the suggestion that the withdrawal of residents from social activity contributes to residents seeking what Wilson refers to as 'associations of lesser worth' (1987) or into a 'deviant set of norms' as suggested by Becker (1963). The notion that residents may withdraw into a 'deviant subculture'

is a significant issue and has potential implications for the stability and cohesion of neighbourhoods. These points are worthy of further examination, particularly in respect of establishing whether this aspect of stigma represents pressure through social influence, coercion or voluntary social withdrawal.

It is also evident from the literature review that those responsible for perpetuating poor image and carrying out stigmatising activities (such as labelling and referring to areas and places in overt and covert, negative ways) include estate residents, non-residents, housing officials, local and national press. However, the extent to which stigmatisation and exclusion of residents represents a systematic, institutional activity is not conclusive. For instance, Damer (1972, 1989, 1992) asserts that neighbourhood stigmatisation is always the result of systematic, institutional agency carried out with the intention of disadvantaging and excluding residents. Alternative perspectives, for instance, as in Goffman's 'classic' approach (1963) although acknowledging that the impact of stigma can be problematic, views stigmatising behaviour as an activity that generally takes place on an individual level with no deliberate intention to cause harm. Likewise, the activity of Becker's 'moral entrepreneurs' (1963) in this process is particularly vague. A related point is evident in research conducted by Dean and Hastings (2000) and McGregor et al (1998) who found that although service providers and local employers acknowledged experiences of stigma and exclusion reported by residents, these same officials denied residents claims that they had experienced direct discrimination. This is a significant, although problematic aspect of stigma, that is, it seems that few people readily accept responsibility for involvement in the labelling, stigmatisation and potential disadvantage of others. In response to these issues, the exact role of officials in stigmatising neighbourhoods and residents remains to be explored in more detail. This is also the case in terms of understanding the motivation behind labelling and stigmatisation.

A further, interesting aspect of the labelling of neighbourhoods as deviant locations is the perceptual activity that contributes to the physical and social decline of neighbourhoods to produce stigma. For instance, it is clear from the literature covering the topic area that neighbourhood stigmatisation is more complex than a simple two-way process conducted between those carrying out labelling and those who are labelled. It is evident that various, often conflicting perceptions of

neighbourhoods exist, this perceptual activity can distort neighbourhood image and may be unrepresentative of the neighbourhood and its residents. For example, as highlighted by Damer (1972, 1989, 1992) and Mooney (1999) the action of homogenising neighbourhoods in terms of their deviant behaviour and status is a common activity. It is necessary to establish how far this homogenisation represents a perceptual activity of those living outside neighbourhoods and to what extent does homogeneity of behaviour represent the lived experience of residents.

The discrepancy can be seen in the way that negative perceptions of places and people do not always correspond with the attributes that give rise to the perceptions. As was highlighted in Chapter One, this point is made by both Goffman (1963) and Becker (1963) who describe stigmatising labels as a defining characteristic of those who are labelled and is difficult to change. In the context of neighbourhoods, the issue of long-standing problem image recurs in the work of Griffiths (1975) and Gill (1977) and more recently Dean and Hastings (2000). These studies illustrate that negative reputation can endure, and that stigma may exist beyond the factor that originally gives rise to the stigma. This aspect of stigma is particularly significant in terms of attempts made to improve neighbourhood image and stigma. For instance, although research into neighbourhood stigma rightly plot the course of stigma in terms of negative change and decline, with the exception of Dean and Hastings (2000) few studies have examined the effects of positive change in neighbourhoods where stigma is a problem. The relationship between stigma and neighbourhood transition is an issue that would benefit from being examined further, particularly in respect of providing knowledge of activities that might improve poor image.

Chapter 3   Methodology

Introduction

This chapter discusses the approach that was taken towards investigating the experience of neighbourhood stigma in the Easthill and Westhill estates in Dundee. The chapter begins by illustrating how the research topic originated from a personal and academic interest in the 'problem' estate. It then plots the development of the research process through the stage of carrying out a literature review, identification of research questions and how these questions directed the investigation by forming the basis of inquiry using interviews and focus groups with informants. The use of a qualitative approach is explained in terms of the benefits this provided towards the research objective of achieving an in-depth investigation of what stigma meant for residents and other informants who had a stake in the neighbourhoods. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the key ethical considerations of the research. This primarily involves an explanation for the maintenance of anonymity of the research locations in terms of minimising inadvertent stigmatisation of the estates and residents.

3.1   Formulation of research questions

The origin of the research topic is derived from a personal interest in the broad area of neighbourhood reputation and stigma. For instance, the concept of the 'problem estate' was one that held a fascination for me. I had a vague knowledge of estates in Dundee (the city where I had lived as an undergraduate student), that were widely regarded in the city as places of trouble and 'no go' areas. Interestingly, the poor reputation of these places was generally accepted with few people questioning why these locations had been labelled and if the basis for their reputation was justified. I was also concerned with the problematic aspect of this situation and interested in exploring the possible, negative impact that neighbourhood reputation might exert on residents. For instance, I had an interest in whether poor neighbourhood reputation influenced the social exclusion of residents. An academic interest in urban sociology

and the sociology of deviance also contributed to a desire to investigate this phenomenon in more depth.

Although the exact direction of my investigation was vague at the early stages of the research process, it was clear that the primary objective lay in establishing the origins of poor neighbourhood reputation and stigma. In addition, I was aware that I was interested in exploring the effects of poor reputation from the perspective of residents living in stigmatised locations. That is, what did the people living in these places have to say about the situation? In terms of taking steps to investigate these broad questions, the next activity was to carry out a review of literature of the topic area. This stage of the research process involved extensive reading regarding the general concept of stigma as well as stigma in the context of neighbourhoods. The literature search was carried out in conjunction with the writing up of a series of small 'papers' or reviews that helped to focus the reading and to highlight main issues and themes that would be explored within the research. This initial broad approach was narrowed down as themes emerged and more refined research questions were formulated, these helped to focus and direct the study further.

It soon became evident that a limited number of studies were devoted solely to the study of stigma and although a substantial body of work existed concerning the decline of neighbourhoods, few references were given to explaining the presence of and origins of stigma. This incomplete aspect of knowledge of the subject matter was a significant point and this generated further enquiry. An interesting finding from the literature review was that there was a lack of theoretical input in recent studies of neighbourhood stigma. It was surprising to find that when reference was made to stigma and many of the attributes and characteristics of the process, these studies did not refer to any theoretical background. In a few cases where this was the exception, brief reference was made to theory. A review of the literature indicated that much of the current theoretical knowledge of stigma has its origins in sociological perspectives originating in the United States in the 1960's with limited addition being subsequently made. From reading this body of work, the authors Goffman (1963) and Becker (1963) emerged as the most significant theoretical contributors within the domain. These middle range theoretical approaches provided a general framework for understanding stigma and labelling and represented accounts that considered the

process from a rather broad perspective. However, as pointed out in chapter 1 of this thesis, in many instances, these particular approaches were unfortunately inadequate in relation to providing more specific information. For instance, this limitation was evident in respect to details such as who or what groups were more likely to experience stigma. However, a review of studies of neighbourhood stigma partly addressed the discrepancy between broad and specific information and a better understanding of the state of knowledge relating to the research topic became apparent. This component of the literature review involved an examination of significant neighbourhood studies that had been conducted over the last thirty years. These mainly represented studies from the U.K although a limited number of studies from North America and Western Europe were also included. Although the majority of these studies were not wholly devoted to the study of stigma, many of these made reference to the issues of poor reputation and stigma. These studies also provided an understanding of the wider issues affecting neighbourhoods such as the impact of economic decline and its local influence.

The use of middle range theory was also beneficial in the way that it allowed greater flexibility in terms of being more readily applied to 'real' social phenomenon. For instance, the benefits of this is referred to by Bryman (2004, p5) who highlights that grand theory has been regarded as being too distant and abstract to be applied to small scale social phenomenon. In light of this, a middle range approach was regarded as being appropriate in the study of neighbourhood experiences of stigma. A further benefit of using both middle range theory and other, latent theory in the form of neighbourhood studies is that this allowed a wider perspective when approaching the subject matter. That is, the research was able to draw upon a broader range of views rather than be constrained by one single theoretical approach. This point is highlighted by Gilbert (2001, p10) who suggests that working within the confines of a single, grand theory can be problematic. In doing so there is a danger that 'theoretical arrogance' can result. Likewise, this can increase the potential of theory to exert an influence over the study to the extent of prescribing research findings.

The literature review highlighted significant areas for further investigation. The main research issues to emerge are summarised in the following questions:

- What factors are involved in the creation of stigmatised neighbourhoods and the subsequent labelling of their residents as 'problem' people and does stigma necessarily result from the experience of neighbourhood decline?

- What social actors are involved in generating and sustaining stigma and what is their involvement and motivation in the process?

- Is stigmatisation an institutional or individual activity and is this a deliberate act carried out in order to punish, control and disadvantage or is stigmatisation an inadvertent, consequence of a normal human activity?

- How do poor neighbourhood image and stigma impact upon neighbourhoods and their residents?

- What role does poor reputation and stigma play in the social exclusion of residents and is stigma the only variable in producing disadvantage of residents?

- What constitutes stigmatising activities and what activities or behaviour is more likely to be problematic and lead to disadvantage?

- Are certain individuals and groups more likely to experience the negative effects of stigma, and what are the characteristics of these groups/ individuals?

- What role does poor reputation and stigma play in the social exclusion of residents? Is stigma the only variable in producing exclusion of residents? Are certain individuals and groups more likely to experience the negative effects of stigma, and what are the characteristics of these groups/ individuals?

- In what ways do residents perceptions of their neighbourhood influence their level of attachment to neighbourhood?

- Does residence in a stigmatised estate contribute to the withdrawal of residents into a subculture of shared norms that deviate from mainstream values?

- How far do external perceptions of 'problem' neighbourhoods correspond with or deviate from the lived experience of neighbourhoods? Does evidence support, or reject the contention that 'problem' neighbourhoods are homogenous in terms of residents' experience or behaviour?

- How enduring is poor neighbourhood image and what is the relationship between neighbourhood reputation, stigma and positive change taking place in the neighbourhood?

3.2   Choice of research method

When devising an appropriate method of investigating the research questions, a qualitative approach was used. The decision to use this route was derived from the key aim of examining what neighbourhood experiences of stigma meant from the point of view of the social actors involved in the processes. The main objective was upon gaining a depth of data that would illuminate the processes involved in neighbourhood stigma and enrich the research questions. With this aim in mind, the approach involved conducting focus groups and in-depth interviews using an open-ended questionnaire schedule. As explained at the beginning of this chapter, the study also utilised texts and research notes, however the main thrust of the approach involved data obtained from interview transcripts.

The decision to pursue a qualitative approach over a quantitative one was directed by the objective of gaining an insight from a depth of responses. This objective would not have been achieved from using a purely quantitative approach. However, it was recognised at the outset of the research process that a combined approach might have been useful. For instance, the value of conducting a survey was considered in terms of its use in quantifying the frequency of responses and this could have been combined with the qualitative interview approach. A major deciding factor against the use of a survey along with a qualitative approach was the potential scale of the work involved, that is, administering a survey and handling quantitative data would have been beyond the scope of the research in terms of time constraints and available resources. For instance, there was a concern that a postal survey would mean a reduced incentive for

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respondents to participate and would result in low response rates and initially result in a small sample. Likewise, the face-to-face administration of a survey as well as conducting qualitative interviews would have been time consuming. Delays of this nature would necessitate an extended fieldwork timetable. This factor again, would have been demanding for a solo researcher on a limited budget.

The use of an ethnographic methodology was also considered as a possible means of approaching the fieldwork. Indeed, there is a long history of ethnographic research in neighbourhood studies to varying levels of researcher involvement and structure. An ethnographic approach was a significant component for example, in Gans (1962) study of community decline. Likewise, in Foster et al's (1993) study of crime in a stigmatised neighbourhood she attended local meetings such as tenants groups and mothers and toddlers groups. Damer's (1989) study of the Moor park estate in Glasgow involved him taking up residence in the neighbourhood for part of his research participating in social activities with his informants.

There was an element of ethnographic/ observational technique involved in my own research although this constituted a small component of the work. No structured method such as participant observation was utilised. For instance, as part of an on-going involvement in the case study locations, notes were taken that described the environment and situations that were experienced during the fieldwork and this may have ultimately contributed to the over all 'feel' of the research. Using an ethnographic approach as the predominant method of research was rejected mainly on the grounds that a primary aim was to gather information through the means of in depth interviews. There is a potential danger that ethnographic research using techniques such as participant observation is more prone to subjective interpretation and increased researcher bias. This point also raises the issue of potential over familiarity with informants; for instance, 'going native' is a possible reality that can influence understanding of the topic being researched. As pointed out by Smith (1975) observational bias is an inherent feature of observational techniques in research. A key aim of my research was to remain as objective as far as possible and maintain an awareness of potential bias.

The use of a language-based approach such as discourse analysis and content analysis were also considered as potential options in the research. For example, in reading the literature, a significant feature was the use of emotive and stereotypical language in reference to stigmatised neighbourhoods and their residents. The use of emotive language appears to reflect popular understanding of the 'problem' estate and 'problem' people. The ability to critically examine the use of language and its frequency would be a useful aspect of the study. In terms of content analysis, this potentially useful method was not applicable to the entire study but rather, aspects of it. For example, this approach may have had a particular value in understanding the nature of language, particularly that used by the mass media, in particular, the frequency and extent of the use of certain language. However, this would have required more time devoted to the study and application of this method and would have meant time away from the main focus of the research.

In respect to discourse analysis, this approach would have been of benefit to the study in terms of providing a more critical understanding of residents' and professionals' explanations of the labelling process through their use of language. However, an important factor that diminished the use of this approach was that additional specialised theoretical input would have been necessary. For instance, reading such literature in order to fully understand and appreciate this method would have in turn impinged upon the time scale of the research. Combining discourse analysis with the in depth interview approach may have been possible (not considering the extra time required). However to utilise small components of a discourse analysis approach would have detracted from the full potential of this specialty. In this respect it would be more appropriate to use discourse analysis in further research devoted to a more in depth study with the aim of making sense of the impact of the mass media in influencing perceptions. Developing this approach is also a personal interest that will hopefully be fulfilled in a further study of the subject area.

3.3 Research design and data collection techniques

Location of fieldwork

The choice of Dundee as the site of the research was based on the benefit of this urban location to provide good case studies as well as having practical advantages when taking on the research. Firstly, in terms of practical considerations, Dundee's size, with a population of 143,090 and a land area of 24 square miles (Dundee City Council, 2004) allowed easy and quick access to sites and agents making research manageable within the time scale and available resources. This was beneficial during the fieldwork, for instance, it was possible to travel quickly between locations and conduct interviews within the same day. In addition, Dundee offered several neighbourhoods that have experienced decline and were associated with a poor reputation. However, although stigma has been acknowledged as a problem in many of the city's neighbourhoods, no research appears to have been conducted into this topic.

Another benefit was present in respect to my own personal knowledge of the city and residence there. This particular factor facilitated the fieldwork in terms of allowing easy orientation to the case study locations; it also assisted in following up contacts. A further factor relating to the rationale for using Dundee as a site for the research may be seen in the way that in a wider UK context, Dundee remains relatively neglected in terms of research into urban neighbourhood decline and stigma. An interesting point for study was the extent to which research into neighbourhood stigma in Dundee corresponded to the situation in other urban locations. For instance, a comparison with the wider, Scottish and UK context would be interesting.

The use of a case study approach

The deciding factor to use a case study approach was based upon the research aims of achieving an intensive examination of the setting in which the activity of labelling and stigma takes place. The main concern was with the complexity of the phenomenon and to achieve an in-depth understanding of this. Two estates were chosen as case

studies, namely, the Easthill and Westhill estates. The rationale for choosing these two case studies was based upon the following points:

1. The case studies were regarded as exemplifying the phenomena under study and provided a valuable context for the research questions to be investigated.

For example, these estates were chosen on the basis that they represented good examples of estates comprising predominantly social housing that had experienced decline, social problems and had acquired a poor reputation. In addition, both estates had also undergone change as a result of regeneration and renewal activity over a considerable period of time. Like other estates in the city, the case studies had become known in terms of their poor reputation. In addition, anecdotal evidence also suggested that the reputation of the Easthill and Westhill was rather ingrained in perceptions of those living in the city. Informal conversations with local people invariably raised the names of these two estates. In respect to the presence of these issues, it was important to tease out the various factors involved in order to explore the different dimensions of stigma.

2. They provided a useful comparative element into investigating the experiences of stigma.

That is, although the case studies shared similar features, differences were present in the way that the estates had approached and responded to regeneration in different ways and although tackling stigma was not a primary objective of renewal strategy, this issue had been addressed. This particular attribute of the case studies was also regarded to be beneficial in terms of the research's secondary aim of considering the impact of regeneration upon neighbourhood reputation. Additionally, although both locations shared similar histories in terms of development, decline and regeneration activity, differences were present in terms of timescale of regeneration. For instance, in Easthill the bulk of change had taken place prior to the research being conducted and was on a smaller scale whereas in Westhill extensive regeneration activity was underway at the time of the fieldwork (Nov 2002-August 2003). Additionally, tenure mix was more varied in Easthill as the result of regeneration. Easthill also had a larger population and had experienced a poor reputation for a longer period than Westhill.

3. Using two case studies rather than a single study also provided more opportunity to allow an in depth study.

The decision to focus on two estates was also made within the confines of available time and financial resources. That is, conducting research in two locations was considered as a realistic enterprise and it was anticipated that conducting research in more than two locations would constitute a considerable level of work and time. This would also have been counterproductive towards the aim of gaining a depth of experience.

3.4   Implementation of data collection

Fieldwork began in November 2002. This involved initial contact being made with key gatekeepers via letter and telephone as well as through visits to both estates. This was done in order to take stock of the areas and gather background data including knowledge of the presence of services and infrastructure such as shops, leisure and recreational facilities. This data provided necessary information profiles of the estates and helped with orientation to the estates and establish important contact and gatekeepers. This profiling activity was also augmented by the collection of data that had been initiated in the first year of the research. This information was accessed from the Dundee City Council, The Social Inclusion Partnership Monitoring Unit at the University of Dundee as well as from local resource centres and libraries in Dundee. After some delay over the Christmas period, this mainly as a result of gatekeepers and informants being inaccessible due to other commitments, the fieldwork was resumed by the following February and the first focus groups were conducted. The majority of interviews were commenced in the spring and continued until August 2003.

Data were gathered principally by conducting in-depth interviews and focus groups with a broad range of informants. In terms of research tools, the investigation was directed by using generic schedules covering the broad issues to be explored (see Appendices). The schedules were developed from the issues raised in the research

questions. Schedules were open-ended and provided a degree of flexibility for the researcher and informant by enabling a greater elaboration of response than would be anticipated in using closed questions that might 'force' responses in a specific and limited way. However, in adopting this flexible approach, there was a tendency for dialogue to stray at times from the themes being discussed. In these instances, skill was required in order to maintain a broad focus on significant themes. The ability to maintain focus was developed throughout the fieldwork activity and a clear improvement in the technique used became apparent. This is not suggesting however that the initial focus groups and interviews lacked focus, this possibility had been anticipated and early focus groups were regarded as being experimental in this respect. Interviews and focus groups were tape-recorded and notes were also taken as an aid in recording significant responses and additional points.

Although generic schedules were used, these were modified where appropriate. For instance this was done to reflect different categories of informant. Schedules used with non-residents and professional informants approached the study from a slightly different perspective. For instance, in the case where a local employer was interviewed, some questions would be modified to allow for exploration of issues relating to employment issues. In these cases, focus was also maintained on the primary issues such as perceptions of estates and opinions regarding the origins of neighbourhood stigma.

When interviewing residents, the order of investigation involved a fairly broad exploration of the perceptions and experiences of the neighbourhood its reputation and understanding of neighbourhood problems before focusing on more specific aspects of the investigation such as stigma and exclusion. For example, schedules used in interviews and focus groups with residents initiated responses with the rather broad question, 'What is it like living in Easthill / Westhill?' The intention was to gauge residents' general experiences, their own perceptions and evaluation of the estate. This approach also established essential information such as agreement upon understanding of the geographical area of the neighbourhood and residents feelings towards the area and its people.

As in the interviews, focus groups involved taking a broad approach towards

exploring informant's experiences and perceptions before focusing on more specific and novel issues. Although a generic schedule was used to direct the focus of discussion, groups were 'fluid' rather than constituting fixed responses to set questions, again, emphasising a flexible and informal approach. This strategy corresponded with the aim of providing the researcher with an overview or general 'feel' of the terrain under research and to use the themes that were identified as the basis for further, more in-depth exploration and discussion while maintaining a focus on the research questions. Additionally, this approach was carried out in order to avoid direct references to stigma and disadvantage at an early stage of contact with informants. This contributed to building up a positive rapport with informants. It was found that by introducing the broad issues first, this enabled a gradual progression to more problematic issues.

As explained earlier in the chapter, in many ways the initial focus groups were exploratory in as much as these formed the initial impression of the study in the early fieldwork stage. Significant themes raised were useful in refining the broad research questions into smaller, subsidiary points for more focused investigation in subsequent interviews. In this respect as well as supplying important information, focus groups provided a further function of 'piloting' the research questions for use in interviews.

The number of informants in each group ranged from 5 to 7 people. This number was found to be practical in terms of easy facilitation and in terms of offering a relaxed atmosphere conducive to obtaining personal accounts from respondents. For instance, groups of higher numbers of participants may have been more difficult to facilitate and maintain focus on the research questions. As was highlighted in the previous paragraphs, while the flow of discussion during focus groups took place 'naturally', maintaining focus required skill, particularly if the conversation strayed from the key issues. Likewise, a large group may have been intimidating for some informants with the result that there may have been some reluctant to participate and freely discuss their experiences. In addition to interviews and focus groups, further informal contact conversations and contact with informants provided useful knowledge that complimented the over-all data collection. A summary of informant groups and methods used is provided in Table 1.

Table1: Summary of informants

Informant	Category of informant	Means of contact	Primary aspect of research explored	Method of Data collection		
Residents	Resident activist	Identification via their participation in community group	Neighbourhood experiences Internal perceptions Stigma and exclusion	Face to face interview- Easthill:7, Westhill: 6	Focus group (1 group in each estate)	23
Residents	Resident Non-activist	Snowball	Neighbourhood experiences Internal perceptions Stigma and exclusion	Face to face interview Westhill: 5, Easthill: 6	Focus group (1 group in each estate)	22
Non-residents			External perceptions	Face to face interviews: 5	Focus groups (3 groups)	20
Non resident / former resident		Snowball	External/ internal perceptions Neighbourhood experiences Stigma and exclusion	Face to face interview		5
Employer / business **City wide**	Non-Resident, Professional/ institutional (Human resources managers)	Targeted Identification	Social/ Economic exclusion External perceptions	Face to face interview		4
Educational Institutions (School, further and higher education)	Non-resident, Professional/ Institutional	Targeted Snowball	Social/ Cultural exclusion External perceptions	Face to face interview		5
Utilities/ service staff	Non-resident Professional / institutional	Targeted Snowball	Service provision Economic / social exclusion External perceptions	Face to face interview		4
Letting agents	Non-resident Professional / institutional	Targeted	Service provision Economic / social exclusion External perceptions	Face to face interview		2

Estate agents	Non-resident Professional / institutional	Targeted	Service provision Economic / social exclusion External perceptions	Face to face interview		2
Employment officers	Non-resident Professional / institutional	Via Gatekeeper	Service provision Economic / social exclusion External perceptions	Face to face interview		2
Housing officials Local authority	Non-resident Professional / institutional	Via Gatekeeper	Service provision Economic / social exclusion External perceptions	Face to face interview		2
Housing officials Housing association	Non-resident Professional / institutional	Via gatekeeper	Service provision Economic / social exclusion External perceptions	Face to face interview		2
Community Workers	Non-resident Professional / institutional	Targeted Via gatekeeper And snowball	Neighbourhood experiences Stigma and exclusion External / internal perceptions	Face to face interview		5
Health worker	Non-resident Professional / institutional	Via gatekeeper	Service provision Economic / social exclusion External perceptions	Face to face interview		1
						98

Characteristics of informants

In keeping with the aims of a qualitative methodology, there was no statistical sampling technique employed in targeting informants. Rather, the emphasis was on gaining a deeper insight in relation to ordinary, every day explanations of neighbourhood stigma. I was aware that in order to achieve this objective, I would have to target and access informants who represented a broad range of perspectives and who had varying degrees of experience and knowledge of the neighbourhoods in

focus. Although the main focus of the research was upon residents' experiences of stigma, I was also aware that a balance between inside and outsider accounts would have to be made to establish whether any difference in perspective might exist between these groups. In this respect, it was also necessary to include potential alternative accounts; these included those living outside the case study locations as well as professionals with various levels of experience of the neighbourhoods.

For the purpose of handling fieldwork, informants were categorised into three broad groups, namely residents, non-residents and professionals. Within these groups, a further distinction was made in respect of resident activists and non-activists. The aim of this categorisation was also helpful in terms of contrasting perspectives between these groups, for instance, variations between perceptions from estate residents and informants from other parts of the city, composing affluent areas and other locations of similar socio-economic features. With this aim in mind, informants came from a range of backgrounds in terms of place and length of residence, housing tenure, and occupation. Informants represented both males and females within the age group 18 to mid 70s. In total, 98 informants were involved in the research. Out of this number, 36 took part in focus groups and 60 were interviewed (see Table 1). Many additional informal conversations with residents, former residents and non-residents provided a useful source of information that contributed to the over-all qualitative approach of the research.

Informants were accessed through various means and involved approaching key gatekeepers such as Social Inclusion Partnership workers, housing officials, local employers and community groups directly. In other instances, personal association with friends and former colleagues provided useful contacts. These informants generated important contacts with further sources and are discussed further in the following paragraphs. The activity of approaching gatekeepers was particularly beneficial in terms of accessing professional informants; this was necessary in respect of being granted official clearance as well as getting access to essential contacts with staff at various levels of neighbourhood involvement. This was the case in respect to Social Inclusion Partnership staff and neighbourhood activists. A further valuable aspect of this approach was evident in the co-operation and advice obtained from official personnel. This activity also generated a snowball approach that in turn

became a significant and valuable means of acquiring further contacts while remaining true to the original plan of accessing a wide range of informants from within and outside the areas. For instance, this was particularly evident in the case of community development staff and resident activists who were initially contacted and who subsequently provided details of contacts in other categories. Although the snowball approach was beneficial, it meant that further contacts made through existing informants had to be considered carefully as to value these would add to the study. For example, at some stages, the list of potential contacts was extensive. In this situation, the decision to pursue these was balanced between time constraints and whether these would maintain the strategy of accessing informants with a broad range of perspectives.

Residents

As important stakeholders within the case study locations, I anticipated that residents would express an interest and concern about their neighbourhoods and was aware of the potential for this group to generate valuable accounts of their day-to-day experience of residence in the neighbourhoods. These particular informants were regarded as being a main focus within the research in terms of providing essential data at 'grassroots' level, particularly in relation to the research objectives of establishing what neighbourhood stigma meant for them. Resident informants included both neighbourhood activists and non-activists. Activists were identified as such in terms of their role in various neighbourhood activities such as their active participation in housing association groups, residents groups, and neighbourhood forums. The distinction between these two broad groups was made in an attempt to establish whether perceptions and experiences differed between activists and non- activists. This was done with particular reference to the aim of investigating whether different groups or categories experienced stigma to varying extents. Access to neighbourhood activists was gained by directly approaching groups that already existed in the estates. As explained earlier in this chapter, contact with this group was done after being provided with clearance from senior neighbourhood development staff.

Non-activist residents were identified in terms of having no participation in organised

groups at a community level. This category was regarded as particularly important in terms of exploring residential experiences of stigma, particularly exclusionary aspects of this. For instance, I regarded non-involvement and participation in neighbourhood groups and activities as worthy of investigating, to explore the factors involved in and relationship to non / low participation / exclusion. Access to these residents was obtained through referral from activists and professionals such as housing association staff who provided contact with, clients, friends and neighbours. In addition, personal contact was made with some residents who in turn had friends and family living in the locations. Gaining access to residents was relatively fruitful in this respect and brought forward many relevant and interesting perspectives.

However, the non-activist group highlighted the practical issue of engaging informants in relation to focus groups. For instance, whereas activist involvement in focus groups took place after their regular scheduled meetings, non-activists had no such regular commitment. In this respect there was an initial concern whether this group would have an incentive to give up their time and participate in the focus groups. In the first instance, the objective was to arouse an interest in potential informants by explaining the nature of the research. Likewise, a positive rapport had been built up with many residents, which was beneficial. In most cases informants appeared to be interested in expressing their views regarding the research and the non-activist group was no exception to this. The greatest difficulty appeared to be encountered in organising groups at suitable times for informants who had various commitments. Ultimately however, this was achieved.

Non –residents

The primary aim of accessing non-residents was to establish 'outsiders' knowledge of the case study locations and to explore their perceptions and explanations for the neighbourhood's experiences of decline and reputation. In addition, it was also important to draw some potential comparisons between different perspectives existing within the outsider group as well as between residents and outsiders. Non-residents were accessed at their place of work as well as through my own personal contacts. Accessing both residents and non-resident category of informant proved to be an

important targeting strategy and findings illustrated a notable contrast between insiders and outsiders perceptions. Although not in every case, it was clear that non-residents held more negative understandings of the estates than residents did.

In terms of focus groups participation, non-resident informants were accessed at two local education institutions. From a practical perspective, accessing informants from this source allowed relatively easy contact with individuals representing different backgrounds including students, teaching and support employees such as admissions, clerical and office staff. This particular strategy also reduced time devoted to finding an alternative avenue for accessing this group of informants. For instance, informants accessed through this route represented a wide range of variables including, socio-economic background, age, gender, place of residence and knowledge of the case studies. Within this group however, student informants represented a slightly narrower age range than was accessed in other informants ranging approximately between 17 and 40 years. Students' courses of study ranged from National Certificate to degree level and were predominantly from social science disciplines. This limitation to one discipline was mainly derived from the way that access to the student group was achieved and was not considered to be a disadvantage in obtaining a range of perspectives on the topic.

Professionals

The professional category provided a distinct, institutional representation with various levels of experience and knowledge of the neighbourhoods. Again, the objective of targeting this broad group was to provide a potential comparison with resident's perspectives. The literature review had highlighted the role of officials in perpetuating neighbourhood stigma; it seemed appropriate to investigate this issue in my own research. It was also significant that after conducting initial focus groups with residents, professional informants such as housing officials and local employers were implicated by some residents as having a particular significant role to play in stigmatisation of residents. It became clear that further investigation of these issues would be required.

This informant category was accessed through gatekeepers as well as through direct contact requesting a meeting or interview. In some cases, professionals had direct involvement in the neighbourhoods for instance, neighbourhood development workers and housing officers and employment officials who were also important players in the process of regeneration. These informants were accessed initially through their membership of the Social Inclusion Partnership. Additionally, the 'professional'/ institutional perspective was represented by service providers and employers in the wider city who were accessed through direct contact as well through referral from other informants and friends.

3.5   Data analysis and interpretation

Transcripts of data obtained from the fieldwork were reviewed and themes were identified in terms of their significance to the research questions. Particular note was made of data that was novel or interesting. Within the main themes, subsidiary concepts were identified and the relationship between these and the research questions were examined. This activity proved to be difficult at times and the relationship between themes and concepts appeared complex and overlapping of themes occurred across different categories. However, broad categories were ultimately reduced to several major themes in which the data was handled and interpreted. This process was continuous and was initiated quickly after the interviews and focus groups were conducted. This was necessary while details were fresh in memory. The early review of data was also carried out in order to carry out some preliminary analysis of research findings.   Interview and focus group transcripts generated a substantial amount of data, from a practical basis; it was necessary to commence some analysis as soon as possible so that data was managed within time constraints.

The organisation of data involved cutting and pasting on word processing software, no specific qualitative data analysis software was used for this purpose. A large component of this stage of the research constituted a mental process, for instance, this involved identification of themes and examining the relationship between these as well as interpreting these in terms of how they illuminated the research. In this respect, the benefit of using qualitative data analysis software was regarded as being

limited. Also, the transcription and organisation of data had been initiated using a word processing programme; in light of this it seemed appropriate to integrate the handling of data using the same programme. For instance, familiarity with this technique was viewed as providing a logical continuity to the process. A further point was that learning a new software package was considered to be time consuming.

In conducting the fieldwork, a constant interplay between the gathering of data and its analysis was present where the initial ideas regarding the subject area and emergent themes involved constant interpretation. For instance, although the main research questions maintained a focus for the research, analysis of unfolding data also influenced the fieldwork's route. That is, emerging themes that were new or interesting modified the way in which further exploration was carried out. In this way, the direction of the research was subject to a degree of revision. This activity did not alter the study significantly, rather, this generally involved cases where informants raised issues that warranted further investigation, in these instances, the issues raised would influence the focus of further enquiry within a specific theme. This aspect of the research provided a more flexible approach to the topic under study. For instance, this corresponds to the method adopted in focus group and interview schedules where the adoption of an open-ended approach enabled broad, exploratory questions to be channelled into smaller areas of investigation.

