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Lone Motherhood in Place and Time: Lived Experiences in Easterhouse, Glasgow, since the 1980s

A Qualitative Study into Life-Course Experiences of Lone Mothers in Easterhouse since the 1980s and the Significance of Female Social Networks for ‘Getting By’ and ‘Getting On’ through Challenges Associated with Gender, Place, Poverty and Lone Motherhood

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BA MEd

Submitted in fulfilment of the Requirements of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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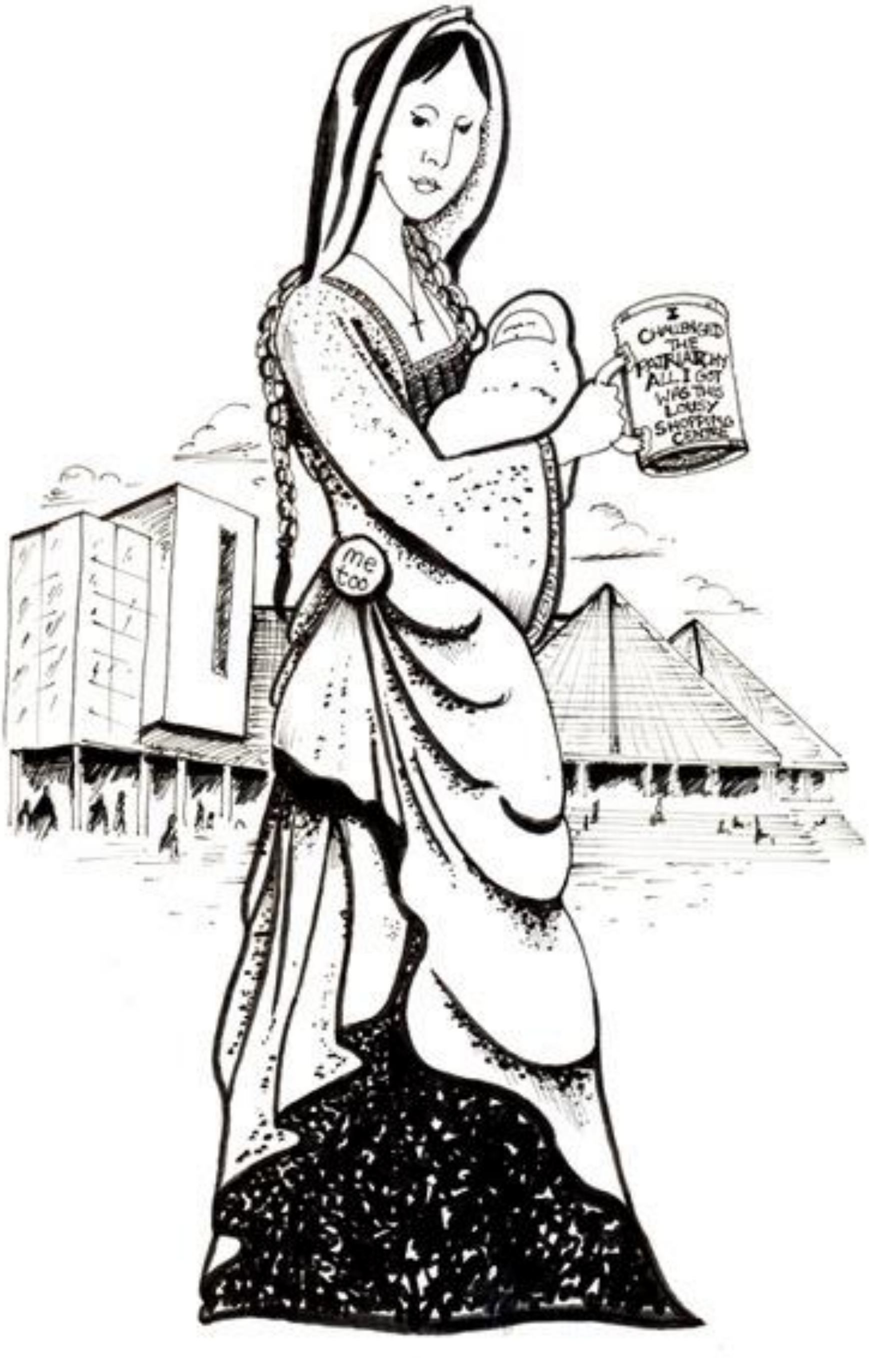
College of Social Sciences, University of Glasgow

December 2023


I
CHALLENGED
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ALL I GOT
WAS THIS
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Thenue with Child, by Graham Gordon

Abstract

Easterhouse in Glasgow is amongst the most persistently deprived housing estates in Europe. During the 1980s it saw a threefold increase in lone-mother households and their proportion has since remained significantly above the Glasgow average. This thesis explores lone mothers' experiences of poverty in Easterhouse between 1980 and 2021 and investigates their use of female social networks to 'get by' and 'get on' through the challenges associated with gender, place, poverty and lone motherhood.

The research comprised thirty semi-structured repeat interviews, assisted by photo elicitation, designed to capture the adult life-course experiences of ten lone mothers in Easterhouse since the 1980s. Interview transcripts were analysed in NVivo using thematic methods to make links between the women's accounts, the problems posed within the research questions, and key themes of social and economic change from the 1980s to present day.

The research found unexpectedly that all of the women had entered lone motherhood as a result of abuse by men. It explored how localised female social networks provided important instrumental, emotional and financial support during the transition to lone motherhood and beyond into the middle stages of life-course, which allowed lone mothers to 'get by'. Yet, female networks could often hinder women's efforts to 'get on'. In later life, participants continued to be almost solely reliant on female networks, but these took on a new, cathartic role in helping the women navigate the emotional damage of lives characterised by persistent trauma.

The study illuminates hidden histories of lone motherhood and concludes that Easterhouse is a place where women have been subjected to violent masculinities, with lasting impacts on their wellbeing and network engagement. It contributes understanding about how structural oppression within a particularly disadvantaged setting has influenced women's journeys into lone motherhood and their lives beyond. The study also generates new insights into older women's conceptions of 'getting on', the meaning of lives well lived in persistently deprived contexts and the importance of internal resources in overcoming challenges through time.

This thesis contains content relating to physical, sexual and emotional violence, suicide and drugs overdose, which some may find distressing.

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Author's Declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Printed Name: MHAIRI-JEAN ROSS

Signature:

Chapter 1: Introduction

> Whatever it takes Agnes, keep going, even if it's not for you, even if it's just for them. Keep going. That's what mammies do.
>
> From *Shuggie Bain* (Stuart, 2020, p.184)

1.1 The Study

This study examines the life-course journeys of ten lone mothers from Easterhouse, a large housing estate in Glasgow, which has been amongst the most persistently deprived neighbourhoods in Europe since the 1970s (Lloyd et al., 2017). During the 1980s, Easterhouse experienced a threefold rise in lone-mother households, their proportion remaining significantly above the Glasgow average during the past four decades. The thesis investigates how lone mothers in this deprived context have used female social networks to 'get by' and 'get on' through the challenges associated with gender, place, poverty and lone motherhood over life-course.

The research draws upon data gathered from thirty semi-structured interviews conducted in the homes of women who have lived in the neighbourhood from the 1980s onwards and have experience of lone motherhood. Interviews were aided by photo-elicitation techniques to promote recall of Easterhouse and connect life events to specific time periods. The life-course research approach brought to the surface participants' evolving experiences of lone motherhood through early, mid and later stages of the life-course, connecting life-course biographies to historical paradigms of time and place and to wider social change. Interview transcripts were analysed in NVivo using thematic methods to make links between the women's accounts, the problems posed within the research questions, and key themes of social and economic change from the 1980s to present day.

The title, 'Lone Motherhood in Place and Time', deliberately reflects a dual focus on the significance of Easterhouse as a residential setting and on the period 1980 to 2021 (referred to in the work as the 'research period') through which the women's lives were explored. This period was chosen as a historical era when high levels of socio-economic inequality, declining neighbourhood conditions and lone motherhood as a mass phenomenon intersected. Yet, these issues cannot be viewed in isolation from the wider social, political and economic trends operating city-wide and nationally. Thus, although the thesis focuses specifically upon lone mothers ‘making and being made’ (Bhaskar, 2009, p.219) in the period, the discussion also zooms out to explore social and economic change over time which has shaped women’s lives in Easterhouse.

I open this thesis by referring to a historic female struggle which frames the birth of the city of Glasgow. St Thenue (later known as St Enoch), mother of Glasgow’s sixth-century patron saint and founder, St Mungo, has been described as ‘Scotland’s first recorded rape victim, battered woman, and unmarried mother’ (Durkan, 2000, p.80). Reputedly, Thenue, a Brittonic princess, was raped by a rejected suitor, and on discovery of her illegitimate pregnancy she was cast off a cliff called Traprain Law by her angry father (Schulenburg, 1998). She survived and drifted in a coracle to deliver her young son, Mungo, who would go on to found an early monastic community in the settlement known as ‘Glaschu’, widely translated as ‘The Dear Green Place’ (Black, 1883). Thenue’s story highlights the continuity of women’s struggle to survive in Glasgow: a thread connecting the biography of the city’s first inhabitant to the lone mothers in this thesis. Thenue’s flight, her child of rape, who she nurtured, and the founding of Glasgow are all part of the city’s historical legacy.

The material in this study makes clear that women in late twentieth and early twenty-first century Easterhouse continued to experience the toxic effects of patriarchal oppression as they navigated their own journeys of lone motherhood in Glasgow some fourteen centuries later. The research also sets out that women of the participants’ generation faced intersecting layers of structural disadvantage relating to gender, neighbourhood, class, health and their status as lone mothers. Subsequently, I observe that although the biographies of the participants speak of a singular period in time, they are also connected to a more universal struggle for agency and personal freedom embodied by Glasgow’s founding lone mother. This thesis is the first study to explore the life-course experiences of this particularly marginalised and hidden population and shine a light upon it within the city.

1.2 Rationale for the Research

Recent evidence shows that, compared to other cities similarly affected by processes of deindustrialisation, such as Liverpool and Manchester, Glasgow suffered far greater levels of poor health, exemplified by its excess mortality rates being 30 percent higher than those of these counterpart cities (Walsh et al., 2016). The city’s exceptional record for excess mortality is recognised to be a product of lagging effects of historical deprivation and overcrowding, negative effects of urban planning decisions and effects of UK public policy (Walsh et al., 2016). Within this city-wide context, Easterhouse has been identified as housing several pockets of the most extreme deprivation continuously since the 1970s (Lloyd et al., 2017).

Easterhouse is one of Glasgow’s four peripheral post-war housing estates, first conceived in the 1940s as solutions to slum housing conditions within the central areas of Glasgow (Keating & Mitchell, 1987). Within the first decade of its construction, Easterhouse became recognised as ‘classed geography’ (Bissett, 2023) and a ‘problem estate’ (Keating, 1987). Meanwhile, as early as 1960, housing was beginning to show signs of damp and mould (Keating & Mitchell, 1987). Although always essentially a single-class estate, by the start of the research period processes of city-wide change had resulted in extreme class segregation (Duckett, 2022). In a city recognised for its toxic effects upon health and wellbeing, Easterhouse was one of the areas worst affected by deprivation and residualised neighbourhood conditions from the 1980s onwards. By the start of the 1980s, Glasgow’s record for poor health, bad housing and lagging economic growth led to its strategic policy and planning leadership being regarded from outside as seriously flawed (Collins & Levitt, 2019). Some have suggested that ‘structural violence’ enacted through governmental and corporate policymaking represented a type of ‘class war’ designed to enforce social apartheid in the peripheral estates (Duckett, 2022; Fryer & McCormack, 2012).

By the start of the research period, the largely municipal housing stock in Easterhouse had entered critical disrepair (Wannop, 1990) amidst widespread opinion that the local council had washed its hands of the crumbling, perpetually deprived peripheral estates (Keating & Mitchell, 1987). At the same time, social problems were evident in the form of high levels of neighbourhood-based violence, crime, addictions and low educational attainment (Mitchell, 2010). It is against this backdrop of progressive decay and marked levels of persistent deprivation that the research period begins.

The 1980s also were a period where Easterhouse experienced a striking threefold increase in lone-mother-headed households, which continued to rise and remain well above the city average throughout the research period (see Table 4.1 for more details). The explosion of lone motherhood through the 1980s, coupled with peak levels of unemployment and declining neighbourhood and housing conditions, sets the 1980s apart as a point in time where lone motherhood became both relatively commonplace and fraught with a range of distinct place-based challenges.

The focus on lone mothers during this period, however, extends beyond their increasing numbers and visibility. Contemporary literature connects rising numbers of lone mothers in peripheral estates to allocations policies which directed women with the least means and most-chaotic circumstances towards the most-deprived neighbourhoods (Brailey, 1986; Wainright, 1996). These studies suggest that allocations policies placed lone mothers at increased risk of a wide range of extra challenges including poor housing, enhanced vulnerability to negative effects of welfare reform, exposure to crime and drugs, discrimination, and reduced ability to access employment. Other authors such as Holman (1998) and Tulle-Winton (1997) maintain that many lone mothers who moved to the peripheral estates during the later years of the twentieth century relocated to escape domestic abuse and resultant homelessness. Taken together, these findings raise important questions regarding the factors underlying the growing numbers of lone mothers in Easterhouse and the extent to which already difficult personal circumstances were accentuated by the challenges of place and time.

1.3 Research Aims, Objectives and Questions

1.3.1 Aims

Overarching aim:

To investigate the extent to which women with experience of lone motherhood in Easterhouse have used female social networks as a mechanism to overcome challenges associated with gender, place, poverty and motherhood since the 1980s.

Additional aim:

To examine the history of women’s poverty and socio-economic disadvantage in Easterhouse since the 1980s, and the extent to which female solidarity and reciprocity have enabled lone mothers to ‘get by’ and ‘get on’.

1.3.2 Objectives

To identify the ways in which women who have been lone mothers in Easterhouse perceive place, poverty, gender and lone motherhood to have impacted their existence over the past forty years.

To identify the ways in which women have used female networks as a means to navigate challenges related to place, poverty, gender and lone motherhood.

To identify the specific types of support and benefits (and/or limitations) generated by female networks.

To identify how important notions of female solidarity and reciprocity have been in enabling single mothers in Easterhouse to ‘get by’ and ‘get on’ over the past forty years.

1.3.3 Research Questions

Overarching research question:

To what extent have female social networks been important in enabling women who have been resident in Easterhouse since the 1980s, and have experience of lone motherhood, to ‘get by’ and ‘get on’ through the challenges of gender, place, poverty and motherhood?

Sub-questions:

What kinds of support do female networks provide (instrumental, informative, emotional, etc.)? What kinds of outcomes has this support allowed lone mothers to access that they might not have otherwise achieved?

Have female networks formed an important consideration in enabling lone mothers to ‘get by’ and ‘get on’ or have they been more likely to rely on other kinds of support networks or operate autonomously?

How important has the support of female contacts been perceived to be in comparison to individual traits such as hardiness, thriftiness, knowledge of systems or local knowledge?

Have women used female social networks as a mechanism to promote their own life chances or those of their children? Or are female networks more likely to be viewed as a mechanism for survival?

Section 4.8 provides a full rationale for the research questions and a discussion of their development.