3.6   Ethical considerations

An awareness of potential ethical issues was a consideration at the research planning stage and ethical clearance was granted from the university. Although no specific ethical problems were identified with the research design, it was necessary to consider the reality that ethical issues tend to be inherent characteristics of the social research process. As highlighted by Burgess (1984, pp185-208) the nature of conducting social research in itself may exert harmful effects on the social actors involved. During the fieldwork, disruption to informant's activities and daily routine was minimised. Likewise, the activity of entering into the private domain of informants remained dependent upon informants' choice to participate in the research. When conducting the fieldwork, every effort was made to prevent any breach of ethical standards. It was

useful to refer to the categorisation made by Diener and Crandall (in Bryman 2004, p509), for instance, who have placed ethical considerations under the headings of harm to participants, lack of informed consent, invasion of privacy and deception. In my own research, informant's consent was requested in every case. Participation in the research was voluntary and informants were reassured of confidentiality. Disclosure of the nature of research took place and gatekeepers and informants were provided with an introductory letter that outlined the research's objectives. In providing details of the fieldwork, the broad aims of the research were explained, although explicit references to stigma, disadvantage and social exclusion were consciously omitted from written material as far as possible. This was based on the premise that these negative connotations might infer negative attributes on informants. For instance, as evident in other investigations into neighbourhood stigma, the activity of conducting research may itself highlight locations and residents primarily in terms of their negative attributes, thereby potentially harming these areas and people.

This approach to studying stigma is evident in Gill's (1977) study of 'Luke Street' and in Lupton's (2003) more recent study of 'Poverty Street'. In both these studies, details of the exact locations of the research were made anonymous in a bid to prevent inadvertent stigmatisation of the areas. This issue became evident in early conversations and focus groups with residents in my own research. For instance, in some cases residents expressed their caution and their frustration at frequent references they believed were made to the estates' negative reputation in the wider city. This point further reinforced my decision not to name individuals who participated in the research and not to refer to the locations by name. Likewise, when interviewing residents, tact was employed when considering issues that might single out informants as being disadvantaged or excluded. For instance, this was regarded to be unhelpful and indeed, potentially harmful for informants. However, this activity raised a further issue, namely that the possibility existed that in omitting certain aspects of the research, the exact nature of the study may have been made less explicit to potential informants. However, the decision not to use negative terminology was regarded as being of more benefit to informants than would be the case if negative terminology were provided. This approach was in keeping with the objective of reducing the potential stigmatisation of informants. In terms of conducting my own

research, the need to maintain confidentiality was also a consideration in respect of informant's disclosing personal details such as their socio-economic background. For instance, socio-economic status is acknowledged as an important variable within the experience of disadvantage and exclusion, however, it was acknowledged that informants might be reluctant to provide details of their financial income. In light of this, no explicit financial details were requested other than informant's employment status, this data was requested in a sensitive way and was voluntary.

Confidentiality was maintained as far as possible in all aspects of the research. For instance, informants' identities were not disclosed in any written reference. This was also the case in notes and transcripts where full names were abbreviated and given codes. Likewise, place names were made anonymous. However, in practice, it was difficult to ensure a situation of total anonymity. For example, this was particularly the case in respect of the description of locations where potential identification of the neighbourhoods could result. The extent to which anonymity was extended was also determined by the practicality of the research, although this was also balanced by the desire to ensure the well being of informants. Ultimately, having an awareness of potential ethical issues was an important consideration of conducting the fieldwork. In general, care was taken to conduct the research in a way that informant's trust and co-operation was maintained in the research process.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided the rationale for the specific methodological approach used towards examining the chosen research area. It has also provided an outline of the various stages of the research process and explained these in terms of their contribution to the research aims and outcomes. A brief evaluation of the methodology illustrates the positive benefits of the general approach while acknowledging limitations of this. The following chapter provides an overview of the case study locations in respect to the socio-economic profiles of the two neighbourhoods. This is done primarily as a means of contextualising the neighbourhoods in a broader socio-economic sphere.

Chapter 4

The case studies: key features of the Easthill and Westhill estates

Introduction

This chapter provides a contextual background to the two case study neighbourhoods and provides an illustration of the main socio-economic characteristics of these locations. In the first section, indicators of disadvantage and exclusion are highlighted including household structure, car ownership, economic activity, tenure, health status and education attainment of residents. These features are considered in the context of socio-economic change that has taken place both in the wider city and nationally. The second section of the chapter provides an historical overview of the case studies and includes their development, decline and regeneration activity.

The bulk of statistical information referred to in this chapter is obtained from the Dundee City Council / General Register Office Scotland (GROS) Census data for 1991 and 2001. The Dundee City Council published this information in 1999 and 2004 respectively. The council wards of 'Easthill' and 'Westhill' correspond closely with the geographical neighbourhood areas. It is recognised that the council ward boundaries were changed in the mid 1990s, this factor has been taken into account and this data remains the most useful and consistent source of information regarding the estates. The Social Inclusion Partnerships (SIPs) have also produced data illustrating the socio-economic features of the neighbourhoods however each SIP draws upon a range of different sources of data. This information is useful for providing insight into individual neighbourhoods although no direct comparison can be made between the neighbourhoods located in each SIP.

4.1 The city of Dundee

Dundee is the fourth largest of Scotland's cities and has a population of 143,090 (Dundee City Council, 2004). The city is situated on the north bank of the Tay estuary and is bordered with the rural areas of Angus to the north, Perth & Kinross to the west and the region of Fife, across the river Tay to the south. Dundee is approximately 50 miles north of Edinburgh, 80 miles north east of Glasgow and 60 Miles south of Aberdeen.

A significant feature of the city can be seen in the population loss that has taken place in recent years. For instance between 1991 and 2003 the city experienced a reduction of 8.0% of its population, that is 12,460 people. In the period 2002/03 a loss of 1,090 people took place. A point of potential concern is evident in the projected population loss of the city which is expected to decline from the 2004 figure of 143,090 to 123,506 by 2018, this being mainly of those in the economically active, 0-44 age group. Over the same period, the proportion of those over 65 years of age is expected to increase from current 17.9 to 21% this is higher than the Scottish average of 20%. Compared to other Scottish cities, the projected population loss is steepest in Dundee, with Edinburgh representing the only city with an increase (Dundee City Council 2004, p11).

Economic and social change

The impact of global economic forces at a city level and in locations within cities is a phenomenon that has been increasingly highlighted in recent years (Sassen, 2001). Although some debate exists as to the relative impact of global forces, particularly in terms of an increased differentiation and diversity within cities that makes understanding the relationship cities share with wider, economic forces more complex (Savage et al, 2003, p42). However, it is generally acknowledged that economic restructuring taking place on a global scale has exerted significant change at both national and local level. For instance, as Roberts (2001, p57) points out, in the latter years of the twentieth century, economic recession and a process of de-

industrialisation has taken place. A subsequent shift from manufacturing to service industry employment has created non-traditional work patterns involving a growth in part-time temporary, precarious employment as well as increasing unemployment. Although this change is regarded as having taken place in many industrialised nations, it has exerted an uneven impact, ultimately creating an increased socio-economic polarisation between income groups and geographical locations (Pacione, 1998, p10).

The process of economic decline has made a significant impact upon the physical and social fabric of many Britain's neighbourhoods. This has made many urban areas unpopular, generating negative reputations. This has been further exacerbated by changes in housing policy that has led to a process of tenure residualisation. As a result, there has been increased concentration of households of lower socio-economic status and disadvantage in specific locations (Glennerster et al 1999). The effects of economic decline and changes in housing became increasingly evident by the 1980s where the situation intensified (Lee and Murie, 1997). This spatialisation of disadvantage is evident in Dundee where the effects of economic recession have been experienced in an acute way. In addition to being identified as one of the poorest regions in the United Kingdom, in the period 1976-1981 manufacturing job losses in the Tayside region were amongst the highest in Scotland (Townsend, 1983, p92). This is also highlighted in the region's designation as an Enterprise Zone and special development area in the 1980's (Whatley et al 1998).

Despite a higher level of manufacturing being present in Dundee than is the case at a national level, a clear shift to service sector employment has taken place. As Doherty (1992, p24) points out, in the period 1970/71, 47% of Dundee's workforce was employed in manufacturing and 43% in the service industry. In 2002, employment in manufacturing was 13% in Dundee compared to 9.1 in Aberdeen, 5.5 in Edinburgh and 7.2 in Glasgow. The figure for Scotland was 12.7 and 14.2 for Britain. (Annual Business Inquiry 2002, cited in Dundee City Council, 2004, p20). In 2002, service sector employment in Dundee was 60 per cent, whereas in 1991 this was 43%. For example, employment in public administration, education and health constituted 35.9% of the cities' workforce. This is compared to a level of 26.8% in Scotland and 24.3% in Britain. Similarly, employment in distribution, hotels and restaurants was 25.6% compared to 24% in Scotland and the British figure of 24.6%. Levels of

employment in this sector remain higher in Dundee than in Scotland's other cities, for instance, 21% in both Aberdeen and Edinburgh and 22% in Glasgow. (Annual Business Inquiry 2002, Dundee City Council, 2004, p20). A negative consequence of this change is evident in the way that the service sector is generally associated with part-time, temporary work with lower pay (Roberts 2001).

Although reflecting changes that have occurred in many other industrial urban areas in Western Europe where the loss of manufacturing has taken place, Dundee's experience of economic change has been intensive. The local manifestation of this wider change is evident in many of the city's neighbourhoods where decline, low-income and higher than average levels of unemployment can be found. Dundee has historically been dominated by a manufacturing economy and a high dependency upon social housing. These factors have made the city more vulnerable to the effects of economic change and subsequently experienced prolonged socio-economic and physical decline over a period of thirty years. The contemporary situation of Dundee illustrates the process of economic decline. In Dundee for instance, 29 per-cent of the city's population live in data zones that are among the most deprived in Scotland. That is, out of 6,505 data zones in Scotland, 976 are in the most deprived 15% with 51 of these zones being found in Dundee. This figure is based on the Scottish Index of Deprivation 2004 that identifies data zones that correspond to geographical areas. These include indicators of income; employment; health; education, skills and training; geographic access and communication; and housing (Dundee City Council 2004. p26). An indication of comparative figures between Scottish local authorities is given in Table 2.

Table 2: Percentage of Local Authority population in the 15% most deprived Data Zones in Scotland

Local Authority	Percentage	Local Authority	Percentage
Glasgow	53	Stirling	5
Inverclyde	33	Dumfries and Galloway	5
Dundee City	28	East Renfrewshire	5
West Dunbartonshire	27	West Lothian	5
North Lanarkshire	25	Highland	3
East Ayrshire	19	East Dumbartonshire	3
Renfrewshire	19	Angus	2
North Ayrshire	19	Perth and Kinross	2
South Lanarkshire	17	Scottish Borders	2
Clackmannanshire	15	Midlothian	1
Edinburgh City	11	Aberdeenshire	1
South Ayrshire	8	East Lothian	0
Fife	7	Eilean Siar	0
Falkirk	7	Moray	0
Argyll and Bute	7	Orkney Islands	0
Aberdeen City	6	Shetland Islands	0

(Dundee City Council, 2004)

4.2 Socio-economic characteristics of Dundee and the case study neighbourhoods

Household income

An important indicator of Dundee's socio-economic status can be seen in the lower than average gross weekly full time earnings present in the city compared to other Scottish cities. In 2002 the average gross weekly earnings of full-time employees was £436.8 in Dundee, this was the same as the Scottish figure however, this can be compared with £524.7 in Aberdeen, £ 467.0 in Edinburgh and £ 437.9 in Glasgow. Likewise, the average annual gross household income in Dundee is £22,800 this being lower than the Scottish figure of £26,900 and £29,400 in Britain. As shown in Table 4, a significant point is evident in the 20% of households in Dundee that have an annual income of £10,000 or under compared with 16% in Scotland and 14% in Britain.

Table 3: Average gross weekly earnings by city (Full time employees) 2003

	Males (£)	Females (£)	Persons (£)
Dundee	428.4	376.0	436.8
Aberdeen	591.4	417.7	524.7
Edinburgh	509.0	409.2	467.0
Glasgow	489.1	374.7	437.9
Scotland	483.7	372.4	436.8
Great Britain	525.0	396.0	475.8

(Dundee City Council, 2004)

Table 4: Average gross annual income in Dundee showing national comparison

	Mean Income	0-10k	10-20k	20-30k	30-40k	40-50k	50k+
Dundee	£22,800	20.9%	32.3%	22.4%	11.8%	5.9%	6.7%
Scotland	£26,900	16.5%	27.7%	22.6%	14.1%	8.1%	6.7%
G Britain	£29,400	14.1%	25.2%	22.5%	15.2%	9.3%	13.8%

(Source: Dundee City Council, 2004)

Table 5: Social grade of residents in Easthill and Westhill

	Easthill	Westhill	Dundee	Scotland
Social grade	%	%	%	%
AB Professional / Middle manager	8	10	15	19
C1 Other non-manual	19	17	25	27
C2 Skilled manual	13	12	12	15
D Semi/unskilled manual	28	26	21	17

(Dundee City Council / GROS 2001)

It is clear from 2001 census data that both case study neighbourhoods have a greater proportion of residents from semi/unskilled background than the Dundee and Scottish level. This was 28% in Easthill and 26% in Westhill compared with 21% in Dundee and 17% in Scotland. Conversely, there is a far smaller proportion of residents from Professional / Middle manager social grading living in the case study neighbourhoods than in Dundee and Scotland. For example, 8% in Easthill and 10% in Westhill compared with 15% in Dundee and 19% in Scotland.

Table 6: Economic Activity in the case study neighbourhoods

	Westhill	Easthill	Dundee	Scotland
Number of persons age 16-74	2568	2595	108,107	3,731,079
(Percentage based on all persons aged 16-74) Working Unemployed Retired Student	% 47 8 16 3	% 49 10 15 3	% 50 5 15 8	% 58 4 14 4

(Dundee City Council/GROS 2001)

As highlighted in Table 6 both case study estates have significantly higher levels of unemployment than in Dundee and Scotland. In 2001 this was 8% in Westfield and 10% in Easthill compared to 5% in Dundee and 4% in Scotland.

Housing tenure

It is interesting to note that a higher proportion of people in Dundee rent their homes from the local authority or other social landlords. As illustrated in Table 5 in 2001 32% of Dundee residents rented from the local authority and other social landlords compared with 28% in Scotland. Significantly higher levels of local authority and social rented housing are present in Easthill and Westhill, for example in 2001 this was 54% and 58% respectively. Conversely, a lower level of owner-occupation can be found in the city than in Scotland as a whole. In 2001 this figure was 54% in Dundee compared with the Scottish figure of 63%. A lower proportion of owner occupation can be found in both case study neighbourhoods when compared with Dundee and Scotland. In 2001 this represented 36% in Easthill and 34% in Westhill. However, these figures represent a significant rise from the 1991 figure of 14% and 15% respectively. This reduction in the level of social housing is a reflection of regeneration measures that has involved the introduction of a greater tenure mix to both neighbourhoods. An interesting feature is evident in the higher proportion of flatted properties that can be found in both neighbourhoods. In 2001 this was 59% in Westhill compared to 53% in Easthill which was just below the Dundee figure of 54% but higher than the national figure of 36%. This can be compared with 1991 when the level of flatted properties was 78% in Westhill and 85% in Easthill. This reduction is

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largely a consequence of demolition that has taken place. In Westhill for example, this involved several high-rise blocks of flats being removed prior to the current regeneration activity.

Household structure

In 2001 there were more lone parent households found in both case study neighbourhoods than in Dundee. This was 13% in both neighbourhoods compared with 9% in Dundee and 7% in Scotland. Interestingly, this illustrates an increase from 1991 where the proportion of single parent households was 7% in both neighbourhoods. Lower levels of car ownership can also be found in both estates than in Dundee and Scotland. In 2001, 55% of households in Westhill had no car while in Easthill this figure was 54%. This can be compared with 45% in Dundee and 34% in Scotland in the same period. However, in both case studies there is a marked reduction in the level of households with no car. For example, in 1991 the level of car ownership was 67% in Westhill and 75% in Easthill. In Dundee, the proportion of households with no car decreased from 57% in 1991 to 45% in 2001.

Table 7: Tenure and household structure in the case studies

	Westhill		Easthill		Dundee		Scotland	
Total household	1991	2001	1991	2001	1991	2001	1991	2001
spaces	3665	1865	2238	1823	65282	70179		2,308,939
Tenure	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Owner occupied	15	34	14	36	43	54	*	63
Local authority	79	47	81	43	42	24	*	22
Other social								
rented	4	11	3	11	9	8	*	6
Private rented	1	2	1	3	7	10	*	6
Other	*	6	*	6	*	5	*	5
Dwelling type								
Flat	78	59	85	53	60	54	*	36
Detached	3.5	5	0.4	5	*	10	*	20
Semi detached	14	27	1.5	26	*	24	*	23
Terraced	4	9	13	15	*	11	*	20

Household structure								
Lone parent	7	13	7	13	*	9	*	7
Pensioner only	*	23	*	17	*	25	*	23
Dependent child	*	26	*	30	*	23	*	26
2 adults, no children	*	12	*	12	*	14	*	16
No car	67	55	75	54	57	45	*	34
1 car	*	37	*	36	*	41	*	43

(Dundee City Council / GROS) (* No data available)

Education attainment

In terms of educational attainment, Easthill illustrates a lower level of secondary pupils gaining standard grade and higher grades than is the case in Dundee as a whole. In 2002/03, 39% of pupils in Easthill gained Standard Grades and 9% Higher Grades (although no data is available to illustrate change). This can be compared with the achievement rates in Dundee where 63% gained Standard Grades and 29% higher. The figures for Scotland were 76% and 39% respectively. These figures are lower than that of Dundee and other schools serving the Social Inclusion Partnership 2 area (Monitoring and Evaluation Unit, SIP2 Area Profile, 2003, p6). Although Higher-Grade attainment in Westhill is evidently lower than in Dundee and Scotland, that is 18% compared with 29% and 39%, more pupils attained Standard Grades than in Dundee (65%) as a whole. However this was still lower than the Scottish figure of 76%. Westhill's levels of secondary school attainment are higher than Easthill in respect to both Higher Grade and Standard Grade, that is 65% and 18% compared to 39% and 9%. Table 6 provides details.

Table 8: Secondary school attainment in the case studies showing comparison with Dundee and Scotland (2002/2003)

	Easthill	Westhill	Dundee	Scotland
Standard-Grade (%)	39	65	63	76
Higher-Grade (%)	9	18	29	39

(SIP Monitoring and Evaluation Unit, 2003)

Health

Further indicators of disadvantage can be seen in respect to health status of residents in both neighbourhoods. As can be seen in Table 8, Easthill and Westhill have slightly higher levels of households with long-term illness, that is, 41 % in Easthill and 45% in Westhill compared with 38% in Dundee and 36% in Scotland. Similarly, both estates have higher levels of those who are permanently sick, for example, 13 % in Westhill and 12% in Easthill. This is comparable with 5% in Dundee and 7% in Scotland.

Table 9: Health status of residents in case study estates

	Easthill (%)	Westhill (%)	Dundee (%)	Scotland (%)
Permanently sick	12	13	5	7
Long-term illness	41	45	38	36

(Dundee City Council, 2003 p3)

Crime

In terms of recorded crimes, in Easthill, a reduction of 47% is evident over the period 1996-2002, that is, a shift from 1275 to 670 cases. (Monitoring and Evaluation Unit, SIP2 Area Profile 2003, p10). As in the Easthill estate, Westhill illustrates a reduction in recorded crime over the period 1996-2002. For example, recorded crimes are reported as having fallen from 555 cases to 189 cases in Westhill, that is, a reduction of 66%, although this is regarded to be a consequence of the loss of population in the estate. It is significant that in a wider context, crime figures in Dundee have also shown a reduction over the same period, for instance dropping from 24140 cases to 16437 cases, representing a reduction of 32% (SIP Monitoring and Evaluation Unit, 2003 p9).

4.3 History and development of the Easthill and Westhill estates

The majority of Dundee's local authority estates have their origins in the climate of housing expansion that took place post Second World War. For instance, the Housing Act of 1950 initiated a significant period of housing development which continued into the next decade, this representing the most prolific period of local authority building in Dundee's history (Doherty, 1992, p30). In conjunction with demolition programmes generated from the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act, several city centre locations containing unfit housing were identified as Comprehensive Development Areas (CDA). Subsequently, plans were drawn up in respect to these locations with the aim of carrying out demolition and a displacement of population to newly developed housing estates in the city and around its periphery.

The Easthill estate

The Easthill estate was built between 1966 and 1975 on a green field site situated approximately 3.5 miles from the city centre of Dundee. The estate was developed by the Dundee Corporation as a potential solution to long term housing shortage and was originally planned as a 'self sufficient suburb' with a population of 12000 (Easthill Partnership, 1992). The estate was built in two distinct phases; building in the south of the estate took place between 1966-75 and completion of the north between 1971 and 1972. In 2001 the population of Easthill was 3605. In terms of ethnicity, 99% of the population was white (GROS / Dundee City Council 2003).

Tenure in Easthill was originally predominantly local authority rent, although in recent years, a far broader mix of housing became represented in the estate, this particularly being the case since the 1980s where increasing the tenure mix was an active strategy in the estate's regeneration and renewal. For instance, in 1988 the estate had 4750 households, 4405 which were local authority rent, 24 housing association and 79 privately owned (New Life for Urban Scotland 1988). From data obtained from the 2001 census, local authority housing represented 43% of

households, 36% of housing was owner-occupied and 11% of households were rented from housing associations (GROS/ Dundee City Council 2003).

Easthill has long been associated with a problematic reputation; this appears to have emerged within a few years of the estate's development. The poor reputation can be identified with a number of inter-linked factors that have combined to produce specific features in the location. Physical problems attributed to the built environment together with location and poor infrastructure made some areas of the estate unpopular. Subsequent physical and social decline and a concentration of disadvantaged households appear to have exacerbated the estate's problems and contributed towards the negative reputation of the area. For instance, problems have been attributable to poor design associated with industrialised methods of construction. This is evident in the deck access blocks that became associated with problems of cold and dampness, ultimately contributing to the 'difficult to let' status of this particular housing in the estate. These problems have been tackled progressively, with modifications being carried out to include pitched roofs, new heating systems and windows as well as large-scale demolition of areas consisting mainly of poor designed blocks.

In addition, problems emerged as a consequence of the estate being built over a large expanse of open ground and being located a considerable distance from the city centre. The physical layout of the estate was also problematic in terms of the large expanse of open area that divided the two main phases of the estate. This area covered a considerable distance and was only accessible by foot with no road access. This was mainly a result of the original plan to keep residents and traffic separate ('Easthill' Partnership, 1988, p13). However, the lack of defensible space became problematic with disputed responsibility for maintaining the area, additionally, the estate's location reinforced the neighbourhood's isolation from the city. Limited social infrastructure also appears to have been a long-term issue for many residents. This issue is evident in surveys conducted in 1989 and 1984 where a majority of residents chose to shop elsewhere in city citing lack of choice and higher cost in local retail outlets as their reason (CRU, 1995, p68).

These combined issues have tended to attract media attention over the years, with the estate having experienced a history of particularly negative media coverage highlighting the estate's disadvantage. This is particularly evident in the case of local press where over the last 30 years the estate has frequently appeared in articles that have reinforced this location as a problem estate. Recent media coverage in September 2002 concerned the estate's reportedly high level of child poverty and generated a wave of negative publicity for the neighbourhood involving media coverage on national press and radio.

Easthill has been subject to regeneration and renewal activity for over 20 years. Initial intervention from the local authority to rejuvenate the area involved various activities aimed at tackling employment and carrying out physical improvements. The local authority's activities became integrated with the government's white paper in the New Life for Urban Scotland initiative in 1988. More recently, regeneration in Easthill was conducted through the Dundee Social Inclusion Partnership 2 (SIP2) that was initiated in 1996 after the New Life strategy came to an end. This was the situation when the research was conducted over 2002-03. SIP 2 composed several fragmented, locations spread over the city being targeted on the basis of being within the worst 10% of enumeration districts in Scotland (based on the 1991 census). Further discussion of regeneration in Dundee is provided later in the current chapter.

The Westhill estate

The Westhill estate is located on the Western periphery of the city of Dundee, approximately 3.5 miles from the city centre. Westhill's development took place over the period 1965-1974 and was planned as a single-tenure, local authority estate with high-density housing. Housing type was predominantly low-rise flats with some deck-access maisonettes and several high-rise blocks. Widespread demolition of all existing housing stock and transfer of ownership to a housing association is currently underway. This activity has exerted an obvious change to the original profile of the estate in respect of increasing tenure and social mix as well as in terms of environmental improvements.

In 2001 the population of Westhill was 2134. In terms of ethnicity, 99% of households are classified as white (GRO Dundee City Council 2003). Population change in Westhill shows a decrease of 65% since 1991. This represents a greater loss than is evident in Dundee and Scotland over the same period, that is 3% and 1% respectively. However, the estate's population loss is primarily attributed to regeneration activities that have involved demolition. For instance, a 60% decline in the population over the period 1991- 2001 has been attributed to this activity alone (SIP Monitoring & Evaluation Unit, 2003 p1).

At the time of the fieldwork being conducted in 2002-03, the regeneration of Westhill was carried out within the remit of the Social Inclusion Partnership 1 (SIP1), which represented the geographical focus for regeneration in Dundee. Formerly a Priority Partnership Area, Westhill's current regeneration programme was commenced in 2000 and is planned for completion by 2007. Prior to current regeneration activities, Westhill experienced physical and socio-economic decline over a two-decade period. For instance, the loss of local employment in the 1970s and 1980s appears to have had a negative impact on the area and contributed to a growing concentration of low-income households in Westhill. This situation became intensified through the local authority allocation procedures that involved housing problem tenants in areas of low demand. In these circumstances, some areas of the estate in many respects became last-resort housing for those with no choice. Vandalism of empty residential and commercial properties exacerbated the physical decline of the environment that increased the unpopularity of some areas, this particularly being the case in respects to several high-rise blocks and some low-rise properties that were regarded locally as problem areas within the estate. The general decline of the estate has contributed to Westhill's poor reputation within the city.

In terms of Westhill's infrastructure, limited provision of retail and leisure facilities has been highlighted as a source of residents concern in recent years. This is associated with a decline in the provision of local services over the last two decades and is inter-linked with the general decline of the estate. Vandals targeted empty commercial properties; this contributed to the poor physical appearance of the area. Ultimately, the remaining shops in the small shopping centre closed down and the remaining buildings were demolished. This has resulted in the loss of post office

facilities, laundrette and grocers shops. Existing services in Westhill include two grocers shops; a hairdressers; church; health centre; primary school; park / play area; library and neighbourhood centre, in addition a supermarket is situated within walking distance. The loss of some facilities however has been balanced by improvements made under the current regeneration of the area. This is the case in respect of a new road that has been created allowing vehicular access through the centre of the estate and recent introduction of new bus routes to nearby retail-park. In addition, a new shopping centre is planned in the centre of Westhill. Improvements to the physical appearance of the estate are also evident in the extensive landscaping that has been carried out within the neighbourhood. However, house construction and reconfiguration of street layout has also resulted in the reduction of green, open space.

Regeneration and renewal

Prior to the first large-scale regeneration approach initiated by the 1988 white paper 'New Life for Urban Scotland,' regeneration in Dundee was delivered through relatively small-scale activity by the local authority. Although a significant programme was initiated in Easthill in 1979, this involved the Dundee District Council improving 500 houses and by 1984 substantial redevelopment was underway. In Easthill, this involved demolition and the introduction of an increased tenure mix (Easthill Partnership 1988, p3).

In 1988 The New Life for Urban Scotland was initiated and focused on four Scottish estates. As well as Dundee, locations in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Paisley were targeted. In Dundee, the New Life for Urban Scotland strategy took place under the 'Easthill' Partnership and was carried out over the period 1988 - 1995. This involved a partnership between the former Tayside Regional and Dundee District Councils; The Scottish Development Agency; Scottish Special Housing Association; Dundee Enterprise Trust and The Department of Employment. The focus of this approach was broad and its objectives came under the areas of housing, environment, employment, education and health. A significant aim of this approach was aimed at increasing tenure diversity partly through encouragement of home ownership as well as the sale and transfer of local authority housing stock (Begg 1996). The final evaluation of the

partnership highlights the success of improvements carried out to the physical, social and economic condition of the estate (CRU 1995).

In recent years the evolution of area regeneration in Dundee has reflected the wider Scottish approach. By the late 1990s the geographical targeting of areas based on the identification of need was evident. This approach can be seen in the designation of Priority Partnership Areas that involved partnership between local government, private and voluntary sectors. The election of New Labour in 1997 saw a continued emphasis on the targeting of areas as well as the partnership between agencies, although a new emphasis is evident in the concept of social exclusion. In 1998, geographic and thematically focused Social Inclusion Partnerships were initiated with the aim of building upon the strengths of the Priority Partnership Areas but with an increased focus on promoting Social Inclusion and the prevention of social exclusion from developing.

In Dundee, two broad priority areas were identified and designated as SIP 1 and SIP 2. SIP 1 composes an archipelago of five neighbourhoods and includes the Westhill estate. SIP 2 represents a disparate spread of areas that includes enumeration districts within the worst 10% across the city but not including the SIP 1 area. Regeneration activity in Easthill took place under the remit of Dundee SIP 2 (School of Regional and Town Planning, Dundee University, 2000). SIP 2 involved several projects throughout the city across a range of themes including Employment and Training, Housing, Health and Education. On its completion in 2001, the impact of SIP 2 was regarded as having been effective in terms of addressing issues of stability and economic prosperity (Geddes Centre for Planning Research, 2001 p55). However, it was also acknowledged that success has been partial and uneven progress had been made, particularly in respect of empowering and engaging the communities involved (Geddes Centre for Planning Research, November 2001). Government funding for the Social Inclusion Partnerships was replaced in 2004 and now involves funding through Communities Scotland to Community Planning Partnerships. These are based on the most deprived 15 per-cent of zones in a partnership area and are established from data obtained from the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004 (Dundee City Council, 2004).

Chapter 4 Conclusions

The profiles present the two case studies as places of disadvantage. This is evident in terms of the proportion of those from semi/unskilled manual social grading, unemployed, single parent households, low levels of car ownership and low educational attainment all of which are higher than the city and national average. These features are an expression of the economic, physical and social decline that has impacted on the estates. There is little doubt that the history of decline in the estates is closely tied with wider economic and political change. The impact of economic restructuring on Dundee has been harmful in terms of the city's dependency on manufacturing and although the service sector now dominates, Dundee has experienced trouble recovering from the loss of manufacturing upon which the city was dependent. The city's unemployment levels remain higher than the national average and the level of dependency upon social housing is second only to that of Glasgow. A further issue is evident in the continued population loss of those of working age that has taken place in Dundee.

Both Easthill and Westhill mirror these circumstances and in many instances display greater disparity with the cities socio-economic situation and have experienced loss of social infrastructure, higher levels of unemployment and population loss. The estates decline has contributed to their poor reputation. However, regeneration activity has exerted a positive influence in both neighbourhoods. Improvements in employment opportunities and in the provision of better quality housing and infrastructure are evident. Both estates have a far greater socio-economic mix than in the past. It is clear that the two estates remain in a process of transition and the full impact of regeneration may not be established for some years. The following chapters provide further insight into these issues and the focus is on how decline, change and poor reputation is experienced by those with a stake in the Easthill and Westhill neighbourhoods.

Chapter 5

Research findings 1: Neighbourhood experiences in the Easthill and Westhill estates

Introduction

As highlighted in Chapter Three, the research questions identified the broad objective of clarifying the processes involved in the creation of 'problem' neighbourhoods and the subsequent labelling of their residents as 'problem' people. The starting point for this examination was to understand where the issue of stigma stands in relation to other neighbourhood problems. From carrying out the literature review, it was evident that there was a need to clarify this aspect of the process of neighbourhood labelling and stigma. For instance, as outlined in Chapter One, neighbourhood stigma was portrayed as being intricately linked with neighbourhood decline. However explanations of the relationship these neighbourhood issues have with the predisposition of stigma are generally inadequate. Additionally, the question of whether stigma necessarily results from the experience of neighbourhood decline is not entirely clear within existing understanding of neighbourhood stigma. A further point for exploration is the relationship between poor neighbourhood image, and residents' neighbourhood attachment and what this means for neighbourhood stability. For example, it was important to establish the extent that residents conveyed a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood and the ways in which informants explained change and how they responded to this. Likewise, the question of whether the exclusion of residents from social activity results from their low attachment and whether this is a consequence of poor neighbourhood image was an important area of investigation.

In order to clarify these issues, it was necessary to begin with an exploration of the broad neighbourhood experiences conveyed by residents and professional informants. That is, how residents felt about their neighbourhood; the issues that informants regarded as problematic in the estate as well as the explanations that were provided for the presence of problems and decline. As well as exploring these areas of

investigation, the issues raised provided a platform from which to examine further points, leading on to a more specific scrutiny of stigma.

Rather than lead focus groups and interviews with an emphasis on the estate's problems and decline, discussion was initially directed towards an open exploration of the broad contours of the neighbourhood. After this, specific issues related to reputation, stigma and exclusion became the key focus (These issues are developed in the following chapter). Focus groups and interviews with started with the open questions:

What is it like living here? and *What are the good points about living in Easthill / Westhill?*

These broad introductory questions led to a large number of issues being raised. The main themes that are explored in this chapter are organised under the headings of neighbourhood attachment and stability; awareness and experience of neighbourhood problems; neighbourhood decline, regeneration and change. These themes obviously merge at points and this is reflected in how the data is handled in this current chapter.

5.1 Neighbourhood attachment and stability

In exploring the concept of neighbourhood attachment and belonging, it was anticipated that a clearer understanding of the degree to which residents felt common or shared experiences with other residents would be indicated. In addition, the extent to which this formed the basis for stability and cohesion in these locations would be made clearer. In considering the issue of attachment, it was also important to relate this to the key focus of investigating how stigma operated in the neighbourhoods. A primary aim was to explore the relationship that existed between resident's feelings of attachment to their neighbourhood and the area's reputation. That is, one of the main objectives of the research was to establish the extent to which residents regarded the poor reputation of the neighbourhoods as constituting a barrier to cohesion and stability and the ways that this was expressed in the neighbourhoods. It was necessary

to establish whether residents' feelings of lack of confidence in the neighbourhood resulted from the stigma of living in the neighbourhoods and the role played by additional factors in generating feelings of insecurity such as the presence of problems in the estates. However, this issue is discussed in greater detail in chapter five. For the purpose of exploring the theme of residential experiences, an indication of attachment was gauged in the following ways: residents expressing positive or negative feelings about their neighbourhood; their desire to either remain or to move out of the area; the existence of informal local support networks such as friends and family and resident's level of activism within their neighbourhood.

Identification with neighbourhood

From the data gathered, although a minority of residents conveyed negative feelings about their neighbourhood, this was not a finding that that was raised much in residents' accounts. Most residents who were interviewed did appear to have a general sense of belonging to the estates. This sentiment was also found in focus groups where positive remarks about the general quality of life and feelings of pride in the neighbourhood were conveyed. Further, many residents expressed a desire to remain in the area. This type of positive identification was evident in both neighbourhoods and was frequently the case for long term residents, irrespective of tenure and age:

> *'It's (Westhill) a good place to live, I'm happy here. I've seen changes in the time I've been here, not always for the better, but I still wouldn't move, it would take a lot for me to leave* (Male, 60s, Long term resident, Housing Association, Westhill).

As one informant pointed out, residence in Easthill held specific qualities that appeared to be desirable for some residents:

> '…its got a lot going for it, its really bonnie up here, we're right next to the country side, we can take the dog for a walk no bother '…'It's a lot better than

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some people would have you believe' *(Retired Male 50s, Long term Local Authority Tenant, Easthill)*

An alternative perspective was also evident, although this was more of the exception than the rule. This view was characterised in the statement of one Easthill resident whose experience of the estate was less positive. This particular resident expressed a desire to leave the neighbourhood:

'Easthill's a dump... if I had half the chance I would be out like a shot'. (Female, middle-aged, Local Authority Tenant)

A substantial consensus existed in terms of what constituted the geographical area of the neighbourhoods and most informants stated that they regarded the estate as a whole as their place of residence. However, while some residents related to a single neighbourhood identity, distinct smaller locations tended also to have resonance with residents who identified with smaller, sub locations in both estates. This local identification was based on streets, groups of housing units and larger areas of the estates and was often reinforced through activity within formal residents associations as well as reputation of different areas. An interesting feature was that kinship networks appeared to exist estate-wide rather than in the immediate vicinity of residents' homes. The research found that the existence of kinship networks was not a significant factor involved in residents' identification with the immediate vicinity.

Diversity and social fragmentation

Informants explained that in both estates, in respect of variables such as socio-economic background and tenure, that a broad social mix was evident. This was more the case in Easthill where increasing tenure diversity had been an active strategy since the late 1980s. However, this process had seemed to mark off areas of the estate more obviously and was based upon the desirability of location, housing type and tenure. This demarcation existed prior to regeneration although the distinction was generally based upon types of housing and higher levels of low demand locations rather than tenure.

This diversity as expressed via tenure mix, socio-economic composition and neighbourhood experience tended to contradict the notion held by some non-residents that the estates were homogenous. Informants acknowledged that both areas were far more diverse than they had been previously. However, this issue was responded to with mixed feelings. That is, while tenure and social mix had become wider and was welcomed, in some quarters the concern that a loss of 'community spirit' and social fragmentation had taken place was also expressed.

One interesting aspect of this issue can be seen in the belief of some residents that diversification reinforced social difference between the areas and people living in the neighbourhood. In many ways this accentuated the polarisation between locations perceived by residents as 'good areas' and 'bad areas'. For example, this comparison could be made where owner-occupier households were distinguishable from rented by architectural features such as the addition of new doors and windows to owner-occupier homes. Likewise, several smaller defined areas of new housing had been developed in various locations in Easthill adding to the 'patchwork quilt' analogy that was offered by one Neighbourhood Development Worker. In addition, these new developments in some instances had expanded beyond previous geographical confines of what had been known as Easthill to merge at points with neighbouring estates. This physical reconfiguration of the estate had added to the social fragmentation that was believed to have taken place in Easthill. The distinct and individual identities that existed in Easthill may also have been partly a legacy of a long-standing difference between two parts of the estate that corresponded to two distinct phases of development. One of these was regarded historically by residents as a being a 'bad area' and was characterised with unpopular blocks of low-rise flatted properties. This location had become difficult to let and increasingly housed lower socio-economic households. There were also many empty properties in this location, some of which had been targeted by vandals adding to their unpopularity and decline.

Continuing the focus on Easthill, the perceived fragmentation of the estate was also reflected in the existence of several different tenant and resident groups. Although attached to an 'umbrella' group, each smaller group had its own identity based on location, these tended to serve individual groups priorities and appeared to be

concerned with activities in the immediate location rather than the estate as a whole. Residents' identification with their neighbourhood was also linked closely to the renewal and development of the area. This was illustrated by one Neighbourhood Development Worker in Easthill who considered regeneration as having played a central role in the fragmentation of the community:

> *'If you asked a local person about Easthill, they would probably ask you where you mean by Easthill. Twenty years ago, everyone here would say that Easthill was seen more by locals as a whole, single place...' 'The regeneration has definitely changed how people see the place. I would say that its much more of a patchwork quilt as far as the different areas are concerned, in many ways, there's been a loss of community, neighbourhood identity, many long term residents will tell you that most people do their own thing now'* (Neighbourhood Development Worker, Easthill).

In the case of Westhill, the perceived division between sub areas of the estate seemed to be less of an issue than in Easthill. Although this had been a particular concern prior to the demolition of the 'Bosnia block' (two blocks of low-rise flatted Local authority housing that were physically run-down) and adjacent low-rise flatted properties that became associated with problem residents. Latterly however, an awareness of this perceived division appeared to have emerged with the recent creation of a private housing development on the periphery of Westhill that had been introduced as part of the current regeneration activities. Some residents were conscious of the far higher value of the private properties as well as the location and landscaping of this development which according to some, had effectively set this housing as an entity on its own separate from Westhill.

Support networks and neighbourhood cohesion

A further measure of the attachment that residents held towards their neighbourhood can be seen in the existence of informal support networks of family and friends that was present for many residents. Many informants conveyed a feeling of attachment and this tended to be the case among long term residents as well as more recent in-

comers, they reported feelings of 'belonging' to the neighbourhood with some expressing the importance of having friends or extended family living nearby. This particular aspect of neighbourhood cohesion was evident in the accounts of residents living in both locations and was also confirmed by some professional informants. For instance, one housing manager in Easthill pointed to the existence of extended family living in the same estate as what she believed to be a positive measure of belonging and stability in some residents:

'there are strong bonds and a sense of community evident in some long term residents, sometimes three generations of families living here, I'm encouraged by this' (Housing manager, Easthill).

In addition to the informal networks provided by residents' friends and family, formal associations with organisations in the neighbourhoods provided a potential focus for shared community activities. Although residents did use local resources such as libraries and computing facilities as well as other clubs organised through the local authority, some community workers believed that in general, residents tended not to get involved in organising and taking part in neighbourhood activities. Neighbourhood development staff regarded the difficulty in actively involving residents as being attributable to a number of factors. For instance, a perceived lack of motivation in residents as well as limited resources to provide supervision was also regarded as a barrier to offering activities such as after school clubs for local young people. At the same time, some activists believed that community workers exerted too much control over the organisation and running of activities. In addition, a degree of scepticism appeared to be present in some residents as was illustrated in resident's responses to the issue of consultation and involvement in decisions relating to regeneration with some expressing alienation from this process. It was widely believed, particularly in Westhill that the scale of regeneration and change was an issue that would affect the future security of many residents and was regarded as being an immediate and real concern.

However, in some instances residents expressed their contentment in doing 'their own thing' and did not consider their lack of active engagement within the neighbourhoods as being a problem, while at the same time expressing a positive regard for their

neighbourhood. Not everyone considered the presence of support networks from neighbours, friends or family as a necessary prerequisite for positive attachment to place of residence. For instance, one particular informant provided an interesting reminder that non-activity within the neighbourhood was not always equated with feelings of negative regard towards the estate and that social withdrawal can be voluntary and indeed unproblematic for some individuals. This particular informant expressed his positive experience of living in Easthill while living alone and having limited social contact with other residents:

> '*I just kept myself to myself. Never really got to know people there. That didn't bother me though*' (Male, 20s, Former Local Authority Tenant 1998-2001, Easthill).

An interesting finding was that residents did not regard taking an active role in the community as a concern and there was no evidence to suggest that residents felt excluded in this respect. The majority of residents in both estates did not consider taking part in activities or in neighbourhood groups as being an immediate issue to respond to. Involvement and participation in community groups, for example, in residents or tenants groups represented a minority activity for residents in both neighbourhoods. As suggested, this finding provides an indication of the tendency for residents to 'do their own thing' rather than participate in, or actively engage within the community.

Regeneration and neighbourhood change

When considering the concept of neighbourhood identification and stability, the issue of change represented a significant feature in both locations. For instance, it is necessary to see this in context of the long-term evolution of regeneration activities that have been a feature in both locations. As was explained in the previous chapter, in the case of Easthill, large-scale area regeneration was initiated in the 1980s and at the time of the fieldwork, activities continued although on a reduced scale. In Westhill, extensive regeneration involving widespread demolition and new build as well as a local authority stock transfer was underway at the time when the fieldwork

was conducted and had obviously exerted a significant influence in the lives of residents. During this period many residents expressed an awareness of the transition and change associated with the regeneration of their neighbourhood and although in many instances this was welcomed, in some residents it had the effect of residents expressing feelings of anxiety and insecurity.

In Westhill the impact of regeneration was more of an immediate concern and a range of perspectives was apparent. In this estate, residents expressed both concern and optimism, for instance, some residents held the optimistic view that current, short-term flux and uncertainty would provide longer-term benefits and bring stability to the estate as a whole:

> '*I think its definitely changed for the better, The place is going through a period of change just now but its improving, It's became a nicer place to live again. I'm optimistic about the future* (Male, 50s, Local Authority Tenant, Westhill).'

As conveyed by one resident activist, in some instances the benefits of regeneration and change taking place in Westhill were considered to be beneficial for the estate as a whole and had exerted a 'knock on' effect by influencing residents to take pride in their neighbourhood. This particular resident believed that there appeared to be a greater sense of cohesion and pride in the neighbourhood as a consequence of the area's regeneration:

> '*People have their own space, people are taking more care of their own home and garden. We're now living in a keeping up with the Jones society, it wasn't like that before. I think that can be good and keeps folk in check too. Its better to take pride in your house and your environment and care about the people who live here, that can only be good. We need more people to have that kind of attitude*' (Retired Male, Long term, Local Authority Tenant and activist, Westhill).

Some informants who appeared to hold negative perspectives regarding the impact of change upon the estate highlighted the converse. As stated by one Westhill resident activist who held reservations about the positive outcome of events:

'Ask me again in 3 years! We'll see if the problems remain' *(Male, 60's* **Resident activist, Westhill, Housing Association).**

While residents generally welcomed the change, there was also some concern expressed, particularly in terms of the feeling that some residents had been excluded from a process that would influence their future leaving some alienated by the onset of change. In some instances a rather fatalistic perspective existed regarding the estates future and the outcome of regeneration:

'We didn't have a choice in the matter, they had their Corporation hats on and we didn't have a choice. If they say the place has to be knocked down and rebuilt then it will go ahead, they say we are consulted but they've set their minds to it anyhow. What we think or how we feel about it makes little difference in their minds. If they've planned it, it will go ahead...' 'we need to have a say in matters concerning our own future' (Female, 50s, Local Authority Tenant and activist, Westhill).

Uncertainty about change and positive benefits was fuelled by the prospect of the resulting loss of specific facilities in Westhill. However, concern of this nature appeared to be balanced against the gain of acquiring better housing and the hope that the neighbourhood would improve in general:

'The new houses have made a big difference, they've opened the road through the estate and also started a bus service which is beneficial. There's been a loss of open space though; the loss of the playing fields has been a problem for many youngsters' (Retired Female, Long term resident and activist, Owner-Occupier, Westhill).

One long term resident and activist in Westhill expressed her concern over the anticipated loss of community that would follow as an unwanted consequence of

regeneration. With reference to the way that the estate been referred to in publicity literature, this resident held reservations about the irony of the title of 'village':

'They talk about the Westhill village! It was more of a village before, they're running down the place' (Female, 30s, Local Authority Tenant and activist, Westhill).

In Westhill, several residents expressed a concern that as a result of regeneration, the authorities were seen to be 'shifting the problem' without addressing the issue of anti social neighbours whom they regarded as a source of the estate's problems. In addition some scepticism existed as to the neighbourhood's future stability:

'They're moving some of them into the new houses, then it will just be the same as before, that's going to be a problem. That's a crazy idea, its not been thought about I don't think. Give it ten years and we'll be back where we started' (Male, 30s, Local Authority Tenant, Westhill).

In providing a brief summary of the ways in which cohesion and stability were conveyed in both estates, this specific issue produced a variety of responses in residents and other informants. In Westhill particularly, discussions were dominated with issues related to the activity of regeneration and as was discussed, informants provided a mixed response. In Easthill, in spite of a long history of regeneration and change, expressions of instability or negative identification with their neighbourhood did not appear to be an essential feature of resident's accounts. In light of the estate's history of problems the opportunity to provide positive improvement had been welcomed, albeit with some reservations, this sentiment was echoed in Westhill. In both neighbourhoods however, it is significant that a majority of residents believed that 'things had got better.' In spite of some concerns that change had decreased cohesion as a community, most residents still expressed feelings of attachment and belonging to their neighbourhood, often in the absence of links to the community involving family, friends or activity within the neighbourhood.

Significant points emerge from the findings in this section. For instance, in general, residents conveyed optimism and expressed a substantial degree of confidence in the

neighbourhoods. The majority of residents from both estates held their neighbourhood in positive regard and had an interest in the estate's future. A further point is that residents were less concerned with taking an active part within the life of the estates, particularly in respect to formal participation in tenants/ residents groups. It is clear that discussions of the broad contours of life in both estates point to a greater concern about neighbourhood decline and problems including antisocial residents and negative image. More emphasis was placed on the fact that both estates had suffered from a long-term history of social problems and these had translated into poor reputation and stigma. These issues are developed further in the following section.

5.2 Neighbourhood problems: informants' explanations

After exploring general experiences of life in the estates and what the neighbourhoods meant for residents, a closer focus was made on the issues that residents regarded as being problematic in their neighbourhoods. It should be noted that obvious overlap exists between the themes, for example, although the issues of cohesion and stability were discussed in the previous section, neighbourhood problems have a role in influencing how residents feel about their neighbourhood. It was considered appropriate to deal with problems / concerns separately since this appeared to constitute a significant issue with residents and would form the basis for an exploration of the issues associated with neighbourhood image. Issues raised were categorised under various headings according to the nature of the problem:

1. Physical
This category concerns features such as the physical appearance of the estates' buildings and environment.

2. People / behavioural
This category refers to problems associated with the activities of other residents such as noise or other behaviours regarded by residents as being problematic, and how these are mediated by structural factors such as economic decline and the effect of this on the neighbourhoods.

3. Amenity and services

This category includes issues relating to the estate's infrastructure and refers mainly to amenities existing in the neighbourhoods for instance, shops and services.

General themes raised

A consideration of the nature of neighbourhood problems generated a substantial response from informants living in both estates. Residents conveyed a broad range of issues, ranging across a spectrum involving inherent characteristics of the estates such as transport links, physical appearance of buildings and the problematic behaviour of some residents. Residents and professionals in both neighbourhoods generally regarded the problems as being similar to problems encountered daily in many neighbourhoods in other locations and not solely a feature of life in the case study locations. In this respect, a general impression was that many informants regarded problems in both neighbourhoods as being unremarkable. That is, both neighbourhoods were acknowledged as having problems, however, these were not regarded as being unique to either Easthill or Westhill and could perhaps be found in a number of other locations throughout the city. This was seen in the way that many informants played down serious issues, in many cases these were regarded as 'one-off' or extreme examples as well as being more of a concern in the past. Although some concern was expressed over issues regarded as serious such as drug abuse and theft, generally, however, residents' accounts conveyed a greater concern with issues such as maintaining the fabric of their homes and immediate environment. This was particularly evident in focus groups where a general preoccupation tended to centre on issues ranging from quality of housing and efficiency of getting repairs carried out to young people cycling on pavements or using off- road motorcycles.

This perspective is characterised in one evaluation of the estates' problems made by a resident activist who believed that despite a number of different problems having existed and often still existed in the neighbourhood, these were generally not of a serious nature:

'Westhill has had more than its fair share of problems these weren't too serious though. We had some families that were trouble but sometimes this was because of neighbourhood disputes that got out of control and you get that everywhere...' 'Ok, there has been more serious problems with crime and drugs but I'd say that is more of an exception, especially these days. We still have the problem of noisy neighbours and kids hanging around in the street' (Male, 50s, Local Authority Tenant and activist, Westhill).

In spite of many residents projecting a positive image of the estate's problems, other residents reminded the researcher that some of the problems experienced in both neighbourhoods remained a more serious issue for those living there. As highlighted by one Easthill resident, some of the problems encountered in the estate could often be potentially serious:

'...one of my friends found needles in her close...with bairns playing there, she can't let them out to play. How is she meant to keep them shut inside all the time? (Female, 30s, Housing Association tenant, Easthill).

As will be discussed in the following section, the nature of problems encountered in the estates took on a variety of forms. In addition, residents regarded the disparate neighbourhood issues as being problematic to various degrees.

Explanations for neighbourhood problems: physical origins

Many residents highlighted the physical quality of the environment as being a problem and were aware of the poor appearance of some locations in both estates. This specific concern was associated with vacated residential and commercial properties that had been subjected to vandalism and damage due to graffiti and being set on fire. In addition, in Westhill, in the eyes of many residents, current regeneration activities such as demolition and new building had reduced the estate to a 'building site'. One resident from Westhill illustrated the physical nature of problems in the estate:

'The empty properties are a big problem, some tenants are unwilling to move and some are still waiting... The empty properties are a hazard, they're waiting to be targeted by vandals and set alight. There's some people still in there, sometimes one occupied flat in a block of boarded up flats. That shouldn't happen' (Male, 50s, Local Authority Tenant, Westhill).

Resident's accounts frequently pointed to a clear spatial element to the problems encountered in both neighbourhoods. The location of problems were not evenly distributed throughout the estates but concentrated in specific areas regarded by residents as problem areas. In Easthill and Westhill, although the locus of problems were attributed to various locations, specific areas had acquired a particularly negative reputation within the estates on the basis that these locations were regarded as being a key source of the neighbourhood's problems. For example, in Westhill, the spatial concentration of problems was attributed to a development of low-rise flats that had been likened to a war zone and referred to locally as the 'Bosnia Block'. In Easthill, a similarly low level of regard was held towards a location in the north of the estate which had acquired a negative reputation that appeared to be based upon the physical appearance of the immediate area as well as the ant-social behaviour of some people living there.

The fact that both locations had been designated as problem areas that appear to have become widely known in and beyond the neighbourhoods seems to have been functional in terms of locating a source of problems and perpetuating this understanding. That is, this activity of negative attribution may also have fulfilled a need for a focus for the blaming of neighbourhood problems. However, it is important to clarify the causal relationship that appears to exist between the geographical locations and people designated as problems. That is, it may be difficult attempting to establish whether specific geographical areas had become associated with a negative reputation due to the activities of 'problem' neighbours living in a specific location or whether these residents had become stigmatised as a consequence of living in 'run-down' parts of the estates. This point is taken up in the following section and also in Chapter 5.

Explanations for neighbourhood problems: 'problem' people

In some instances residents made a clear distinction between geographical location and the behaviour of the people living there suggesting that 'it wasn't the place but it's people' who were thought to cause problems for the estates. This involved some residents scape-goating or attributing blame on the basis of a minority of residents who were regarded as problematic. In doing so, residents appeared to project the source of problems towards the actions of certain others rather than being an attribute of the neighbourhood as a whole, thereby potentially redirecting stigmatisation from themselves:

> *'It's not that bad living here, nothing wrong with the place, it's the people that seem to be the problem, that have caused problems here... They're just transferring the problem; if they had dealt with the people first there would be no need to build new houses... Aye, there were some of the houses in the Bosnia block, they were in a bad way, broken windows and vandalism, nobody wanted to live there, but again, that wasn't the houses, they weren't the problem it's the folk they put in there'* (Female, middle-aged, Long Term Owner Occupier, Westhill).

In some instances, the behaviour of specific residents regarded as a problem did pose a real and immediate issue for residents, as one resident from Easthill explained how her activities were curtailed by the act of vandals:

> *'it's the folk that come into here ...the multies were really bad, they were always getting vandalised' 'you could never get a lift because they were always broken, I'd never have went near them at night'* (Female, 20s, Housing Association Tenant, Easthill).

This vein of sentiment towards 'problem' neighbours was common in many residents and was echoed in the concerns of a long term 'non- active' resident in Easthill who suggested that problem neighbours could often be a negative influence on the neighbourhood as a whole:

'Some of them are a problem, drugs, noise, that kind of thing. These kind of people don't bother about taking pride in their community, they don't bother then after a while nobody bothers, it drags the place down' (Female, middle-aged, Long term, Local Authority Tenant, Easthill).

In addition to attributing the source of problems to residents from specific areas on the basis of certain aspects of their behaviour or attributes such as creating noise or taking illegal drugs, the Local Authority was also implicated in contributing to the concentration of social problems. There was a belief in a few resident informants that in both areas, the Local authority had 'dumped' tenants in parts of the estates where there was a low demand for housing:

'The council thought that they'd just stick them in here, some of them with drugs and that, these kind of people. That's the real cause of problems here'... 'it's them with no jobs, they don't care about the place and don't care what they do' (Female, 30s, Local Authority Tenant, Westhill).

The contribution of allocation policy towards the spatialisation of problems is supported in the comments of one former resident of Westhill who explained how his choice of residence was based upon the fact that there was a short waiting list due to the low demand of the area:

'There were loads of young people, single and unemployed too. I wasn't the only single person staying there... you got a flat fast with no waiting, that's why there were so many young people there... at that time it was easy to get a flat there (Male, 20s, Former Westhill Local Authority Tenant).'

One resident in Easthill vented her frustration at what she felt was the local authority's reluctance to deal with neighbourhood problems:

'... I've had it up to here'... 'The council don't give a damn about the folk that live here, let them live here and see how they like it, that would make them do something about it'. .. 'You go to the council, you're just as well talking to

yourself. You wait weeks to get an answer; they're quick enough to take your rent and council tax though! (Female, 50s, Tenant, Local Authority, Easthill)'.

While some residents clearly expressed strong feelings of resentment toward problem neighbours, a degree of tolerance towards 'problem' behaviour also existed as one former resident of Easthill recalled:

> '*...sometimes noise from the neighbours, you'd sometimes get noise in the street at night, shouting and stuff, mainly kids or people coming in late at the weekends, walking up the stairs, you just get used to it. I never had any problems with the people, never got any hassle* (Male, 30s, Former Easthill Tenant, Local Authority)'.

Some residents took a more lenient, perhaps pragmatic approach towards attributing the estates problems and linked the behaviour of some younger residents to a consequence of inactivity and a lack of facilities within the neighbourhoods:

> '*There are gangs of young lads, they hang about down at the shops in (makes reference to street name), maybe that's a problem, I don't really blame them for hanging around when there's nothing to them to keep them out of trouble...* ' '*What else is there to do in Dundee? There's not the same work these days..* ' '*...given a choice I think they'd rather be out working rather than hanging around the streets*' (Male, 50s, Long term Westhill Tenant, transferred to Housing Association).

Some residents played down certain aspects of the perceived problem of local young people. As one mother in Westhill stated, very often, young people were too readily blamed for creating problems in the estates. This resident believed that the activity of scapegoating residents on the basis of their behaviour was a frequent response in residents:

> '*There used to be some trouble with gangs up here, but that's not such a problem these days, not as much as it was. The shops in (makes reference to street name) have been knocked down, I think that attracted vandals, it was a mess with graffiti and broken windows but the bairns weren't fighting or*

taking drugs or anything like that, they were just hanging about. The bairns get the stick for everything here, they get a hard time' (Female, 30s, Local Authority Tenant, Westhill).

A lack of activities was regarded as being problematic for many residents, particularly in the case of younger residents this is in spite of the presence of a number of key facilities existing locally in both neighbourhoods:

'as soon as they're seen in a crowd, there's always someone ready to complain to the council or the police, it doesn't matter what the bairns are actually doing... they just need somewhere to play' (Female, 30s, Local Authority Tenant, Westhill).

One resident pointed to the reality that a lack of activities locally meant that one alternative of going elsewhere in the city centre could be financially costly:

'There's not much for them to do though, there are some things here for them but not every night and they can't go down the town all the time, I can't afford that' (Female, middle-aged, Tenant, Local Authority, Westhill)

As conveyed by a few resident informants, wider, structural factors had a role to play in creating the estates problems. Although problem people were very often acknowledged as being a potential source of neighbourhood problems, actual blame was not always projected towards problem neighbours themselves. As one long term resident from Easthill explained, structural factors such as declining employment had exerted negative effects in the lives of some residents. This resident made a direct association between the effects of unemployment on 'problem' residents and the general well being of the estate:

'There's some families with nobody working, second generation who have never worked in their life. That's scandalous, that's asking for trouble, there's no stability, no income, it's a bad precedent to set, it can't be good for these families or the area either. What incentive is there for young people to get out of this mess'? (Male, 40s, Tenant, Housing Association, Easthill).

From the data contained in this section, it is clear that problem residents were regarded as a concern for many residents. In some instances troublesome neighbours provided a scapegoat for the estates problems and a cause of poor reputation. However, although a majority of focus groups and interview participants made it clear that problem people were a significant concern, these informants also believed that problem people represented a minority in the estate. At the same time, other informants, particularly professional informants recognised that the problem people were only one part of the process whereby the neighbourhoods had declined and became associated with poor reputation. These informants considered broader processes of economic change as having a serious impact on the neighbourhoods.

A notable finding was that residents and professionals did not raise issues that were regarded as serious such as drug abuse; it was interesting to note that most informants believed that serious crime was less of an occurrence. The following section continues the discussion of the nature of neighbourhood problems and focuses on the problems associated with the loss of local infrastructure and services.

Explanations for neighbourhood problems: amenities and services

Problems associated with amenities and services were expressed in various ways with residents suggesting that there were 'no facilities' and 'nothing to do' in both Easthill, and Westhill, this was regarded by some as being a particular concern for young people. For instance, as was discussed previously in this section, according to some informants the issue of lack of facilities was linked to the problem of youth 'hanging around' in the streets.

In general, poor infrastructure was regarded by many residents as being a long-term problem for both locations, and was accentuated as a result of the general decline of the neighbourhoods. For example, inherent features of the estate such as distance from the city centre and physical accessibility appears to have been combined with acquired characteristics linked to decline and loss of services was reflected in residents concerns.

The physical proximity from the city centre meant that a degree of isolation was present and this was a recurring theme raised by residents in both estates. Although this matter was regarded as being more problematic in the past. For instance, as was outlined in the previous chapter, both neighbourhoods are located approximately between 3.5 and 4 miles from the centre of the city. A progressive decline in local amenities meant that travelling to other parts of the city was generally necessary in order to benefit from a greater variety of services and social activities.

A comparison of the amenities and services on offer in the two locations illustrates the fact that Easthill provided less local services than Westhill, this being the case historically and was reported by many informants as having been exacerbated with the estates' decline. For instance, the closure of several shops and services that had taken place over a long period was regarded as a problem in Easthill. The existing poor provision of amenities providing recreation and a lack of variety of retail services was considered by residents to have been intensified by the estates' being situated on the periphery of the city. This isolation was made worse by the infrequent bus service.

In terms of shops and services in Easthill, two 'corner shops', and a small shopping centre offering a grocery, a betting shop and a post office, existed, however, the majority of units were vacant. In addition, Easthill had lost a school, a pub and a laundrette in recent years, although schools, a police station, health centre and church had been retained. In respect of local recreational facilities, a community centre, library, learning centre and a range of clubs run by the local authority existed. In addition, children's play areas, a football pitch and landscaped playing fields were present in Easthill. A new cinema and entertainment complex had been developed although this was located approximately one and a half miles from the estate.

The nearest alternative retail outlets were situated approximately half a mile south of the estate and many residents did not regard shopping there as offering variety or the best value for money. The lack of variety locally meant that alternatives involved travelling into the city or to the nearby superstore located over one mile away from the estate. These factors tended to make Easthill resident's concerns with lack of facilities more acute. In this respect, access to more affordable and varied retail

outlets existing in other parts of the city was regarded as problematic, if not prohibitive for some residents, particularly those without their own transport. As highlighted by one Easthill resident:

'...coming back from (refers to local superstore) on the bus with a dozen bags of shopping is impossible' (Female, 30's, Housing Association tenant, Easthill).

Many residents considered there to be no option but to use the local shops despite the higher prices although others relied on taxis, friends or family to go shopping.

The situation regarding amenities represented some difference in the case of Westhill. For instance, in spite of the closure of retail and other services such as the rent office and post office being regarded as a 'a big loss' by residents in Westhill, this estate offered a greater variety of services than in Easthill. However, as a consequence of new building a loss of open, green space had resulted, with many residents regarding this as one of the more negative features of regeneration. The loss of services was a recurring concern in focus group discussions and interviews with residents in both estates. In Westhill, some residents expressed their anger and resentment towards the closure of the post office and shops that had went ahead despite their protests. There was also a belief in some residents that more could have been done to save these.

Retail provision in Westhill included two small grocers, a newsagent, budget grocery chain store, pub, off sales, chip shop and other fast food take-aways. A neighbourhood co-operative had replaced some of the smaller retail outlets that had been closed down. In addition, a large superstore was also located around a quarter of a mile from the estate. A new shopping complex that was in the process of being developed around half a mile from Westhill also provided further retail outlets and a range of other amenities. As pointed out in the preceding chapter, public transport to this development and to other local services had been also been enabled with an improved bus service.

It is clear that the loss of services and important infrastructure was regarded as a significant problem for residents in both estates. As with the case of other

neighbourhood problems, the loss of local services was closely linked with the change and decline that had taken place in both estates. This situation combined with the problems of anti social neighbours and physical changes were explained as having produced decline of the estates. However, it is equally clear that improvements had been initiated with many residents acknowledging that both estates had benefited from positive change, particularly as a result of regeneration. Further explanation of the estates' problems and their contribution towards the decline and poor reputation of the neighbourhoods is provided in the next section.

Neighbourhood decline

In interviews and focus groups, there was a strong sense from resident and professional informants that the neighbourhoods had been through a 'bad patch' and suffered as a consequence of a period of decline. In addition, many informants linked the process of neighbourhood decline to the acquisition of the estate's poor reputation. In terms of explanations for the decline of the neighbourhoods, there appears to be a level of consensus evident in terms of the factors believed to have contributed to decline as well as the period in which changes had taken place. However, decline was seen by some as being a feature of specific locations, mainly a feature of the most run down areas of the estates while others tended to see the loss of amenities and services as a key focus for the estates decline. In many cases, informants linked the process of decline to structural changes, particularly in terms of the impact of changing employment patterns that in turn, had translated into a combination of physical and social problems. In particular, the function that local employment had played in generating the economy and providing neighbourhood stability was expressed in resident's accounts. A sense of decline of the neighbourhoods had in some instances translated into a desire in some 'respectable' families to leave the area as one former resident from Westhill explained:

> 'the decline of industry had an impact and a knock on effect; people were dependent upon the local factories with unskilled labour. My parents were a hard working and motivated family, we eventually moved out' (Male, 40s, Former Tenant, Local Authority, Westhill).

The chain of contributing factors involved in the decline of Westhill was summarised rather succinctly by another resident:

> *'poor buildings, poor maintenance, shops and houses became dilapidated and the area went into decline, it became ghettoised'* (Male, 50s, Former tenant activist, Local Authority, Westhill).

Explanations of the decline in both estates indicated that, irrespective of length of residence, residents were aware of their neighbourhood's decline and the contributing factors. However, there did appear to be a tendency for longer-term residents to perceive the neighbourhood's change in terms of decline. For instance, many residents with several years residence and former residents who had lived in the estates in the 'early days' readily conveyed a strong sense of nostalgia and regret that decline had taken place.