1.4 'Whit Ye All Aboot?' – Where the Personal Meets the Political

There is one further dimension of the inquiry that must be explained, which concerns my personal and epistemological position as a researcher. Within the thesis the reader will encounter several points inflected with personal reflection on my own positionality and philosophical orientation. In the interest of reflexivity, I now share something of the personal experiences and beliefs which have brought me to the research and influenced my interest in the topic.

In 2017, six months after the birth of my first child, I applied for a supervisor-led PhD studentship titled 'Why Does Deprivation Endure?' At that point, I genuinely had no idea how the puzzle of perpetual disadvantage might be addressed. What I did know was that the fifteen years I had spent working in Glasgow's most-deprived neighbourhoods coupled with my own experience of growing up in a relatively deprived neighbourhood gave me a strong working knowledge of the issues faced by residents in such housing estates and a drive to understand the mechanisms fuelling disadvantage. Over the following year, I developed the research project to focus upon the biographical experiences of lone mothers and settled upon Easterhouse as the research setting, largely on account of its remarkable history of persistent socio-economic disadvantage and some previous familiarity.

The first year of study was followed by two years of suspension on account of the birth of my second child and the restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown, which prevented interviewing older women in their homes. The pandemic period also coincided with another major life event, where, in a case of life imitating art, I unexpectedly became a lone mother myself to a three-month-old baby and a two-year-old, living in the East End of Glasgow. Unwittingly, I became a researcher researching women's biographies which in several ways resembled my own.

Yet, I also had some much older business with the research setting and the topic of lone motherhood from the 1980s onwards. My mother and father were Highlanders who moved to the Cranhill area of Easterhouse in the 1970s, around ten years before my birth. My mother's recollections of Cranhill during the 1970s focus around her outrage at the state of the housing and the desperate personal circumstances of some neighbours. As a child, I listened intently to the stories about Cranhill and the black mould, bug infestation, gang fighting, glue sniffers in closes and school children with never-ending bouts of lice and impetigo. It is no exaggeration to say that my family were utterly shocked at the contrast between the Highlands and Glasgow in housing and social conditions for working-class people in the 1970s.

By the time of my birth in the early 1980s my father was suffering from multiple sclerosis and terminal liver cancer. My family was rehoused in supported accommodation in Craigmillar, one of Edinburgh's most persistently deprived peripheral housing estates. Craigmillar in the 1980s was in the midst of a heroin epidemic, which made break-ins a regular occurrence. We were broken into so many times that after my birth, when my father was in hospital dying, my ten-year-old brother slept in the hallway of the flat, determined to guard his mother and new baby sister from potential intruders.

Seven months after my birth my father died, and my mother was left with her five children on the estate. We were so short of money that we could not afford bus fares to attend my father's funeral in the Highlands. Social conditions in Craigmillar coupled with the loss of my father had taken a real toll on my mother's mental health. We applied for rehousing in the Highlands and were allocated a house in the rural housing estate in Easter Ross where my grandparents lived. Our new home was situated in a remote coastal village of great natural beauty, yet it was also known as one of the least desirable and most-deprived estates in the Highlands. Times continued to be hard for my family in Easter Ross.

Music was my first route out of deprived housing estates. At seventeen, I was offered a place at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama in Glasgow to study violin. None of the other students I met at 'The Academy' seemed to have come from council estates. My class background felt like a humiliating secret and Imposter Syndrome defined much of my undergraduate experience. As I lived and studied in Glasgow, the rest of my family continued to experience poverty and many of the other social problems so common on our estate, such as drug addiction, alcoholism, imprisonment and mental health issues.

The experience of being seventeen in a new city for the first time coupled with the difference in life experience of most of my peers made for an isolating early experience of Glasgow, not least because I was often chronically short of money. I was also often distracted from my study by worries relating to how my family members at home were managing their difficult and unpredictable lives.

Over the ensuing fifteen years my path led me further and further from music towards work addressing social inequalities in Glasgow's most-deprived communities. I found myself drawn to working-class spaces of the city, the down-at-heel pubs and neighbourhoods where working-class people lived. My professional journey led me to spend six years working in homelessness services in Cranhill, where my own family had lived some twenty-five years earlier. Later I became involved in community mental health services and suicide prevention, and latterly gained an MEd qualification in community development at the University of Glasgow, which led me into work with Glasgow's housing associations.

During the MEd course I discovered literature relating to social change, social justice and emancipatory practice, which has become a cornerstone of my interest in anti-poverty and feminist pedagogies. I believe my close attachment to the research setting and subjects has helped to sustain my motivation to continue working towards the PhD through long interruptions and challenging points in my personal journey. It is, I conclude, in learning from the realities of oppressed people that I fathomed how to understand and intervene on my own oppression.

> In writing another's life, we also write or rewrite our own lives. (Letherby, 2014, p.52)

1.5 Structure of the Thesis

Chapter 1 introduces the study, research aims, objectives and questions, and presents my personal orientation to the research.

Chapter 2 presents the first review of literature, which summarises and synthesises a range of discourses relating to gender, poverty and lone motherhood. This chapter also discusses the key concepts of 'getting by' and 'getting on'.

Chapter 3 reviews the literature around the functions of social capital and female social networks, focussing specifically on configurations, functions and outputs of female support networks.

Chapter 4 presents a contextual overview of Easterhouse as the research setting and justifies the research questions.

Chapter 5 explores the chosen methods and methodology. The chapter justifies the chosen methods of repeated semi-structured interviews, assisted by photo elicitation to capture the adult life-course experiences and thematic analysis and examines researcher positionality.

Chapter 6 presents a series of ten participant biographies which situate the life-course experiences of the ten research participants in a linear temporal format.

Chapter 7 presents the first chapter of findings, on the challenges of gender. The challenges of lone motherhood run as a thread through each of the findings chapters.

Chapter 8 presents the second chapter of findings, on the challenges of place and neighbourhood.

Chapter 9 presents the third chapter of findings, on the challenges of poverty and strategies for ‘getting by’ and ‘getting on’.

Chapter 10 presents the fourth chapter of findings, on the significance of female networks for ‘getting by’ and ‘getting on’.

Chapter 11 systematically discusses the research questions and findings.

Chapter 12 concludes by addressing the research aims, foregrounding the original contribution, suggesting directions for future research and practice, and reflecting upon the PhD journey and the significance of time and place.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature – Gender, Poverty and Lone Motherhood

2.1 Introduction

This chapter evaluates and presents a synthesis of the published literature on poverty, gender and lone motherhood in deprived neighbourhoods and addresses the overarching research question presented in Section 1.3.3 discussing definitions and discourses of the concepts central to the research question: ‘getting by’ and ‘getting on’. The review brings together contextual knowledge and identifies gaps in existing knowledge which legitimise the need for this research.

This study draws upon the simple definition of poverty developed by Goulden & D’Arcy (2014, p.5):

> When a person’s resources (mainly their material resources) are not sufficient to meet their minimum needs (including social participation).

This definition asserts that being ‘in poverty’ involves not possessing the material resources to adequately subsist and participate in the range of social activities which might be expected to be accessible to members of a society. This conception of poverty is termed *relative poverty* on account of its relativity to economic norms and standards of living, that is, minimum standards deemed socially acceptable by other citizens (Townsend, 1979). Although many facets of poverty exist, such as ‘food poverty’ and ‘fuel poverty’, these must be considered part of the overarching problem of poverty, which includes both access to minimum levels of material resource *and* inability to fully participate in the mechanics of everyday life.

Deprivation is defined as a deficit of goods, services, activity or social relationships as a direct result of insufficient financial resources and focuses primarily upon the effects of poverty on people and places (Bailey et al., 2003). *Multiple deprivation* is multiple layers of relative deprivation, often concentrated within specific geographical areas (Bailey et al., 2003).

Area deprivation forms a key consideration for the research questions, referring to areas where concentrations of multiple deprivation have been recorded over several decades. Measures of area deprivation used within the study are based upon the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (Scottish Government, 2020).

Persistent deprivation, an important consideration for the study, refers to states of multiple deprivation which have been consistently reported over time (Fusco & Van Kerm, 2022). To date, there is no specific agreement on the temporal period which may definitively encapsulate the persistence of deprivation. However, within the study, persistent deprivation will mainly refer to ongoing neighbourhood deprivation which has been recorded over several decades using indices of multiple deprivation.

It is important to note that in measuring household and area-based deprivation, the point is not to capture deprivation across all areas of life, but rather to provide a generalised picture of how individuals are affected by multiple dimensions of deprivation at once. Within the study, deprivation and poverty are considered interrelated, with deprivation an outcome of poverty.

Social exclusion, another term cited frequently within the research, is characterised by reduced ability to participate:

> Social exclusion is a multidimensional relational process of severing social ties, preventing access to institutions, denying opportunities for social participation, and impairing social cohesion and solidarity. It contributes to and is a result of poverty. (Silver, 1995, p.58)

Lone motherhood is defined within the thesis as a mothering role in which the majority of the emotional, physical and financial load of parenting is borne by the mother alone (Tischler et al., 2007). Increasingly, dissolved partnerships result in complex shared care and economic arrangements between parents. For the purpose of this thesis, however, lone motherhood refers to mothers who are head of household and bring up children without significant support from the other parent (Chant, 2003).

Section 2.2 explores the gendered effects of poverty. Sections 2.3–2.4 explore stigmatisation and the ontological effects of poverty. Sections 2.5–2.9 examine the key concepts of ‘getting by’ and ‘getting on’ and the dimensions of these concepts for women in deprived neighbourhood settings. Sections 2.10–2.12 explore trends towards lone motherhood in the UK and Easterhouse through the research period and examine the dimensions and strategies employed by lone mothers to ‘get by’ and ‘get on’. Section 2.13 concludes the chapter.

2.2 Women’s Poverty Experience and the Feminisation of Poverty

Evidence shows that poverty has distinctly gendered dimension with implications for both men and women in deprived contexts (Congreve & McCormick, 2018). The discussion in this chapter, however, focuses specifically on women’s experiences of poverty. Data shows that, overall, women in Scotland are at greater risk of poverty than men (Understanding Glasgow, 2023). Lone mothers continue to experience higher relative poverty than their lone male or lone female counterparts with no children, although poverty rates amongst lone mothers in Scotland have dropped substantially from peaks of 64 percent in the 1990s to 38 percent in 2020 (Figure 2.1).

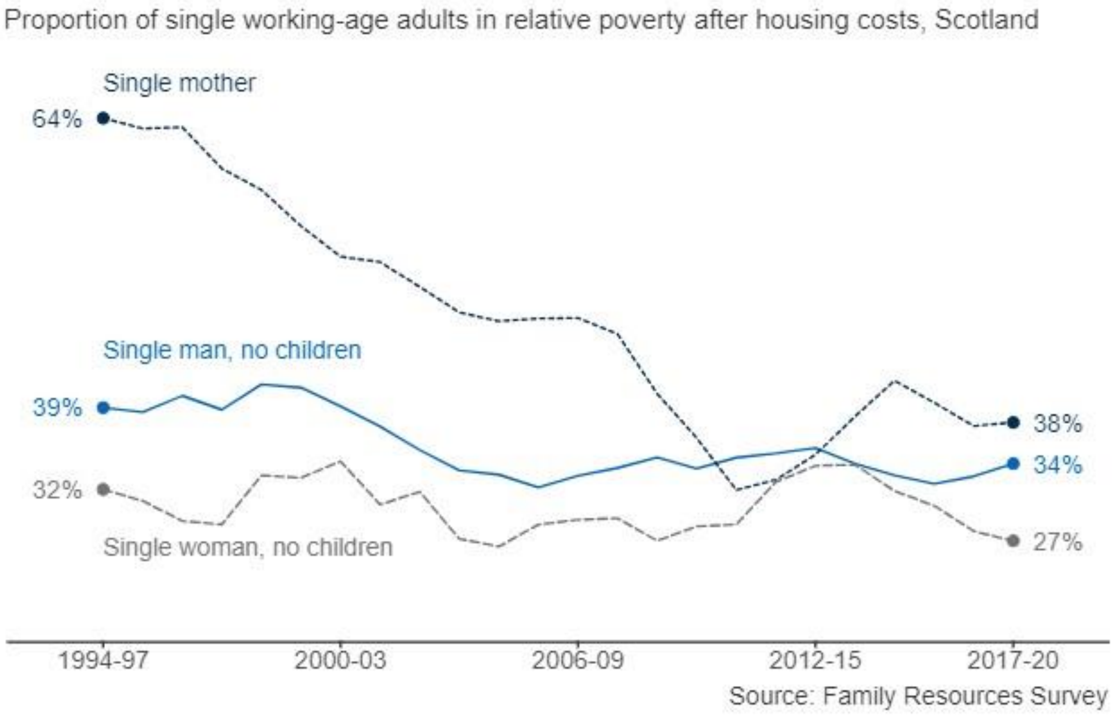

Figure 2.1 Graph of lone mother relative poverty rates

Source: Scottish Government (2017)

Bennett & Daly (2014) suggest that viewing poverty through a gendered lens requires a critique of the social and economic conditions which contribute towards unequal distributions of resources within society. The role of unequal distributions of power between men and women in society has been argued to contribute to the feminisation of poverty (Kim & Choi, 2013; Lister, 2021; Payne, 1991). Studies such as those of Lister (2021) and Warburton Brown (2011) highlight that gender constructs contribute to poverty in that expectations for males to be breadwinners or women to be managers of household budgets may contribute strongly towards the ways in which women experience and endure the effects of poverty.

Control of household finances and women's ability to access household income is linked to their economic dependence on men, which is rooted in structures of male power within society and women's own agency whereby they may sacrifice their own needs for those of other family members (Lister, 2021). It has been well recognised within the literature that within multiply deprived neighbourhoods women are more likely to rely on state benefits or part-time work for personal income (Libertad, 2005; Warburton Brown, 2011), neither of which are likely to sufficiently meet a woman's needs for economic independence (González, 2004). This pattern of economic instability serves to reinforce traditional gender assumptions of males as breadwinners and providers for women and children.

Issues of economic dependence also highlight unequal distribution of power within intimate relationships with men. Lack of control over household finance can be experienced by women as full or partial dependence, lack of agency to make decisions about how money should be spent, and a sense of obligation and deference towards the main provider (Lister, 2021). Economic dependence has also been suggested to increase women's likelihood of exposure to domestic abuse (Humphreys, 2007). Feminists argue that economic control is one of the key tactics used by abusive men to curtail the activities of women and to ensure reliance and compliance (Barzilay, 2017). The thrust of this argument is that economic dependence forms a crucial building block of men's domination of domestic, emotional, physical and sexual spaces of women's lives.

The final important facet of the gendered dimensions of poverty relates to women's reported propensity towards 'self-sacrifice'. A range of studies have demonstrated that mothers in low-income families often act as buffers to the effects of poverty by prioritising the needs of children over their own (Lister, 2004; McKenzie, 2015; Shildrick &

MacDonald, 2013; Warburton Brown, 2011). Examples of ‘doing without’ in order to stretch family resources may include limiting food, eating poorer quality food, rationing heating or restricting travel (Shildrick & MacDonald, 2013). The internalised discourse of maternal self-sacrifice means that often mothers are the members of families who face the most extreme effects of poverty (Cantillon & Nolan, 2001). Deteriorating physical and mental health have been cited within the literature as direct consequences of maternal self-deprivation (Bennett & Daly, 2014; Simpson et al., 2021). Further studies, however, have observed that women may consider their ability make sacrifices for family as a personal strength (Harrison, 2013; Warburton Brown, 2011).