In the research locations, many long term and some former residents regarded the estates as having been better places to live in the past and expressed their sadness regarding the sense of ' a close knit, sharing community' that had since went into decline. Put in the words of one resident from Westhill who had been among the first residents to move into the estate: ' we had a greater sense of community then, it was a self contained area'. Some accounts portrayed a picture of cohesive neighbourhoods that were characterised by strong bonds that had existed between residents and had fostered residents' close attachment to their neighbourhood. This suggestion was evident in the account of one former resident who had been brought up in Westhill:

> *'social contact was maintained at work and out of work too, my father worked in (refers to local employer) and would go out socially with friends from work, they all lived here...families would share in things like baby sitting'*(Male, 40s, former Local Authority Tenant, Westhill).

Often, this cohesion was regarded as being based around the local employment that provided in addition to income, a common experience. One professional informant who referred to Westhill's infancy in the early 1970s recalled how the estate had

provided a stable and thriving community and reinforces the suggestion that common, shared experiences were an integral feature of life in Westhill:

'Originally the estate had a real community, a sense of neighbourhood built up around the local employment... Many residents were employed locally and shared social activities then...' (Social Inclusion Partnership Employment and Training Worker, Westhill)

As one Neighbourhood Development Worker from Easthill explained, the physical attributes of the area with new housing made the estate a desirable place to live and had once attracted residents:

'You have to remember that when the estate was built at first it was a really nice place, the houses were new with all mod cons. People were really keen to move here at first' (Neighbourhood Development Worker, Easthill).

Although many current and former residents and professionals conveyed a sense of nostalgia regarding the neighbourhoods past, there is little doubt however that both neighbourhoods had been through a cycle, in this respect, memories of a time when life was better on the estates was a reality. However, in spite of the apparent concern in some informants that 'things had got worse' these thoughts coexisted with a feeling of optimism that life on the estates had improved and was continuing to progress for the better.

This was evident in the accounts of professional informants; for example, housing managers in both estates as well as local authority neighbourhood workers explained that both neighbourhoods had been through a process of decline. This decline had involved a number of inter-related factors that were thought to have contributed to the general, negative experiences of estate residents during the period of decline. However, informant's accounts pointed to a general belief that things were beginning to 'turn around' and that life on the estates had improved, as one housing manager in Easthill stated, there was a 'sense of community returning'.

Improvement had been progressive, as was discussed in the previous section; it was evident that this positive turn around of the neighbourhoods corresponded to regeneration activities. This was a belief that appeared to be present in both professional and resident informants. In terms of the time scale in which decline was considered to have occurred, the 1980s was stated frequently by informants as being a particularly significant period in the history of problems in both neighbourhoods. This agreement as to the nature of decline and period in which the estate's fortunes had turned for the worse is evident in the accounts of residents as well as Social Inclusion Partnership workers and other key professionals:

> '*Back in the 80s this place was seen as a bit of a battlefield, nobody wanted to live here. If you did, it was only as a last resort, the estate had serious problems with its turnover. People were moving out in droves, its ironic that after all that went on here, now people are beginning to move back in which is good of course' (Neighbourhood Development Worker, Easthill).*

In addition to the wider economic changes previously discussed, housing allocation policies had also resulted in a change in the socio-economic status of many residents moving into both estates. Some informants made a clear link between this situation and the decline of the neighbourhoods as illustrated in the explanation provided by one professional informant in Westhill:

> '*a big decline took place in the 1970s and 80s, by end of the 1980s it had declined badly and there was a change in the kind of people moving into the area. A lot of the original residents had moved...a generation had moved on*' **(Social Inclusion Partership Worker, Westhill).**

Chapter 5: Summary of main findings

In providing a synthesis of the key issues contained in this current chapter, informants' experiences of life in the case study neighbourhoods provide a clear indication of the factors underlying the decline of the estates and the creation of poor

reputation. The findings also illustrate some significant points in relation to residents' feelings towards the estates, their experience of change and explanations of neighbourhood problems. The main issues to emerge are summarised in the following points:

- The majority of residents in both estates offered expressions of attachment to neighbourhood. Residents with longer length of residence were more likely to express positive sentiments towards their neighbourhood. In a few cases residents' feelings of low regard towards their neighbourhood was linked to the presence of poor image.

- A significant finding is that a large degree of attachment to neighbourhood coexisted with problems, change and transition and crucially, in spite of poor image. For example, most informants conveyed a sense of positive regard towards their place of residence. Although social networks involving friends and family and membership of groups were present, these were not a requirement for resident's positive attachment to place.

- A substantial degree of stability and cohesion existed in both neighbourhoods although this was not linked to residents' levels of participation in their neighbourhood.

- A consensus exited as to the nature and cause of neighbourhood problems. For instance, both resident and professional informants attributed neighbourhood decline to combined economic change, loss of infrastructure, physical decay and 'problem' neighbours. The majority of informants were aware of these combined problems as important contributors to poor neighbourhood image (these factors are discussed in the following chapter).

- Regeneration activity was a significant agent of change in both neighbourhoods. This was more apparent in the Westhill estate where activity was taking place at the time of the research, this was also on a larger scale and had exerted extensive change to the estates' physical lay out and social and economic infrastructure. Regeneration was met with a positive response from the majority of residents who

in most cases viewed this in terms of its positive benefits. A majority of residents had become accustomed to transition in the estates and regarded regeneration activities as accepted aspect of the estates' transition. A minority of residents however viewed the regeneration activities with a degree of cynicism and held the belief that less was to be gained from the change. These informants were concerned that the neighbourhoods had become socially fragmented as a result of change.

These points are discussed below:

Resident's identification with their neighbourhood corresponded to various levels of geographical area. Personal association existed with the immediate location, involving sub area of estate or street, although in most cases this also involved identification with the entire estate. Residents in both estates displayed a substantial degree of belonging towards their neighbourhood. Residents' connection with their neighbourhood was expressed in a number of ways and although some residents reported having family and friends nearby, this did not constitute a prerequisite for a sense of belonging to the estates. Likewise, although change and decline were features of both estates, a substantial level of stability and cohesion was found to exist in both locations, this was openly expressed in residents' feelings of positive regard and attachment to their neighbourhood.

The findings also illustrate that residents were more inclined to do their own thing rather than take part in local activities. For instance, while holding their neighbourhood in positive regard, many residents were content to live independently with no participation in the social or common activities in the estates. Although there was a concern in some longer-term residents that a loss of community had taken place over the years. These residents cited the changing profile of residents in addition to regeneration induced fragmentation as important factors. In most cases however, residents seemed to be content living in what may be understood as independently within the estates. That is, while acknowledging that a sense of 'community' might exist, many did not seem to regard this as being important stabilising factor in their own experiences of neighbourhood life. Having personal links with the neighbourhood through friends, family, direct activity or membership of community

groups appeared to be regarded as positive factors in contributing to a sense of neighbourhood cohesion and stability. However, these factors were not crucial components that contributed to resident's positive feelings for the estates. As characterised in the words of one informant, people were understood as increasingly 'doing their own thing'. In a number of instances, residents accepted that it was necessary to travel to other parts of the city to access social activities and services. Although this activity may have been partly a consequence of the loss of local services, many residents suggested that this was not a new phenomenon. That is, going 'down the town' was an activity that had long been an expected aspect of daily life, predating the loss of facilities. This had historically been regarded as a social event in itself, whether to visit friends or family or to go shopping or to take part in other leisure activities.

Active participation within neighbourhood groups was a minority activity in both estates and residents did not regard this as a problem. However, this is in contrast with a view from neighbourhood development staff that encouraged residents' involvement in neighbourhood activities and decision-making. For instance, a few neighbourhood development workers regarded the level of community activism to be a measure of the extent to which residents perceived the estates to be in crisis. These neighbourhood workers stated that the highest levels of activity had taken place during periods in which the estates had experienced serious problems and the worst effects of decline.

Informants also provided a vivid account of the factors regarded as problematic in both estates. For instance, a recurring issue was neighbours who were regarded as a problem in terms of their behaviour, such as being noisy or on the basis of living in unpopular locations. This issue was reported to be a significant factor that had contributed to neighbourhood decline and poor reputation. However, most residents acknowledged that this represents a minority activity but none-the-less, constituted a real problem. It is interesting that residents expressed more concern with issues such as noisy neighbours or the speed of housing repairs being carried out than on more serious problems such as crime, which most informants regarded as a rare occurrence.

In terms of resident's explanations of and responses to neighbourhood decline, this appeared to be regarded as a fact of life for many residents although perhaps being more problematic at different times of the estate's histories. The issue of decline was understood generally in the broader context of transition and evolution of the neighbourhoods. It was believed that decline was an aspect of the estates that had turned full circle, in some respects providing a reminder that the life cycle of the estates had evolved through periods of positive and negative change and tended not to remain static.

The explanations of decline that were provided by informants demonstrate the role these played as a basis for the creation of negative reputation. It is clear that a variety of factors had been involved in creating the distinct histories and experiences of decline in both neighbourhoods. This was evident in respect of a combination of local physical and social problems that had been exacerbated by the impact of economic change. For instance, although a range of explanations were provided to explain the nature and origins of the neighbourhood problems across all informant categories, a consensus was seen to exist in respect of the nature of problems that were understood as having given rise to decline in both neighbourhoods. For instance, informants attributed the origins of the estate's problems to a number of factors including economic decline, problem people, changes in housing policy and allocation procedures that concentrated disadvantaged 'problem' families in less desirable housing. In addition, the gradual decline of infrastructure combined with economic change had created high levels of unemployment and disadvantaged households in both estates. Inherent features within the original design of estates such as the distance from town and lack of public transport also exacerbated the decline and growing unpopularity of the estates. Although it is also clear that additional factors and agents are involved in the process of generating poor reputation and stigma. This issue is developed in the following chapter where the origins of poor reputation and stigma and the specific ways this impacts on neighbourhood life are examined.

The importance of area renewal and regeneration was made clear in the findings and this represented a significant vehicle of change in both estates. The impact of regeneration was broadly welcomed although with some reservations being present, this was primarily expressed in some anxiety regarding change, for instance in terms

of a perceived loss of community and a reduction in services and facilities as well as relocation of residents. Additionally, although the spatial concentration of problems was evident prior to the onset of the estate's regeneration, there was a sense that problems had in some cases shifted as a direct result perpetuating problems. In this respect, it is uncertain whether the scale of problems had increased or was being masked by its displacement. For instance, regeneration had involved increasing the social mix in both estates by introducing different housing tenures. As a consequence of this action however, a more visible distinction emerged between areas residents regarded as problematic and other more desirable locations. In this way, a social polarisation based upon tenure and desirability of location was accentuated. As a result, the less desirable locations became associated as 'problem' areas giving rise to negative perceptions of these parts of the estate (This issue is discussed in more depth in the following chapter).

Although a sense of transition was present in both neighbourhoods, it was evident that the issues raised in each estate stemmed from their respective stages of the regeneration process. In Westhill, the impact of regeneration appeared to be more dramatic, for instance, at the time of the fieldwork being conducted, regeneration activity was taking place at a relatively fast pace and the estate was still very much in the midst of the process of transition. In this location, a sense of positive anticipation of the benefits of the outcome were reinforced by many residents, however some residual concern and discontentment was expressed, in addition, feelings of insecurity existing in some residents. These reservations generally involved a concern over the loss of facilities and the perception that a shifting of problems was taking place. For instance, the re-housing of problem tenants into new housing was very often cited as a source of concern for residents. However, despite the process of change and flux and the exceptions mentioned, a general feeling was that in the longer term, benefits would be realised. Similarly, irrespective of the sense of turmoil experienced by some residents in response to significant physical and social change taking place, for instance, involving re-housing and changes in services and facilities, a degree of stability and cohesion was maintained in the estate.

In the Easthill estate, the long period of area regeneration had seemed to produce a feeling in many residents that change associated with regeneration was an accepted

aspect of life. However, at the same time, the momentum of regeneration activities had been in the process of slowing down and in terms of magnitude was on a reduced scale. Perhaps this factor produced the apparent lower level of awareness of the impact of regeneration that was evident in some Easthill residents. In a similar way to the experience of Westhill, a general consensus existed in terms of the benefits that renewal and regeneration had brought to the estate. This was believed to have resulted in an improvement in the general condition of the neighbourhood and was demonstrated in better housing and environmental conditions.

Although regarded widely as being beneficial, the effects of regeneration were not wholly unproblematic, as discussed; a key feature of this is seen in the situation where a displacement of the estate's problems seemed to have occurred. In addition, while some of the estates problems were regarded as having been tackled and had resulted in a positive outcome, some protracted issues appear to remain in the process of being addressed. The reality that problems remained was perhaps demonstrated more obviously in the case of Easthill where in spite of regeneration having been a major characteristic of the estate for the last 20 years, residents highlighted the continued presence of a number of problems. These problems invariably concerned the behaviour of problem residents in addition to the long-standing issue concerning the estate's poor image. This particular point also provided a reminder that tackling problems may be regarded as an activity that required on-going action.

Chapter 6

Research findings 2: Poor reputation and stigma in the Easthill and Westhill estates

Introduction

As highlighted in the previous chapter, it was clear that residents attributed poor neighbourhood reputation and stigma to the economic, physical and social decline of the estates. Building upon the findings of the previous chapter, this chapter begins with an examination of residents understanding of their neighbourhoods' reputation. The first section explores the conflicting perceptions that were found to exist between informants and considers the extent to which external perceptions of 'problem neighbourhoods' correspond with or deviate from the lived experience of neighbourhoods. The chapter also explores the origins of stigma more closely and examines the role of social actors responsible for generating and sustaining stigma. The second section constitutes a significant aspect of the research findings and highlights the ways in which poor neighbourhood reputation and stigma had an impact upon residents living in the case study locations. A specific objective is to look at the ways in which poor reputation and stigma contribute to the social exclusion of residents. Within this inquiry, subsidiary points are explored including an examination of the stigmatising activities that were regarded as problematic. The chapter also looks at the characteristics of those that were found to be more vulnerable to the negative effects of stigma.

6.1   Neighbourhood perceptions

From interviews and focus groups conducted with informants it became apparent that residents and non-residents were conscious of the poor reputation that the Easthill and Westhill estates had in the city. A prevailing understanding held by residents living in both neighbourhoods was that outsiders had fixed, negative perceptions regarding the neighbourhoods which according to some residents, extended to some outsiders forming generalised, stereotypical ideas about the people living in these locations. In

addition some residents expressed their annoyance that very often, non-residents made no distinction between residents, in this respect involving en masse or collective stigmatisation. For example, a common understanding in many residents was that outsiders perceived estate residents to be 'all the same' which elicited a strong response in some residents:

> 'You just have to mention the name Easthill and you're treated like a second class citizen, whether it's at the council tax office or whatever, they expect a certain kind of person to live here. If you're that kind of person or not, it doesn't matter to them, we're all tarred with the same brush! We're nobody, we're all just scum to them' (Female, 40s, Housing Association Tenant, Easthill).

The feeling that the stigma of the neighbourhood had been passed on to residents was often met with resentment and in some instances attempts were made to reject any association with problematic aspects of their neighbourhood. This response is evident in one resident activist in Westhill who appeared to distance herself from the estate's reputation, this resident expressed her frustration and annoyance at being regarded as part of a unitary mass of problem people perceived to be living in the estate:

> 'Everybody's individuals, you can't say they're all bad, I've lived in the multies for 20 years, my two sons live here and were brought up here, they've never been in trouble once. I think people should think about what they are saying before making accusations about the people that live here, we're definitely not all the same, I get fed up with rumours about the place' (Retired Female Local Authority Tenant activist, Westhill).

This instance of resident's stigmatisation through association was evident in the accounts of many resident informants. The consciousness of the poor reputation of the neighbourhoods was manifest in the expression of emotional responses such as embarrassment or anger in some residents. As conveyed by one resident, the association with the more negative aspects of the estate had a propensity to generate feelings of resentment in some residents:

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'It has a bad name and it sticks... People don't see you as a person they're more interested in where you're from and where you work... even if you're a decent person and never been in any trouble you still get seen as a lay about and a trouble maker' (Male, 30s, Local Authority Tenant, Easthill).

In some instances, the impression of negative estate images upon residents had led to some residents adopting strategies in order to minimise feelings of embarrassment when faced with the potential prospect of being stigmatised. For instance, some residents had admitted that on various occasions they had been reluctant to reveal their place of residence when asked by work colleagues or when meeting people unknown to them. As one former resident explained this activity appeared to be common practice:

'I got so annoyed that I would just say that I was from the city centre, it sounded better than Easthill' 'That was the way loads of folk used to deal with that problem' (Female, 30s, Former Local Authority Tenant, Easthill).

In some instances, the negative perceptions believed to be held by those from outside the estates was confirmed in the accounts of some non-residents where generalisations regarding the 'kinds of people' and 'these sort of areas' were made:

' even before you lived in Dundee you would always hear of these sort of areas (refers to several city neighbourhoods that have a negative reputation)' (Female 30s, Non resident, Owner-Occupier, Neighbouring Estate, referring to both locations).

In addition to generalisations, external accounts sometimes involved a degree of vagueness regarding the neighbourhoods and their residents. To some outsiders, coming from the city 'schemes' appeared to carry a degree of stigma, in some cases very little, or no distinction appeared to be made between neighbourhoods and residents:

'At school in (refers to nearby town), new kids coming from Dundee were seen as a problem, from some of the Dundee estates, you'd hear some of the stories about the place' (Female, middle-aged, Non-resident).

An interesting point is that in some cases, negative, stereotypical ideas regarding the neighbourhoods and residents appeared to exist even in the absence of direct experience of the neighbourhoods. For example, one informant who had heard about both locations but had never visited either neighbourhood still appeared to hold ideas about the type of activity that might be found in the estates. These perceptions seemed to involve the negative attitude or behaviour of residents:

'being un-neighbourly, shoplifting, vandalism, drugs, that type of thing (owner occupier, non resident)'.

In the case of this specific informant the origin of her ideas appear to have been generated through hearing news of events in addition to the visual appearance of other estates regarded as having similar physical attributes, in this instance, high-rise flats:

'it's the kind of place that if you parked your car you'd come back and find it jacked up with no wheels.' 'Its not just what you hear about, 'it's the same when you drive into Dundee, the first thing you see is the multies. The look of the multies and all that, it looks bad. Not the kind of place you'd want to go to'. (Female, middle-aged, Non-resident)

However, other non-resident informants also appeared to posses a wider and more varied range of understandings regarding the reputation of the case study locations. In addition to negative, stereotypical ideas, some non residents acknowledged that both neighbourhoods were perhaps more varied and dynamic in their composition and that the most negative stereotypes of these places could be in fact, unfounded or exaggerated. As one non-resident informant expressed the belief that a 'stereotype of the place' existed, her basis of knowledge being through a friend who had experience of Easthill:

'(makes reference to name of friend) mum lives there, it's not half as bad as
they say it is'. 'It's like trying to say everyone who stays there is a hooligan or
a murderer! or if you go there, it's dangerous' (Non resident, Clerical worker,
Owner occupier, Female, 30's).

The suggestion that there may often be a discrepancy between neighbourhood
perception and direct, lived experience was also evident in the accounts of some
residents who maintained that the basis for the neighbourhoods negative reputation
was largely unfounded, as highlighted in the challenge made by one resident:

'They (non-residents) should come here and see for themselves, they would be
in for a surprise, its probably better here than half of the places in Dundee'
(Female, middle-aged, Resident, Easthill).

In addition to challenging the negative reputation, anger at how the estates were often
regarded by those living outside appeared to be present in some residents:

'Its not half as bad as folk say it is. It's blown out of proportion. I get sick of
people running this place down. Its high time somebody did something about
it' (Male, middle-aged, Tenant, Housing Association, Easthill)

The discrepancy that appears to exist at times between the negative beliefs and actual
experience of the neighbourhood is also evident in the accounts of some former
residents. These informants explained that the preconceived ideas and low
expectations of the neighbourhood that had existed prior to moving into the
neighbourhoods did not equate to their actual lived experience in the neighbourhood.
In these instances, the actual experience of being resident in the neighbourhood was
found to be more positive than expected as related by one former resident in Westhill:

'Yeah, I was worried about personal safety, crime and drugs, that kind of
thing. Actually living there wasn't as bad as I thought it would be, I felt ok
walking on my own at night, I guess I made assumptions about the place.
Having said that, it wouldn't have been my first choice but there was no hint

of problems when I lived there' (Female, 30s, former Local Authority Tenant 1996-97, Westhill).

Similar sentiments were echoed in the accounts of one former Easthill resident:

'I had no bad experiences, no drugs, I'd heard there were drugs in these places. There was vandalism, quite a bit, broken windows and graffiti' 'I used to be a bit worried about gangs of teenage kids in groups, if I just walked past them it was ok, they never gave me hassle' (Male, 30s, former Local Authority Tenant, Easthill).

One former resident explained how rumours that she had heard about Westhill had negatively influenced her judgement about the estate to the extent that she had considered not moving there:

'if I'd listened to what people had told me about Westhill I probably wouldn't have moved there. It wasn't a patch on what I'd thought it was, it's a stereotype. I was up there recently, it's changed, it looks totally different now, it's good. Even when I lived there it wasn't that bad, it was good' (Female, 30s, Former Local Authority Tenant, Westhill).

Another former Westhill resident explained that had it not been for a friend who already lived there, he would have been reluctant to move into the neighbourhood:

I knew Westhill, my friend had lived there, in the same block, he liked it so I wasn't that worried. If he hadn't lived there I would have been worried about getting a flat there, Id heard that it was a dodgy place'... 'I'd been up to visit my friend when he first moved in and it didn't look that great. People would say that it was full of junkies and stuff. I never seen anything' (Male, 20s, Former Tenant, Local Authority, Westhill).

The belief that the negative reputation of the neighbourhoods was often a misrepresentation of the lived experience of residents was echoed in the accounts of some professional informants. For example, one Housing Manager in Easthill clearly

expressed the view that external representations of the neighbourhood as conveyed by the press was often undeserved and did not correspond to the actual reality:

'There is a difference between Easthill and how people who don't live here see it, Easthill's location, trees, countryside, it's lovely, people wouldn't believe it' (Housing Manager, Easthill).

It can be deducted from informant's accounts that many residents and professionals appeared to remain confident that the reality of life in the neighbourhoods did not match external negative perceptions. However, an alternative approach was also evident in informant's narratives, in some instances the poor image of the neighbourhood did seem to exert a negative effect upon residents by influencing their regard for the estates. For instance, this was manifest in the accounts of residents who in some cases, expressed feelings of low esteem towards the estates, citing reputation as a particular problem.

Explaining the sources of neighbourhood reputation and stigma

From the data gathered, a range of different explanations were believed to have been responsible to varying degrees for the poor reputation that existed in respect of both estates. As was discussed in this current chapter, in the case study neighbourhoods, a combination of variables including physical and social decline as well as events based on the activities of people appear to have been significant predisposing factors involved in the production of a negative reputation. These factors however had sometimes been subject to exaggeration via a number of agents and devices including the local press as well as local 'hear-say', these had contributed to the perpetuation of the poor image of the neighbourhoods:

'You hear from your pals and that, folk that have lived there, stories from work mates and that, in the paper, the Tele' (The Telegraph, local newspaper) is always reporting stories about things that happen in Dundee' (Mature Student, Male, 40s, non-resident referring to both locations).

As one housing manager in Easthill confirmed, conveying stories about events occurring in the estates was often done via word-of-mouth with this activity being unreliable in terms of its accuracy:

> 'Some people will tell you that there are problems with some families, the reputation of former tenants but it's more of a case of Chinese whispers and tends to be unfounded' (Housing Manager, Easthill).

One professional informant provided an explanation of events that she considered as having contributed to generating Easthill's image in the wider city. This particular account reflected the intermeshed social and economic factors involved in addition to the suggestion that stigma was a feature of many estates throughout the city:

> 'stigma is a real issue in Easthill, although (it) exists all over the city, because of social conditions they attach a stigma and it becomes difficult for people and causes a problem for residents in the employment market and their social status in the wider community...stigma has been a problem and probably still is an issue in Easthill' (Housing Manager, Local Authority, Easthill).

A similar account is evident in the explanation provided by one long term resident in Easthill. According to this informant, the poor neighbourhood image was viewed as being intricately linked to a number of issues including the general physical and social decline of the neighbourhood:

> 'By the 1980s there was a lot of drug abuse, even then it was pretty serious, this was tied up with the crime that went on here. There was vandalism too, many of the empty blocks were targeted by vandals and drug users, this really made the appearance worse, which of course made it a no go area in many ways. These blocks would be set on fire. These kinds of problems did a lot, an awful lot to make Easthill's name well known, unfortunately for the wrong reasons' (Middle aged Male, Long term Local Authority Tenant, Easthill).

As one resident from Westhill suggests although briefly but rather concisely:

'Westhill has got a reputation because of the decline, it's seen as a run down kinda area, that's why the regeneration is happening' (Male 50s, Tenant, Local Authority, Westhill).

'Problem' people

As discussed in the previous section, residents often regarded the actions of other residents as being a primary source of problems in both neighbourhoods. The negative image of the neighbourhoods was in many cases also believed to be attributable to this particular source. Some residents had seemed to distance themselves from association with these perceived problem neighbours. This distancing from the stigmatising features of the estates frequently involved explaining sources of problems and stigmatisation as being elsewhere, either another location or attributing these to others based on activity of some 'problem' residents. In the case study locations, problem people were implicated as a source of problems and as a source of negative reputation, this appears to have been linked to the general decline and in some instances, the moving in of some 'problem' families. In these instances residents regarded new comers to the estate as being culpable for some of the estate's problems, as expressed by one resident in Easthill, this had resulted in the estate acquiring its 'bad name':

> *'Its definitely the people that live here…for a while they were putting all the problems into here, the bottom of (refers to name of street). That gave the place a bad name. Some families have been here since the place was built… there's a lot of respectable folk here, never any trouble. It's the newcomers coming into the place'* (Female, 60s, Long–term Housing Association Tenant, Easthill).

This apparent activity of blaming residents was also evident in some non-residents who considered the activity of residents in providing an important contribution towards creating poor image in the estates. Although in some accounts, there appeared to be some vagueness as to the nature of the behaviour involved and also in respect of specific events that have been attributed to the creation of the area's image. One

particular informant's explanation was that the reputation must be based upon 'something' or 'someone' although an understanding of the precise origin appeared to remain inexact:

> *'it's the type of people who live there, definitely the people'... 'yeah, the reputation is bound to be based on people who live there, the behaviour of some people. You've got to think where there's smoke there's fire, there must be something wrong with the place. If you hear through hearsay then there's obviously something happened, something, someone has done something to create it you would think'* (Middle-aged, Female, Non-resident, referring to Westhill).

At times, there was also a degree of vagueness among some informants as to the source of the estates poor reputation:

> 'something's happened at sometime, stories of vandalism in the paper. You're more likely to be burgled if you live in a place like that, the media report what's happened then stereotypes (are) made'… 'The press is not to blame for what goes on in these places, you can't blame the papers for that, look at some of these places, they are pretty run down, some are dumps!' 'The problems are already there..' (Male, Student 20s, Non-resident, referring to Easthill).

Mass media and estate image

Informants representing all categories were aware of the activity of the local press in conveying negative images regarding the neighbourhoods. It was apparent that the influence of the media in conveying negative and potentially damaging reports was regarded as a concern. In Easthill, the local press had seemed to have a history of reporting negative aspects of life on the estate. One neighbourhood worker had approached the local press in a bid to arrange for regular updates on events taking place to be reported, however, the press rejected this suggestion. This professional expressed concern at the tendency for the press to report negatively:

'I could tell you some tales about the things that went on up there, some of these were reported in the local papers, as I said the papers were quick to report all the problems. I suppose they need to sell their papers, they're more interested in the worst parts of the estate and never want to know about what's been happening for the better' (Neighbourhood Development worker, Easthill).

This 'bad press' did seem to be a particularly emotive issue in Easthill where residents and professionals were acutely aware of recent bad publicity that had taken place regarding their neighbourhood. This had involved the media reporting on the high levels of poverty that was reported as existing in the estate. The coverage of this event was executed at a local and national level via the press and radio. As expressed by one resident, the media event in question was regarded as both unnecessary and unfair:

'They cannae leave the place alone, there's always somebody wanting to make out that the place is bad. The papers have made Easthill out to be a dump'. '...say something about the good bits, the good things'... 'There's a lot of good folk up here, it's not fair' (Retired Female, Local Authority Tenant, Easthill).

In referring to the adverse publicity that had occurred, one housing manager explained that the negative press coverage was potentially damaging to the estate and its residents:

'Some of the residents were unhappy about the recent publicity, this case was unfortunate, they (the press) used out of date information' 'I think the recent media event was a one off, there was outrage in some local people, its quite sad that they (the press) don't check the facts' (Housing Manager, Local Authority, Easthill).

There was also evidence to support the idea that specific variables involved at a local level had combined with historical factors. Over time these appear to have consolidated the external negative image of the estate. The factors involved were considered by informants to have led to the creation of a particularly ingrained view

of the estate as being problematic. In this respect, the reputation of the Easthill estate appeared to be more fixed than that of Westhill:

> '...even in the early days Easthill had a bad press...' '...there was some controversy about the place, corruption, this was at a high level in the council, even then the estate had its problems. It's pretty unfair but in Dundee Easthill's name got well known for this alone. I think it affected how people felt about the place at that time. I think this led to some of the later problems, yeah, with how Easthill was seen by people in Dundee' (Neighbourhood Development Worker, Easthill).

Although it was generally accepted by residents and professionals who had experience of the neighbourhoods that events had taken place that may have attracted media coverage, many felt that reporting of these had been exaggerated and in many cases reporting was unnecessary and unhelpful:

> 'There's a tendency to report more negative stories rather than positive, they (the press) are more interested in juicy stories and rarely report positive stuff...' ' they (the press) are less interested in events such as job creation' (Social Inclusion Partnership Worker, both locations).

One resident from Westhill echoed this suggestion:

> ' newspapers are bound to spice things up, that's their business, they've got to sell papers. I think the media plays up what actually happens in real life' (Male, 30s, Tenant, Local Authority, Westhill).

As conveyed by one Easthill resident, press coverage was not always regarded as representing an accurate reflection of the neighbourhood and its people, this resident also tended to play down any serious problems existing within the estate:

> 'It's really vandalism that's a problem. There's no serious crime like you would believe from reading the Tele' (The Telegraph local newspaper). I've read about crime, drug dealing, theft and the like. I don't think that's a clear

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picture of things here, far from it' (Female, 20s, Housing Association Tenant, Easthill).

The mass media's role in contributing towards people's negative perceptions of the neighbourhoods was also implicated in the accounts of some informants living outside the estate:

'Bad news sells' 'sometimes they (the press) just look for the negative' '...I think they (the press) do a lot to make people think about what's going on locally, they can make a mountain out of a molehill if they want to' (Female Student 20s, Non-resident referring to both locations).

The exaggeration of events that was considered to take place in mass media reporting was reinforced by another non-resident who believed press coverage of the neighbourhoods could actually distort the truth and intensify negative perceptions of the neighbourhoods:

'If you had went by what the papers said, you would be terrified to go near the place' (Female 30s, Non-resident, referring to Easthill).

It was also suggested that the mass media's tendency to 'spice up' events was an activity that was carried out in relation to other estates and not only in Easthill and Westhill:

'If you hear about a case of drug abuse, the newspapers are gonna give you the impression that it's a lot worse than it really is'... *'If you hear about a drug abuse case in Westhill, (names a neighbouring estate) or Easthill or wherever, you're bound to think that its going on all the time there'* (Male, 20s, Non-resident on both locations).

Although some informants did not regard the mass media to be singly culpable for creating poor image, there was a belief that this medium provided an important contribution to the process:

'These places have a bad name already, the papers do nothing to help it'
(Male, 50s, Non-resident referring to both areas).

An interesting perspective was provided by one Social Inclusion Partnership worker who considered the influence of structural change at a city level to be a determinant of neighbourhood image at a local level. According to this explanation, poor image was regarded as an issue that reflected a broader process involving structural and historical factors:

'Dundee in general gets a bad press'... *'Its past as an industrial city and decline, unemployment crime, reputation...'* *'...Its socio-economic situation and its publicised statistical data such as aids, drugs use, single mothers, crime'* (Social Inclusion Partnership Worker, Employment and Training, both locations).

As stated by one non-resident, the press was also regarded by some as simply reflecting the reality of life on the estates:

'the papers report what's happening in these areas, its just telling it as it is'
(Male, 40s, retail worker, Owner Occupier, non-resident referring to Westhill).

The findings illustrate the presence of various perceptions of the estates from outside and within. It is clear that residents and non-residents were very aware of the poor reputation associated with both neighbourhoods. However, a significant finding can be seen in the discrepancy between residents' accounts and non-resident accounts. Residents in particular were conscious of negative neighbourhood reputation and regarded this in many instances as being unjustified and not representative of life on the estates. Residents had more direct experience and were more explicit regarding the origins and actual nature of poor reputation than those living outside the estates. Many residents defended news reports of crime and serious events as being misrepresentative and out of date. Most neighbourhood development and housing staff who believed that these negative aspects of the estates had taken place in the past reinforced this understanding.

It is interesting that in many cases, outsiders' knowledge of the estates was found to be partial. For instance, some had come to learn about the locations through various means including hearsay and newspaper reports and had little or none direct experience. Despite this partial knowledge however, many non-residents still viewed both estates in a negative way and did not appreciate the diversity of experience that was present in both neighbourhoods. These non-residents homogenised the neighbourhoods in terms of what they believed to be the defining characteristics of the estates, that is, places where crime and deviant behaviour was a feature of daily life. With the exception of a few non–residents, their understandings were invariably negative.

A common feature of both residents and non-residents accounts was seen in the way they attributed the source of poor reputation to people and events taking place in the estates. It was also found that most professional informants such as housing staff considered wider factors such as structural change as contributing to poor reputation. The mass media was regarded by most informants as representing a significant source of knowledge of the estates. However, in many cases, the neighbourhoods were portrayed negatively, thereby contributing to the perpetuation of stigma. It is clear that residents were very aware of the negative reputation and stigma attached to the estates and that this was responded to in a number of ways and included rejecting, denying and avoiding the negative label. The influence of neighbourhood reputation is taken up in the next section where the impact of stigma upon residents' daily activity is explored in more detail.

6.2 Stigma and exclusion

A primary objective of the research involved investigating the impact of neighbourhood reputation upon the lives of residents. That is, did the poor reputation of neighbourhood make residents more vulnerable to disadvantage and exclusion? The findings illustrate that the experience of exclusion was evident in respect of resident's participation in the social and economic life of the neighbourhoods.

Although, inter-linked, the data was ordered under the broad categories of economic / financial and service exclusion.

Economic exclusion: access to employment

Exclusion from employment on the grounds that their residence in a stigmatised neighbourhood could mean residents being judged negatively and rejected at the application stage was reported as being a significant issue for some informants. In spite of residents having no official feedback that their address was the deciding factor in being rejected in a job application process, many considered that their address or postcode was a disadvantaging factor when applying for a job elsewhere in the city. A few residents related instances where they have been met with more success in looking for a job using an alternative address. The belief that employers refused to employ estate residents was expressed by several residents, this, it seems in many instances being based upon the reality of being rejected from employment and had become a fact of life in some cases. As summarised by one resident:

> *'If they (potential employer) think you're from a run down place they're not going to want to give a job to you are they? and they're not going to tell you why'* (Female 30s, Tenant, Local Authority, Westhill).

One long term resident also related her daughter's experiences of trying to find work and highlighted an awareness that living in a stigmatised estate could create barriers to finding work:

> *'She had problems when she left school, soon as you say Westhill on an application form you couldnae get a job. It was that bad'* (Retired Female, Local Authority Tenant activist, Westhill).

Although it appears that the reality of being rejected in job applications had become in many ways, an accepted although frustrating feature of living in the estates, many residents had responded by developing coping strategies to counter the problem. As one resident explained, using his own address in a job application would be futile

although he would stand a greater chance if using an alternative address on application forms:

> '*There's no way I would put my address on a job application, I would give my big sister's address, she lives in another part of Dundee that doesn't have a bad name, that's how I got round that problem. I'd have no chance if I put my own address on it* ' (Male, 40s, Tenant, Housing Association, Easthill).

The reality of getting a 'knock back' in the job application stage was reinforced by one resident who refers to his own previous experiences of applying for jobs. This resident also conveyed his understanding of why residents might be discriminated against negatively by local employers and in doing so, describes an account which is essentially linked with the reputation and history of the estate's decline:

> '*You'd have no chance of getting an interview, whenever I did use my own address I'd just get a knock back. It's no coincidence; they'd only give jobs to folk from better areas. At that time Easthill was at an all time low, it was pretty bad, full of problems... drugs, gangs, unemployment, dilapidated houses, all sorts of crime, the lot... It wasn't our fault, folk like us just paid the price for living here* ' (Male, 50s, Tenant, Local Authority, Easthill).

This sense of futility was echoed by another resident living in Westhill who vented his frustration with what appeared to have become a familiar scenario in applying for jobs:

> '*You'd see a good job in the Courier (local newspaper) and think ah, great, I'll apply for this just to be turned down. You're just told sorry you've been unsuccessful, after a while you start thinking what do you have to do to get a decent job?* ' (Male, 30s, Tenant, Local Authority, Westhill)

In addition to experiencing problems when attempting to find work, one resident expressed an awareness of stigmatisation being present while in employment. This resident stated how in a previous job with a local employer felt she was treated

differently on account of where she lived and referred to the negative perception towards estate residents that existed on behalf of her employer:

> *'When I worked in (refers to name of employer) if you said you were from Easthill or any of the other schemes they'd treat you in a different way, they'd react different with you. You'd see them change their attitude when they spoke to you'* (Female, 30s, Tenant, Housing Association, Easthill).

In spite of the belief in some residents that their job applications had been rejected on the basis of having a 'bad address', although acknowledged as an issue, this particular aspect of stigmatisation was regarded by one employment official as being less of a current feature, although she admitted it was a problem in the past:

> *'There is very little evidence to suggest that customers have been knocked back because of where they stay... feedback from customers doesn't suggest this to be the case...Employers are less likely to discriminate now whereas this was a possibility in the past'... 'It used to be that applicants had more success if they used another address for job applications, many would use a relatives' or friends' address simply because they were afraid of being be turned down if they used their own address'* (Employment Officer, working in both locations).

This assertion may suggest that a change has taken place with regard to how the neighbourhoods are perceived by outsiders. However, as the same employment official stated, factors such as equal rights legislation and greater accountability on the behalf of employers may also make some businesses less likely to carry out discriminatory activities:

> *'The mindset is changing, employers are less likely to discriminate now, partly because of legislation'.*

This official suggested that additional factors may have influenced a change in the practice of discriminating against residents, this seemed to be based upon a belief that

the external perception of both neighbourhoods had improved and was more positive in general perceptions in the wider city:

'There is less scope to label people from these areas nowadays... this isn't justified any longer, things are changing... Westhill and Easthill are not the places they used to be, I think employers are realising this and are acting accordingly' (employment officer, working in both locations).

If discrimination had taken place, local employers in both locations emphasised that this activity was not a current feature of the recruitment process of their own companies. In one interview with a Human Resources Officer representing a large manufacturing employer, this particular official explained the company's employment practices rather clearly:

'Employing people from certain areas is not a particular issue... From my point of view this is not a determinant of suitability for employment, we don't discriminate on the basis of where someone lives... there is always a selection panel'... 'Decisions are not down to one person, therefore any potential bias would be removed, we are very strict regarding this aspect of our selection criteria' (Human Resources Officer, local manufacturing employer, Easthill).

A similar perspective was conveyed from another representative from a large manufacturing employer located on the periphery of the city near Westhill. While accepting that the local estates did suffer from a poor reputation and that stigma was a problem for the residents, employers did not believe this to be a problem in the recruitment of their own employees:

'I think the reputation of these kind of areas do pose problems for the people living in them...'. 'I wouldn't consider the reputation of the adjacent area as being at all relevant, it is certainly not a problem, it's the individual qualities of candidates we are primarily concerned with when we seek to employ new staff' (local large manufacturing employer, Westhill).

Another employer highlighted what she regarded as the positive attributes in respect of the qualities of local employees:

> *'We have a policy of employing local people...we have found that we have tapped in to an excellent resource of skilled and dedicated workers'* (Human Resources Officer, local retail employer, Westhill).

From informant's accounts, stigma has been a problem in gaining employment and remains as a barrier in this respect. However, discrepancies between the various accounts tend to obscure the processes involved in the stigmatisation of potential employees. That is, employers acknowledge the presence of stigma in local neighbourhoods and appear to be aware that this can be problematic for residents while stating that this is not an issue in the recruitment process.

Stigma and economic exclusion: the local property market

A further aspect of economic and financial exclusion was evident in respect of the barriers that appeared to be present in the selling and leasing of property in the neighbourhoods. This situation was directly attributable to the poor reputation of the neighbourhoods. In terms of the private housing market, one property agent pointed to the reality of low demand for buying homes in specific areas of Easthill:

> *'Its actually bad news for many sellers in parts of these estates, we find this to be a particularly serious problem in (refers to specific area of Easthill), property just wont shift there. I have one client just now who's having severe problems trying to sell a flat he bought seven years ago, he's selling it at an asking price considerably below the price he paid for it, fixed price...'* (Estate agent, city centre).

The difficulty in selling property in parts of the estates was confirmed by another agent who believed the reputation of the locations to be the determining factor in creating lack of demand:

' I've seen a few properties in that area and they tend to take some time to sell,
demand there is particularly low...' '...It's just one street and surrounding
area really, it is sadly, a deterrent for possible buyers' 'people know these
areas as being bad' (Estate agent, city centre).

This particular aspect of low demand appeared to be reinforced in the case of one
letting agent who's policy involved rejecting requests for leases in specific locations
in the city, including Easthill and Westhill:

'We don't let property in these kind of places, no one wants to rent there.
There has *been a lot of trouble in these areas in the last few years, crime is a*
major problem and puts people off'.... *'We deal with professional clients and*
there is very little demand for property in these places. Generally, city centre
lets are in most demand'.... *'People coming into the area to work and who are*
looking to rent a property would be encouraged not to consider renting in
these places' (Private letting agent, city centre).

Whether this particular instance reflects the extent of the undesirability of some of the
estate's housing and locations is uncertain. It may be the case that private leases do
tend to be more in demand nearer the city centre and not in peripheral estates.
Irrespective of the factors informing the decision not to take on leases in the case
study locations, this specific response does appear to suggest negative perceptions in
response to the neighbourhood's poor reputation.

Stigma and service access

In respect of access to services, many residents related instances where they had
become aware of the estate's reputation through their contact with various service
personnel and officials. In some of these cases residents were reminded of the
resonance that the reputation of their neighbourhood seemed to have in the city. This
was particularly the case in residents who believed that they were treated differently
because of where they lived. For instance, some residents believed that officials and
service providers attached a particularly negative significance to a post-code, name of

a street or estate associated with stigma. In some instances this was manifest in a negative experience on the part of residents. This point is illustrated in the account of one resident who conveyed the scenario of when she purchased a new television and was met with a comment from a sales assistant that reflected the negative image her place of residence apparently had from an outsider's perspective:

> *'I was paying for my telly and the lassie asked me what my post code and house number was, then she said oh, is that the good bit or bad bit of Easthill? Now, maybe she was joking, but I was thinking, hold on a minute here, what's she trying to say?* (Female 50s, Owner-Occupier, Easthill).

In similar instances, some residents believed that officials and service personnel held lower expectations of estate residents and in some instances residents reported being responded to with impolite or negative attitudes:

> *'the other day at the Housing office, when people were giving their addresses you could see the way the man behind the counter reacted, if they said (reference to affluent area of the city) it was all oh, yes Mrs so and so, when I mentioned Westhill his whole attitude changed, he didn't even look up!'* (Retired Female Long-term resident and activist Owner Occupier, Westhill).

These negative preconceptions however also seemed to be present in some residents, as highlighted in one informant who had learned to expect a poor level of service from officials, as he believed on account of his place of residence. In this instance, the anticipation of poor treatment and negative attitude was based upon past experiences, in turn the response had appeared to be the 'taking on' of a negative attitude which had seemed to be directed from official to resident:

> *'When you say to them (council tax office) that you're from Easthill you know its going to be the same treatment as always, they speak down to you, they've no respect like. You feel they expect you to grovel to them, like they're doing you a favour'* (Female, 40s Long Term Tenant, Local Authority, Easthill).

One resident felt that she had been labelled in a negative way by virtue of her postcode:

'As soon as you tell them the post-code that's enough, you begin to feel that you're being judged, that they're thinking- oh god, its one of them...I think that you are treated in a different way because of where you stay' (Female, 20s Housing Association tenant, Westhill).

Another resident in Easthill explained her experience of how she had inherited a poor credit rating after moving into her new home and expressed her annoyance and embarrassment over this situation. This highlights the ability of the neighbourhood stigma to impact negatively on residents. That is, as far as this resident was concerned, she had acquired the unwelcome stigma of bad credit through no consequence of her own actions:

'...every time I asked about the electricity there was always some problem or other, I asked the man what the problem was, he said something had come up on his computer screen and told me to hang on a minute, when he came back he said to me that he would have to run a credit check, I thought, that's funny, I've never had bad credit in my life' (Female, 50s recent owner-occupier, Easthill).

Another experience conveyed by a resident in Easthill illustrated how post-code discrimination could mean being penalised financially, resulting in paying higher insurance premiums for some residents:

'My sister had to renew her car insurance and was quoted over £300. She was sure it was because of her address, when she called again using her mother-in-laws address, with exactly the same details, this time she was quoted £160 (Male, 40s Long Term Tenant, Housing Association, Easthill).

From the perspective of service providers, an awareness of the reputation of the neighbourhoods seemed to be based on their past experience of trouble in the estates

and other neighbourhoods and this had contributed to their cautious approach towards Easthill and Westhill residents:

> 'Some parts of these estates would be regarded as two-man areas... the guys would have to be teamed up with another worker whenever they're called to carry out a job there... it's a case of safety in numbers! We need to make sure that engineers don't come into any bother when working in these areas. The high crime rates makes this necessary... ' (Utilities Manager, both locations).

One manager for example, explained the basis for exercising caution in specific areas, this appeared to be based on pragmatism, that is past experience of individual situations had involved real danger to utility workers. In addition, there was an acceptance that having preconceptions was in fact a necessary aspect of carrying out the duties associated with their employment. However, the effects of this precautionary stance had also generated negative perceptions of the locations and their residents and had caused further, inadvertent stigmatisation. For instance, labelling of the estates and residents seem to have taken place and as far as some workers were concerned, the estates and the people who lived there were regarded as 'dodgy' :

> '...there are specific areas that are seen as being dodgy. We do have specific training for staff for example, where people might come across used needles or come in contact with other potentially harmful situations, violence or verbal abuse... Our staff have got to visit peoples property and basically, we have to be quite judgmental about people... You find certain areas, run down areas, where people are a problem, these tend to be multi-storey flats. Sometimes we don't like going into these places, there are reputations about places that are violent, at the end of the day we have a job to do and we have to do it as safely as we possibly can' (Utilities manager, both neighbourhoods).

Although as one worker explained, while acknowledging the stigma of the neighbourhoods, he believed that his preconceptions of the areas had not translated into disadvantage or poorer services for customers:

'I don't think this affects the level of service to these areas...It is a thought being sent to a job there though, I would say that its more of a problem for us having to work in these places, it means more of a hassle for us. (Utilities worker, both neighbourhoods).

Service exclusion: individual and institutional factors

As was illustrated earlier in this current chapter, exclusion on the basis of place of residence was clear in resident's accounts. In many cases residents believed that officials regarded people from the estates in a negative way, for instance some residents had commonly received a poor service from impolite staff. No direct evidence pointed to active negative discrimination of residents on the basis of the stigma of residential location. From the accounts discussed, stigmatisation of the neighbourhoods and their residents appeared to be less of an institutionalised, systematic process and perhaps more of an individual activity.

However, an important finding is seen in a minority of professional informants who were more candid in an informal capacity. For example, on a few instances, in talking informally with officials outside an interview situation, they remarked that their work involved categorisation of clients, very often in judgemental ways that tended to focus more on the negative aspects of some residents. In these cases, a distinction seemed to be made where residents who complained and were seen to pose problem for the department attracted negative attitudes in staff, between the 'problem' resident and the good resident. This 'problem' resident was categorised on the basis of behaviour such as creating disturbances due to noise, rent arrears or on the basis of their conduct or as being regarded as being abusive towards front line staff.

A particularly interesting aspect of this issue is illustrated in the case of one official who in the capacity of housing officer had stated that she had judged tenants on the basis of the appearance of their homes, in particular on the cleanliness of the property's windows. This informant used a generalised reference to residents as 'that type of people'. This individual official maintained that this approach was

commonplace and unproblematic. In these cases, little sympathy was reserved for 'problem' residents with a particularly negative judgement made in respect of residents who could 'work the system' and 'complain too much'. In these instances, the residents involved were regarded by staff as being undeserving of services. These individual agents explained the basis of this formation of categorisation as a result of staff's experience of contact with residents.

This feature of labelling may appear to be a harmless attitude although it is difficult to establish the extent to which negative attitudes underlie the level or quality of service provided. For instance, this aspect of the research illustrates the manner in which agents in an official capacity can potentially operate in ways that can distinguish and discriminate between residents. This ultimately influenced the quality of service provided and in this way access to services was controlled. However, it is difficult to establish the extent to which residents might be excluded on this basis. For example, it is not certain whether housing officials would exclude residents from housing on the basis of these judgmental remarks alone. Likewise, residents' experience of this situation pointed to having felt they had received a poorer service and faced negative attitudes from officials. No residents referred to actual instances of overt discrimination and exclusion. It should also be stated that these instances represented a small minority of individual informants as opposed to representing official policy of service providers and institutions.

This issue also illustrates the relationship between individual and official / institutional agency in carrying out stigmatisation. For instance, institutions represented by the local authority or other service providers invariably compose individuals who may indeed hold specific, perhaps negative, stereotypical beliefs regarding their clients. While not being written into their code of practice or policy, discrimination or stigmatisation as was stated earlier may often be carried out unwittingly by individuals. The consequences of holding negative perceptions of places and people may not be apparent to some officials carrying out their duties and may have become a normalised activity whereby clients / customers are categorised. The extent to which the preconceptions of individual officials might influence or colour their interactions with clients may be vague, although resident's experiences appear to point to this activity in some cases. This was also evident in informal 'off

the record' discussions with some informants. Stigmatisation was stated to be present in residents' encounters with officials in positions of authority, in this respect exerting an important influence, if not control over certain aspects of residents access to services and general well being. The extent to which this aspect of stigmatisation represents a specific culture existing within some institutions is uncertain. However, irrespective of the presence of overt institutionalised stigma, covert negative discriminatory attitudes were evident in the activities of some individual officials / service providers, representing an important aspect of exclusion for residents.

In addition, as was conveyed by some utility workers, procedures had been developed in response to poor neighbourhood reputation, which in turn appeared to have become part of the mechanism, which could discriminate negatively through a process of mass treatment of residents. For instance, this was the case in attempts to label residents en masse through the use of a post-code or address. This was evident in respect of insurance premiums being based essentially upon postcode rather than individual circumstances. It may be that this activity reflects a certain degree of reality that a higher level of claims may occur in a specific geographical area, although this may be related to the spatial concentration of problems rather than active discrimination. However, this form of mass treatment of customers does not appear to allow for individual cases or circumstances. A negative consequence of this policy may ultimately result in the stigmatisation of residents.

Stigma and educational attainment

When considering education as an aspect of exclusion, a central theme to be explored was whether living in a stigmatised neighbourhood acted as a barrier to accessing formal education and academic achievement. In addition, the issue of education and training may be extended to incorporate broader aspects of exclusion. For instance, access to education as well as experience of education can be argued as representing a crucial determinant of economic as well as cultural aspects of daily life.

Education and training was an issue in both areas that was in the process of being addressed as part of continued regeneration activities. Both Social Inclusion

Partnerships were actively engaged in education initiatives and had links with schools and training providers. Informants involved in education viewed the local schools and other educational establishments as being an integral part of the community in terms of support. A notable point was that the educators who were interviewed conveyed an acute awareness of the poor reputation that existed in both neighbourhoods and appeared to be knowledgeable regarding the features and history of the neighbouring locations. However, mixed responses existed in respect of whether the area's reputation was problematic:

> *'Westhill does have a history, I think this has had an impact on the people who live here'* (secondary teacher, Westhill).

In some cases, it was believed that the reputation of the local area had merged with the school's reputation, as one teacher from Easthill explained:

> *'...Its not the first time that I have overheard conversations coming to work on the bus, there are many people who think of Easthill and (refers to name of school) as one and the same thing, a rough place'. 'I think that Easthill's image in the city does give us specific issues to deal with, being in this community does tend to give the school a certain profile'* (secondary teacher, Easthill).

As one teacher in Easthill explained, the image of the estate could be a problem in terms of perpetuating an undeserved poor image of the school. Regardless of the achievement record of the school, some in-comers to the area were reluctant to have their children attend the local secondary:

> *'I have come across cases where some families who are new to the area don't want their kids to come to (refers to name of school), they are concerned with the area's poor image. It's not a matter of the school's record of achievement, that isn't the issue, we actually have a wide catchment area in this part of the city, it is in fact very socially mixed. I think it's possible that some parents opinions have been influenced* [by what they have heard about the area]' (Secondary teacher, Easthill).

Another teacher in Easthill explained that although the estate and school had acquired a negative reputation, he did not regard this to pose any specific barriers impeding the education of the schools pupils. This teacher believed that the school was no different from schools in other locations. In this respect, this informant pointed to the normalisation of the experience of 'rough' estates, as far as this teacher was concerned teaching in Easthill was little different from teaching in other locations:

'I don't think that this [poor reputation] means that pupils from Easthill face any more of a challenge than pupils from any other part of Dundee'. '...I'll be honest; Easthill may be seen as a rough place, I would agree, I have little doubt about that. The truth is, you will find estates and schools like this over the country.' (Secondary teacher, Easthill).

In the case of Easthill, one primary teacher pointed out that the neighbourhoods were socially varied, again reinforcing the suggestion that the experience of education was in general positive:

'The children come from a wide mix of backgrounds, obviously we have our share of problems, there are a few children who need additional attention with work. Their ability is good mainly, in these cases I would say the families have been an important support mechanism, this is encouraging' (Primary teacher, Easthill).

According to some teachers however, specific problems were evident, particularly in respect to low levels of confidence that were thought to be an issue for some families living in the neighbourhood. Some teachers held the view that low expectations tended to be grounded in experience, namely, the reality for many school pupils was that prospects after leaving school could be limited. As a response to this situation, some families in the estate were not 'geared' towards high achievement, although interestingly, this was regarded by some teachers as being more of an issue in the past. While echoing the belief that Westhill's school children were not extraordinary in terms of their behaviour and achievement, one teacher did suggest that confidence

might be a factor in producing specific expectations that could perhaps influence levels of achievement in some families:

> *'In the main, kids from Westhill are like kids in other schools, I think there is a core that give us problems, these are kids who have given up and don't see any importance in the need to do well in education. I would say that sometimes there are low parental expectations, particularly in the past, people here didn't have high expectations post-schooling'* (Secondary school teacher, referring to Westhill).

The issue of low expectations was reinforced in the views of one teacher in Easthill who regarded parental attitudes / expectations to be an important factor in their children's experience of formal education. This informant also suggested that this issue might be an attribute of the wider social situation rather than a specific feature of residence in specific neighbourhoods. It was suggested that increasingly high expectations was a situation that had become more common in general. An interesting point illustrated from this however can be seen in the way that residents' expectations may be influenced by broader experiences and trends taking place. However, wider influences were also regarded to have a negative aspect. That is, residents appear to have taken on the negative features of the experiences of employment in the estates, in this way, coming to expect a particular outcome, in some ways representing a self-fulfilling prophecy:

> *'...I do think low expectations is an issue for many families, I think this is a Dundee thing rather than a problem with living here. I think after a while that way of thinking has entered the psyche of the people living here'* (Primary School teacher Easthill).

In the context of higher education, one university actively sought to admit students from backgrounds that traditionally have not entered higher education. This institution had a number of programmes involved in outreach work via links with schools and communities throughout the city including Easthill and Westhill.

This education establishment was regarded by one of its admissions staff as being a feature that linked the community together:

'(reference to name of institution) *actively encourages wider access.' '...the* **university has a tradition of having the local community at its heart'** (Admissions Officer, Higher Education, referring to widening access).

At the time of the fieldwork, several students from Easthill were enrolled on an adult returnee's route to university. No distinction was made between students from different backgrounds or place of residence, in contrast, this institutions policy was explained as being geared towards encouraging wider access:

'...(refers to name of institution*) has a long tradition of widening access, getting folk from ordinary backgrounds and getting them to degree level, also, the size of the institution allows a good relationship.' '(the university) will seek out mature students, often where the formal criteria for entry has not been made, students will be interviewed...we get a feel for someone who wants to make a go at it'* (Admissions Officer, Higher Education, referring to widening access).

As explained by this admissions tutor, no negative expectations were held regarding the academic performance of students from the research neighbourhoods. Rather, concerns were more in terms of adjusting to university and on the reality that students from non-traditional backgrounds did tend to lack confidence in the academic setting:

'(Students) *sometimes need confidence, they often lack academic language in first year, it's a case of confidence building and less on exams, a platform from which to continue on their degree'* (Admissions officer, Higher Education).

Despite a prevailing positive attitude that appeared to be present in the education professionals who were interviewed, an alternative understanding was present in some residents. As one former resident who had attended secondary school in Easthill believed, low expectations from teaching staff appeared to have been an accepted

aspect of school life. Drawing on his own experiences at school, this informant suggested that there was an ingrained expectation of low achievement in some teachers that he believed was transferred to pupils:

'I had one careers teacher who sneered when I said I wanted to have my own business, as an electrician. It was like, how can you possibly do that? You've no chance, oh, they're from Easthill it doesnae matter if they don't get a job when they leave cos they're gonna be on the dole anyway... After a while you begin to think like that yourself' (Male, 40s Former Local Authority Tenant, Easthill).

Although neighbourhood reputation was regarded as an issue that most informants were aware of, this was generally not considered to be a problem in terms of creating barriers to quality of teaching nor in respect of educational achievement. As was illustrated from informants' accounts, it seems that some less desirable issues were present in the experience of education, namely in respect of low expectations and confidence that were regarded as being present in some estate residents.

This issue points to the role of broader social issues related to the impact of economic change upon the city and the estates as well as the influence of stigma. Low expectations may have been borne out of the reality of negative experience and had subsequently contributed to an ingrained pessimism in some residents. It seems that as a consequence of resident's experience of unemployment, a consensus may have developed as to what to expect in this context. As was illustrated in chapter Three of this thesis, high unemployment and lower levels of attainment has been a feature of both estates, at least since the 1980s. Although rooted in the reality of social conditions such as the impact of unemployment, this feature may also be understood as a further dimension of the generation of neighbourhood perceptions. That is, residents may come to expect a certain outcome in relation to how they perceive specific experiences of life in the neighbourhoods. However, although based to a degree on reality, the extent of the situation may have become distorted as a consequence of prevailing negative perceptions, after a period of time, these negative perceptions may come to dominate and influence resident's experience of the estates in general. This does not suggest that exclusion in this context is somehow imagined,

rather, the experience has appeared to have become distorted, and that specific expectations may prevail and in some instances remain in spite of changes in circumstances such as improvements in the conditions of the neighbourhoods.

From the data gathered, there is limited evidence that points to active discrimination on the grounds of place of residence that prevented residents participation in formal education. In some cases however, a belief that some teachers held specific expectations regarding the achievement of some pupils was evident, these expectations were sometimes negative and at the worst had involved discouragement towards pupil's ability. However, as informants suggested, the more negative instances appear to have been a feature that was more prevalent in the past and linked to rising expectations in general. This point may correspond to the focus of tackling education and training in the regeneration process in both neighbourhoods as evident in the development of access programmes and links developed as part of the Social inclusion partnership.

An interesting aspect of the findings is seen in the way that reputation and stigma were regarded as a considerable issue in both estates and acknowledged as a potential problem for educators, pupils / students and their families. In spite of this acute awareness, teachers denied the presence of explicit barriers to education on the basis of stigmatisation. This finding reinforces the stance that was frequently found in professional informants. For example, teachers like other service providers were acutely aware of the estate's reputation and the problems this could generate for the schools and residents. In addition, teachers did recognise a link between reputation and education experience in some instances relating to the impact of wider social issues upon education experience and attainment rather than focus on the discriminatory aspects of this. It is significant that teachers did not suggest that stigmatisation was an activity that they contributed to, although some aspects of stigmatisation were in evidence. For instance, some teachers labelled the estates and residents on the basis of negative attributes however no teachers stated that overt negative discrimination against residents was carried out in ways that would actively disadvantage residents.

Summary of findings

Stigmatisation and exclusion were intricately linked in the case studies and the effects were manifest in terms of psychological, social, cultural and economic dimensions. Significant findings are highlighted in the following points:

- Most informants were aware of the poor reputation that the case study neighbourhoods had in the city. However, a significant difference was found to exist between the perceptions of residents and non- residents. For instance, many of those living outside the neighbourhoods held fixed, negative perceptions regarding the neighbourhoods. This was based on individual experience of the estate, however external perceptions often involved stereotypical and generalised ideas about the people living in these locations. A crucial point is that in some cases non-residents' negative perceptions of the estates was based upon limited or no direct experience.

- The poor image and stigma of the neighbourhoods was met with a range of responses from residents. While a majority of residents accepted that their neighbourhood had a poor image, in a few instances residents had attempted to avoid association with the estates' stigma. In other, although limited cases, residents rejected the idea that stigma was present and stated that the poor reputation of their neighbourhood was not deserved.

- Neighbourhood stigma was attributed to a variety of sources although most informants believed that a combination of economic and physical decline had led to a deterioration of the estates and subsequent poor image. Many residents and non-residents also believed that the presence of 'problem' residents was an important contributor to the neighbourhoods' poor reputation.

- Many social actors were found to be involved in the perpetuation of the poor image of both neighbourhoods. The media, residents and professionals were all implicated in the process. The local press was highlighted as having an important role and had a history of reporting events in the estates, however many resident

and professional informants believed that press coverage was biased against the estates and their residents and focused more on the estates negative attributes. A minority of housing staff and service providers were influential in the stigmatisation of residents. These informants were more able to participate in conduct that could disadvantage, such as making decisions that would affect the quality of service received by residents.

- Poor neighbourhood image and stigma had a significant impact on residents' psychological and material well-being. Stigma was found to be a primary factor that affected the quality of life of residents and directly contributed to the exclusion of residents from important financial, employment, service and housing provision. Many residents believed that they had been labelled as people as lesser worth and as a result had received poorer service and in some cases had been refused service.

- Conflicting accounts of this process makes it unclear whether stigma-based discrimination represents a conscious, deliberate act. For instance, while residents believed that they had been actively discriminated against in their access to services and employment, officials accepted stigmatisation was carried out but denied any involvement in this. A significant aspect of this issue was found in private conversations with a minority of officials who admitted that discrimination was actually practised.

- Stigma was found to have more negative effects upon those who were already disadvantaged. For example, those from lower socio-economic households and who lived in less desirable locations were more vulnerable to the exclusionary aspects of stigma.

These points are elaborated below:

Internal and external perceptions of the estates differed and external perceptions were important in the labelling of the estates as 'problem' areas. For instance, non-residents did not always appreciate the diversity of experience that was present in the estates and many non-residents perceptions of the estates and the people living in them

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involved the homogenisation of the areas as problem or 'rough' places. In some cases however, these ideas seemed to exist in the absence of any direct experience or knowledge of the estates. Some external perceptions relied on second hand information developed from rumours of events and information conveyed by friends, family, work colleagues or other contacts. A significant source of knowledge of the estates was evident in the activity of the mass media, however many informants regarded this medium as an unreliable source of accurate information. For instance, it was commonly believed that the local press was more interested in reporting negative and sometimes out of date stories.

Informants explained the evolution of the estate's poor image as being attributed to combined economic, physical and social decline of the estates as well as specific events that had taken place such as criminal activity that was reported in the local press. In addition, the presence of 'problem' neighbours was a recurring theme although this was not conclusive in terms of representing a primary cause. That is, although there were aspects of behaviour that were a real source of concern for some residents, in many cases people were implicated on the grounds of perceptions based on news stories or rumours.

The perpetuation of the estates' negative reputation involved the activity of residents, professionals and service providers, this was found to take place at an institutional and individual level. However, the mass media was widely regarded as being an important medium in this activity. Informants in all categories expressed this belief. For instance, local newspapers had a history of reporting news stories that portrayed negative images of the estate. In most cases, labelling and stigmatisation was not carried out with the intention to harm residents, although findings point to the presence of covert and overt stigmatising activities. This is evident in instances where residents' reports of discrimination did not correspond to the experiences conveyed by some service providers and employers. For instance, although employer's categorically maintained that equal opportunities was maintained in employee selection, residents reported being rejected in the early stages of the application process as they believed on account of the stigma of a 'bad address'. This finding highlights the difficulty in examining the extent of the discriminatory aspects of stigmatisation. It also points to stigma as being a covert activity in some instances.

For example, it was significant that no informant within the professional category admitted to carrying out stigmatising activities that discriminated against residents. For instance, it appears that activities associated with stigma are perhaps not always openly displayed or discussed and that a 'hidden' dimension to the process remains. A significant feature of this issue can be seen in the discrepancy that was seen to emerge between resident's perceptions and experiences of negative stigmatisation and the perspective of service providers. This was evident in the belief in some residents that discrimination was carried out while at the same time being denied by professionals.

Although this involved a minority of informants, there was a willingness to speak more frankly in an informal capacity rather than in the context of a formal interview where comments would be recorded and attributed. However, a degree of caution should be maintained in the respect of this particular issue. It is uncertain whether this represents the desire in some professional informants to distort or conceal their own stigmatising activities or whether this is an attempt to protect the estate's reputation and residents from further stigmatisation. Most informants appeared to be acutely aware of the estate's reputation and it became apparent early in the fieldwork that the potential damaging effects of stigma were an issue. In this manner, many professional informants spoken to requested that their identification should remain anonymous with the aim of limiting potential stigmatisation of neighbourhoods that were already associated with a poor reputation.