The literature points to the fact that, in society, women are often disproportionately affected by overt and hidden forms of poverty, and combined historical dependence and propensity towards self-sacrifice means that mothers are likely to experience the most marked effects of poverty within family units.

2.3 Stigmatising Discourses of Poverty and the ‘Othering’ of Residents in Deprived Neighbourhoods

Debates on the influence of poor people’s behaviours on poverty experience have been an ongoing concern in the literature, which pre-dates and cuts across the research period (see Auletta, 1982; Murray, 1990; Welshman, 2007; Wilson, 1987). Political administrations have scrutinised the lifestyles of poor people, with Thatcherite rhetoric in the 1980s vilifying those experiencing deep poverty. Lewis’s (1966) ‘culture of poverty’ theory was used to explain widening inequalities and the growing prevalence of lone mothers in deprived contexts (Skeggs, 2004b).

In the late 1990s and 2000s, the New Labour governments in the UK adopted the term ‘social exclusion’ to describe the disenfranchisement of those in deepest poverty (Levitas, 2005; Novak, 2018; Welshman, 2007). However, New Labour’s focus later shifted from addressing structural inequality to ‘changing people, changing communities, changing cultures’, placing the responsibility on poor people (Levitas, 2005).

In 2002, Ian Duncan Smith experienced his well-documented ‘poverty epiphany’ whilst visiting Easterhouse and pledged greater efforts towards improving living conditions in deprived estates like Easterhouse. Yet, by the late years of the 2000s, ‘Broken Britain’ – a term popularised by the Conservative administration – was used liberally within the tabloid media to explain the perceived social and moral decay of residents of the UK's most-deprived housing estates (Slater, 2014). Marginalised groups such as lone mothers, long-term benefits claimants and young offenders became the pariahs of the 'Broken Britain' media lament (McKenzie, 2015). Demeaning discourse towards urban poor people contributed strongly towards negative public opinion through the 2000s (Lister, 2021; Skeggs, 1997), compounded by the rising popularity of television documentaries and comedies which cast people in social housing estates as lazy, fat, feckless and immoral. Shows such as *Undercover Ibiza*, *The Royle Family*, *Little Britain* and *The League of Gentlemen* fed into a powerful discourse of working-class culture which cast those in deep poverty as vulgar and without decency (Skeggs, 2004b).

Working-class femininity through the period was also portrayed in the media as a series of undesirable stereotypes: the fat, chain-smoking lone mother as sexually available, reliant on benefits and social housing, and intellectually inferior is a common caricature of working-class femininity. In fact, through the period, there were few positive discourses of working-class femininity or motherhood being perpetuated within either the media or political spheres (Skeggs, 2004b; Campbell, 1993).

McKenzie (2015, p.66) notes the sexualisation of working-class femininity and associations of revulsion, and working-class lone mothers being perceived as 'rough and ready': 'rough' a reference to class, residency within a persistently deprived neighbourhood, and its connotations of crime, disorder, poor housing and poverty; and 'ready' a reference to sexual availability and the prevailing representation of working-class women, and particularly lone mothers, as 'slags' or sexually immoral. Consequently, lone mothers' sexual judgement and reproductive agency were high-profile sources of political rhetoric throughout the Thatcherite and Blairite eras, their sexualities and bodies a site of national political debate and conjecture.

The prevailing political and media discourses of the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s meant that, for the most deprived, respectability and femininity were resources with limited potential for convertibility into other more valuable types of social and cultural capital outside of the immediate neighbourhood. Indeed, scholars such as Skeggs (1997, 2004a) have argued that femininity is a cultural resource belonging mainly to the middle classes, which holds little transmissible value even in deprived contexts. This argument holds important resonances for the discussion of women's social capital, which is examined in Chapter 3. What is clear is that there are crucial class-based differences in the ways in which women in deprived contexts are able to draw upon femininity and sexuality as forms of social capital. Furthermore, the kinds of femininity that hold value within deprived neighbourhoods may contribute to the process of 'othering' from more mainstream discourses of femininity (Campbell, 1993; McKenzie, 2015; Skeggs, 1997). Yet, to date, no literature has directly examined the effects of pathologising poverty discourse in the Scottish context. The literature review raises important questions around the extent to which such rhetoric impacted lone mothers' poverty experiences of 'getting by' and 'getting on' in Easterhouse.

2.4 Poverty Shame – The Ontological Experience of Poverty

By contrast to pathologising political and media discourses of poverty, scholars concerned with social justice have argued that political, media and academic discourses which focus on the language and imagery of exclusion and brokenness have perpetuated a process of 'othering' of residents in deprived neighbourhoods (Welshman, 2007). 'Othering' describes how 'the non-poor' treat 'the poor' as different (Lister, 2015), and 'othering' of people in deprived communities has been argued to contribute to a continuum of poverty shame which is typified by an 'us and them' mentality. Welshman (2007) argues that discourses of differentiation reinforce social exclusion, stigmatisation and stereotypes of poor people and that establishing an ideological distance between people in deprived communities and more-affluent people allows 'the non-poor' to rationalise the existence of persistently deprived communities (Lister, 2015; McKenzie, 2015; Skeggs, 2004b). This question of the ideological divide holds an important resonance for Easterhouse as a place which has experienced long-lasting class segregation and has been described as 'a part of and apart from' (Bissett, 2023) the city of Glasgow.

The 'poverty–shame nexus' has been suggested to be a direct consequence of the multidimensional 'othering' of poor people (Lister, 2021). The nexus refers to the structures of humiliation and shame which poor people attach to their experiences of poverty. Scheff (2003), Sayer (2005) Shildrick & MacDonald (2013) and Walker et al. (2013) argue that social exclusion in deprived neighbourhoods is reinforced by the ontological shame of being poor and perceived as tarnished by poverty. Poverty shame is noted within the literature as being ‘psychologically and socially painful’ (Walker et al., 2013). This pain is likely to be felt particularly deeply by women who experience gendered pressures to budget and provide markers of ‘artificial affluence’ for their offspring in order to prevent further shame and marginalisation (Shildrick & MacDonald, 2013).

Some studies note the tendency of those experiencing poverty to distance themselves from the shameful ‘poverty’ label (Flaherty, 2008; Shildrick & MacDonald, 2013), reporting a tendency for UK residents to perceive ‘real’ poverty as existing in the global south. Flaherty (2008) also highlights perceptions that poverty in the UK must be attributable to poor budgeting decisions or individual personal failings. It can therefore be argued that the process of ‘othering’ within deprived communities is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon. Whilst those experiencing poverty are ‘othered’ and marginalised by more-affluent people, poor people often distance themselves from those they perceive to be ‘not coping’ with the effects of poverty or those experiencing absolute poverty (Batty & Flint, 2010). This exemplifies the ways in which poor people come to internalise the debasing dialogue of ‘otherness’ and become agents in its transmission to other populations. Consequently, in order to address the secondary research aim, which examines the history of women’s socio-economic disadvantage in Easterhouse (Section 1.3.1), it is necessary to view disadvantage as a socially constructed as well as material phenomenon.

The literature makes clear that women in persistently deprived housing estates are likely to have experienced stigma and shame related to social class and perpetuated by pathologising political and media discourses. These discourses are rooted in structures of power which promote dominant ideologies through media platforms. Pathologising discourses of poverty have a direct bearing on public opinion and the ways in which women in deprived contexts internalise the shame of poverty and attempt to shield families from its effects.

2.5 Defining the Concepts – ‘Getting By’ and ‘Getting On’

Marginalisation is closely bound up in neighbourhood identity and local community. Segregation and the discourse of ‘difference’ mean that the arena of neighbourhood becomes a key site of both belonging and navigating inequality (Campbell, 1993).

The research draws upon Lister’s (2021, p.130) definition of ‘getting by’:

> The ongoing struggle to survive which takes different forms, many of which remain invisible to the rest of society.

The hidden nature of ‘getting by’ has been noted within the literature as one of its defining features (Lister, 2004; Shildrick & MacDonald, 2013). Lister (2021) highlights that individuals experiencing poverty often minimise the strategies they employ to navigate the effects of poverty as simply belonging to the mechanics of ‘getting on’ with daily life. This internalised perspective fails to recognise the myriad extra strains placed upon the abilities of those experiencing poverty to navigate the daily stresses of poverty and social and environmental deprivation. As will be seen, the thesis explores the hidden acts that women have engaged in to navigate gender, place, poverty and lone motherhood.

The acts involved in enabling poor people to navigate the effects of poverty form a central concern of the debates around ‘getting by’. It has been argued that the shame and stigma associated with persistent poverty have resulted in difficulties obtaining rich data surrounding the measures employed by poor people to manage their lived experience (Sedmak, 2013). For those in deprived neighbourhoods, being perceived as ‘getting by’ is important in terms of both managing the shame of poverty and staying ‘under the radar’ of unwanted attention from external agencies such as social work or housing services. Within the thesis, strategies for ‘getting by’ will be considered as being located within the small everyday acts which allow women to cope with the experience of poverty practically and psychologically (Lister, 2021).

Lister (2021) draws upon the conceptualisation of ‘getting out’ as a descriptor for the aspect of personal agency which encompasses ‘moving out of poverty’. Lister’s definition of ‘getting out’ recognises that some groups such as lone mothers may choose to direct their personal agencies towards outcomes such as maintaining stability and security over academic or economic achievement. Participation in the labour market and accessing education are understood within the literature to be the most important strategies for attempting to ‘get out’ of poverty (Lister, 2021).

The original intention of the research questions was to discover the extent to which female networks had been significant for ‘getting by’ and ‘getting out’ in the sense of moving beyond periods of extreme poverty and promoting life chances. However, the findings made important new contributions to knowledge which showed that for older women in deprived settings like Easterhouse, success is often connected to finding fulfilment and meaning in spite of lives lived in poverty, rather than simply moving out of deep poverty (see Section 11.4). The findings also showed that the majority of research participants held no desire to 'get out' of the deprived neighbourhood confines of Easterhouse, but rather opted to remain on account of belonging and local connection. Consequently, the term 'getting on' was appropriated to addresses a gap in knowledge relating to the aspirations of older women in segregated class spaces and their understandings of transcending structural disadvantage. The *Cambridge Dictionary* (2023) defines 'getting on' as: 'To manage or deal with a situation, especially successfully.'

This everyday definition of the term captures an aspect of how 'getting on' is operationalised within the research. However, the broader focus within the study is upon lone mothers' persistently challenging lives in Easterhouse through the period 1980–2021 and the ways in which experience of severe and enduring structural inequalities have shaped the meaning of personal success. 'Getting on' in this context is tied into the reality that inequalities have hampered the ability to exercise full human agency and that the majority of participants started from relatively low economic and social bases *and* perceive themselves to have lived well and attained in spite of the evident challenges. In this way, where 'getting by' focusses on strategies for negotiating the effects of poverty, 'getting on' deals with personal conceptions of success within the recognisable limitations of structural inequality.

2.6 'Getting By' and 'Getting On' as Expressions of Human Agency

Some scholars have proposed that recognition of poor people's agency to act and effect personal change is an important counternarrative to the dominant discourse of 'othering' (Krumer-Nevo & Benjamin, 2010; Lister, 2015).

> Agency engenders their capacity to act, which challenges the characterization of 'the poor' as passive objects be it in its benign form of the helpless victim or the malign spectre of the lazy, work shy, welfare dependent languishing on benefit. (Lister, 2021, p.125)

As noted in Section 2.5, whilst considering the agency of people experiencing poverty, it is imperative to recognise the limitations imposed by structural inequalities upon individuals' abilities to act and participate. Numerous studies have noted the barriers to personal and collective agency posed by class inequality and exposure to areas of multiple deprivation (Boon & Farnsworth, 2011; Craig, 2010; DeWilde, 2003; Lister, 2021; McCormack, 2009; McGarvey, 2017; Shildrick & MacDonald, 2013). In acknowledging the agency and strategies of poor people, research must also recognise the additional disadvantages posed to agency by structural inequalities.

This thesis recognises ‘getting by’ and ‘getting on’ as expressions of individual agency, used to counter the effects of neighbourhood, age, income, class, gender and motherhood. Thus, research must also recognise the contextual factors which influence abilities to exercise agency and access power for those experiencing poverty. Agency can be exercised in both individual and collective capacities, as a mechanism to influence personal, group or community-level change (Mik-Meyer & Silverman, 2019).

Lister (2021) proposes a model for understanding the individual and collective agency of people experiencing poverty, based on a continuum of actions which range from small everyday acts to counter the effects of poverty to more-collective, organised community action. The model suggests four specific dimensions of agency and highlights that all four may be present to different extents within individual lived experience:

1. Getting by – acts of agency which enable individuals to cope with or ‘get through’ the difficulties associated with living in poverty. These acts are generally situated within the everyday activities and domestic routines of individuals and families.
2. Getting (back) at – acts of individual resistance towards systems or discourse which reproduce or compound the effects of poverty.
3. Getting out – the ways in which those experiencing poverty may use their agency and decision-making skills to plan routes out of poverty. Lister stresses the difficulties faced by those who aspire to effect economic and social mobility in spite of the barriers posed by neighbourhoods, generational poverty, social circumstance, gender, age and other diverging limiting factors.
4. Getting organised – this aspect of Lister’s model of agency refers to poor people’s ability to collectively organise to effect community-based or structural change.

Two of Lister’s categorisations have important resonance for the research aims. First, the exploration of ‘getting by’ is explicitly noted as one of the key areas of the research. ‘Getting out’ as mentioned above is also directly related to the concept of overcoming or ‘making it out the other end’ of poverty. The notions of ‘getting by’ and ‘getting on’ are given singular importance within this chapter due to their orientation towards the research aim:

To investigate the extent to which women with experience of lone motherhood in Easterhouse have used female social networks as a mechanism to overcome challenges associated with gender, place, poverty and motherhood since the 1980s.

Lister’s analysis of agency will form a key operational concept within the research.

2.7 The Practical Dimensions of ‘Getting By’ and ‘Getting On’

Three realms of challenge are considered. These have been selected for their relevance to the research questions. The spatial dimensions of ‘getting by’ and ‘getting on’ are explored in Chapter 4.

The first practical aspect of ‘getting by’ and ‘getting on’ relates to the acts women employ to navigate economic challenges, mitigating against the effects of scarcity. The literature suggests that managing to ‘get by’ on insufficient household income requires resourcefulness, skill and a capacity for endurance in the face of constant pressure and anxiety (Bartley, 2006; Carpiano, 2008; Shildrick & MacDonald, 2013), involving closely monitoring finances and the daily juggling of debt management, bill paying, borrowing and cutting back (Dowler & Lambie-Mumford, 2015).

The thought and energies, as well as enhanced time and emotional pressures, expended in putting together sophisticated plans for managing have been argued to have distinctly gendered dimensions (Shildrick & MacDonald, 2013). Women, who have been demonstrated to engage in greater emotional and caring labour (Adkins, 2006; González, 2004; Huppatz, 2009; Kim & Choi, 2013; Skeggs, 2004b) are also more likely to bear enhanced responsibility for managing debt and household budgets (Warburton Brown, 2011). Moreover, the extra time constraints of rigid meal planning, shopping in the cheapest outlets and renegotiating credit payments pose a significant stressor which impacts on time available for other domestic responsibilities. Thus, the time taken up with ‘getting by’ through micro-budgeting has implications for both women’s mental wellbeing and their abilities to engage with other practical, emotional and administrative household responsibilities (Brailey, 1986; Drobnič, 2000; Shildrick & MacDonald, 2013).