Informants in all categories viewed stigma as an issue, this was true in the case of residents who in many instances viewed the estates' reputation as an accepted part of life. Although the poor reputation of both case study locations was widely acknowledged, a range of perceptions was evident and these were often contradictory. In spite of many residents being aware of the neighbourhoods' stigma, some residents did not see this as a serious issue. For many it was not a daily preoccupation, although they could relate to instances where stigmatisation had taken place, either from direct experience or from instances related from family, friends or word of mouth. In addition, many resident informants believed that their estate did not deserve its poor reputation and expressed their annoyance that outsiders held a low regard for the place. Labelling was also carried out within the estates; for instance, specific areas

and residents were regarded as a source of trouble and were believed to have stigmatised the estates.

The impact of stigma was also variable and affected residents psychologically and materially. Some expressed feelings of embarrassment and shame and held a belief that outsiders regarded estate residents as 'second class citizens' it was also clear that stigma contributed to the disadvantage and exclusion of residents in more tangible ways. There were many instances where access to services and employment opportunities had been hindered. Many residents believed that neighbourhood reputation had resulted in problems with getting access to services such as telecommunications, gas and electricity through the acquisition of bad credit. For instance, some service personnel and housing staff held negative views of the estates that had influenced their attitude and in turn, the quality and level of service offered to residents. In addition, residents also reported being penalised financially by paying higher car and home insurance premiums on the basis of their post-code that was associated with poor credit and increased insurance claims.

Although the estates had been stigmatised en masse through external perceptions, the extent to which stigma was a problem varied. A significant finding is that those who were already disadvantaged were more vulnerable to the negative effects of stigma. For instance, those living in less desirable locations felt the impact of stigma more strongly. These residents faced a double jeopardy in that they were stigmatised by outsiders and by other residents. This issue was raised in Westhill where although extensive new building and re-housing of 'problem' residents had taken place, a significant number of residents believed this activity was merely shifting the estates' problems.

It is clear that stigma represented a problem in the case study locations and despite some ambiguity being present in terms of the sources of stigma and its covert nature, its impact was clear in many instances. The following chapter offers further analysis of the research findings and discusses these in the context of themes raised from the literature review.

Chapter 7   Discussion of key findings

Introduction

This chapter provides a discussion of the key research findings. The primary aim is to examine the research contribution to understanding the nature of neighbourhood stigma. The first section of the chapter provides a discussion of the factors involved in the production of neighbourhood stigma. This involves an examination of stigma as a consequence of urban decline and how this produces negative perceptions that contribute to the labelling of neighbourhoods as 'problem' places. The chapter also examines the role of social actors identified as playing a crucial part in the process of neighbourhood labelling. The impact of neighbourhood stigma is a primary focus and examines the ways in which stigma was found to disadvantage and exclude residents. The factors found to mediate the experience of stigma and exclusion is also discussed. This involves a consideration of distinct neighbourhood features such as the impact of regeneration and change in producing specific patterns of stigmatisation. The chapter concludes by considering stigma as an enduring problem and points to the implications this has for neighbourhood regeneration initiatives. The research findings are discussed with reference to existing theoretical knowledge of the subject area.

7.1   The origins of neighbourhood stigma

Neighbourhood stigma and urban decline

The research has clarified the mechanisms whereby neighbourhood stigma originates. A key finding is that stigma was found to be an integral feature of neighbourhood decline. This is shown in the combined effects of economic and social decline that represents a crucial element in the predisposition of neighbourhood reputation and stigma. For example, the research has identified several factors that are clearly important contributors to neighbourhood stigma. These include the impact of broader economic change such as high levels of unemployment; history of local decline; physical decay; local depopulation and housing voids; changes in tenure and

household social mix; problem neighbours; representations of place and its people through various media including the press and 'hear-say' which contribute to popular belief. No single factor can be pinned down and identified as having a dominant influence. It is clear that the afore-mentioned variables are closely interconnected and reinforces the impact of each other.
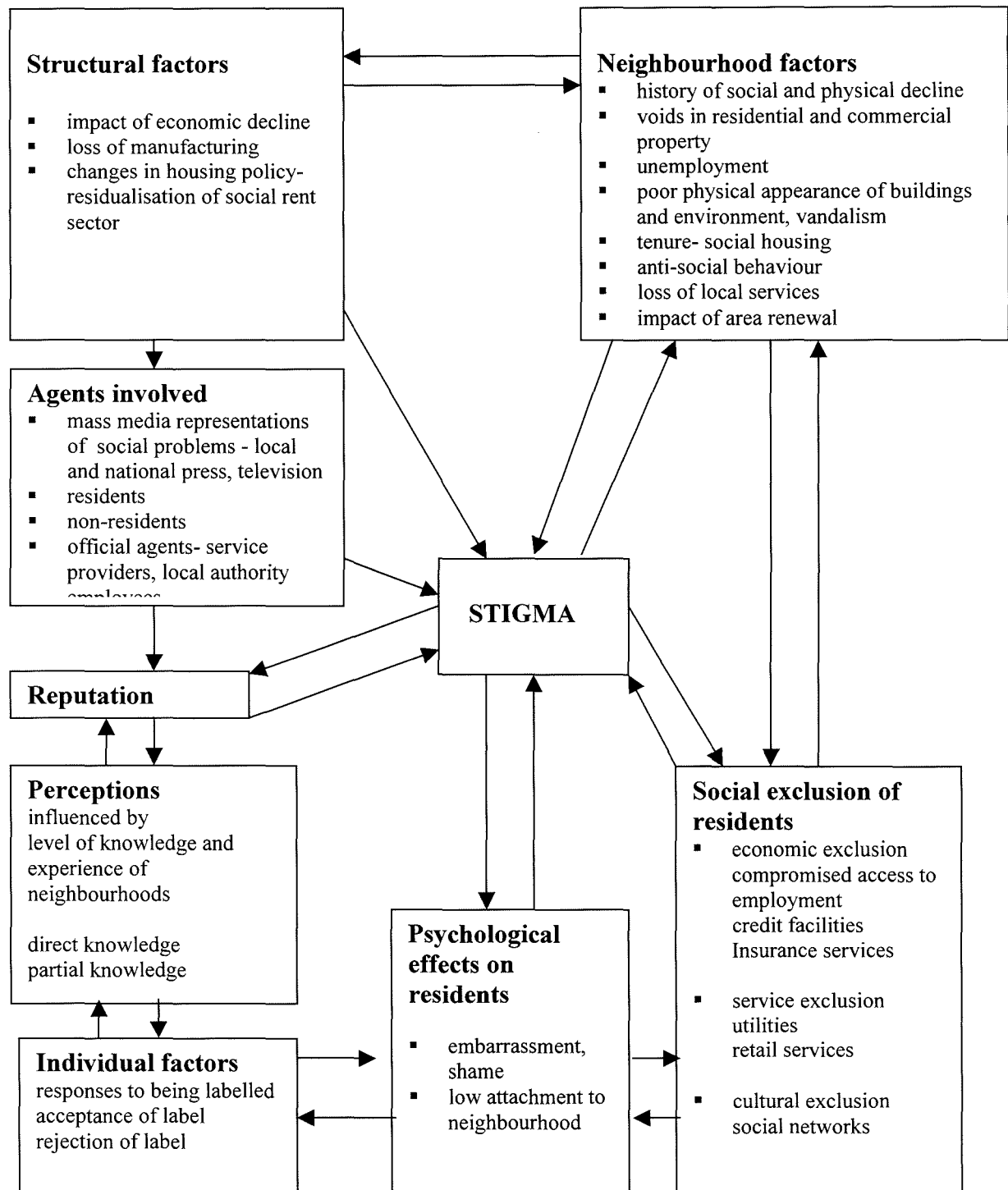
This process is demonstrated in the chain of events that led to the Easthill and Westhill estates acquiring their negative reputation. It is apparent that the poor reputation of both estates was generated through a process involving the combined economic, physical and social decline of these locations. The two neighbourhoods did not start off with a negative reputation, it is clear that originally, both locations were widely regarded as popular places to live and held in high esteem by residents and non-residents alike. Both estates acquired their reputation as places of trouble within a few years of their development. This was initially a result of economic decline that had a local impact and produced high levels of unemployment. This led to changes in the social composition of the areas that exacerbated the disadvantage and stigma of the estates. Disturbances from anti-social neighbours became a problem for residents and this also conveyed the estates as problem places. The movement out of a large number of families left many empty properties and exacerbated the process of general decline taking place in the physical environment and was a further, significant factor in producing negative reputation and stigma. For instance, visible signs of decline such as vandalism and empty housing were found to be an important influence on how residents and non-residents felt towards the neighbourhoods. As a consequence of these combined factors, residents of both neighbourhoods became negatively labelled through their association with the place.

The estates' physical and social deterioration corresponds directly with a long process of wider economic change and a major shift in housing policy. This is evident over a thirty-year period where the social rented sector has increasingly represented a far narrower range of socio-economic composition of households than in the past. Increasing polarisation has emerged between tenures and social housing has become residualised, more often providing for those of lower socio-economic status (Lee and Murie, 1997). This situation has been compounded by the impact of economic change. For instance, a decline in manufacturing employment has taken place in the

United Kingdom since the 1960s, and by the 1980s economic recession had accelerated (Pacione 1997). These changes exerted an uneven impact so that disadvantage and stigma have taken on an increasing spatial nature. The socio-economic polarisation between tenures and geographical areas has been reinforced through the sale of better quality housing to owner-occupiers in more desirable locations. This has also contributed towards the changing profile of social housing in general and as a result, the tenure has become increasingly associated with low status.

The processes involved are summarised in Diagram 1. This provides a representation of the various components involved in the generation of neighbourhood reputation and stigma. The diagram illustrates the interplay between individual, structural and local factors that contribute to the process. It also depicts stigma in its capacity to impact on existing disadvantage, thus highlighting the mutually reinforcing aspect of the factors involved. The process of events is also represented in a continuous flow and illustrates the perpetuating nature of stigma. For instance, although decline and disadvantage are important underlying factors in producing negative reputation and stigma, these factors are also outcomes of the process. Stigma is a powerful influence in conveying perceptions of neighbourhoods as 'no go' areas and this can increase their unpopularity, in turn perpetuating their stigma and social and economic exclusion from the wider city.

Diagram 1: Factors influencing neighbourhood stigma

Structural factors

- impact of economic decline
- loss of manufacturing
- changes in housing policy-residualisation of social rent sector

Neighbourhood factors

- history of social and physical decline
- voids in residential and commercial property
- unemployment
- poor physical appearance of buildings and environment, vandalism
- tenure- social housing
- anti-social behaviour
- loss of local services
- impact of area renewal

Agents involved

- mass media representations of social problems - local and national press, television
- residents
- non-residents
- official agents- service providers, local authority

STIGMA

Reputation

Perceptions

influenced by
level of knowledge and experience of neighbourhoods

direct knowledge
partial knowledge

Psychological effects on residents

- embarrassment, shame
- low attachment to neighbourhood

Social exclusion of residents

- economic exclusion compromised access to employment credit facilities Insurance services
- service exclusion utilities retail services
- cultural exclusion social networks

Individual factors

responses to being labelled
acceptance of label
rejection of label

Although this situation is repeated in many urban areas in the United Kingdom, it is evident that the experience of industrial decline and especially dependency on manufacturing made Dundee more vulnerable to the transition to a service economy. As explained in Chapter Four, the shift from manufacturing to service employment was a prominent feature of Dundee's economy and experience of high unemployment. Further, the city demonstrates higher levels of social housing, unemployment and a loss of economically active population than is found nationally. However, the extent to which the experience of disadvantage and stigma of the case study estates has been compounded by the distinct socio-economic features and history of the city is not entirely clear. It is apparent that the socio-economic profiles of both estates remain compromised. For example, as was illustrated in Chapter Four, both neighbourhoods have higher levels of unemployed and benefit-dependent households than are found in the city as a whole. This feature has also contributed to the estates' poor reputations. Additionally, it is clear that the changes outlined above have exerted a cumulative effect and the concentration of problems and decline has perpetuated the neighbourhoods disadvantage and stigma.

Stigma clearly has a strong spatial element and this was found in relation to specific locations within the neighbourhoods. It is evident that despite social housing being increasingly associated with stigma, not all social housing is stigmatised, run down or unpopular. Rather these characteristics are concentrated in the most disadvantaged and poorest areas. Prior to regeneration activities, in both Easthill and Westhill small pockets of very unpopular areas were evident. These locations for example had more vandalised housing and more concentrations of lower economic status households. It is significant that these concentrations were an important focus for the construction of internal and external perceptions. Likewise, these locations were also the site of problems such as noisy neighbours as well as being socio-economically disadvantaged. Although a general decline has taken place in the social housing sector, this being partially a consequence of policy changes that have led to residualisation of social housing, the problems associated with decline have been intensified in less popular locations. This finding is contrary to Griffith's (1975) rather sweeping statement that stigma is a feature of all council estates. Other studies refer to stigmatisation of social housing estates as a general trend, for example in White's (1998) study of Parisian neighbourhoods where he regards stigma to be a

dominant feature of the social housing. This notion is also asserted in Dean and Hastings study of poor neighbourhood image where they refer to the British trend 'stigmatisation of social renting in general' (2000, p2).

This aspect of the research findings clarifies the features that produce neighbourhood stigma and illustrates the impact of changes in the wider economic and political sphere as they interact with local features to produce complex problems. Neighbourhood stigma is certainly an issue that is present within specific areas of social housing where social housing is the predominant tenure rather than in social housing per se`. Neighbourhood stigma is essentially found in locations made unpopular through decline and where existing social and material disadvantage is a feature.

The research findings also show that the stigmatisation of residents is invariably a consequence of living in a stigmatised neighbourhood. That is, poor neighbourhood reputation was found to predispose residents to stigma rather than residents producing the stigmatisation of a neighbourhood. From the research on Easthill and Westhill, the situation was found where incoming residents with urgent needs had been housed in undesirable areas of the estates and these areas were frequently cited as posing a problem for both of the estates, particularly in terms of contributing to the neighbourhoods' negative reputation. However, stigma predated these incomers and the labelling of the estate can be traced back to its long history of decline. This aspect of the research departs from Damer's (1992) suggestion that neighbourhood stigma is a consequence of stigmatised residents. In his study of the Blackhill estate in Glasgow, Damer found that the negative reputation of the estate had been acquired as a result of stigmatised residents who were decanted from 'slum' locations as part of a clearance programme. Likewise, Gill's (1977) study of the stigmatised Luke Street in Liverpool explains that an influx of problem tenants was a crucial factor in producing the poor reputation of the neighbourhood. My own research illustrates that while 'problem neighbours' contribute in a large way to negative neighbourhood perceptions they are not the principal factor in predisposing a neighbourhood to poor reputation and stigma. Invariably, residents acquire stigma from their place of residence, rather than being the primary source of neighbourhood stigma. Evidence

from my own research points to the finding that 'Problem' residents become problematic through their association with 'problem' estates.

It is clear that stigma generated from neighbourhood decline reinforces the process of decline and this in turn, perpetuates stigma. Once poor reputation and stigma become established however, this exacerbates the experience of disadvantage. Stigma generates negative images of a neighbourhood that reinforces the idea that location is problematic and run down, and increases its unpopularity. This finding represents an important aspect of the relationship between decline and stigma. Essentially, this relationship is complex and involves a spiral of decline and stigma where each of these components is reinforced. The process of decline also contributes towards the socio-economic and physical separation of neighbourhoods from the wider city. This reinforces their position as being economically and perceptually different from other locations in the city, thereby reinforcing their stigmatised reputation. This issue is a crucial point in terms of approaching the regeneration of stigmatised estates. That is, the interconnected nature of problems that give rise to stigma highlights the importance of tackling poor neighbourhood image as an integral part of holistic renewal. This points to the value of interventions that include physical, economic and social measures. The role of area regeneration in tackling stigma is discussed in more detail the following chapter.

7.2   The formation of negative neighbourhood images

Neighbourhood perceptions

The research demonstrates that in addition to physical and social decline, perceptual activity represents a critical component within the formation of negative neighbourhood image and stigma. The findings clearly show that external perceptions contribute significantly to the way people understand neighbourhoods. It was found that external perceptions of the neighbourhoods represent a powerful vehicle for the construction of the estates as problem areas that house problem people. External perceptions were also found to be dependent upon experiences. For example, in instances where non-residents held understandings based on visits to the estates,

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perceptions reflected more accurate representations of the estates. Perceptions were also based upon reality, for instance there is little doubt that the poor physical condition of both locations and the presence of problems such as vandalism generated an external view of the estates as 'problem' locations. In this respect, in some cases there was a justification for negative perceptions in that these actually reflected situations found in the estates.

A key finding is the discrepancy that exists between external perceptions and the lived experience of the estates. Although most informants were highly aware of the poor reputation of both neighbourhoods there was a striking difference between residents' perceptions and those held by non-residents. A significant point is that those living outside the estates had more fixed, negative perceptions of the estates than were found inside the estates. Many outsiders made no distinction in respect to different locations or social mix and general diversity within the neighbourhoods. An interesting aspect of this perceptual activity is evident in the presence of idealised or in some cases imagined notions of what might be found in the estates in terms of residents' behaviour. For instance, external perceptions were commonly based on the belief that the estates were places of trouble and predominantly housed anti social residents. One resident who believed that residents had all been 'tarred with the same brush' explained this situation succinctly.

This highlights a further problematic issue involving the vague and potentially unreliable aspect of non-resident's sources of knowledge about the estates. It was clear that in the absence of direct experience, knowledge was gained through reporting of events that had taken place in the estates. This point is illustrated in the analogy made by one professional informant who explained that stories conveyed about the estate involve a process of 'Chinese whispers'. News of events taking place involves distortion and this partial and very often negative information remains as an important reference point for understanding estates. This sheds light on why many non-residents explained the estates in terms of stereotypical ideas that homogenised the neighbourhoods into unitary wholes based on what they believed to be general characteristics of the estates and residents. To many outsiders, the neighbourhoods were viewed as places of decay and trouble, housing 'problem' people. According to some non-residents, the case study locations were the same as any other 'run down'

estate in the city and elsewhere, these informants projected attributes of what they understood as typical problem estates on to Easthill and Westhill.

This finding supports early labelling perspectives of stigma and reinforces an important attribute of its broader nature. For example, Goffman (1963) illustrates the difference that exists between an individual's 'virtual and actual identity' (1963 p12); from this stance, what is believed about an individual does not necessarily correspond to reality. This finding also emerges in research conducted by Armstrong and Wilson (1973), Foster et al (1996) and Dean and Hastings (2000). In these studies, non-residents' perceptions were found to diverge with residents' accounts. What this research points to is that the basis for stigma has a tendency to be vague and external perceptions are often founded on very limited information. External perceptions are inherently prone to distortion, that is, negative images are produced in the absence of direct experience of the neighbourhoods. In this vacuum of knowledge, alternative, competing explanations are utilised in order to understand stigmatised neighbourhoods. External images are often negative and judgmental, in many cases it is evident that these problematic images prevail over positive images and have greater resonance. This issue is discussed later in the current chapter when the mass media's role in contributing to neighbourhood images is discussed.

The tendency for stigmatised locations to be understood in terms of a perceived homogeneity reinforces key assumptions made in other studies. For example, Damer (1972) asserts that disadvantaged estates are understood primarily as being homogenous on the basis of perceived types of people and their 'problem' behaviour. Damer suggests that this homogenisation is a political concept and is central to how estates are understood in the public domain. This reinforces their perceived status as 'dangerous places' (p17). Like Damer, Mooney (1999) explains the representation of 'problem' estates in stereotypical, preconceived ways in terms of a dominant politically based ideology that reinforces these places as sites of 'urban disorder' (p73). It is clear however that the findings of this research differ from these perspectives on a major point. For example, the formation of negative perceptions was not found to be the product of a systematic activity based on ideological control. From my own research, although perceptual activity is obviously a pervasive aspect of social life in the estates and wider city it was also found to be dynamic and most

informants carried out labelling that even if it was not in every case problematic, it had the potential to be harmful to others. Essentially, the negative labelling of neighbourhoods and residents is not the preserve of those with superior wealth or political power but is conducted by individuals from a variety of backgrounds and circumstances. There is no evidence that points to the labelling and stigmatisation of neighbourhoods and residents as being a systematic activity. This point is an issue that will be revisited in the following paragraphs.

7.3 The social actors involved in creating and maintaining stigmatising labels

This study also identifies those responsible for perpetuating poor image and carrying out stigmatising activities. The social actors involved in this process constitute a broad range of individuals. Estate residents, non-residents, housing officials, retail staff, service providers, local and national press were all found to play an important role in maintaining the negative reputation and stigma of neighbourhoods. However, although a majority of individuals are involved in this process, it was found that their level of involvement in the process varied. Likewise the motivation and outcome of their various activities is an important aspect of the stigmatisation process. Activities that were found to stigmatise included referring to locations and residents in negative and stereotypical ways, although this also involved active discrimination and disadvantage that was conducted overtly as well as through more subtle means. The negative disadvantage associated with stigma is discussed in the second section of this chapter when its role in influencing exclusion is the highlighted.

Evidence from the case studies shows that in the majority of cases activities that stigmatise are carried out with no intention to cause harm. Essentially, most people at some point label others in negative ways, however, the extent to which this is a problem varies and it is clear that stigmatisation becomes a serious issue when residents' quality of life is compromised. This includes instances where residents felt ashamed, threatened or were financially disadvantaged as an outcome of being labelled in negative, stereotypical ways. This aspect of the research reinforces one of

the main components of the 'classic' labelling perspective as found in the work of Goffman (1963) and Becker (1963). In this approach, the activity of labelling and stigmatisation is ultimately explained as a social function that distinguishes between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. From this perspective, although the regulation of social norms can sometimes involve active control of others it does not necessarily take this route. However, the very nature of the categorisation process involves distinguishing and marking out places and people as different. This activity is inherently problematic because of its tendency to focus on the negative attributes of those who are stigmatised. It is clear that deviation from established norms is the accepted standard from which difference is gauged. Neighbourhoods viewed in terms of distinct features such as physical signs of decay or problem residents whether based upon actual experience or perceived ideas are a prime focus for this process of labelling.

Institutional based stigma

From the research findings, stigma was found to be more problematic when it was carried out by institutional actors such as service providers who are able to exert a negative influence over the well being of residents. It is clear that service personnel and local authority officials play an important part in the stigmatisation of residents. These individuals made decisions that affected resident's daily experiences in serious ways. This involved categorising residents and judging them in a highly subjective manner that could exclude them from the housing market and other services such as retail and credit facilities. This also involved making subjective evaluations of residents based on unofficial criteria. In a few cases employees categorised residents according to the presence of negative attributes such as speech that they regarded as being inferior, or in terms of being unemployed and in receipt of state benefit. A few staff expressed their contempt towards residents who they believed were 'playing the system'. These were people who were in many ways regarded as 'problem residents' by consistently appearing at the office 'demanding' service.

In some cases however, service providers were found to label residents as a whole in response to having received verbal abuse from a minority of residents. These

situations had influenced staff expectations of, and their general approach towards, residents. In this aspect of stigma, some service providers were found to legitimise their discriminatory approach by explaining that they had encountered problems of harassment from residents in the past. There was also a practical basis for discriminating between specific areas; this was the case where some service personnel explained that their work involved coming into contact with potential hazards, such as hypodermic needles or aggressive behaviour. In these cases service personnel explained that estate residents had harassed them and had prevented them from carrying out their work in the estates. In some instances, service managers had responded in specific ways by designating some estates as 'two man' areas thereby stigmatising the estates in an official capacity.

In one sense this finding provides some justification for service providers to have negative views towards residents. Although this activity was regarded by service staff to be grounded in the reality of experience of the locations, this was also based partly upon generalisations, in some instances involving stereotyping whole areas according to expected behaviour with little exception made for the presence of variety or individual cases. This issue is raised in White's (1998) research where he explains that the designation of problem estates in terms of their 'no go' status is thought to be necessary by officials and service personnel. Although some categorisation or indicator is no doubt required in order to identify the presence and scale of potential problems, this has the potential to exacerbate the already negative image existing of an area and the stigmatisation experienced by residents.

In Easthill and Westhill the perceptions of some service providers did not match the lived reality of residents and in many cases these did not take account of positive change in the neighbourhoods. In the research it was clear that in a number of cases service personnel had formed their impressions of the neighbourhoods and residents as a result of their contact with some of the more problematic aspects of the estates. The evaluation of the estates was made primarily upon minority behaviour and this generalisation was misleading and distorted understandings of the estates. This issue was found by Gill (1977) for instance who explains that the nature of official's work means that these individuals are perhaps more likely to have frequent contact with a limited, unusual, biased sample of the neighbourhood as opposed to a wider

representation of its residents. As was found in my own research, it is invariably the negative aspects of residents that have more resonance with service providers. Stigmatising labels are tenacious and once a problem resident is identified as such by service staff it is likely that subsequent interactions will be viewed in a problematic manner.

In Easthill and Westhill, many service personnel viewed the process of labelling the estates and residents in negative ways as an unproblematic activity; these individuals did not recognise their actions as being detrimental to residents. In one remarkable instance, a professional informant explained that as part of her assessment of tenants, she had judged them by the cleanliness of their house windows. This example refers to an almost trivial activity yet it has important ramifications because it represents an institutional aspect of the labelling process. In a formal capacity, this official had used subjective criteria in her evaluation of tenants and was essentially based upon moral standards. This largely moralistic basis for the judgment of residents has been found in other neighbourhood studies. For instance, this ties in particularly with Foster et al's (1994) research where housing personnel were found to be judgmental and focused mainly on negative attributes of residents. For instance, in their study, housing personnel were found to focus on the estate's serious issues and talk in emotive ways about crime when matters such as littering presented more of a problem for residents. A similar situation is evident in Gray's (1979) study into housing allocation where it was found that housing managers were actively involved in the 'aggressive and abusive treatment' of tenants. In his study the council routinely used 'informal practices' such as negative discrimination in their decisions to allocate homes to tenants (p206). In Gray's approach, as a scarce resource, the allocation of housing requires the use of additional informal mechanisms whereby potential tenants are assessed.

My research shows that stigmatisation is frequently carried out in an institutional context and is problematic for residents. However whether this represents a formal, systematic enterprise is not conclusive. There was limited evidence from the case studies to assert that institutional actors actively promoted the systematic use of negative attitudes, discriminatory behaviour and poor service in their organisations. It is evident that institutional stigma involves the activity of individual actors within an

institutional setting rather than carrying out official policy that labels and discriminates against service users. Negative discrimination carried out on the basis of poor reputation was primarily an individual activity. In addition, generally, the involvement of individual actors was unwitting rather than being a desire to disadvantage others.

As was mentioned earlier in this chapter, in some instances, stigmatising labels can be used to discriminate against residents and potentially cause harm. The research found that residents were disadvantaged as a result of being labelled and negatively discriminated. This negative attribute of stigma is also found in 'classic' labelling approaches. For instance, as well as accepting the presence of social labels as an accepted aspect of human interaction, Becker (1963) acknowledges that rule making and law enforcement can maintain social status and justify the use of power. As he points out, 'rules tend to be applied more to some persons than others' (p12). An important aspect of the labelling process involves 'moral entrepreneurs' furthering their own cause by highlighting deviance and responding to this by punishment. In spite of labelling and stigma being generally an unproblematic enterprise, it has an inherent potential for negative discrimination and disadvantage, stigma can be used as a means of social control. This point is echoed by Goffman (1963) who in spite of his general uncritical approach acknowledges that labelling has been historically carried out with a vested interest in social control. As identified in the literature review, both Goffman and Becker's perspectives are unclear when it comes to providing details of the circumstances under which negative discrimination takes place.

My own research findings are clearer in this respect and illustrate the ways in which labels are used in a spatial context. That is, although generally unproblematic and used to make sense of social situations, negative labels (that are to a large extent subject to distortion) can be adopted to judge and potentially influence others. As was illustrated stigmatising attitudes and language from institutional personnel were found to exert a negative impact and this can translate into behaviours that exclude residents. For example, negative perceptions and attitudes of service personnel such as utility staff can be a deterrent for these individuals conducting business in some locations. This reinforces the understanding of stigma as an important determinant of the quality of experience of neighbourhood life. (This issue is discussed later in this chapter

where the disadvantaging aspects of stigma are addressed). However, it is unlikely that residents are labelled systematically and no evidence was found that conclusively points to stigmatisation as a conscious activity with an express aim of social control.

This aspect of neighbourhood stigma is again, in direct contrast to the conflict orientated perspective offered by Damer (1972, 1989, 1982) who views the labelling of neighbourhoods and residents as being structured into society. A general characteristic of his approach is that labelling neighbourhoods as deviant places is a systematic, politically motivated activity. In terms of the rationale for labelling, Damer clearly places blame with the state and asserts that this activity is essentially a means of perpetuating class divisions and maintaining social control. Arguably, Damer's perspective portrays residents as pawns in a political game. In his approach, residents are represented as being static and subject to one ultimate outcome that is invariably negative. From my research, it was found that although stigmatisation of neighbourhoods has an obvious structural basis in the way that economic change has clearly impacted upon estates, this is not the dominant factor within the process of neighbourhood stigmatisation. It is clear that the process of labelling and its outcome is dependent upon the interplay between individual agency and social structure. This point is illustrated where residents were found to negotiate stigma in a number of ways by rejecting or accepting their neighbourhood's poor image. My work points to the process of neighbourhood labelling and stigma as being dynamic and that poor reputation is capable of change, it does not necessarily result in a negative outcome. This point is discussed in more detail in the last section of this chapter.

However, this aspect of stigma highlights a problematic yet important research finding. There is a clear disparity between the accounts of residents and service providers in respect to the institutional context of stigma. This is highlighted in situations where local employers regarded stigma to be a problem for estate residents yet the same officials refuted any suggestion that they would actively discriminate against residents. At the same time, residents believed that their 'bad address' would exclude them when applying for employment. Likewise, many residents provided examples of having encountered poor service from rude housing, service and retail staff. In these cases residents did not just feel they were given less priority, they also

believed that they were singled out and disadvantaged because of their stigmatised address.

More so, some professional informants acknowledged that stigma could be a serious issue for residents and lead to disadvantage, however no informant admitted responsibility for this. This issue is made more significant in light of the finding that a minority of officials stated 'off the record' that although stigmatisation of residents was not an official activity, it was accepted within their organisation. In these apparently covert stigmatising activities, the exact role played by informants was more difficult to establish, mainly due to a reluctance to openly discuss involvement in activities that could disadvantage residents. Examining this aspect of stigma is inherently problematic and obscures the actual extent of negative discrimination as a consequence of neighbourhood reputation. This is a crucial point to make and has implications not only for a clearer understanding of the dynamics of poor neighbourhood reputation and stigma, but also for further research into this social phenomenon.

The role of mass media in contributing to negative neighbourhood images

Mass media such as local and national press were found to be an important contributor to reinforcing poor neighbourhood image within and outside the estates. Informants from all categories believed that the press at a local and national level had a crucial role in conveying knowledge of the neighbourhoods. In many cases, those who lived outside the estates explained that press reports had contributed greatly to their own perceptions of the neighbourhoods and in their understanding of other neighbourhoods. While a few informants believed that local press reports of problems such as crime were 'just telling it like it is' most informants believed that press coverage did not reflect reality. A significant feature is that in many cases, informants from all categories believed that press reports involved exaggeration and unnecessary negative coverage when it came to conveying events taking place in the estates.

A key finding to emerge from the research of Easthill and Westhill is that local knowledge is closely bound with knowledge in the public domain. It was found that individuals utilise various, connected aspects of information in their understandings and explanations of stigmatised neighbourhoods. This understanding (or misunderstanding) can be generated from sources including local and national press and television that report events taking place in the wider context of city and society. In addition, understandings are subject to a significant level of distortion. Images become assimilated into the formation of a mental schema of place and people. This schema or representation is drawn upon to explain disadvantaged neighbourhoods in general. These influence expectations and assumptions made about stigmatised neighbourhoods and the people who live there. An important outcome of this process is that in the absence of alternative explanations, the prevalence of negative imagery can influence general perceptions of how some social issues and disadvantaged areas are understood.

As was discussed earlier in this chapter the grouping together of the city's estates according to perceived similarities was a common activity among non-resident informants. In these cases, the neighbourhoods were primarily understood in terms of being run down, 'typical' or 'problem' estates. This activity involved the construction of stereotypical conceptions of neighbourhoods and their residents and in many cases the estates were referred to in terms of 'that type' of place, and that a specific 'kind' of people were expected to live there. In addition, informants' narratives of the estate's problems also reflected the influence of popular understandings of neighbourhood issues. This was found in informant's use of terminology that is present in public discourse that in turn, contribute to representations of problem neighbourhoods. The common usage of words such as 'ghetto' and 'war-zone' was evident. Although the mass media is not the only source of terminology such as that described, the frequency of this descriptive language being used is significant. Likewise, this type of language was raised voluntarily and in the absence of being prompted in an interview situation. This issue is also demonstrated in the situation where non-residents drew upon reports of crime statistics and drug abuse that had taken place in Dundee as a whole in their assumptions about the estates, to these residents the estates were typical places of drug activity. In these instances

perceptions were far removed from the reality of the estates and this emphasises the tendency for images to be subject to distortion.