Chronic stress associated with poverty has also been argued to place poor people at a higher risk of adopting coping strategies which may undermine health and in turn make coping more difficult (Goodman et al., 2019). Several authors note that strategising to ‘get by’ involves creating opportunities for life to be more bearable despite the constraints of poverty (Lister, 2021; Shildrick & MacDonald, 2013; Warburton Brown, 2011), for example, spending money on ‘small pleasures’ such as consumables (Daly & Kelly, 2015). For some, this may mean using meagre resources to buy items of which others may disapprove, but which grant a measure of psychological wellbeing (Lister, 2021). Strategies such as smoking, drug-taking or depriving oneself of food may contribute towards periods of crisis and poor health outcomes (Kim & Choi, 2013). Health-risking strategies may also contribute towards cycles of crisis caused by poor physical and mental health, which may cumulatively impact on individual ability to manage the everyday pressures of poverty.

There exists some limited literature relating to risky strategies which may be employed in order to ‘get by’. Some studies have examined the phenomenon of ‘survival crime’, which those experiencing poverty may engage in as a means to cope with economic pressure (Davies, 2002; Pare & Felson, 2014; Webster & Kingston, 2014). Examples may involve shoplifting (Davies, 2002; Loftin, 2020; Reddy, 2007), prostitution or transactional sex work for food or other consumables (Edlund & Korn, 2002; Phoenix, 2007), drug dealing (May et al., 2005) or involvement with gangs (Deuchar et al, 2020).

Other risky strategies noted within the literature include benefit fraud and engaging in undeclared work (Dean & Melrose, 1997; Jordan & Redley, 1994). It has been suggested in a small body of literature that subversion of the benefits system constitutes a radical strategy utilised by poor people to fight discriminatory welfare policy. Feigned ignorance, ‘foot dragging’ and undeclared earnings have all been suggested as measures that poor people employ to counter the effects of structural inequality (Jordan & Redley, 1994). Other sources counter this argument by suggesting that these acts of agency are not so much radical acts of ‘getting back at’ the system, but rather a facet of everyday struggles to simply ‘get by’.

Relatively little has been written about how women use risky behaviours as acts of agency for ‘getting by’. Stigma and shame are likely to be compounded by engagement in activities which may be viewed by outsiders as morally dubious. Research on transactional sex work, in particular, is extremely limited within the literature. Transactional sex work refers to sexual services provided in return for goods, food or consumables. Existing knowledge on this topic exclusively relates to the global south with very limited information regarding its prevalence in relation to global north poverty. The limited research relating to the risk-taking dimensions of ‘getting by’ points to a very clear gap in knowledge surrounding how people experiencing poverty use risky or morally dubious strategies as a means to ‘get by’.

Women’s time and its potential for convertibility into income forms the final consideration of this section. Section 2.2 established that people experiencing poverty expend a great deal of time and energy employing strategies to survive the effects of poverty, but this is seldom recognised as a facet of ‘getting by’ or prioritised within institutional and structural settings. Payne (1991) argues that women in deprived contexts spend time in order to save money. This might be demonstrated in walking rather taking buses or walking long distances to access affordable food shopping outlets. Indeed, women’s reliance on public transport in deprived contexts forms another key consideration in how time and money have specific dimensions in deprived neighbourhoods (Kenyon, 2015). The argument follows that reliance on public transport increases time poverty and dislocation from resources outside the neighbourhood. Thus, women have an increased vulnerability to being both economically and time poor.

> Within a household, a woman might be poorer than a man not just in terms of income and consumption, but also in terms of discretionary time and energy left over after the process of conversion, affecting their relative substantive freedom to pursue their goals in life. (Burchardt, 2010, p.325)

One of the most corrosive aspects of the ways in which managing poverty eats into the time resources of women is reflected in time spent serving other people. The information relating to women’s exposure to poverty points to the fact that self-sacrifice, time pressure and the ontological challenges of poverty result in women being deprived of their right to freedom to pursue self-development. Women’s time poverty then can be argued to directly contribute towards cycles of poverty (Lister, 2021).

When women spend much of their time mitigating against the effects of poverty, there is little left to build skills which may aid in ‘getting out’ of poverty, nor time to spend building up stores of resilience to protect against fresh crisis. Moreover, lone mothers may face exacerbated stress relating to the choice between material poverty and poverty of time spent with children (Burchardt, 2010). Limited research surrounding the cumulative effects of poverty on time, resources and emotional capital on women’s ability to pursue activities which contribute towards self-improvement and personal progression signifies a significant gap in current knowledge. This thesis aims to contribute towards addressing this gap.

Chapter 3 considers the social and emotional capital generated by networks of women in deprived contexts. However, it is important to note that besides the practical and economic strategies utilised to ‘get by’, social relations form the other key contextual consideration in how poverty is managed, endured and transcended in deprived neighbourhoods such as Easterhouse. One of the key considerations around how social networks help poor people ‘get by’ lies in their dual ability to enable and constrain efforts to ‘get by’, an issue explored in depth in the following chapter.

2.8 Personal and Ontological Dimensions of ‘Getting By’

The relationship between poverty, living in deprived housing estates and poor mental health outcomes has been well documented within the literature (Goodman et al., 2019; Hopton & Hunt, 1996; Mickelson & Kubzansky, 2003). Perhaps less commonly recognised is that poverty is often characterised by episodes of crisis and the presence of acute stressors, which have been linked directly to perceptions of powerlessness and low morale (Goodman et al., 2019). Empirical evidence consistently shows that poverty stressors are linked to stress and mental health symptoms such as anxiety and depression (Mickelson & Kubzansky, 2003). Furthermore, studies indicate that poverty doubles women’s likelihood of experiencing depression (Bussuk et al., 1998) and that the highest rates of post-traumatic stress disorder can be found amongst women on the lowest incomes (Bachman & Saltzman, 1995; Vest et al., 2002; Vogel & Marshall, 2001). The challenges of substandard housing, overcrowding, lack of access to transport, lack of resources and crime within neighbourhood have all been argued as significant contributors towards poor women’s mental health challenges (Bachman & Saltzman, 1995; González, 2004).

Titterton (1992, p.19) suggests that ‘creative human agencies may act as important buffers against stressful circumstances related to poverty’. Titterton uses the notion of unequally distributed human resources to suggest a range of emotional resources which may contribute towards ability to ‘get by’. Practical skills are noted within this model as one of the most important mechanisms, alongside a range of less-tangible resources, such as adopting a ‘positive mindset’, a key learned strategy which acts as a buffer to poverty stress. Other personal attributes such as humour are noted as positive strategies for survival and providing ‘hope for the future’. Black humour has also been noted by some authors as a mechanism for subverting stigmatising discourses of poverty (Perry et al., 2014, p.72).

Faith forms the final consideration. Some studies have suggested that having religious faith acts as an ontological strategy for internally managing the strains of poverty (Chan & Rhodes, 2013; Mayo et al., 2022; Vandsburger et al., 2008). Participants from these studies reported that faith in God or other forms of spirituality contributed towards inner strength and resilience. However, these studies relate directly to the US and to date there is no available literature examining the extent to which faith is significant in supporting deprived populations in the UK to navigate challenges associated with poverty. Involvement with churches and religious groups may not necessarily be based upon religious faith. These have been documented within the literature as community anchor points in deprived neighbourhoods which provide both economic and social supports (Kawachi, 1999; Myers, 2000; Pacione, 1990; van der Merwe, 2020). The data within these studies, however, relating to the extent to which secular engagement with church groups supports women to ‘get by’ in deprived contexts, is less clear. This constitutes another clear gap in knowledge surrounding how women interact with religious organisations as a means to ‘get by’.

2.9 The Cultural Dimensions of ‘Getting By’ and ‘Getting On’

Some of the mechanisms that women use to ‘get by’ in deprived contexts can be considered to be rooted in cultural habits. One important aspect of cultural strategies that allow women to ‘get by’ relates to the sharing of locally situated knowledge, which can help to navigate poverty and neighbourhood and protect against unwanted interventions from external agencies.

> ‘Getting by’ comes in different forms, from where you can buy the cheapest chicken, to how you might handle the various government agencies you have to deal with, often on a daily basis. As a woman living on a council estate, it is important to know ‘what to say’ and how to answer a question – answering a question ‘wrongly’ can have steep penalties. (McKenzie, 2015, p.48)

Political discourses of poverty have historically contributed towards the dislocation and stigmatisation of residents in deprived communities (Campbell, 1993; McKenzie, 2015; Shildrick & MacDonald, 2013; Skeggs, 2004b; Welshman, 2007). Perceptions of powerlessness and limitations of personal agency in deprived communities contribute towards distrust of agencies linked to structural power (Dewild, 2003), such as housing providers, benefits agencies, social services, community police and education services, which are often viewed with distrust (Campbell, 1993; McGarvey, 2017; McKenzie, 2015; Skeggs, 2004b). In these contexts, agencies and institutions are regarded as systems which must be negotiated. Situated knowledge of how to negotiate systems to best effect is often transmitted orally or through storytelling among female networks (McKenzie, 2015). This form of networking and information-sharing forms a powerful strategy that women employ to secure housing, maximise income, avert financial crisis and protect families from unwanted interventions.

Finally, cultural resources such as local storytelling and adoption of estate-based language and ‘being’ have been noted in the literature as mechanisms that support poor people to give meaning to their lived experiences (Galster, 2003; Watson, 2014). Some authors have sought to conceptualise cultural assimilation within deprived neighbourhoods as a mechanism for ‘getting by’ (McKenzie, 2015; Watson, 2014). Belonging and fitting in to a neighbourhood allow residents to form social bonds which hold meaning and cultural identity. McKenzie (2015) explains ‘estateism’ as the notion that belonging to a deprived estate may invoke complex patterns of loyalty, identity, pride, language and habitus. These patterns may hold value within the context of the estate but be viewed as culturally vulgar by outsiders. For residents of multiply deprived neighbourhoods, the neighbourhood may be a rich site of cultural and social capital. ‘Belonging’ may allow local privileges such as being included in events and information-sharing circles and being protected from acts of crime and violence.

2.10 Challenges of Lone Parenthood and the Dimensions of ‘Getting By’ and ‘Getting On’ for Lone Mothers

The following section examines literature relating to lone mothers’ experiences of ‘getting by’ and ‘getting on’ in deprived contexts.

2.10.1 Rise of Lone Motherhood in the UK from 1980s Onwards

The most recent available data shows that, in the UK, one in four households with children is headed by a lone parent and of those parents’ 90 percent are female (Office for National Statistics, 2019). During the research period, the prevalence of lone-parent families in the UK increased dramatically and lone motherhood become a mass phenomenon.

> In 1971 the UK had 570,000 one parent families, with one million dependent children. But by 1986, one in seven families, or just over one million, were headed by a lone parent who was not cohabiting. This proportion grew to one in five by 1991, and by 2000, 26 percent of all families, or 1.75 million in total, had just one parent. (Office for National Statistics, 2019)

Table 4.1 in the next chapter shows that families headed by a lone parent in Easterhouse tripled in the first decade of the research period and continued to stay around twenty percentage points or almost 75% higher (51.4% in Easterhouse and 29.6% in Glasgow in 2011) by the end of the research period. Evidence makes clear that whilst the trend towards lone motherhood gained increasing traction through the 1980s, Easterhouse became a place within the city of Glasgow where lone mothers were increasingly concentrated from the 1980s onwards (see Section 4.3).

Since the 1970s, the socio-economic demographic profile of lone parents has shifted significantly (Bernardi & Mortelmans, 2018). Figure 2.1 highlighted that lone-mother poverty rates in Scotland were highest through the early part of the research period and, although poverty rates have fallen through the following decades, lone mothers remain consistently more impoverished than those without children. Furthermore, much evidence points to the fact that lone parenthood is a causal factor in poverty and that lone parents are at greater risk of poverty than their coupled counterparts (Bernardi & Mortelmans, 2018).

Increasingly, since the 1980s, lone parenthood arises as a result of the dissolution of cohabiting or married relationships (Tischler et al., 2007). The causes and effects of rising trends in lone motherhood are the subject of some lively debate. Conservative perspectives have lamented the role of lone-parent-headed households in contributing towards the desecration of heteronormative family values and childhood disadvantage. Women's liberation movements in the late-twentieth century have been blamed for destabilising traditional family configurations and encouraging women to reject structures of male paternalism (Auletta, 1981a; Murray, 1990; Wilson, 1987).

Liberal theorists and feminists have argued that the growing trend towards lone motherhood signified a positive development in women's liberation from oppressive patriarchal constructs of marriage (Jacobs, 1994; Mink, 1998; Neyer & Bernardi, 2011). Trends towards rising lone motherhood were also argued to intersect with rejection of economically unviable men whose earnings were compromised by unemployment and deindustrialisation (Campbell, 1993; Craig, 2010; Hughes, 2004). Some authors also cite growing awareness of domestic abuse as a cause of lone-mother households (McKeganey & Barnard, 2007).

2.11 Lone-Mother Strategies for 'Getting By' and 'Getting On'

Within the literature. Bernardi & Mortelmans (2018, p.10) observe that the interconnected challenges of work, care and income are those most central to 'getting by' lone motherhood:

> Work, care, and income are a triangle of intertwined influences and dependencies that are difficult to see as completely independent from each other.

The extent to which lone mothers are able to engage with employment opportunities clearly has implications for likelihood of exposure to poverty and 'getting by'. In the first instance, lone mothers have a higher likelihood of lower educational attainment, which is reflected in lower-skilled, lower-paid jobs (Bowman & Wickramasinghe, 2020; Stewart, 2009; Zhan & Pandey, 2004). Second, cycles of low-paid employment also increase likelihood of exposure to what Bauman (2002) calls the 'hidden cost of work'. This refers to extra costs associated with travel and childcare, and a decrease in time available for domestic work and caring for children. Third, the age and number of children within the family also has a bearing on lone mothers' likelihood of entering the labour market (Drobnič, 2000). The more children and the younger they are, the more time constraints placed upon lone mothers. In addition, cultural attitudes to being a 'stay-at-home mother' versus 'working mother' may hinder entry into the workplace. Fourth, social norms relating to the orientation of motherhood from within support networks (i.e. stay-at-home versus working) may also contribute towards whether work is sustained long term and the kind of work patterns to which lone mothers commit (Boeckmann et al., 2015). Fifth, lone mothers in deprived neighbourhoods are also more often involved in high-intensity, multi-generational caring responsibilities, which compounds time pressure and vulnerability to poverty (Aldridge & Hughes, 2016). The extent to which lone mothers rely upon support networks as a means to access work forms another important consideration, which is given fuller attention in Chapter 3.