These findings reflect issues highlighted in previous neighbourhood studies, for instance, Cole and Smith (1996) found that perceptions of crime in the Bell Farm estate were influenced by the general fear of crime in society. For instance, media reporting of crime via television and newspapers intensified the awareness of crime locally. Although measures to improve safety had been taken place in the estate, fear of crime remained. Similarly, in Dean and Hastings (2000) study of neighbourhood stigma, the role of mass media was also a crucial factor in producing ingrained negative perceptions of the Pilton estate in Edinburgh. This was found to be a direct result of the portrayal of the estate as a place of crime and drug culture in the novel and film *Trainspotting*. A further example of the relationship between local and wider sources of knowledge can be drawn from the emphasis upon behavioural explanations of disadvantage that constituted a prevailing understanding in the late 1980s / early 1990s. For example, this approach was typified in Murray's (1990) conception of the underclass as being a product of individual preference to opt for benefit dependency rather than find employment. This moralistic approach was reflected in government policy that targeted the 'problem' of welfare dependent single mothers. This group was simultaneously singled out and demonised in the mass media and in turn, influenced popular understandings of this aspect of disadvantage.

More recently, the influence of media images is demonstrated in the issue of anti-social neighbours that has been highlighted as a concern in many Scottish neighbourhoods. At the same time this issue was reflected in recent policy interventions such as the Anti-Social Behaviour Order that targets and penalises anti social tenants. It is interesting however to note that the emergence of this issue also corresponds with a media focus on problem youth, as expressed in the concern over a perceived growth of 'Ned' culture. This issue has been prominent within recent political discourse and has received extensive, perhaps disproportionate media coverage in Scotland. There may be cases when youth are a source of neighbourhood complaints however, the use of specific terminology such as ned, carries negative connotations and negatively influences understandings of the much debated issue of anti social behaviour.

From the research of Easthill and Westhill the contribution of the mass media in influencing knowledge of stigmatised neighbourhoods is clearly implicated. It is evident that the press, radio and television all had a crucial role to play in the labelling of the neighbourhoods as places of dereliction and trouble. These media have a capacity to distort the nature and extent of the problems experienced in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Stereotypical representations of 'problem' estates can provide a specific focus that can be utilised as a readily accessible explanation and in some cases a scapegoat for attributing blame for social problems. As was suggested earlier in the chapter, in a wider context mass media is generally understood as being an important institution within society and is influential in informing public understandings of social issues. However, unlike the conflict based perspectives of Cohen (1972), Hall et al (1978) and Armstrong and Wilson (1973) there is limited evidence in my own study to suggest that the media's activity is a means of social control that is structured into society. Armstrong and Wilson's study is interesting in that it highlights the mass media's role in distorting events in Easterhouse. Their study also points to the complexity of media messages and how these are applied in public understandings of 'problem' neighbourhoods. Unlike my own research however, their study remains overly deterministic in respect to the importance given to the mass media's role in 'creating' the estate as a site of deviance as well as in shaping the negative outcome of this activity. This is seen in their over emphasis upon the power of the mass media in dictating the outcome of labelling activity. There is also an underlying assumption in their study that residents are powerless victims at the mercy of mass media imagery. According to Armstrong and Wilson, the labelling process determined the fate of the Easterhouse estate, it seems that no other outcome was possible after the press became involved in the estate's problems.

There is little doubt that the media can set the agenda for what becomes a public issue by publicising events and as a result this generates public concern. However, it is unlikely that this represents a politically motivated activity. For example, the findings from Easthill and Westhill strongly suggest that the press and media reports involve a process of influence rather than obvious control. This finding diverges with the conflict-based perspectives previously mentioned. For example, although the media has a vested interest in exaggerating news reports to sell news it is doubtful whether

their primary aim is to cause harm. The mass media is one of many social actors involved in the labelling process and although it has a crucial role to play this agent was not found to be singularly responsible for stigmatising the estates and residents. Like other social actors involved in conducting stigmatising activities, the role of this institution and its motivation was generally found to be an inadvertent activity. Despite stigmatising neighbourhoods and residents by negative news reporting their activity is not a conscious strategy to disadvantage residents. This point also returns to the issue of responses to media images and it is clear that residents and some non-residents are capable of rejecting news stories and equally able to judge negative stories as being inaccurate. The mass media is an important contributor to influencing neighbourhood images. However, it is also clear that further research into this aspect of labelling process would be beneficial. This would be necessary in order to fully establish the role this institution plays in the conceptualisation of the 'problem' estate in the public domain. This latter point is revisited in the following chapter and is discussed in terms of its role in regeneration initiatives aimed at tackling poor image.

7.4   Stigma and social exclusion

It was clear from the research that a majority of informants had encountered stigma in some form at some point and in the absence of direct experience residents would relate instances from friends, family or neighbours. Stigma was found to be an important contributor to the experience of disadvantage and exclusion in both estates. The poor reputation of both neighbourhoods influenced residents' participation in significant areas of their social life, including access to employment, financial services and provision of utilities. Stigma also exerted a psychological / emotional impact on residents and had a strong influence on resident's feelings towards the neighbourhood, themselves and other residents.

The psychological impact of neighbourhood stigma

Stigma was an important factor in influencing the way residents felt about their neighbourhood. For example, residents were aware that in the eyes of those living outside the estates they were stigmatised through the neighbourhood's poor

reputation. Negative neighbourhood images weakened residents' positive regard for the estate and in turn influenced their level of attachment towards the neighbourhood. An awareness of problems in the estates such as crime, vandalism, noisy neighbours and decline of some locations was a strong indicator of how residents perceived their own neighbourhood. Those from less desirable locations were more likely to express negative feelings and in these cases, residents' regard for their neighbourhood was based on having personally encountered stigma or other problems.

An interesting aspect of this is that negative feelings towards the estates also existed even when residents had not experienced anything problematic about living there. This ties in with the finding that perceptions are largely constructed from diverse sources of information that are additionally subject to distortion. In some cases residents explained that they had been influenced by news and rumours of events such as problem neighbours obtained from neighbours, friends and family. In a few cases, this activity had a significant part to play in providing residents with their understanding of the negative aspects of their neighbourhood. This process had the effect of producing feelings of insecurity and low regard for neighbourhood. In these cases residents expressed their clear dislike for a number of aspects of life on the estates and this accumulated in a sense of negative regard. Although many residents were found to challenge the stigmatising effects of the area's reputation, in a few cases these negative feelings and low levels of attachment were strong enough to generate a desire to leave the estate.

This is an interesting finding and has been documented in other neighbourhood studies. For example, Costa Pinto (2000) found that poor neighbourhood image directly translated into residents' low self-image and low confidence, these feelings represented a barrier for participation in activities and prevented residents from seeing themselves as 'makers of their own destiny' (p17). In her study poor image trapped residents in their disadvantaged situation and negative image was tied into a spiral of decline and despair. Lupton (2003) similarly illustrates the increased instability, conflict and fear linked to stigma and where residents express feelings of having no control over the circumstances in their estate. Her study also highlights a tendency for residents to project blame to other residents as well as blame the authorities for not doing enough to combat the problems.

Although low attachment towards neighbourhood was linked to the poor image of Easthill and Westhill, a more optimistic scenario was generally found than in Costa Pinto's study. As was illustrated, there is little doubt that a strong element of attachment to neighbourhood existed, particularly in long-term residents. In many cases residents who had lived in the estates for several years or more, displayed strong feelings of attachment and positive regard for the area. However although these residents also had an increased involvement with community organisations, this activity alone was not a significant factor in producing a greater degree of attachment. The fact that these residents had remained in the area during periods of decline rather than move away may also indicate their degree of attachment to neighbourhood. Although this last point may also depend to an extent on the opportunities and constraints presented to individual residents as well as representing a simple choice to stay through resident's positive regard for an area. It is likely that long-term residents have a longer period of time which they can develop an attachment to place, this providing more opportunity to build up and maintain connections with other residents. This aspect of the study diverges with research conducted by Lupton (2003) who found that length of residence was less important, her study suggests that networks gained through long-term residence may not represent a significant factor in producing stronger cohesion.

In Easthill and Westhill tenure and socio-economic background were found to be important variables in influencing residents' level of attachment. For example, this was evident in instances where residents who expressed more negative sentiments towards their neighbourhood (such as dissatisfaction with the lack of facilities, social problems in the estate) tended to live in local authority housing and in some instances, in homes provided by housing associations. As was discussed, this issue is also is tied into the spatial concentration of problems that was present in both neighbourhoods, where small pockets of problems were evident in less attractive and disadvantaged areas of both estates. Housing tenure in these areas was predominantly local authority. Similarly, some local authority tenants expressed negative feelings toward the immediate environment and housing that was on some occasions directed towards the estate as a whole. These expressions involved dissatisfaction with the quality of housing and problems with carrying out housing repairs. As outlined earlier, this

situation had been reduced, particularly in Westhill where much of the housing stock had recently been transferred to alternative ownership, although prior to this, problems had generally been regarded as existing in areas of local authority housing.

The significance of tenure in influencing feelings towards the estates corresponds with research conducted by Kenway et al (2002). Their study found that households from lower socio-economic groupings of manual and unskilled backgrounds were more likely to report feelings of insecurity in their neighbourhoods compared to those from professional backgrounds. Similarly, these groups were more likely to express negative attitudes towards their neighbourhood because of problems such as vandalism or young people loitering. This may be a reflection of residence in less desirable locations where poorer quality of environment may be more of an immediate concern.

The finding that those with lower financial incomes appear to be more vulnerable to neighbourhood problems reinforces the suggestion that disadvantage is compounded by existing disadvantage. This provides evidence for the conceptualisation of stigma and other neighbourhood problems as constituting a spiral of disadvantage. Further evidence from the research suggests that psychological / emotional effects also combine with material disadvantage and intensify the impact of exclusion. This reinforces the cumulative effect of neighbourhood problems. It is clear that disadvantage and social exclusion has long been a problem in both estates and resident's low expectations and feelings of low self-esteem were found to exist with other aspects of exclusion. For example, material disadvantage associated with stigmatisation also had a psychological impact. Expressions of shame and embarrassment had resulted from being refused services or having experienced bad service because of a stigmatised address. This issue is also expressed in the finding that resident's low expectations and withdrawal from services was generated from the anticipation of poor service. It was clear that in a few cases residents expected to be faced with stigmatising attitudes and behaviours in their contact with official agencies and service providers. In these instances the experience of having received poor service and negative comments in the past had produced an expectation of low level of services as constituting a normal activity. Low expectations were found in a few

residents and this had contributed in some instances to their withdrawal from some aspects of service provision such as housing repairs.

This finding has been reported in other cases of neighbourhood research. For instance, Wacquant and Wilson's (1993) study into spatial concentrations of disadvantage in the United States highlights the potential for resident's excluded position to be maintained through their low expectations. In their study, resident's expectations were borne out of the lived experience of long-term disadvantage and negative discrimination. This involved resident's anticipating long-term unemployment and dependency on state benefit as a natural outcome of their situation. From the research of Easthill and Westhill expectations of low standards of service were found although in a few cases. It is uncertain whether this aspect of exclusion translated into residents expectations about their anticipation of wider life chances and quality of living in the longer term. This finding clearly points to the disadvantaging aspects of stigma as being complex and potentially self-perpetuating and has implications for tackling these problems. This point is discussed further in the final section of this chapter.

Stigma and material disadvantage: financial and service exclusion

Stigma was a direct contributor to the material disadvantage of the estates and this was evident in its capacity to exclude residents from essential economic resources. The stigmatisation of residents clearly acted as a barrier and prevented access to credit facilities, the property market and in their opportunity to find employment. For instance, in a few cases, residents had been refused services and credit on account of their stigmatised address. Residents were routinely penalised with higher car and home insurance and had inherited poor credit ratings. Residents were unequivocal in their explanation of this activity as being the result of the estate's poor reputation. It seems unlikely that there was an objective justification for this discrimination. This did not reflect a higher level of insurance claims taking place in the estates as a result of criminal activity. It was clear that reported crime had showed a significant decrease in both estates and in the city as a whole. The evidence strongly suggests that this represents an act of discrimination against resident. The uniform categorisation of areas according to their shared postcode does not consider individual circumstances of households such as the likelihood of an individual claim occurring.

The process of buying and selling property highlights a further aspect of economic disadvantage that trapped some owner-occupiers in the least desirable parts of the estates and excluded them from the property market. In Easthill for example, the reputation of specific locations had translated into undesirability and low demand to buy homes in the area. As a result, property prices in these areas were among the lowest in the city. As explained by estate agents, there was great difficulty in selling homes in these specific locations despite a buoyant market being present in the city in general as well as in other locations within the estates. These areas of low demand had been historically associated with many of the estate's problems and the reputation of this location had persisted. However, some of the properties in this location had been bought at a discount price by long-term tenants who experienced difficulty in the re sale of these homes. For instance, these specific areas of the estate were highlighted by many informants as being particularly problematic in respect to physical appearance and the people living there. In addition, these locations had a higher population density with no private garden space. These areas were essentially stigmatised locations within the estates.

Stigma and exclusion from employment

Stigma was also found to exclude residents from the employment market. Although this problem was generally viewed as being less prevalent in recent times, this aspect of exclusion was found to be a key aspect of stigma in the neighbourhoods. A significant number of residents believed that there was an active process of discrimination in play that prevented themselves and others from finding work. In some cases residents had not experienced this directly but related to situations where family members or friends had been rejected from a job application on the basis of the estates reputation. In a few instances however, it was obvious that discriminatory activities were a lived reality. In these cases residents had been turned down in job applications on account of their stigmatised address or postcode.

The awareness of the 'bad name' that both estates had in the city was clearly a disincentive for some residents in applying for advertised posts. For instance, this was evident in the case of some informants who had a fatalistic approach in relation to the outcome of job applications and these residents believed that rejection was inevitable and had become accustomed to expecting this response. In some cases, residents were found to adopt various strategies to over come this problem and used an alternative postal address when completing application forms. In a minority of cases, informants explained that the reputation of the estates could impact upon the experiences of some residents while in employment. For instance, one informant who stated that her employers and some colleagues treated her with less courtesy because she came from Easthill highlights this.

Although this specific finding represented a minority of experiences it remains a significant and problematic issue. Like other aspects of stigma and disadvantage, this finding is associated with some ambiguity. While employers and employment officers maintained that stigma did not constitute a serious disadvantaging factor in excluding residents from employment. Residents had little doubt that their address stigmatised and disadvantaged them in job applications. This point was discussed earlier in the

chapter and is a response found in many service providers. Stigma is clearly acknowledged by many social actors as a problem although few people admit to participation in any activity that might discriminate or stigmatise. This finding is consistent with other studies looking at neighbourhood discrimination and is raised in McGregor et al's (1998) research into employment and training patterns in Scottish regeneration areas. Their study found that while employers stated that residents employed from stigmatised estates made good employees, some employers also believed stigma to be a 'major obstacle' for the reemployment of estate residents. A significant aspect of their study showed that in some cases, employers were reluctant to take on unemployed candidates, particularly the long-term unemployed. This activity is more likely to exert a negative influence against residents in areas where high unemployment is a problem. This point is illustrated in Dean and Hastings (2000) study of three stigmatised British neighbourhoods. Their study showed that specific neighbourhood characteristics such as high unemployment pose difficulties for the employment prospects of residents. For instance, in their case studies Dean and Hastings highlighted the presence of lower than average level of qualifications and unskilled labour that can reinforce the exclusionary impact of stigma.

The presence of high unemployment and distinct lower socio-economic status of the Easthill and Westhill estates clearly impacted upon resident's experiences of disadvantage. An employment and training officer who explained that a skills shortage was a particular problem for the estates residents finding work raised this issue. This was regarded as an important factor that made the estates more vulnerable to unemployment and in facing barriers to retraining. Although employment and training had been long been an integral part of regeneration activities in both neighbourhoods, features such as high unemployment and skills shortages produce more complex problems for residents in accessing work. In addition, the presence of these neighbourhood characteristics may also obscure the impact of stigma weighed against other variables in influencing employment opportunities. This issue is highlighted by Lupton and Power (2002) who explain that intrinsic neighbourhood features such as weak economic position interacts with other problems and contributes to the experience of disadvantage in many neighbourhoods. Distinct features such as low socio-economic position as well as regeneration activity were found to be important variables in producing the patterns of stigmatisation and

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disadvantage that was found in the case studies. This point is developed in more detail in the following section of this chapter.

7.5   Stigma and exclusion: mediating factors

The findings show that stigmatisation involves the interplay between structure and individual agency. A significant point is that the impact of stigma and its potential to disadvantage residents was also mediated by factors existing at both an individual and structural level. For instance, although the experience of exclusion was more intense in those from disadvantaged locations within the estates, the impact of stigma was also influenced by individual resident's ability to respond to negative labels and negotiate these in sophisticated ways. Residents could effectively respond to the neighbourhood's poor reputation by accepting, denying or rejecting negative labels. Residents routinely challenged labels and often dismissed these as irrelevant. In cases where stigma excluded residents from services, residents employed various means of getting around this problem such as using an alternative address. This aspect of the research suggests that residents are proactive rather than passive victims of an overpowering system as portrayed in conflict-oriented perspectives such as Damers (1989). The findings reinforce the suggestion that the activity of stigma and labelling is a dynamic process and does not always result in a negative outcome. The factors involved in mediating the various outcomes are discussed in the following sections.

It is clear that residents' socio-economic circumstances represent an important factor in producing more negative and intense experiences of stigma. It was found that the impact of stigma was more prevalent in residents living in disadvantaged households and less popular areas. Residents living in these locations related more direct and serious experiences of stigma. They were also more likely to hold negative feelings towards their neighbourhood than residents living in more desirable areas of the estates. This point illustrates that although these were a minority of cases, it is clear that those more vulnerable to the negative and disadvantaging effects of stigmatisation are in many respects already socially and economically disadvantaged. This finding reinforces the general understanding found in other studies that stigma is

an important factor in the disadvantage of residents. It is apparent that stigma exerts an unequal impact and it is significant that the experience of stigma was found to be more problematic in disadvantaged locations of the estates. In some cases however it was found that resident's access to services was constrained by the limited provision of services in the neighbourhoods. For instance, as was highlighted earlier in this study, the loss of retail and recreational facilities had taken place in both estates. In a few cases residents reduced use of services was dependent upon the financial ability to pay for regular trips out of the estates to enjoy recreational activities in other parts of the city.

An interesting finding is that there was also a voluntary component evident in some aspects of resident's experience of exclusion. This is apparent from the finding that most residents did not consider their involvement in community groups as being an important aspect of life in the neighbourhood. Despite some concerns that a sense of community had been lost and that the estates were increasingly socially fragmented, most resident and professional informants in both estates still held a strong sense of attachment towards their neighbourhood. Interestingly, this sense of belonging existed in the absence of social networks that were enabled through local activities, family and friends. Although a significant number of informants believed these networks to be important, others did not share this view. It was found that some individuals actively chose not to participate in social activities or to use local retail outlets and services such as the library and community centre. Many residents maintained links beyond the estates in respect of employment, retail and leisure activities. Accessing cultural / recreational amenities for many people involved travelling to other parts of the city. This finding provides some evidence for a trend of residents living independently within the estates. That is, most residents were not dependent upon links within the neighbourhood and did not use local recreational or retail services. For instance, while acknowledging the positive aspects of 'getting on' with their neighbours and stated the importance of community networks, most residents did not feel a personal need to participate in community activities such as formal organisations. Although some neighbourhood workers were aware of this aspect of neighbourhood life and expressed concern that community integration was threatened, most residents did not view this aspect of neighbourhood life as disadvantageous.

The findings suggest that the presence of distinct features of the case studies contributed to the general positive outlook and responses that were evident in the research. For instance, both estates were heterogeneous in many respects and this was evident in terms of housing tenure, socio-economic mix, behaviour and outlook / perceptions found in residents. There was a large degree of stability, positive regard and sense of belonging found in both neighbourhoods. This was found in many residents in spite of the estates having a protracted history of stigma, decline and the long-term presence of problems including high unemployment and concentrated socio-economic disadvantage. This point is highlighted in research conducted by Power (2000) who found that in poor and unpopular estates, neighbourhood functions of providing security and familiarity can still be performed. In my own study, there is little doubt that social problems such as decline, anti social residents and crime co-existed with a large degree of positive regard and social stability. Although the estates had declined and experienced poor reputation and stigma, in most cases these problems did not engulf residents' experience of their neighbourhood. This issue reinforces the suggestion of Groves et al (2003 p49) that some neighbourhoods have the ability to absorb problems partly due to the presence of 'sufficient variety and change... without continuing disorder'. In their study, Groves et al found that social change was incremental rather than acute and the presence of a substantial level of social mix exerted a general positive neighbourhood influence. The situation found in Easthill and Westhill is interesting and offers a challenge to assumptions based on popular notions of 'problem' estates as predominantly involving uncontrolled problems of crime and anti-social neighbours. The prevailing positive attitude was a finding that was in some ways surprising.

There is an obvious link between the general sense of well being of both estates and their history of regeneration. Residents and professionals regarded the regeneration of both estates as being a major vehicle for positive change and this was believed to have contributed to the well being of residents in both estates. Regeneration had obviously produced a marked improvement in the physical and social condition of the estates and had translated into resident's positive regard and expressions of attachment. There was also a strong belief that the estates' image had improved and most informants agreed that the negative aspects of the estates were more intense in the past. The

general, positive outlook found in most residents may be to a significant extent the result of the process of decline and subsequent regeneration taking place over a prolonged period of time in both neighbourhoods. This long-term change is likely to have allowed more time for residents to adjust and accept these changes than would perhaps have been the case in a more rapid and intense experience of change. It is important to interpret this finding in the context of the fact that the research took place at one specific time in the estates history. In this respect, the research findings reflect the impact of the regeneration process. This influence of this factor in influencing the research findings should not be underestimated. It is significant that the two neighbourhoods were at different stages and different degrees of intensity in terms of their regeneration.

There is little doubt that the prevailing, optimistic mood that was more apparent in Westhill was a reflection of the regeneration activity that was underway at the time of the fieldwork being conducted. It is obvious that the positive impact of regeneration was more immediate in this estate. This was a dominant issue in resident's narratives of their neighbourhood experiences. In many cases, resident's positive sentiments were associated with the anticipation of change in the neighbourhood and the opportunity to experience improved living conditions. For example, extensive rebuilding of the estates housing had taken place and the majority of residents were in the process of being re housed in new homes. For most residents, the shift from their flatted property to semi-detached and terraced houses was gladly welcomed. For many residents, this move represented their first opportunity to have a home with its own private garden.

This situation can be compared with Easthill where the regeneration process was not as immediate. Positive sentiments were clearly present in residents although this appeared to be more associated with a greater degree of stability existing in the estate. This is evidently a consequence of Easthill being a larger neighbourhood and the greater socio-economic variety than is found in Westhill. Although regeneration had increased the social mix, it is significant that the estate traditionally had distinct areas of housing that represented stable communities within the wider estate. These locations held long term residents with strong levels of attachment. In some cases, change was viewed as a fact of life after two decades of regeneration activity. There

was also a feeling in residents that things were back to normal after a prolonged period of renewal for instance, the most extensive regeneration was complete although smaller scale activity continued.

The influence of wider structural factors such as economic change is a crucial factor in producing stigma and disadvantage. However, residents actively responded to these problems in ways that were positive. Both estates were found to be socially diverse and there was generally a positive outlook found in residents despite distinct neighbourhood profiles of disadvantage. The presence of positive features points to the favourable outcome of regeneration in creating diverse neighbourhoods. General improvements were clearly evident in both estates although for a minority of residents, the disadvantaging features of stigma remained as a significant problem. Many informants clearly stated that the negative reputation of the neighbourhoods has improved over the years. However, a significant point is that poor reputation and stigma still remains a problematic feature of both estates. This issue is discussed in the following section.

7.6 Neighbourhood stigma as an enduring problem

It is obvious that the impact of neighbourhood stigma has far reaching consequences for residents. Poor image was found to be a pervasive aspect of neighbourhood life and in many instances it posed a problem for residents. In both neighbourhoods, poor image and stigma were well established and had persisted over the last thirty years. The negative reputation of the estates was an ingrained aspect of life in the neighbourhoods and was etched in the minds of many of those living within and outside the estates. It is also striking that poor reputation had endured despite extensive efforts to tackle the root causes of decline and disadvantage. This reflects the capacity of stigma to endure and even after stigmatising features have been corrected individuals and places can remain bound by this. In the case studies, the history of problems and decline remained as a powerful basis and justification for outsiders to label the estates and their residents in negative ways. This finding points to a crucial attribute of stigma and is reinforced in the work of Goffman. For instance,

having been labelled the ensuing negative reputation can outlast the significance of the attribute that originally gave rise to stigma and that subsequent perceptions are interpreted within the confines of the original negative label:

'transformation of the self from someone with a particular blemish into someone with a record of a particular blemish' (1963, p19).

From the case studies, the subsequent modification of negative images is a feature that was clearly problematic in external perceptions of the estates. In many cases images of the estates were fixed. There is a practical basis for this finding, for example problems still existed in respect to trouble with noisy neighbours, crime, vandalism, loss of infrastructure and services such as retail provision. Although it is clear that these issues had been addressed and were a continued aspect of regeneration activity. Regeneration and renewal was a crucial factor in producing an improvement in material and social conditions in both estates. This was also the case in relation to influencing resident's feelings of optimism and positive regard towards the estates. For example, it was found that attachment to place was strong and many residents expressed pride in their neighbourhood. At the same time however, change had also exerted a less optimistic situation and there was some concern present over the loss of community in a few informants.

Both estates were understood as having received their fair share of problems and that the estates had passed through the worst period of decline and negative experiences. Many informants believed that life had changed for the better and was still in the process of improving. This was more so in Westhill where extensive renewal was underway at the time of the fieldwork being conducted. However, a crucial point is that negative experiences were still very much in evidence in both estates. Residents could relate many instances where the negative influence of stigma remained as a serious issue. What is more, its impact was not felt equally and was dependent upon socio-economic status and place of residence. In spite of this, evidence points to the beneficial role of regeneration and this had exerted a positive influence in both of the case studies. For example, the extent of problems and the experience of stigma were widely believed to have been more problematic in the past. It is also significant that many non-residents drew upon out of date and obscure events in the estates' history to

explain their negative perceptions. Many professional and resident informants believed that the problems that gave rise to poor image had been tackled and although stigma remained, its impact was on a reduced scale. These informants were positive that the reputation of the estates had improved over the years and continued to change for the better.

This finding returns once again to the point that was made earlier, namely the variance that was found between internal and external perceptions of the neighbourhoods. There is no doubt that external perceptions lag behind the actual experience of positive change. This is an important issue and has implications for improving neighbourhood image in regeneration activities. These findings point to two main aspects of tackling the problem of poor image, firstly the need to exert change within the estates and secondly to convey this change to those living outside the estates. From the issues highlighted in the research findings there is an obvious benefit in carrying out physical improvements that contribute to better material conditions for residents. This suggests addressing the factors that underpins decline and stigma such as stemming economic and physical decline by improving the economic infrastructure for instance through employment and training measures and promoting local business. These aspects of renewal also have a positive role to play in changing internal images that contribute to building residents self-esteem and positive regard for the estates and other residents. For instance, physical and environmental improvement has an important role to play in correcting the problems that convey decline and negative images to residents.

A second distinct objective to renewal is evident in the importance of improving external images by conveying accurate knowledge of the estates to stake holders outside the neighbourhoods. This would involve the promotion of the estates as attractive places to live and conduct business in. It would be of use aiming this message at potential resident in comers and local service providers. It is also clear that the promotion of change needs to reflect real improvements in the neighbourhoods. In light of the finding that neighbourhood images are created from vague and disparate sources of information this may pose a challenge for tackling poor image and would necessarily involve targeting a wide audience. This activity also points to the input of specialist knowledge relating to mass media as well as

expertise in public relations. The issue of tackling stigma within urban renewal initiatives is discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

Chapter 7   Conclusions

This chapter has provided an insight into the factors involved in producing neighbourhood decline, poor reputation and the ways that stigma affected residents in the Easthill and Westhill estates in Dundee. Several important aspects of neighbourhood stigma have been examined, including its origins; the formation of negative neighbourhood images; the social actors involved in the creation and maintenance of stigmatising labels; and the influence of stigma upon the psychological and material well being of residents.

The impact of broader structural change and economic decline at a city level is a crucial element in contributing to local physical and socio-economic deterioration. This is a key factor in the production of poor neighbourhood reputation within the estates and in the wider city. External perceptions of the neighbourhoods were found to be a crucial component in maintaining estates and residents as problem places and people. However the foundations for these perceptions was based on limited knowledge. A general finding is that residents' neighbourhood experiences were generally positive and involved a greater diversity and heterogeneity than is present in external perceptions. There is a link between local neighbourhood images and popular knowledge in the wider social sphere and these sources of knowledge combined to form images that misrepresented the neighbourhoods as being predominantly places of trouble.

The findings highlight the various social actors involved in maintaining neighbourhood stigma and illustrate their role in the process and the motives behind their activity. In many cases stigmatisation was found to be a routine activity that had no harmful consequences. Residents, non-residents, service providers and mass media were found to contribute to the process and this was manifest in negative remarks, stereotypical judgements and stories that were often inaccurate.

Stigmatisation was found to be more problematic when carried out by individuals who are in a position to make decisions that can affect residents' quality of life. This was the case in terms of local authority employees or service providers who offered a lower standard of service or prevented residents access to services. However, this was not done in a systematic way but rather as an activity of individuals within institutions. This finding is significant and ties into the nature of the labelling process in general. Essentially, labelling and stigmatisation is done in most cases without the intention to cause harm.

The institutional basis of stigma represents an interesting aspect of the findings and it is clear that a discrepancy existed between the accounts of officials and residents. While local employers denied that residents were stigmatised and discriminated against because of the estates poor reputation, residents believed that stigma was a real problem that disadvantaged them in job applications. This issue is made more problematic in the finding that although some employers and council officials acknowledged that stigmatisation of residents was commonplace, none of these informants admitted personal responsibility for this activity. A minority of informants were more likely to speak candidly about this activity in an informal context rather than in an interview situation. This is also significant and points to the need for further investigation of this aspect of stigmatisation

The impact of poor reputation and the disadvantaging experiences of stigma has been a central concern, and stigma was found to be a crucial element in reinforcing social exclusion. It is clear that stigma exerts a psychological impact on residents as well as having an important influence over their material disadvantage. Poor neighbourhood reputation affected resident's feelings towards their neighbourhood and was also an important barrier in terms of gaining credit and insurance facilities and financial and service exclusion and from employment opportunities. The negative impact of stigma was more problematic in respect to those who were already disadvantaged and vulnerable. It is evident that stigma interacts with existing disadvantage to exert a more negative influence.

The findings reflect the interaction between the individual and wider changes in the political and economic sphere in creating the dynamics of neighbourhood decline and stigma. It is clear that the impact of stigma is influenced by factors that exist both within the estates and beyond. In addition to the presence of disadvantage that made the impact of stigma more intense, it was found that resident's ability to negotiate negative labels in positive ways also mediated the outcome of being stigmatised. This aspect of the findings shows that neighbourhood stigmatisation is a dynamic process with a variety of outcomes. This is a significant point to make and is in contrast to theoretical models that emphasise the social control aspects of neighbourhood labelling and stigma such as Damer (1972,1989,1992) and Mooney (1999). A more optimistic scenario was found in a few significant aspects of the research. This is the case in respect to the finding that labelling is not a politically motivated or systematic activity.

Likewise, although the mass media is an important player within the production of negative images its role was not found to be as instrumental as in the accounts provided by Cohen (1972), Armstrong and Wilson (1973) and Hall et al (1978). These approaches suggest that once labelled, a neighbourhood's reputation and the stigma of residents is a fait accompli. In these approaches labelling appears to take on a life of its own, separate from the social actors involved who have no control over the process or outcome. Labelling was not found to be a one-way process and does not necessarily result in a one-way route to disadvantage and disorder. Responses to stigmatising labels are diverse and residents can actively negotiate and respond to these in positive ways by rejecting, dismissing them as irrelevant. In addition, a substantial level of stability and optimism was found to co exist with poor reputation and stigma.

A further significant finding is that although negative neighbourhood images are based on diverse sources of information and endure they can also be changed. The findings present a more optimistic scenario than found in many other neighbourhood studies. This point also reinforces the dynamism of the processes involved. Stigma is a significant problem but as explained, residents can negotiate it in positive ways. In addition, poor reputation and stigma can also be tackled by regeneration measures aimed at improving the underlying cause of decline and negative perceptions can be

modified. This finding also points to potential strategies for improving poor neighbourhood image and a central aspect of this involves conveying knowledge of positive change in order to influence external perceptions. It is clear that regeneration activity exerted a positive influence in both neighbourhoods. This had a significant impact on bringing physical and social improvements that in turn contributed towards resident's positive regard for their neighbourhoods. This aspect of the research findings is given more attention in the following chapter where the role of regeneration in tackling poor neighbourhood image and stigma is discussed. The following chapter also offers some reflection upon significant issues of the research findings and highlights areas for further study.