A further challenge for lone mothers navigating poverty relates to the more generalised phenomenon of women's historic economic dependence upon men. Where women have left relationships in which they have been economically dependent upon male partners or had little access to household income, there may exist gaps in knowledge relating to how to make and manage income (Bernardi & Mortelmans, 2018). Additionally, absence of financial support from fathers contributes towards lone-mother poverty (Zahn & Pandey, 2004). Other studies that have adopted life-course approaches to examining lone-mother poverty suggest that factors such as low educational attainment, poor health and precarious employment all place lone mothers at greater risk of poverty over life-course (Tsakloglou & Papadopoulos, 2002; Vandecasteele, 2010).

McKenzie (2015) and Ridge (2009) highlight that children use clothing as a symbolic means to 'fit in' and avoid social exclusion relating to poverty. Lone mothers have been cited within the literature as particularly vulnerable to the pressures of providing expensive clothes as a means to shield children from the poverty–shame nexus (Lister, 2021; Shildrick & MacDonald, 2013). Sherman (2009) describes this strategy as 'buffering'. The tendency of parents is to try to protect children and allow them better opportunities than they themselves might have experienced. Consequently, buffering has been evidenced as a female strategy for both 'getting by' and 'getting out' of poverty. Lone motherhood means that women alone bear the responsibility for actively promoting the life chances of offspring; this means that the challenges of ‘buffering’ behaviours are exaggerated (Neyer & Bernardi, 2011; Shildrick & MacDonald, 2013).

Lone mothers have been demonstrated within the literature as particularly vulnerable to high levels of debt (Bennett & Daly, 2014). This has been explained as the result of a propensity towards poverty due to barriers to labour market participation and also as a result of protecting families from poverty shame (Lister, 2021). Household debt is highly correlated to maternal stress (Kempson et al., 2004). Debt also involves lone mothers in time-intensive administrative tasks relating to managing and renegotiating payments. These processes contribute to the extra constraints that managing poverty places on lone mothers’ time and physical and emotional energies.

McKenzie (2015, p.201) reflects that the stigmatisation of being perceived as a ‘broken family’ is felt deeply by lone mothers and a great many rally against the trend by attempting to ‘maximize household income, even where that means breaking the law’. However, as noted in Section 2.2, the literature relating to how people in deprived neighbourhoods use risk-taking behaviours as a means to navigate poverty is relatively limited. Knowledge around lone mothers’ involvement in criminal or risk-taking behaviour is almost completely absent in the literature. This points to a clear gap in knowledge and a need for further research.

2.12 Personal Dimensions of ‘Getting By’ and ‘Getting On’

There is evidence of a correlation between lone motherhood and poorer physical and mental health outcomes over the life-course (Mackenbach et al., 2008). However, whether this is caused by lone motherhood specifically is less well established. Authors such as Bernardi & Mortelmans (2018) have argued that the main causal factor in influencing poor mental health is the long-term impact of lone-parenting stress and anxiety of managing the effects of poverty. For lone mothers already experiencing poor mental health, anxiety relating to how children will be cared for in the event of a crisis may act as a compounding stressor (González, 2004).

Poor health also acts as a barrier to lone mothers finding and sustaining employment (Lister, 2004). Other studies have argued that the pressure on lone mothers to work long hours in order to provide for children places them at enhanced risk of clinical depression and other mental health issues (Bernardi & Mortelmans, 2018; Simpson et al., 2021). Consequently, the health status of lone mothers feeds into the other central concerns of ‘getting by’ and ‘getting on’ which relate to poverty, work and childcare. This convergence demonstrates the links made by Bernardi & Mortelmans (2018) regarding the interconnected tangle of issues which impacts on lone mothers’ everyday endeavours to get by.

Some studies have suggested that domestic abuse has been a significant factor in the rise of lone motherhood (Goodman et al., 2019; Robbins & Cook, 2018; Tischler et al., 2007). Tischler et al. (2007) note that mothers who have left relationships because of domestic abuse are at higher vulnerability to a raft of other issues which are likely to negatively impact on wellbeing. The most pressing of these stressors in the early stages of transitioning to lone motherhood is homelessness (Schein, 1995; Tischler et al., 2007; Vostanis et al., 1998). During the 1980s and 1990s, homeless families were overwhelmingly women with dependent children who were roofless or who lived in unstable or temporary accommodation, most of whom were fleeing domestic violence or relationship breakdown (Schein, 1995; Vostanis et al., 1998).

Skafida et al. (2021) found that Scottish lone mothers from the poorest neighbourhoods had a one in three chance of having experienced some form of domestic abuse, compared with one in ten in wealthier neighbourhoods. Generational poverty was directly correlated with lone mothers’ likelihood of having experienced domestic abuse. This correlation between poverty and likelihood of experiencing domestic abuse is supported by other studies (Eby, 2004; Goodman et al., 2019; Lown et al., 2006). However, there is a clear gap in knowledge relating to the extent that domestic abuse as an expression of patriarchal ideology and hypermasculinity is area-based and prevalent in areas with high poverty rates. The existing research indicates that lone mothers have been at increased comparative risk of abuse, homelessness, trauma and long-term poverty. To date, the experiences of this group in the context of deprived neighbourhoods in Glasgow have received insufficient attention. The research questions have been designed to contribute towards this gap in knowledge.

2.13 Conclusions

This chapter has examined and discussed four main themes relating to women's experience of poverty in deprived neighbourhoods. Several key points stand out. The first relates directly to the moralisation of poverty within academic and political discourse. This chapter established that there has been a long historical bias within poverty models which has problematised the lived experience of those experiencing poverty (Davis, 2014). Moral assumptions relating to the economic and social behaviours of poor people have resulted in a process of 'othering', which is demonstrated most starkly within neighbourhoods characterised by persistent poverty. In deprived neighbourhoods, poverty shame and the internalisation of negative discourses of poverty impact directly on the habitus of residents (Lister, 2015; Shildrick & MacDonald, 2013). Poverty shame contributes directly towards the measures women, and lone mothers, employ to cope with the effects of poverty.

'Getting by' and 'getting on' are important expressions of agency that women employ in everyday acts to mitigate against poverty effects and protect their families from their negative consequences. A substantial body of literature exists relating to how people in deprived neighbourhoods experience and manage poverty. Yet, understanding of how lone mothers 'get by' and 'get on', especially in areas of persistent poverty, is much more limited. The shame associated with poverty and its hidden nature mean that the measures women employ to get by are likely to be shrouded in secrecy (Lister, 2004). Since poverty has been established to be both gendered and shameful, 'getting by' and 'getting on' probably involve acts which women find difficult to expose. Whilst some acts of 'getting by' are likely to involve the more everyday acts of budgeting, negotiating childcare and work/life, others may involve less-talked-about strategies which involve risk-taking behaviours – an area where more research is clearly warranted. The research aims to explore the full range of strategies employed by women to navigate the effects of poverty, including those which may not be often talked about.

Chapter 3: Review of Literature – Social Capital and Network Theories

3.1 Introduction

Having examined the literature concerning the research themes of poverty, gender and lone motherhood, Chapter 3 turns to explore female social networks and their outputs. The focus upon lone mothers as a population of special interest originated from the data concerning the dramatic rise of lone-mother households in Easterhouse from the 1980s onwards (see Table 4.1 in the next chapter for more details). This increase raised important questions around the significance and functions of support networks in such a persistently and multiply deprived setting. The specific focus on female networks developed from the small body of literature which suggested specific negative dimensions of heterosexual relationships in the West of Scotland (Craig, 2010; Hughes, 2004). The research questions set out to explore the significance of female networks within a specific place, Easterhouse, and time, 1980–2021 (see Section 1.3.3).

Chapter 3 is structured in nine parts. Sections 3.2–3.4 examine definitions of social capital and social networks and explore overarching discourses of social capital theory and feminist responses. Sections 3.5–3.6 explore literature relating to survival networks and lone mothers' support networks. Section 3.7 sets out discourses on women's caring responsibilities and the generation of emotional capital. Section 3.8 discusses trends towards lone motherhood from the 1980s onwards and relational dynamics between men and women. Finally, Section 3.9 concludes by setting out the aspects of social capital theories which are operationalised within the research.

3.2 Definitions

Over the past thirty years, social capital has steadily become one of the most widely written about and applied areas within the social sciences. Bhandari & Yasunobu (2009, p.480) provide an overarching definition of social capital which encompasses its inherent values and functions:

> Social capital is broadly defined to be a multidimensional phenomenon encompassing a stock of social norms, values, beliefs, trusts, obligations, relationships, networks, friends, memberships, civic engagement, information flows, and institutions that foster cooperation and collective actions for mutual benefits and contributes to economic and social development.

Within the thesis, social networks are defined as formal and informal structures which are reinforced by ties between actors and acts of exchange. The study draws on the relational definition below as a definitive explanation of networks:

> Networks are a way of thinking about social systems that focus our attention on the relationships among the entities that make up the system, which we call actors or nodes. (Borgatti et al., 2018, p.2)

3.3 Development of Social Capital Theories – The Contributions of Bourdieu, Coleman and Putnam

The theoretical contributions of the seminal figures of Pierre Bourdieu, James Coleman and Robert Putnam are presented to foreground the focussed discussions around survival networks (Section 3.5) and emotional capital (Section 3.7). Key contributions of these major social capitalists orientate the wider debates around networks and social capital in the thesis.

Bourdieu (1986), heavily influenced by his interest in hierarchy and social class, identified patterns of taste and behaviour within social groupings that he labelled ‘habitus’ – the state that serves as a social bridge between subjective free choice and objective position. He viewed capital as a product of cumulative labour that necessitates continual work and effort and contended that most network actors regard this activity as a kind of investment that can subsequently be transformed into other forms of capital.

Like Marx, Bourdieu (1986, p.252) concluded that ‘economic capital is at the foundation of all other sorts. He saw economic globalisation and its grand narrative of neo-liberalism as the ultimate negative force that legitimises poverty and prevents social cohesion.

Coleman’s work focusses on the social networks of marginalised people, and describes social capital as based upon the obligation for reciprocity, shared values and trust. He views social capital as a useful element that allows people to seek their own best interests whilst also preventing social anarchy. This view contradicts the findings of scholars such as Fine (2010) and Field (2003), who argue that the interactions and links that exist between players in a network should be seen as important resources in and of themselves.

Putnam’s (2000) concerns about social capital revolve around the role of capital in facilitating cohesive communities, as well as the decline of associational life, which includes volunteering, political participation and increasing insularity, along with a significant decline in public perceptions of trust and honesty. Putnam is also the first social theorist to demonstrate that social capital manifests itself in numerous types of links and ties, the most common being ‘bonding’, ‘bridging’ and ‘linking’ capital.

Putnam (1993b), like many social capital theorists (Adkins, 2006; Fine, 2003; Lin, 2000; Lowndes, 2004), concludes that bonding capital – ties between members of networks who share similar characteristics, such as family members, neighbours and close friends – is ordinarily more valuable for ‘getting by’ than ‘getting on’. Bridging capital, on the other hand, an outward-facing sort of capital, brings people from different communities, socio-economic classes and societal divisions together (Putnam, 1993). As a result, the ties engaged in bridging capital are more likely to assist network members in ‘getting on’ and improving their own situations (Häuberer, 2011).

3.4 Feminist Responses to Social Capital Theories

Feminists have emphasised the evident masculine gender bias of social capital theories developed by men (Adkins, 2006; Lewis, 2010; Lowndes, 2004; Molyneux, 2002; Reay, 2004). Others emphasise the neglect of class and women’s home caring roles (Belle, 1983; Dominguez & Watkins, 2003; Lowndes, 2004). Feminists frequently highlight a failure to recognise that gendered roles force women to perform unpaid and undervalued caring and emotional labour that has little potential to be converted into more valuable forms of economic or cultural power (Adkins, 2006; Edwards et al., 2003; Molyneux, 2002). Here we have a clear gender divide between men’s employment, which is frequently compensated and recognised, and the emotional labour frequently carried out by women. Furthermore, theory that directly connects social capital to civic participation fails to recognise that women may not value political avenues of influence as highly as men. This may be explained in part by women's historical exclusion from political engagement, as well as by women's tendency to direct their change-making efforts in personal and community settings.

A growing body of evidence suggests that men interact with social networks in quite different ways to women, particularly in disadvantaged areas. Women are more likely to have high levels of neighbourhood-based bonding capital, whereas men's networks have traditionally been more diverse in terms of geography and access to bridging capital and its associated economic benefits (Franklin et al., 2005; Lowndes, 2004; McKenzie, 2015).

Feminist responses to the work of these major scholars have tended to centre on three themes. The first concerns issues of power. On one hand, Bourdieu's analysis is favoured by a number of feminists for its recognition that social capital is unequally distributed across society and is consequently complicit in the re-creation of inequality (Adkins, 2006; Edwards et al., 2003; Molyneux, 2002). Bourdieu has also been viewed as the main theoretical alternative to the inherently functionalist perspectives of scholars like Coleman and Putnam, who tend to universally embrace social norms such as trust, cooperation and reciprocity. Authors such as Kovalainen (2004) and Adkins (2006) argue that functionalists who always regard these norms as serving the wider societal good fail to recognise power relations implicit in labour and exchange, for example, that dependency, coercion and vulnerability can affect the dynamics which produce the conditions for norms such as reciprocity or solidarity. Bourdieu's formulations have also been criticised for their failure to adequately capture the limitations attached to female social capital: in effect, that women's capital generally has much less economic convertibility (Adkins, 2006; Huppatz, 2009; Skeggs, 2004a). Huppatz (2009, p.47) observes that Bourdieu sees women as 'central repositories of social capital', essentially accumulating capital for the benefit of men but lacking strategies which allow them to build up stores of useful capital of their own. In this way, women are framed by Bourdieu as 'capital bearing objects rather than capital bearing subjects' (Lovell, 2000, p.21).

The second point centres around the significance of 'the family unit'. Several authors highlight the issue of discourses which promote normative assumptions about women's roles in amassing, mobilising and reproducing social capital (Fine, 2003; Lowndes, 2004; Edwards et al., 2003). Bourdieu, Coleman and Putnam all appear to place families at the centre of social capital accumulation. However, the recognised family composition patterns are exceedingly normative – nuclear compositions of mother, father and children are commonly cited as the social standard. This becomes troublesome when attempting to apply theory to situations in which women parent alone. Other familial arrangements, such as lone parents, same-sex parents and families who live apart, are almost entirely removed from the equation. Thus, social capital theorists may have historically linked women with a fairly limited heterosexual, domestic role. Domestic femininity has a strongly gendered undercurrent which suggests women's roles should revolve around being primary bearers and creators of social capital inside families (Lowndes, 2004; Molyneux, 2002).

Feminists have maintained that, as noted by Putnam (1995), families are hierarchical constructs that serve as one of the most crucial venues of patriarchal and chauvinist reproduction (Farr, 2004; Hall, 1999). Misogynist, racist and discriminatory behaviours and viewpoints are frequently transmitted through families (Fukuyama, 1995; Putnam, 1995; Putzel, 1997). The essential principles of the family are intertwined with regular interactions and exchanges among members. Critics of the white, middle-class nuclear family analysis of social capital contend that the constructs of these normative units are the primary locations of patriarchal norm transmission between generations.

Women inside these units internalise social exchanges modelled within families. Thus, micro-level patriarchal network connections play a crucial role in promoting macro-level female oppression and subjection. This viewpoint is consistent with Bourdieu's (1986) views concerning cultural habitus and the imposition of dominant class ideals on subordinate groups. Bourdieu's views echo the feminist viewpoint that the imposition of cultural habitus has serious consequences for the transfer of social capital.

Finally, feminist critique (Lowndes, 2004; McKenzie, 2015; Molyneux, 2002; Skeggs, 1997) has provided a detailed examination of how social capital theory interacts with women's labour. On the one hand, Putnam and Coleman have been chastised for implying that women's decreased role in the domestic sphere and increased admission into the labour market has resulted in declining levels of social participation and cohesion (Bell and Robbins, 1994; Freeman and Dodson, 2014; Lowndes, 2004). Putnam (2000) has since withdrawn from this position, claiming that economic work for women is an inherently desirable social development. Such arguments, of course, presume that unpaid domestic, emotional and caring labours performed by women result in favourable societal outcomes, and that all groups within society have equal access to constructs such as participation and cohesion. Again, the class analysis of how structural inequalities relating to poverty and class diminish paths to participation and social cohesiveness is overlooked, particularly in the case of women living in deprived neighbourhoods. Some feminists contend that mainstream theorists' conceptions of women's labour are founded on middle-class women's femininity and labour expectations (McKenzie, 2015; Skeggs, 1997).

Accordingly, many feminist contributors adhere to the view that, in order to be sufficiently analysed, social capital requires to be placed within the social context in which it operates. This may involve expanding the term by providing a fuller picture of the social relations in which it is situated. This type of feminist analysis has resulted in social capital being dissected and theorised into a range of further capitals including emotional (Gillies, 2006; Illouz, 1997; Reay, 2004), physical (McCall, 1992), gender (Skeggs, 1997) and feminine capital (Huppatz, 2009; Lovell, 2000).

These approaches necessitate searching for alternative sites of accumulation of women's social capital, including childcare circles, labour markets and women's political movements (Adkins, 2006; Molyneux, 2002; Kovalainen, 2004). Wolff (2000) argues that this kind of situated approach to expanding the dimensions of capital amounts to little more than a 'correctionist' paradigm. Her argument follows that in situating the cultural and social conditions of networks and their functions, little is achieved beyond reinforcing the perception that the transmission of social capital is 'women's work'.

According to Adkins (2006), Kovalainen (2004) and Molyneux (2002), social capital is a resource embedded in networks with exchange value. It is accumulable and has a temporal structure, which allows it to be transferred throughout time (Adkins, 2006). This concept of social capital's potential for transmission across time is critical for the study. The life-course approach, used in this thesis, involves acknowledging that women's social capital is an accumulating resource with varying degrees of convertibility as women progress through the phases of life.

Wolff's commentary on the 'correctionist' nature of this aspect of the feminist discourse also has real resonance to wider debates. As noted, feminists have begun to develop mechanisms for making social capital more gender and class relevant. However, perhaps the real challenge might be found in finding new theories of expressing women's connection and labour rather than building upon a concept which some argue to be inherently flawed.

The review now moves to examine social capital theories in relation to ‘getting by’ and ‘getting on’. The idea of how networks have helped or hindered women in navigating the challenges presented by society, time, gender, place and poverty relates directly to the overarching research question (see Section 1.3.3).

3.5 Women’s Engagement with Survival Networks

A body of literature investigates low-income women’s support networks (Belle, 1983; Dominguez & Watkins, 2003; Freeman & Dodson, 2014; Lowndes, 2004; Lubbers et al., 2020; Riley & Eckenrode, 1986). Another, smaller, body investigates the social networks available to lone mothers in disadvantaged neighbourhoods (Keim, 2018; McLaughlin et al., 1981; Nelson, 2000).

Stack (1974) was among the first to investigate women’s survival networks in a disadvantaged US neighbourhood. She emphasised that the low-income women in her study had strong mixed-gender networks made up of direct family, adoptive family and friends. Stack (1974, p.32) noticed that commodities such as ‘food stamps, rent money, a TV, hats, dice, a car, a coin here, a cigarette there, food, milk, grits, and children’ were commonly swapped within these networks. Community sanctions obligated and enforced mutual sharing and transactional support. Whilst the survival networks provided critical instrumental, financial, emotional and informational support, Stack (1974) discovered that the duties they imposed made it hard for members to save money for themselves or invest in personal goals.

Stack’s (1974) research was the first to show that the outcomes of low-income women’s network affiliations are not always beneficial. Since the 1970s, there has been a modest but growing body of scholarship that examines the characteristics and roles of women’s survival networks. There is some agreement among these studies on the definition of survival networks. Actors are typically close friends, relatives and neighbours who live in close proximity. They also provide survival supports, which have been recognised as a method for solidarity and reciprocity for women experiencing poverty (Freeman & Dodson, 2014; Morris, 2019). Some studies have also found that ideals like solidarity, sisterhood, socialism and faith may inspire women to join survival networks (Freeman & Dodson, 2014; McKenzie, 2015).

Members of survival networks frequently report limited personal economic resources but feel obligated to help friends and relatives navigate crises (Belle, 1983). Reciprocity is expected as a social norm, and punishments are imposed when norms are violated (Dominguez & Watkins, 2003; Lowndes, 2004). Members of these networks frequently claim negative consequences of involvement, such as decreasing mental health, inability to save and excessive time demands. Furthermore, most women are reported to withdraw from networks once poverty no longer requires membership or to enter cycles of therapeutic withdrawal from the stresses associated with contact, only to re-establish contact when a new financial, emotional, or practical crisis necessitates assistance (Belle, 1983, p.2).

This pattern of engagement with social networks follows the kind of functionalist principles set out by Coleman, who concluded that all social bonds are perpetuated by self-interest, or in this context desperation. Ultimately, Belle (1983, p.2) concludes that the stress of poverty ‘encourages tentative, ambivalent, and shifting relationships and undercuts the efforts of men and women to maintain these relationships.’

Nettle’s (2015) Tyneside study looks at two economical behaviours neighbourhoods, distinguishing between ‘pro-social’ and ‘anti-social’ behaviours, and concludes that living in disadvantaged areas makes pro-social behaviour less likely, owing in part to the fact that most inhabitants use much of their own efforts merely ‘getting by’. Furthermore, it is impossible to foresee whether members of a network will engage in pro- or anti-social modes due to survival-based desperation, which manifests when people are ‘close to the edge’.

> Deprivation might move people into a space where they are hovering so close to the edge that they oscillate stochastically between a state of necessary prudence and a state where they feel they have to do desperate things just to get through their immediate crisis. (Nettle, 2015, p.61)

Nettle (2015) is careful not to infer that all residents in deprived areas are perpetually unpredictable and desperate, but rather in poor neighbourhoods the likelihood of encountering experiences of intense personal crisis grows progressively in response to relative degrees of poverty and hardship. These crisis patterns are relevant to the previously mentioned survival networks. Members of survival networks will face additional hardship as a result of repeated periods of unforeseeable tragedy and crisis.

This may help to explain how the social capital available to women in disadvantaged neighbourhoods can be both caring and emotionally costly. The essence of Nettle's theory is that the frequency and extent of unrelenting crisis among network members causes actors to disengage whenever poverty no longer necessitates engagement. However, Nettle's findings apply to both male and female groups and may not be reflective of women's network-engagement tendencies.

Taken together, the arguments around survival networks suggest that women's networks in deprived neighbourhoods such as Easterhouse are likely to be significantly shaped by negotiating poverty and that neighbourhood deprivation may play a part in shaping the dynamics of women's close ties and the labours of care and products of network membership. The concluding section of the chapter discusses the importance of survival networks as a theoretical framework for the study.

3.6 Literature on Lone Mothers' Support Networks

In addition to the literature on survival networks, a small body of literature investigates the support networks of lone mothers (Keim, 2018; McLaughlin et al., 1981; Nelson, 2000). These studies expand the discussions on survival networks to investigate the supports generated by lone mothers' networks. According to Keim (2018), three major strands of support have been found in the psychological research on low-income women's social networks: instrumental, informational and emotional. These social support categorisations have been incorporated into one of the research sub-questions as a framework for comprehending the explicit dimensions of support generated by female networks (Cohen, 2004; House et al., 1985):

- Instrumental support – the provision of material help and assistance
- Informational support – facilitates access to local and network knowledge
- Emotional support – helps to manage feelings and navigate emotional difficulties

According to the small body of literature on lone mothers' networks, the transition to lone motherhood frequently involves an ontological renegotiation of identity in which women re-evaluate matriarchal role orientation (Keim, 2018; Nelson, 2000; McHanahan et al., 1981). These studies suggest that women frequently fall into one of two categories: 'stabilisers', who want to maintain their prior caring roles as wives or mothers, or 'changers', who want to develop a new identity, generally a career-orientated one.

Stabilisers are frequently associated with a close-knit network of social relationships composed of links with immediate friends and family and may also create romantic or platonic relationships with key males who provide emotional stability and practical and emotional assistance. Stabilisers may receive assistance from close family and a male actor who establishes the environment for a more couple-centred family configuration, in addition to networks made of immediate friends and relatives. Male support can be an essential source of social capital for stabilisers.

Conversely, changers are connected to more-diverse bridging networks, which allow better access to resources and opportunities for personal growth. Women who are orientated towards ontological change may have a larger network of bridging and bonding ties with people who play varied roles. These may include paid or unpaid childcare providers, 'eyes' on the street who keep a look out for youngsters, and individuals who provide financial and informational assistance and emotional support.

This perspective might be argued to constitute a rather reductionist interpretation of women's adaption into lone motherhood. However, the notion that the configurations of female support networks is subject to variation based on women's attitudes towards matriarchy has important implications for this research. This small body of literature makes a case that the nature of lone mothers' survival networks is likely to be influenced by ideals of motherhood. Being a changer may be important to some mothers, to model ambition and mobility to their offspring. Taking the role of stabiliser may signify entrenched societal ideals of women as primary caregivers and devoted partners. Regardless of motivations, it remains that each may have a bearing on the composition and functions of survival networks.

Other studies suggest that female friendships are likely to hold more significance than kinship ties for heterosexual lone mothers, especially at the point of transition to lone motherhood (Keim, 2018; Nelson, 2000). This is attributed to the importance of peer-to-peer relationships and cathartic exchange between those with shared experience. Nelson (2000) notes that, despite the emphasis which lone mothers are likely to place upon their female relationships, these ties tend to be looser than those associated with immediate family. This means that the ties require more upkeep and awareness of non-violation of network norms. For the women in Nelson's study this involves not 'taking more than you give' and maintaining a balance between dependence on and independence from other women.

The delicate balance of reciprocity is evidenced as a key consideration for lone mothers' wider female connections. The evidence suggests that most are all too aware of the limitations of other women's reserves of social and emotional capital (Keim, 2018; Nelson, 2000). Any imbalance of reliance in deprived contexts in particular can involve too much pressure being placed upon one member of the network, which results in the kinds of crises noted by Nettle (2015). Moreover, older studies, such as Lamotte's (1981), showed that lone mothers tend to gradually assume greater independence from support networks as time progresses. However, Lamotte's (1981) findings relate purely to the first year of lone motherhood and, to date, no studies have examined interaction with networks over the life-course. There is a clear gap in recent knowledge relating to lone mothers' patterns of engagement with networks of support. The available literature provides only a very perfunctory analysis of how these networks may be utilised to 'get by' and 'get on' through poverty and lone motherhood.

3.7 'Women's Work': Gender, Caring and the Generation of Emotional Capital

Section 3.7 explores theorisations relating to the facet of social capital termed 'emotional capital' (Gillies, 2006; Illouz, 1997; Reay, 2004; Skeggs, 1997). There is an argument within the literature that social capital should be known as 'women's capital' (Molyneux, 2002), because of the important roles that women occupy in forming and maintaining network bonds.

Bourdieu (2001) suggests that women are often the gender most closely involved in work which involves devotion, generosity, and solidarity, observing that 'this work falls more particularly to women who are responsible for maintaining relationships' (Bourdieu, 1998, p.68). Bourdieu's focus upon 'responsibility' suggests that women's roles as maintainers of network bonds may be rooted in obligation. However, there has been little examination to date of the extent to which women view these responsibilities as a burden, a privilege or indeed both.

Feminists have for decades sought to contextualise women's relationships with social capital. Reay (2004) draws on Illouz (1997) to explore the possibilities of a capital that has not been identified by Bourdieu. Reay (2004) argues that, in their roles as relationship maintainers, women can generate their own specific form of capital – 'emotional capital'. This is described as a variant of social capital which women tend to possess separately from men. For Reay (2004, p.71), emotional capital 'is all about investments in others rather than the self'. Further studies argue that within families, women tend to invest much time and energy in maintaining the emotional wellbeing of members, responding to others' emotional states and acting to alleviate distress (James, 1989; Nowonty, 1981; Reay, 2004). These acts of emotional labour result in the generation of emotional capital (Reay, 2004).

Emotional labour is described within the literature to be ordinarily channelled into two distinct streams. The first involves supporting male network members to regulate feelings and mental wellbeing (Reay, 2004). Bourdieu never explicitly recognises the existence of emotional capital, yet in his 2001 publication, *Masculine Domination*, he writes:

> It has often been observed that women fulfil a cathartic quasi-therapeutic function in regulating men's emotional lives, calming their anger, helping them accept the injustices and difficulties of life. (p.77)

The second outlet for emotional labour is connected to children's emotional and educational development. A number of studies have highlighted that through the research period women have continued to be the gender who expend most time on childcare (Oakley, 1993; Reay, 2004; Wright et al., 2017). These studies suggest that childcare is bound up in a complex cycle of practical and educational support, and that society holds expectations that mothers are always 'close-up' in the field of childrearing whilst men enjoy the choice to engage or remain 'at a distance'.

Reay (2005) argues that as a result of the limited exchange-value society attaches to emotional capital, women expend lots of energy transmitting capital which has little potential to be converted into other forms, such as financial, symbolic, social, educational or cultural. In deprived contexts, mothers stand even less chance of having the emotional capital they invest converted into better outcomes for their families. This is attributed to the stress poverty places on the emotional lives of women and resultant reduction in emotional reserves (Skeggs, 1997). As Reay (2005, p.70) observes: ‘A culture of survivalism and the anxieties it produces are not conducive to the transmission of emotional capital.’

To conclude, within the feminist discourse on social capital, there exists a school that maintains that women do more than simply maintain bonds. Within the emotional capital debates, women are identified as key figures within families, upholding societal obligations to promote male and juvenile mental health (James, 1989; Nowonty, 1981) and children’s wellbeing (Oakley, 1993; Reay, 2004; Wright et al., 2017). Of course, these relational patterns are not claimed to be absolute. There will certainly be examples of many men who have engaged in labours of emotional care. The thrust of the largely feminist discourse around emotional capital simply suggests that women have historically been the gender obligated to involve themselves most heavily in these processes.

3.8 The Dynamics of Women’s Intimate Relationships with Men

Campbell (1993) and Rowthorn & Webster (2007) explore sociological theories relating to the growing phenomenon of lone motherhood in deprived UK neighbourhoods. Rowthorn & Webster (2007) note that rates of lone mothers in the UK began to increase dramatically during the latter years of the 1980s and have continued to grow. The greatest increases were seen in areas which suffered most from industrial decline. Both these studies note that male worklessness and unemployment have been major contributors towards rising numbers of lone-mother-headed households, and that increasing numbers of low-income women now make an active choice to become lone mothers, owing to the limited supply of marriageable men and the sufficiency of welfare benefits in allowing life to be at least tolerable.