Chapter 8

Neighbourhood stigma and social exclusion: conclusions

This chapter consolidates the research findings by drawing together the main issues that have been highlighted in the previous chapters. The chapter begins by offering suggestions for tackling the problem of neighbourhood stigma in regeneration initiatives. It is proposed that although current broad-based urban regeneration initiatives are beneficial in tackling the underlying factors involved in producing poor neighbourhood image, their lack of focus on stigma as a distinct issue may be a shortcoming. This premise is made on the basis that neighbourhood stigma has specific attributes that require particular attention. That is, the formation of negative neighbourhood images is complex and frequently based on vague, limited knowledge. In addition, negative images can endure and disadvantage residents.

The second section offers some reflection upon how the findings contribute to a clearer understanding of the nature of neighbourhood stigma and the research's distinct contribution to the subject area is highlighted. This considers specific features of the case studies such as the role of regeneration in exerting change and its influence upon the positive outlook that was found in informants. The chapter also highlights areas of research that might benefit from further study such as the basis for institutionalised stigma as well as the relationship between mass media images and local perceptions of neighbourhoods.

8.1 Tackling poor image in stigmatised neighbourhoods

It is clear that the research findings contribute in a useful way towards understanding the nature of neighbourhood stigma. On a practical level, the findings raise some important implications for tackling the problem of poor neighbourhood image within urban regeneration initiatives. The following attributes of the processes involved provide a useful foundation for suggested interventions:

- Urban decline is a crucial underlying factor in producing neighbourhood stigma

- Stigma is intricately linked to other complex neighbourhood problems and these reinforce the impact of each other

- Stigmatisation can lead to the disadvantage and social exclusion of residents and its influence is more intense where there is existing disadvantage

- Stigma represents a distinct neighbourhood issue on the basis that it involves to a large extent, perceptual activity that can be illusive and difficult to pin down.

- External neighbourhood perceptions are invariably more negative than residents perceptions

- External perceptions / understandings are very often produced from disparate sources of information

- Stigmatising labels can endure. However they can also be modified

These aspects of stigma point to two broad strands within neighbourhood regeneration. Firstly, there is an obvious need to address the combined underlying physical, economic and social factors that produce decline, negative reputation and stigma. Secondly, the need for changing external neighbourhood perceptions is clearly implicated. It is evident that benefits can be obtained from stemming the process of neighbourhood decline. This suggestion is made on the basis that decline is a central component in the formation of negative neighbourhood images. The case studies illustrate that decline and the negative images derived from this process within the estates have a bearing upon how residents feel towards their neighbourhood. In this respect, improvements to the physical aspects of the estate may also be beneficial in terms of raising residents' own self esteem as well as their regard towards the neighbourhood. Physical improvement also needs to be considered in light of the finding that the impact of wider economic change is a further important factor in producing local decline. Economic decline had clearly impacted upon the neighbourhoods and poor credit ratings and higher insurance premiums were tangible problems for some residents. Although in many cases residents had been penalised in this way through their residence in the neighbourhoods, this aspect of discrimination also reflected the circumstances of some households. In light of this, while physical

change is essential, on its own it may be limited and obviously needs to be carried out in conjunction with additional measures that address the economic aspects of decline. This suggests the benefit of physical change to the built environment being tied in with measures that improve poor infrastructure, insecure employment and low economic investment.

Although regeneration activity in both neighbourhoods has utilised a broad, multifaceted approach, this has invariably involved a strong physical element. Surprisingly, stigma has not been approached as a distinct issue. The emphasis upon physical improvement was present in Easthill with the *New Life for Urban Scotland* initiative and more recently in Westhill where extensive demolition and rebuild has taken place. In Easthill, the *New Life* approach was carried out over the period 1988 – 1995 and maintained a focus on the areas of housing, environment, health and crime. This included improvements to the physical housing and environment, attracting economic investment and creating training and employment opportunities. Although the problem of poor image was addressed within the initiative there was no specific strategy involved in tackling this issue directly; this point was recognised as a shortfall of the strategy (CRU 1995). No marketing campaign was developed although positive change gained coverage in the local press. In addition, problematic areas to the north of the estate were renamed. At the time of the fieldwork was conducted (spring / summer 2003) regeneration activity was on a far smaller scale than in the past and was carried out under the Dundee Social Inclusion Partnership 2 geographical focus. This has mainly involved the themes pursued in previous renewal strategies, although with a greater emphasis on partnership across different agencies in tackling social exclusion. Feedback is positive and most informants clearly identify with the benefits of regeneration. As one neighbourhood worker suggested for instance: 'you wouldn't have recognised this estate back in the 1980s.'

In Westhill, regeneration activity continues at the time of writing (summer 2005) as part of the Dundee Social Inclusion Partnership 1, which represents the main focus for urban renewal in the city (Social Inclusion Partnerships were replaced in 2006 by Community Planning Partnerships). Regeneration activity in the estate reflects the approach taken in Dundee as a whole and involves the broad aim of tackling poverty and social exclusion across the themes of housing, economy, education and training,

health, crime, community integration, transport and stabilising population levels (SIP Monitoring and Evaluation Unit, 2000). Recent activity has involved extensive demolition and the replacement and renewal of housing, this feature alone has created a transformation in the physical layout and appearance of the estate.

As in Easthill, the regeneration of Westhill has not involved a specific strategy to improve the estate's reputation. However, the estate's poor image in the city is recognised and measures have been taken to raise positive publicity although this has been on a relatively small scale. This has included the estate being renamed as the Westhill Village and improvements have been covered in a positive way by the local press. 'On the ground', the majority of resident and professional informants believed that regeneration measures have been an important benefit in terms of improving the general quality of life in the estates. In addition, a significant number of informants were convinced that the reputation of their estate had improved over the years and that this was linked directly to changes in the general condition of the estate. There was a general feeling in Social Inclusion Partnership workers that poor image and stigma has been improved through the broad changes that had taken place and this sentiment was echoed in many residents.

This highlights the benefits of existing approaches in improving general conditions in both neighbourhoods and it is evident that this also translates into improvement of neighbourhood image and stigma. There is little doubt that both estates have experienced positive change in terms of general conditions and image. On visiting the neighbourhoods, the positive attributes of the estates can be confirmed and this is evident in relation to the appearance of the estate's housing and environment. Some problematic aspects of the neighbourhoods remain however, perhaps more so in Easthill where there is a lack of social and economic infrastructure such as local retail and leisure services. It is apparent that stigma and poor reputation remain in spite of this change and it is clear that external perceptions have lagged behind improvement. This points to a need for changing external perceptions and a more concerted effort to publicise both neighbourhood's positive attributes. For instance, existing disadvantage and poor image may be a disincentive for the development of business and services in neighbourhoods. Stigma was found to be a significant barrier in providing potential opportunities for investment as well as dissuading potential in

comers to the neighbourhoods. This point is illustrated in the finding that neighbourhood stigma influences the local experience of gaining employment. For example, residents reported that stigma was a direct barrier in terms of access to work. Although employers did not state their own involvement in this exclusion they believed that the neighbourhood's stigma was an important factor that could prevent residents from finding work. The economic dimension to stigma and exclusion is also highlighted in the case of one letting agent who did not lease properties in the estates on the grounds of their unpopularity. In addition, in some locations of the estates, property was difficult to sell in spite of a buoyant housing market in the city as a whole. These issues point to a need for attracting economic investment into the estates and these locations need to be made known in the wider city as places that are socially diverse and attractive places to live and conduct business in.

In many cases, service providers held stereotypical views based on outdated information. This aspect of the research suggests that there is a strong case for changing external perceptions of the neighbourhoods and it is evident that perceptions can be modified as a result of direct experience. This is highlighted in the cases where some residents explained that their experience of living in the neighbourhoods was far better than that they had expected prior to moving in. In a few cases, it was also found that when non-residents had visited the estates, their negative expectations had been challenged. In general, external perceptions were found to be more accurate when these were based upon direct experience of the neighbourhoods. This finding reinforces the need to convey positive information about estates. The dissemination of knowledge about positive aspects of neighbourhood including news of improvements in the neighbourhoods is obviously essential however the findings suggest that the nature of external perceptions may pose a particular challenge. This is evident in the finding that negative images of neighbourhoods are powerful and can prevail even after improvements are carried out. In light of this, it is obviously not enough to publicise change on a one–off basis; conveying change may evidently need to be sustained on a long term basis in order to be of optimum benefit. It is also clear that negative perceptions can be changed although a number of factors were found to influence the extent to which challenging stigmatising labels is successful. The impact of stigma was found to be dependent upon variables such as residents' socio-economic status, their residential location and their individual ability to challenge

stigmatising labels and activity. This point returns to the importance of tackling stigma as a distinct problem but also within broad regeneration measures that address underlying physical and socio-economic factors.

Negative neighbourhood images: a distinct challenge for regeneration initiatives

The complexity of neighbourhood images is also indicated in the finding that external perceptions are generated from broad sources of information. The research found that non-residents' understandings were often piecemeal and their explanations of stigmatised neighbourhoods included connected facets of a wide array of information. In some cases, external perceptions were also found to exist in the absence of direct experience of the neighbourhoods. Knowledge of neighbourhoods clearly has diverse origins and includes the local and national press, television and hearsay based on current and past events that may or may not have taken place in the estates. In turn, these sources of information are subject to various interpretations that seem to further obscure knowledge.

Evidence suggests that in addition to perceptions derived from the estates themselves, reports of stories and events taking place in other places appear to combine to form knowledge that is applied in understandings of the local context. For instance, selective negative images involving stereotypes of 'problem' estates and people appear to represent a significant contributor to popular understandings of disadvantaged neighbourhoods in general. The finding that a relationship exists between local perceptions and knowledge in the broader, social sphere might pose a specific challenge for improving neighbourhood image. For instance, publicising improvements in neighbourhoods may have to be directed at a broader population as well as locally and in the city. As was suggested earlier in the chapter, it would be beneficial to target those who provide services to the estates as, in many cases, they play an important part in maintaining negative labels. The mass media has a clear role to play in maintaining negative images. However this medium as an important source of knowledge also provides a possible avenue for changing images in a beneficial way to publicise positive aspects of neighbourhoods including conveying information about improvements. Forging links with local and national press would

appear to be an important part of changing neighbourhood images. The application of positive publicity has been recognised as a crucial means of tackling the problem of poor image, this is the case in research conducted by Dean and Hastings (2000) and Cole and Smith (1996). These studies identified the media as having a crucial role to play in shaping images of the estates and was also utilised as an important means of publicising news of positive change in the neighbourhoods.

However, if neighbourhood perceptions are based upon wide sources such as images in the mass media, strategies designed to influence perceptions in a positive way might need to be tackled on a large scale. For instance, it is evident that understandings of neighbourhood disadvantage are created from sources of information and imagery beyond the actual neighbourhoods. Additionally, as a consequence of technological developments in the dissemination of knowledge through mass media, it is clear that information is brought to people in more diverse and complex ways. Avenues for the spread of information such as the internet have contributed greatly to a far wider variety of potentially competing sources of knowledge than was the case in the past. Further study into this aspect of the research would undoubtedly be useful. This would need to involve a closer examination of the nature of the relationship between local perceptions and broader sources of knowledge as well as exploring ways to convey information about estates to a potentially wide audience. Investigation of this area of research would benefit from the application of specialist knowledge of marketing and public relations as well as further study into the mechanisms underlying mass media and audience reception. This would also help to understand the nature of images in the mass media, how these operate, and where best to pitch messages aimed at changing understandings of disadvantage.

A further point to consider is the relationship that exists between the image and fortunes of the case study locations and the image and fortunes of the wider city of Dundee. As was highlighted in Chapter Four, Dundee's precarious economic situation remains. The shift to service sector employment has been problematic and the loss of manufacturing work has exerted a long lasting economic effect in the city. In addition, population loss has taken place and is projected to continue into the next decade. Dundee's industrial past remains a defining feature of the city and the impact of

economic decline has been long lasting and slow to improve. It is evident that this negative, post-industrial image of Dundee prevails in press reports (Beyond Rustbelt, 30 September, 2002, *The Scotsman*), (Dundee: City In Recovery, 21 September, 2003, *The Sunday Herald*). Changing the city's image remains a primary objective in the economic development of Dundee (Dundee City Council, *a city vision,* 2004 p12).

Dundee's industrial heritage has also been identified as a positive attribute in attracting tourism to the city. The attempt to capitalise upon Dundee's industrial past is evident in the reconstruction of the Verdant Works jute mill as a museum and heritage centre devoted to the city's former jute industry. Similarly, the return of Captain Scott's ship *Discovery* to Dundee the city of its construction involved the city council adopting the slogan City of Discovery. However, as Doherty (1992, p24) states, the marketing strategy of Dundee as the City of Discovery is 'more an expression of hope, even of wishful thinking than a description of reality'. This comment reflects the insecurity associated with the cities economic situation and continued population decline. It is obvious that the economic situation of the city and the case study neighbourhoods are closely linked. Economic change at a city level has a local impact, and in some instances, this is intensified. This is evident in the concentrations of disadvantage found in the estates. In this respect, regeneration must consider factors at a city level.

Recent literature recognises that linked up responses to urban problems should be tailored to fit local circumstances (Hutchinson 2000, Groves et al 2003). The case studies demonstrate that neighbourhoods can display variation in terms of their experience of decline and stigma. It is clear that while there are general features of neighbourhoods that give rise to stigma such as decline and the presence of crime, anti social residents, vandalism and physical decay; local experiences of decline and stigma are important factors in the process. There is little doubt that the distinct histories of both case studies produced the circumstances that were found and existing regeneration influenced residents' expectations and responses to decline and stigma. However, in the same way, specific features such as concentrated disadvantage and negative news reporting of specific events can make negative labels more tenacious in some estates, and indeed, in specific locations within neighbourhoods. This point reinforces the evidence for adapting responses to meet the individual needs of specific

neighbourhoods and locations within neighbourhoods. Approaches need to take account of the distinct history and circumstances of neighbourhoods as well as considering the impact of change taking place in the wider city.

There is a strong indication that regeneration in both neighbourhoods has been beneficial. It is obvious that residents and other stakeholders in the estates welcomed improvements and believed that stigma had become less of a problem. The evidence discussed in this chapter also suggests that the recent trend of comprehensive, partnership-based approaches towards combined neighbourhood problems is useful. However poor reputation and stigma remain in both neighbourhoods and it is clear that scope remains for targeting stigma as a specific problem. Interventions aimed at tackling poor image need to reflect the dynamic, interconnected aspects involved in the process of neighbourhood labelling and stigma. The research findings reinforce the suggestion that tackling neighbourhood stigma as a specific part of holistic renewal measures is of benefit (Dean and Hastings 2000). Approaches need to consider the underlying factors that give rise to stigma as well as understand the complex and elusive basis of neighbourhood images. This suggests the benefit of adopting strategies that involve a strong emphasis upon the physical, social and economic components of stigma while targeting media messages at specific stakeholders. The lack of focus on stigma as a distinct focus in recent neighbourhood regeneration initiatives ultimately points to a need for placing this issue higher in the urban renewal agenda.

8.2 The contribution of the study to knowledge of neighbourhood stigma: some reflections

The research has investigated stigma as a clearly defined entity and this involved a comprehensive study of two stigmatised neighbourhoods. This approach was beneficial and has provided a more complete understanding of neighbourhood stigma than is currently found in existing studies of the subject area. The research has highlighted the underlying causes of stigma; the social actors responsible and the ways in which stigma impacts upon residents; the outcomes of being stigmatised and also offers suggestions for combating stigma. The research is distinct in this respect. For instance as highlighted in the literature review, with the exception of Dean and Hastings' (2000) study the majority of studies concerning neighbourhood stigma involve an emphasis on specific attributes of stigma rather than approaching this in a comprehensive way. Likewise, most existing studies refer to stigma as being one of the many problematic aspects of urban neighbourhoods.

Stigma is obviously interlinked with other neighbourhood problems such as economic and physical decline and these combine to have a negative effect upon residents. However the perceptual attributes of stigma can make this illusive and difficult to track down. This is illustrated in the way that external, and more rarely, internal perceptions can be based on vague facets of knowledge such as rumours or past events. A further distinctive aspect of stigma is illustrated in the finding that negative images were found to be powerful and can endure. These particular qualities of stigma reinforce the benefits of approaching the study of this social activity as a distinct entity while being aware of its relationship with other neighbourhood problems.

The case studies demonstrate features that are shared with other neighbourhoods that have experienced decline in the wake of wider social and economic change. The physical and social decline of the neighbourhoods and their subsequent stigmatisation reflects a wider process that is systemic in many locations in western, industrialised society. In this respect, the findings can be applied to a broader understanding of decline, disadvantage and stigma of neighbourhoods. However an important aspect of

the research is evident in the distinct features that were found. This is the case in terms of Dundee's socio-economic situation that remains significantly compromised when compared with the national situation. Dundee has experienced long term economic decline due to its former dependency on manufacturing. The city also experienced a difficult transition to the growth in service sector employment. Additionally, a steady population loss has taken place over the last two decades. The impact of this broader change has clearly had a more severe impact on the cities peripheral estates where concentrated socio-economic problems have become characteristic features.

On a more positive note, the impact of regeneration in both neighbourhoods is a significant issue and there is little doubt that this activity has exerted considerable positive change that has in turn, translated into a general feeling of optimism. It is clear that the impact of regeneration has an important bearing on the findings. In this respect the time scale in which the research was carried out is an important factor. It is recognised that the study represents a relatively short period of time in the life of the estates although does not detract from the significance of the findings. For example, although the research undoubtedly reflects the experiences of one part of the life cycle of both neighbourhoods, the historical context was an important area of investigation within the research. The stigmatisation of the neighbourhoods was approached in terms of the time scale of decline, regeneration and change. However, in spite of this consideration, it may be useful to consider carrying out future research over a longer period of time in order to gain further understanding of the development of the process of stigma. It would be interesting to explore whether residents positive outlook remained after the final completion of regeneration in both neighbourhoods. A major process of transition was in place and this was a significant factor within the study. In this respect it would be useful to allow a period of time for the estates to adjust in order to obtain a more precise understanding of the impact of regeneration in improving poor reputation and stigma in the longer term. This would be of benefit in terms of providing some comparative analysis that might indicate the sustainability of renewal measures.

Understanding the nature of social stigma

The findings provide a useful insight into the nature of stigma as a social activity and it is evident that the labelling of neighbourhoods has its origins in the human tendency to categorise social phenomena. Labelling essentially involves a process of categorisation and is an integral aspect of human behaviour that can contribute to understanding (and misunderstanding). It seems that most individuals make judgements about the general characteristics of other individuals in order to distinguish between different social groups. As highlighted earlier in the chapter, the aim of this activity is generally not to negatively discriminate and disadvantage although it can result in this outcome. This reinforces the theoretical approach taken by the classic labelling perspectives of Goffman (1963) and Becker (1963). From this approach everyone distinguishes, marks out and judges others and is essentially how people make sense of the social world. It was made clear in the research however that despite the general social acceptance of this activity, it does not mean that the process is conducted without problems. The process of forming perceptions and understanding is subject to distortion and can negatively discriminate.

The research also reinforces the idea that the process of labelling and stigma is an important regulator of social behaviour. In this respect, stigma in a broader context is functional. For instance, labelling and stigma perform the social role of defining and maintaining normal, acceptable behaviour and are an important element in the maintenance of social order and stability. It was found that many residents held a strong desire to avoid stigmatising labels and disassociated themselves from stigmatising features such as problem neighbours. It seems that individuals generally have an inherent desire to be viewed as being 'normal' and to avoid being seen as different or in negative ways. Pressure to conform to accepted norms is evidently strong and may be derived from a desire to 'keep face' in the public domain as much as through the avoidance of stigmatising attitudes and behaviour that can lead to shame, embarrassment or more harmful outcomes such as exclusion from services.

A significant point is that in most cases, conformity to social norms operates in terms of consensus rather than conflict. This finding is an interesting aspect of the research and to some extent challenged my own ideas about the nature of stigma. Although the

research was approached as objectively as possible, it was the case that the initial review of literature relating to stigmatised neighbourhoods generally portrayed a negative scenario. There is an underlying premise in much literature relating to the subject area that stigma is an activity that is carried out with the primary aim of causing harm and that deviation from norms always results in punishment. As was highlighted earlier in this chapter, this latter perspective is evident in Damer's (1972, 1989, 1992) studies where he asserts that stigmatisation is an official means of maintaining control over the working class. Damer's approach implies that people are passive victims of an overwhelming political system of control that is operated through societal institutions. As found in this research, individuals evidently strive to conform to accepted behaviour but this was invariably found to be a voluntary activity rather than a result of active coercion.

Stigma as an institutionalised activity

The institutional basis for stigmatisation represents a further interesting research finding. As was discussed in the previous chapter, officials such as council employees and service providers were found to be important players in the process of maintaining negative labels. In some cases, officials participated in behaviour that was discriminatory and disadvantaging for residents such as holding negative attitudes that translated into poorer service and exclusion form services. This is a serious aspect of the discriminatory potential of stigmatisation. There is little doubt that stigma pervades many aspects of social life. However it was not found to be a systematic activity. This finding provides a further contrast with conflict-based approaches that emphasise this activity as a means of actively pursuing the control of others. The findings reinforce the inherent nature of stigmatisation as being mainly an inadvertent activity and it was certainly not found to be a politically motivated enterprise. For instance, residents were capable of labelling other estate residents in stereotypical ways although this activity was less likely to result in negative outcomes such as disadvantage as in cases where officials were involved.

While no firm evidence points to stigmatisation and exclusion of residents as being a conscious activity that is carried out in a systematic way to disadvantage residents,

there are aspects of this attribute of stigma that would benefit from further study. In limited cases, evidence points to informal practices carried out by institutional employees such as housing officials in the exclusion of residents. For instance it is evident that there are covert aspects of stigmatisation and conflicting accounts from service personnel and residents adds weight to this suggestion. This is highlighted in the cases where residents believed they were actively discriminated against in job applications and had receiving lower standards of service from housing, retail and utility services. Employees within these services denied any involvement in this activity although acknowledged that stigmatisation was a practical problem. This finding requires more in depth investigation in order to establish the nature and extent of institutional employees in the intentional discrimination and disadvantage of others. The hidden nature of this aspect of labelling and stigma can make further investigation of this issue potentially problematic. It is evident from the research that informants are unwilling to be associated with involvement in discriminatory behaviour. This situation was found in the cases where a few service personnel were more willing to make 'off the record' comments regarding their activity in stigmatising activities such as categorising residents in ways that excluded them from services. These informants were more likely to talk candidly in an informal context rather than in an interview situation.

The investigation of activities involving stigmatisation is an inherently emotive subject area. For example, accessing officials may be problematic and important gatekeepers can be reluctant to grant access to researchers out of a concern that comments from employees might implicate their organisation in stigmatising activities. This can pose a problem in the research of this aspect of stigma and crucial data may be limited by this factor. There are practical ways to address some of these issues in the research process. Although maintaining confidentiality is an important aspect of social research in general this is perhaps more acute in the study of stigmatising activities which is a sensitive aspect of research. My own study recognised this potential and informants were given anonymity in the recording of data. It is significant that some professional informants were more likely to provide information anonymously. It is evident that a balance needs to be struck between providing accurate information to informants, gaining their trust and informed consent and obtaining accurate data. In this respect, further study will have to consider ways

in which informal practices of institutional officials can be studied in a rigorous and ethical way.

Stigmatisation as a pervasive social activity

Irrespective of whether or not stigmatisation is conducted with the express aim of causing harm, it is clear that this activity has inherent negative consequences. By its very nature, the process of labelling and stigma is an influential means of regulating behaviour and essentially involves the differentiation between acceptable and unacceptable attributes / behaviour. Neighbourhoods are primarily labelled on the basis of their difference or perceived difference and in many cases this activity utilises stereotypes that can negatively discriminate and contribute to disadvantage. Many informants in the study expressed stereotypical views and language and this appears to constitute a normal characteristic of daily discourse and behaviour. It is evident that in many cases, when an individual expresses a negative comment that little thought is given to its outcome. This does not suggest that people are unable to think about their behaviour and have no control over their actions, in fact the very opposite is suggested from the research; the dynamic responses that were found in informants reflect this attribute of the process. The study points to stigmatisation as being a complex, deep-rooted social activity that has inadvertent negative outcomes.

Inadvertent stigmatisation is a potential consequence of any focus on neighbourhoods where negative reputation already exists. This may also be the case in the context of formal academic research of stigmatisation. It is acknowledged that in focusing upon the experiences of stigmatised neighbourhoods this study also potentially contributes to the process of labelling. This issue was considered in the initial planning of the research and anonymity was ensured as far as possible throughout the study. In defence of the research, the primary aim was to examine the subject area as objectively as possible and there was no underlying agenda to portray the case studies in ways that would misrepresent them either negatively or positively. In addition, this study has less scope to convey harmful representations of the neighbourhoods than mass media such as the press who have a large readership and commercial objectives. Ultimately, research into this subject area should maintain awareness that inadvertent

stigmatisation is a possibility and steps should be taken to minimise opportunities for causing harm.

The research findings contribute to knowledge of the processes involved in neighbourhood stigmatisation. On a practical level, this contributes to the evidence base for intervention in stigmatised neighbourhoods and the research can usefully inform stakeholders involved in the process. The findings offer suggestions for improving poor image and evidence shows that regeneration based on broad approaches that tackle the economic, physical and social aspects of neighbourhood decline are beneficial. However, in spite of obvious positive change and improvements in the general fabric of the case study estates, stigma remains as a significant factor in the social exclusion of residents, more so in locations where existing disadvantage is present. This points to the need to address stigma as a distinct focus within holistic measures and to approach this issue consistently over a period of time. The study also provides a useful platform from which to conduct further research into this important aspect of social life.

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APPENDIX 1:

Interview / Focus group schedule: Residents

Interview / Focus group schedule

Target / informant Group:
Residents (neighbourhood activists* and non- activists)

*Activists identified as residents who actively participate (regularly attend meetings or hold office) in community groups such as residents / tenants associations.

Neighbourhood: **Date:**   **Time:** **Location of interview/ focus group:** **Informant identification:** **Category of informant:**
Residence: **Tenure:**   **Length of residence:**
Employment / designation: **Gender:** **Age group:**

Aims:

To explore the following themes
- Resident's feelings about their neighbourhood- attachment, belonging, positive, negative feelings
- Residents perceptions of neighborhood, its reputation
- Residents explanations for reputation- agents / factors involved in creating / sustaining reputation
- Social exclusion- residents experience of negative reputation, its disadvantageous and exclusionary aspects; residents responses
- Regeneration and its impact

Introduction
Remind group / informant that I am a research student interested in looking at neighbourhood change and regeneration and what it means for residents living in these neighbourhoods. (Introduce informants to each other) Inform group that the meeting will last about 1 hour.
(Rationale- to put informants at ease creating an environment conducive to relaxed interesting discussion. Also, to inform respondents of research aims)

Definitions

Neighbourhood – Establish knowledge of location and boundaries of neighbourhood in question. (Do informants recognise the neighbourhood in question as an entity, are they agreed on the place – defined by the name and geographical boundaries of the areas in under research?).

Image- refers to the collective representation or impression of the area. That is, how the neighbourhoods are portrayed.

Reputation- defined as the general opinion concerning the character or qualities of a place and / or its residents. That is, how the neighbourhood is perceived or understood by people. *(Rationale- to establish understanding of key concepts, (THIS IS MAINLY FOR BENEFIT OF RESEARCHER)*

Section 1   Residents general perceptions of neighbourhood (its reputation; understanding of neighbourhood problems)

Perceptions of the area, how do residents feel about their neighborhood?
(i.e, how do residents feel about their neighbourhood?)

What is it like living here?

What are the good points about living in (Name of Estate)?

What are the less likeable aspects of living here? i.e is there anything about living here that causes you concern?

Have you ever experienced problems with living in (name of estate) If, so, what sort of problems were they?

Are some areas within this estate better to live in than others? If so, why? *(Any specific area factor or people?)*

What is it about these areas that make them better?

What makes these areas less attractive to live in?

What do you think is the cause of these problems?

How does (Name of Estate) compare with other places in Dundee? (Is it better or worse?)

Do you feel like you belong to (name of Estate)?
(Aims to explore resident's feelings of attachment to area)

What is it about (name of estate) that makes you feel like you belong here?
(Establish involvement in activities in the estate, member of clubs, associations, use of amenities)

What is it about (name of estate) that makes you feel like you don't belong here?

Would you ever consider moving away from (name of estate) to another area? If yes, for what reasons?

If no, why wouldn't you leave here?

Section 2   Reputation
(Aims- to explore residents understanding of area's reputation and its origins)

What kind of image does (*name of estate*) have in Dundee? i.e How do you think people from other places 'see' (*name of estate*), would you say that (*name of estate*) is 'seen' by others in a good or bad way?
(Rationale- to explore perceived image(s) of estate and the source(s)

What kind of things do you think might give (*name of estate*) a 'bad name'?

Do you think that (name of estate) poor reputation is justified? That is, does (*name of estate*) live up to its reputation?

Do you think that (*name of estate*) reputation has changed over time or has it stayed the same?

If so, when did it change?

Is the estates reputation better or worse?

What do you think has caused this change?

Section 3   Social Exclusion and Stigma
Aims:
To explore the relationship between negative reputation, stigma and disadvantage
To explore the ways in which stigma is manifest

Does the reputation of (*name of estate*) have any advantages or disadvantages for the people living here?

Have you ever felt that you have been personally disadvantaged because of your address / place of residence?

How did you feel about this?

How did you respond to it?

What would you say to someone who said that *(name of estate)* is not such a good place to live?

How do you feel about people thinking that *(name of estate)* is not such a good place to live?

Do you think the estates reputation affects some people more than others?

Why do you think this might be? What kind of things do you think might make them more disadvantaged by this?

Section 4   Regeneration and its impact

How has regeneration affected the estate?

Has this (regeneration) been good or bad for (name of estate)?

Has this made it a better place to live? If yes, in what ways has it improved?

Has regeneration made anything worse? If so, in what ways is it worse?

What has this (regeneration) meant for you?

Do you think that the regeneration has changed the way you feel about the place?

Do you think people from other places see (name of estate) differently because of the regeneration?

Section 5   Further, additional points raised

ANY QUESTIONS?

Concluding remarks- thank group / informant

APPENDIX 2:

Focus group/ Interview schedule: Non-residents

(Informant group: Non-residents, i.e those living outside the neighbourhoods. (Non-resident category is differentiated further into professional and general categories).

Date: Time: Location:
Informant identification:
Age group:
Gender:
Occupation / designation:
Place of residence: **Tenure:**

Aims:
To gauge external perceptions of the case study neighbourhoods
To establish 'outsiders' knowledge of the estates and their sources of knowledge of these locations

Themes to be explored:
Neighbourhood image; external perceptions / knowledge of neighbourhoods and image; sources of knowledge; explanations of factors involved; influence of neighbourhood image; disadvantage and exclusion.

Introduce informants to researcher and research topic
Inform group that I am a research student looking at neighbourhood regeneration and change and how this affects residents. I am also interested in exploring the perceptions of those living outside the areas.
(Introduce informants to each other)
(Rationale- to put informants at ease creating an environment conducive to relaxed interesting discussion. Also, to introduce informants to research topic)

Definitions:
Neighbourhood – Establish knowledge of location and boundaries of neighbourhood in question. (*Do informants recognise the neighbourhood in question as an entity, are they agreed on the place – defined by the name and geographical boundaries of the areas in focus?*).
Image- refers to the collective representation or impression of the area. How the neighbourhoods are portrayed through various media / ways.
Reputation- defined as the general opinion concerning the character or qualities of a place and / or its residents. That is, how the neighbourhood is perceived or understood by people. *(Rationale- to establish understanding of key concepts-*This is mainly for the benefit of researcher)

1

1.) <u>Knowledge of the case study neighbourhoods and their reputation</u>

I am interested in the regeneration of the Easthill and Westhill estates in Dundee are you familiar with these areas? (*To gauge extent of knowledge/ familiarity with estate/ estates*)

What do you know about these areas? What are these estates like?

Do you have any direct experience of these areas?

If so, which estate?

What are the estate's good points?

What are the estate's negative points?

If you have not visited any of these areas, what knowledge do you have of this place / these places? Where did you learn about them?

What kind of things do you think cause problems in the estate(s)?

Do you think that life on the estate(s) has improved or got worse?

Why do you think this might be? (Timescale?)

Do you think that regeneration has improved the estate(s)?

2. Perceptions and sources of neighbourhood image

How do you think people in Dundee see these estates/ the estate?
/ What kind of image do these estates have in Dundee?

What kind of things have given these places / the place its reputation?

What / who do you think is responsible for giving the estate(s) its/ their reputation?

Would you consider these estates to be better or worse than other neighbourhoods in Dundee?

Would you be happy to live there?

Would you be happy for any family members to live there?

Do you think that the neighbourhoods' image is better or worse than in the past?

When has this taken place? (Timescale of improvement/ change)

In what ways has image improved?

In what ways has the area's image got worse- What has caused this?

Do you think that the reputation of the estate(s) is justified?

3. Social exclusion and Stigma

Do you think that the image of these neighbourhoods causes problems for the people living there? If so, what kind of problems?

Do you think that residents might be discriminated against because of where they live?

Do you think that there are some individuals/ groups who are more likely to experience these problems?

Additional points raised

ANY QUESTIONS?

Thank informants