Rowthorn & Webster (2007) and Campbell (1993) make crucial connections between the economic emasculation of men and their increasing emotional withdrawal from family life. Both ultimately conclude that poverty increases women’s likelihood to actively choose lone motherhood over heterosexual partnership due to the increased emotional burdens associated with remaining coupled. The arguments around the rise in lone motherhood have their origins in the much earlier work of Moynihan (1965) and Wilson (1987). Both scholars were concerned with the growth of female-headed families in the US and concluded that the trend could be substantially explained by male unemployment rates and the ‘un-marriageability’ of unemployed men.

The vast majority of women involved in Lamotte’s (1981) study in Edinburgh entered lone motherhood as a result of unplanned pregnancy and precarious short-term relationships. These conflicting perspectives demonstrate that, through the early part of the research period, lone motherhood was often attributed to poor life choices or women’s refusal of economically emasculated men. Within the literature to date, only one much later study directly connects women’s decisions to mother alone to cultures of toxic masculinity within deprived neighbourhoods (Rose & McAuley, 2019). However, the findings around causes for lone motherhood in this study reflect domestic abuse as a single causal factor amongst a range of other relationship stressors.

Craig (2010) and Hughes (2004) introduce the argument that working-class men in the West of Scotland have historically been relatively disconnected from family life. Craig (2010) links men’s lack of involvement to destabilisation of working-class male identities as a result of deindustrialisation and the effects of poor housing conditions. Hughes’ (2004) study concludes that generations of West of Scotland men have perpetuated a fatherhood role which reflects a lack of participation in the daily mechanics of family life – a trend she terms ‘lone-ranger syndrome’. Lone-ranger behaviours may be evident in the absent father who is always in the pub or betting shop or at the football, or perhaps in fathers who are present but mentally unavailable.

Craig (2010) suggests that male disconnect from domestic responsibilities has resulted in tense and brittle relationships between men and women, characterised by contempt and an absence of loving exchange. Craig (2010) is careful not to cast all Glaswegian men as drunks who perpetually inhabit bars or physically or emotionally abandon families. She simply states that her case-study-based research with several generations of Glasgow women born from the 1940s onwards suggests:

> There was a strong current in Glasgow which easily swept men up and deposited them in the pub or encouraged them just to suit themselves. (Craig, 2010, p.157)

This small body of literature suggests that the effects of socio-economic trends in the city have impacted strongly on the relational patterns of men and women and the transmission of different forms of social capital within families.

The commentary from Craig (2010) and Hughes (2004) raises questions around male disconnect and the possible implications for the rise of lone motherhood in the peripheral neighbourhoods. Brailey (1986) and Tulle-Winton (2005) suggest that rising numbers of lone mothers in Glasgow's peripheral estates from the 1980s onwards was likely to reflect the residualised neighbourhood conditions and availability of council housing for homeless families in need of rehousing. Craig's (2010) and Hughes' (2004) commentaries raise new questions around the extent to which 'lone rangerism' as a poverty response may have contributed to growing trends towards lone motherhood. Also, arguments around male disconnect from family life raise important questions around the possible importance of female networks in response to men's tendency towards lone-ranger behavioural patterns in deprived Glaswegian contexts.

Popular Glaswegian fiction, such as *The Steamie* (Roper, 2006), often casts Glaswegian women as united in their struggles against poverty and male oppression. However, within academic literature there is a paucity of knowledge around how peripheral living and lone motherhood may have impacted upon female social networks and how the same networks may have supported lone mothers to navigate challenge. The research questions developed, in part, as a response to this evident gap in knowledge.

3.9 Conclusions

This conclusion examines elements of social capital theory which directly inform the orientation of the research questions and subsequent analysis. Within the social capital literature, some aspects of theory have been drawn out to form the basis of a theoretical framework. The sections below are thematically arranged in order to correspond to the research sub-questions (see Section 1.3.3).

3.9.1 Network Composition

Within the established discourse, it has been suggested that the composition of women's social networks has important implications for the kinds of social support which they may generate (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1994; Putman, 1993). Putnam (1993a) established that social capital finds its expression in various types of bonds between members of networks and that these bonds hold varied potential for convertibility into different forms of capital. Other studies have argued that women in deprived neighbourhoods are more likely to possess greater stores of bonding capital than bridging or linking forms (Adkins, 2006; Fine, 2003; Lin, 2000, Lowndes, 2004; Putnam, 1993). Poverty and living in deprived housing contexts have been noted by authors such as Campbell (1993), Lowndes (2004) and Reay (2005) to both dramatically increase women's levels of bonding social capital and reduce likelihood of accumulating bridging social capital (see also Forrest & Kearns, 2001; Rowthorn & Webster, 2007).

These perspectives suggest that women in deprived neighbourhoods usually experience a high level of bonding ties. These ties have been argued in the literature to be more effective in helping women to 'get by' than to 'get on' (Coleman, 1994; Fine, 2010; Lin, 2000; Lowndes, 2004; Putnam, 1993). This perspective broadly ties in with perspectives on survival networks in which it is suggested that low-income women's robust networks of survival can be simultaneously nurturing and detrimental towards economic and educational attainment (Belle, 1983; Dominguez & Watkins, 2003; Freeman & Dodson, 2014; Lowndes, 2004; Riley & Eckenrode, 1986). Others argue that it is unhelpful to homogenise the network engagement of poor people as being dominated by bonding capital (Farr, 2004; Lin, 2001).

However, the small body of literature pertaining to low-income lone mothers' memberships of social networks suggest that they engage with networks strategically at different times in life-course to achieve different outcomes. First, some note that female friendship networks may hold an increased significance for the mental wellbeing of lone mothers, especially during transition to lone motherhood (Morris, 2019; Nelson, 2000). These female support networks have been noted as weaker than bonding ties with immediate family networks and requiring more intensive emotional and physical investment (Freeman & Dodson, 2014). The composition of female networks is an important consideration of the research, which is discussed in full in Section 11.6.1.

Second, there is some evidence that lone mothers' matriarchal role orientation is a key driver for the kinds of networks with whom they will choose to engage (Keim, 2018; McLaughlin et al., 1981; Nelson, 2000). Within this literature, 'stabilisers' are noted as those women whose values-based role orientation gravitates towards creating a fresh heterosexual-couple dynamic. Stabilisers may therefore choose to invest their social capital into coupling with a key male figure, who may provide ontological, financial and physical security. These links are usually with a lone male actor and may involve a romantic or platonic relationship. This investment may sit alongside key relationships with immediate family and friendship networks (Keim, 2018; Nelson, 2000). The notion of matriarchal role orientation affecting women's engagement with key male actors as opposed to mixed or solely female support groups forms an important consideration for the research. It suggests that identity and lone mothers' perceptions of role orientation will influence likelihood of affiliating more strongly with gendered networks. It also suggests that matriarchal values may significantly dictate the composition of networks.

'Changers', conversely, will be more likely to have links with a wide range of bridging, bonding and linking ties. Their role orientation is based upon a desire to reinvent the self, often in terms of career or attainment. They are also often motivated by the desire to convey a strong work ethic to children and model social mobility and aspiration (Keim, 2018; McLaughlin et al., 1981; Nelson, 2000). This notion of stabilisers and changers and how role orientation affects women's likelihood of engaging with bonding versus bridging ties will form a key analytical focus.

This categorisation forms the analytical framework for examining the composition of lone mothers' social networks. The inclusion of networks based on intimate relationships, forms an important new category within the established discourse on network theory in deprived estates. As previously noted, there has been wide recognition of low-income women's tendency to accrue higher levels of neighbourhood-based bonding capital. However, there has been much less attention paid to how personal values and orientations may affect lone mothers' engagement with networks.

Furthermore, the life-course approach of the study has been devised to explore whether women's reliance on specific network forms changes over time, which has not been examined in the literature to date.

3.9.2 Network Functions

A further key consideration is the kinds of support actually generated by networks. For women in the poorest neighbourhoods, bridging ties may often find expression in relationships with employment, support or health-promotion services (Brisson & Usher, 2005; Freeman & Dodson, 2014). These relationships and supports can provide valuable access to information and resources. Bonding ties have been noted as more likely to support women to navigate financial and emotional hardship (Brisson & Usher, 2005; Freeman & Dodson, 2014).

The study draws upon the three key functions of female support networks identified in Section 3.6 – instrumental, informational and emotional. It also expands upon these external functions of networks to address the penultimate sub-question, which examines the extent to which personal qualities may contribute towards lone mothers' experiences of 'getting by' and 'getting on' in the Easterhouse context (see Section 1.3.3).

3.9.3 Network Products

Several of the most-prominent social theorists have recognised that the products of social networks are not always inherently positive (Bourdieu, 1986; Lin, 2001; Lowndes, 2004; Putnam, 1993). In the wider survival-network literature, survival networks are often implicated in cycles of crisis and dependence (Belle, 1983; Dominguez & Watkins, 2003; Freeman & Dodson, 2014; Lowndes, 2004; Nettle, 2015; Riley & Eckenrode, 1986). Yet, women's motivations for engaging with survival networks may be complex and multifaceted. As well as being driven by necessity to survive the effects of poverty, women may also engage with female support networks as a means to express values of sisterhood and solidarity.

The study explores the interaction between the core concepts of reciprocity and solidarity and the extent to which obligation frames participant engagement. Survival networks and the extent to which they help and hinder women in 'getting by' and 'getting on' in deprived neighbourhoods holds important resonance for women in Easterhouse. The study sets out to understand the composition, functions and products of women's support networks, encompassing how much lone mothers may use these to navigate challenge and the extent to which they have been useful for 'getting by' and 'getting on'. Consequently, the research draws upon the theoretical conceptualisation of survival networks to consider the extent to which lone mothers' networks model the cycles of crisis and dependence set out in the literature and the extent to which these networks have generated positive outcomes over time.

3.9.4 Network Values

The notional values of reciprocity and solidarity inherent in networks are important dimensions of most debates around social capital and network engagement and of the main aims of the research (see Section 1.3.1)

The idea that social capital is generated through reciprocal exchanges between members and requires ‘topping up’ through regular interactions is widely recognised (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1994; Fine, 2010; Fukuyama, 1995; Lin, 2001; Putnam, 2000). Functionalists such as Becker (1962) and Coleman (1994) have argued that self-interest lies at the core of most human reciprocal exchanges. In this context, obligation towards other network members plays an important role in determining the extent to which members will reciprocate the social support they receive. Coleman and Becker, influenced by rational choice theory and the economic paradigm, base their analyses primarily in social capital’s potential to generate economic benefits. This study, however, aims to move beyond purely material conceptions of reciprocity to understand the extent to which notional values such as female solidarity and reciprocity are likely drivers for engagement with networks in deprived neighbourhood contexts. It also investigates whether collective female social capital expressed as solidarity has had potential for ‘getting on’ through barriers of structural inequality.

Some feminist authors (Adkins, 2006; Kovalainen, 2004) have argued that functionalists, who generally regard social capital as serving wider societal good, fail to recognise the power relations implicit within women’s labour and exchange. These power relations may be influenced by a range of factors including dependency, coercion and vulnerability. Taken together, these power dynamics can affect the conditions for production of social norms such as reciprocity and female solidarity. Other studies have noted that interpretations of social capital theory which situate reciprocity within heteronormative familial configurations fail to recognise the role which families play in reproducing damaging patriarchal social constructs. Families are often the site of transmission of ingrained misogynist, racist and discriminatory behaviours (Bourdieu, 1986; Fukuyama, 1995; Putnam, 1995; Putzel, 1997).

The core values of the family are also enmeshed within the daily relations and exchanges between members. Consequently, it is important to recognise that women’s motivations and patterns of reciprocal exchange are likely to have been shaped by their experiences within families and society. Early experiences of reciprocal exchange within families might also be argued to influence perspectives on matriarchal role orientation. This orientation is likely, as discussed earlier in the chapter, to have a direct bearing on the networks on which lone mothers come to rely. It is within this situated understanding of values that the study explores the significance of solidarity in female social networks in Easterhouse.

To conclude, this chapter has explored a range of debates around social capital and network theories and women’s involvement in emotional labours and survival networks. Section 3.9 has established the theoretical frameworks which have been used to analyse the composition, functions and products of female networks in Easterhouse. The following chapter moves to examine the specific significance of Easterhouse as the research setting and context for the study of lone motherhood in 1980–2021.

Chapter 4: Research Setting and Context

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of neighbourhood conditions within Easterhouse, a peripheral housing estate which lies on Glasgow's eastern boundary some ten kilometres from the city centre, drawing upon historical, visual, statistical and literary evidence to contextualise Easterhouse's development as a 'classed geography' (Bisset, 2023) within the city of Glasgow. The chapter examines the development of the estate and evolving neighbourhood conditions from the 1980s onwards, to capture the specific aspects of time and place which have shaped participant life-courses and trajectories through lone motherhood. The issues examined have been selected on the basis of their relevance to the research questions in Section 1.3.3 and their relevance to the temporal period 1980–2021. Figure 4.1 illustrates the position and scale of the estate in relation to the city of Glasgow and the city's East End.[1]

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[1] Over the research period, the administrative boundaries of Greater Easterhouse have been subject to some changes. The maps in figures 4.1 and 4.2 represent current administrative boundaries rather than historical or resident-based conceptions of geographical boundaries.

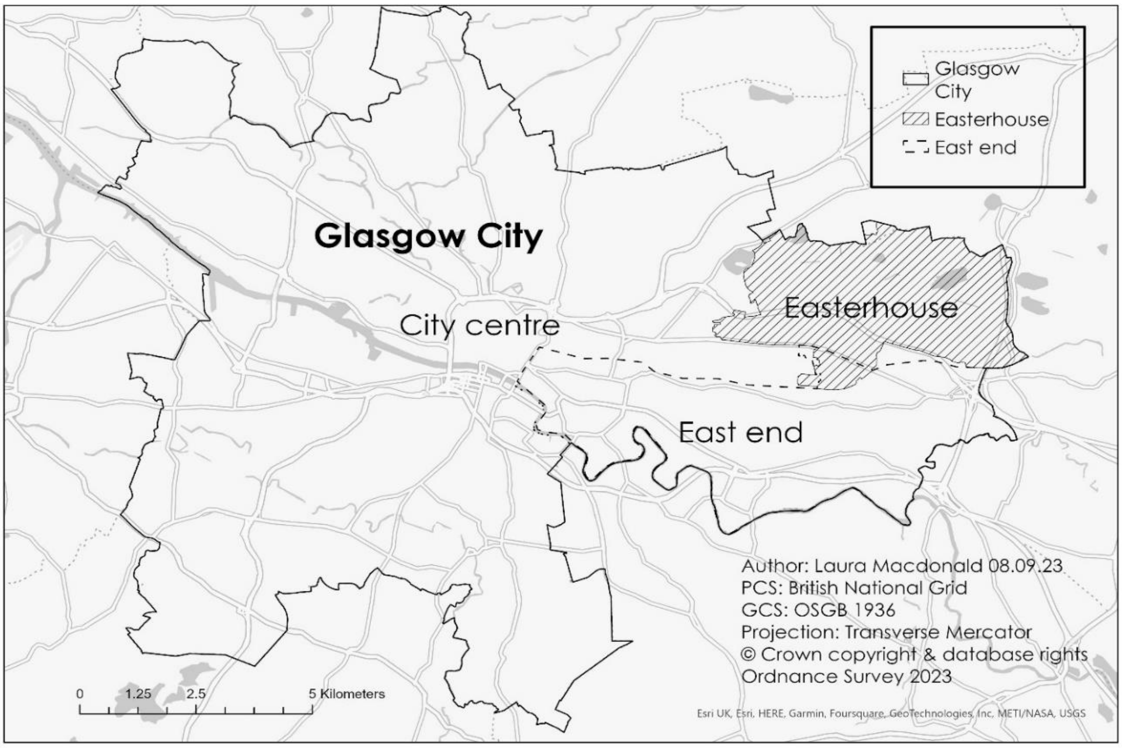
Glasgow City
Easterhouse
East end
Glasgow City
City centre
Easterhouse
East end
Author: Laura Macdonald 08.09.23
PCS: British National Grid
GCS: OSGB 1936
Projection: Transverse Mercator
© Crown copyright & database rights
Ordnance Survey 2023
0
1.25
2.5
5 Kilometers
Esri UK, Esri, HERE, Garmin, Foursquare, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS

Figure 4.1 Map of Easterhouse's position and scale in relation to the city centre and East End

Source: Ordnance Survey, 2023

Figure 4.2 details the boundaries of eight locality neighbourhoods within Easterhouse and a range of local landmarks referred to in the thesis. Longstanding issues of area-based territorialism and gang fighting have resulted in patterns of resident affiliation with demarked neighbourhoods within the estate (Fraser, 2013; Garnham, 2018). Consequently, conceptions of place-based connection often reflect participants' dual identities as residents of Easterhouse *and* of their immediate geographical locality. Within the study, all reference to Easterhouse refers to the network of eight localities which belong to the administrative area defined as Greater Easterhouse.

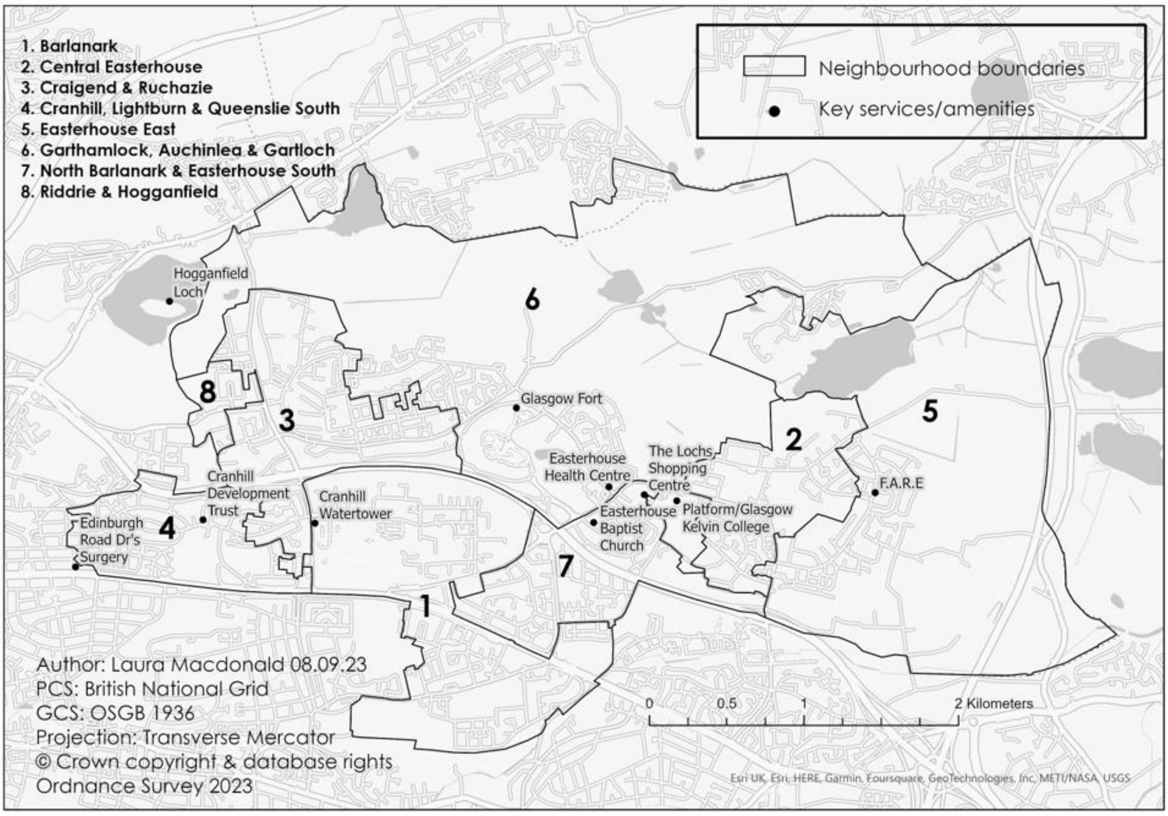
1. Barlanark
2. Central Easterhouse
3. Craigend & Ruchazie
4. Cranhill, Lightburn & Queenslie South
5. Easterhouse East
6. Garthamlock, Auchinlea & Gartloch
7. North Barlanark & Easterhouse South
8. Riddrie & Hogganfield
Neighbourhood boundaries
Key services/amenities
Hogganfield Loch
6
8
3
Glasgow Fort
2
5
Easterhouse Health Centre
The Lochs Shopping Centre
F.A.R.E
Cranhill Development Trust
Cranhill Watertower
Easterhouse Baptist Church
Platform/Glasgow Kelvin College
Edinburgh Road Dr's Surgery
4
7
1
Author: Laura Macdonald 08.09.23
PCS: British National Grid
GCS: OSGB 1936
Projection: Transverse Mercator
© Crown copyright & database rights Ordnance Survey 2023
0
0.5
1
2 Kilometers
Esri UK, Esri, HERE, Garmin, Foursquare, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS

Figure 4.2 Map of neighbourhood localities and local landmarks

Source: Ordnance Survey, 2023

Over the past fifty years neighbourhood conditions in Easterhouse have resulted in a robust academic body of literature. This chapter does not attempt to provide a comprehensive overview of all aspects of the neighbourhood, but rather a synopsis of issues which hold direct relevance to the research population.

Section 4.2 sets out critical background information relating to wider social and economic conditions in Glasgow prior to the 1980s and the physical development of Easterhouse. Section 4.3 examines evolving demographic characteristics of the neighbourhood, including economic, social and health-based trends. Sections 4.4–4.6 explore the landscape of housing-based change, crime and public services since the 1980s and Section 4.7 examines present-day neighbourhood conditions. Finally, Section 4.8 sets out the rationale for the research questions and sub-questions in relation to the literature and discussions set out in chapters 2, 3 and 4.

4.2 Early Days: Easterhouse – A Single-Class, Single-Tenure Estate

Glasgow’s peripheral estates – Easterhouse, Castlemilk, Drumchapel and Pollok – were conceived as solutions to Glasgow’s post-war housing crisis (Keating, 1987; Pawson et al., 2009). Easterhouse is perhaps the best known, on account of its sheer scale, reputation for violence, and progressive decay. After the Second World War, the public desire for social justice focussed strongly on housing provision (Pawson et al., 2009). In Glasgow, the need for new housing was particularly evident due to conditions of severe overcrowding and crumbling tenemental housing throughout the central parts of the city (Mitchell, 2010).

Economic conditions in the city during the post-war period were framed by a backdrop of industrial decline (Pike, 2017). Some studies have suggested the city’s post-war decline to be a deliberate strategy of central policymakers to direct economic ‘development and growth to other parts of Scotland’ (Collins & Levitt, 2019, p.22), rather than an inevitable consequence of ‘post-industrialism’ and the global transition towards service industries. What is clear is that, regardless of cause, Glasgow had by the 1940s become synonymous with poverty and slum housing conditions (Pacione, 1990). As the city’s record for poor health, housing and economic growth increased, strategic policy and planning leadership began to be regarded from outside as seriously flawed (Collins & Levitt, 2019).

The ‘Bruce Plan’ (Bruce, 1945) advocated several measures to alleviate overpopulation within the central districts of the city and a programme of demolition of tenemental housing within ‘comprehensive development areas’ (MacLean, 2003). Several potential solutions were suggested, including the creation of new towns outside the city, dispersal to outlying towns and the creation of high-density housing estates within the city boundaries (Gibb, 2003). Taken together, these measures were designed to both radically transform the central districts and improve the health and wellbeing of residents through improved housing and neighbourhood conditions (Bruce, 1945). Residents would have access to high-quality modern housing with indoor toilets, bathing facilities, fitted kitchens and communal garden space. The recommendations of Bruce (1945) resulted in planning proposals for four high-density municipal council housing estates on the peripheries of the city: Easterhouse, Castlemilk, Drumchapel and Pollok.

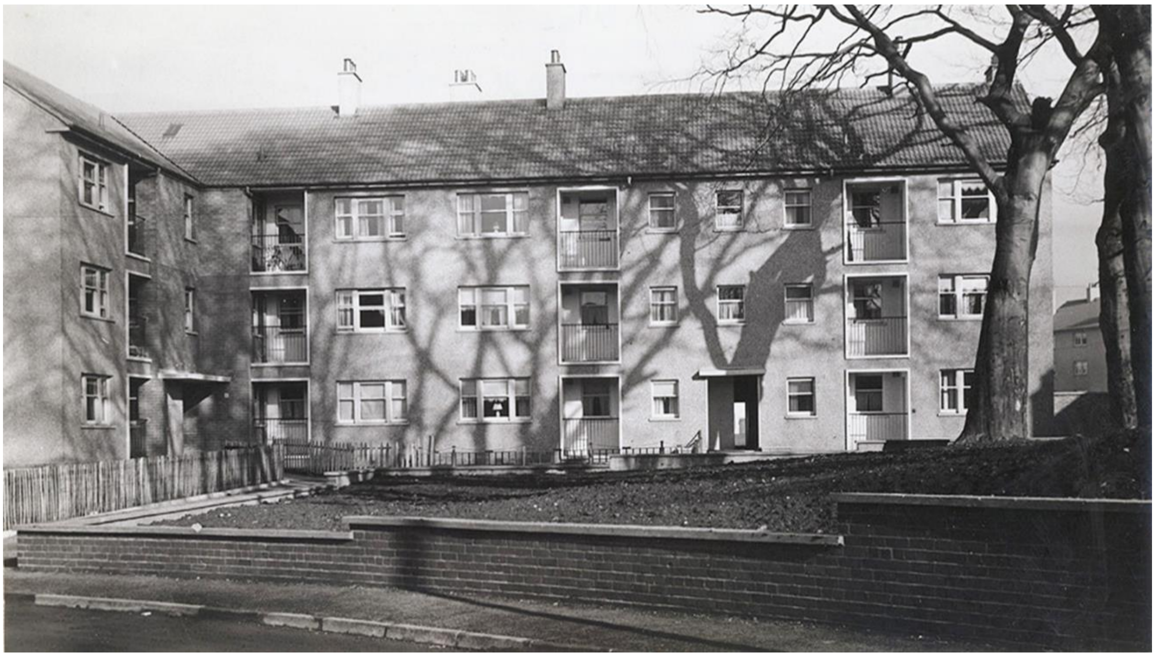

Figure 4.3 Duntarvie Quadrant, Easterhouse, pictured in 1959
Source: https://www.theglasgowstory.com/image/?inum=TGSA00796

By 1954, the construction of Easterhouse had begun and in 1958 the first residents moved in (Garnham, 2018). For early settlers, new and modern housing was perceived as luxurious compared with the crumbling overcrowded dwellings they had left behind (Craig, 2010). The diaspora of inner-city dwellers who settled in the estate originated mainly from slum clearance sites where endemic poverty and highly developed social networks went hand in hand (Paice, 2008). The majority of central tenemental housing stock had been privately let and, for most, Easterhouse would be their first experience of living within a municipal council housing estate (Mitchell, 2010; Pacione, 1990). The remote location of the estate resulted in social dislocation for many settlers whose social networks remained in the central areas of the city (Mitchell, 2010). Thus, from its inception Easterhouse was essentially a single-class and single-tenure estate (Garnham, 2018).

Easterhouse was immediately beset by a lack of local amenities and public transport (Gibb, 2003; Keating, 1988; Paice, 2008). Such was the urgency to build the new peripheral estates as an escape from the notorious slums that basic services were almost completely neglected (Keating & Mitchell, 1987). By the early 1960s, Easterhouse had fifty thousand residents, comparable in its size and population to Scottish towns such as Perth or Inverness (Bartie & Fraser, 2017), but was served by only one doctor and no dentist

(Mitchell, 2010). The first school did not open until 1961 and there was no police station until 1965 (Garnham, 2018). Shopping provision remained very limited until the construction of the Shandwick Centre in 1980. During the 1960s and 1970s the estate gained a growing international reputation for gang violence and teenage crime (Bartie & Fraser, 2017; Keating & Mitchell, 1987).

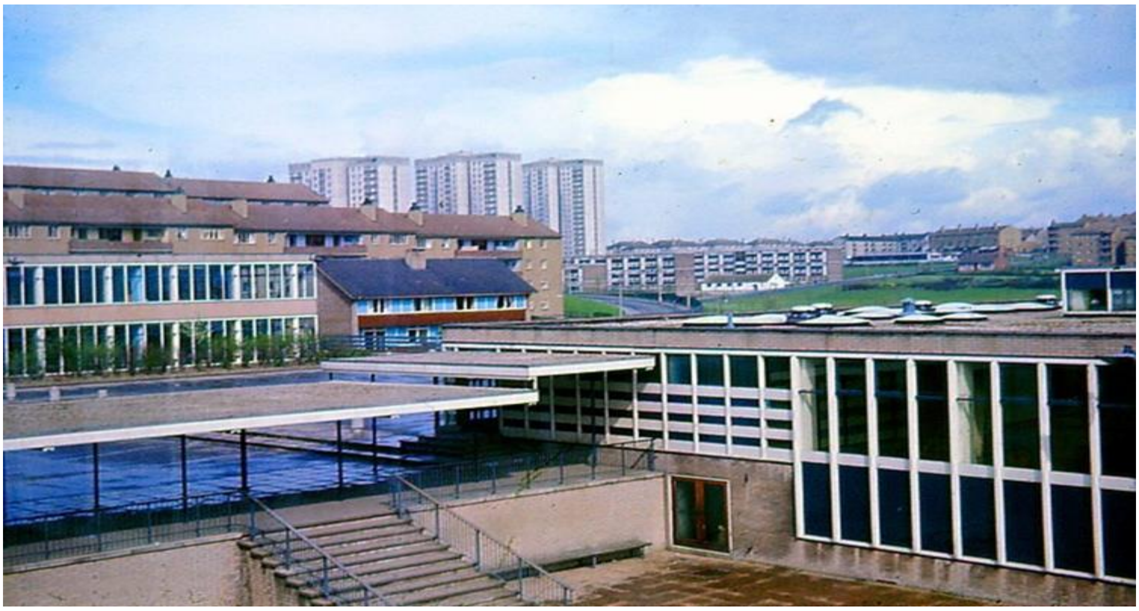

Figure 4.4 Cranhill Secondary School, Glasgow, 1967

Source: https://www.facebook.com/profile/100064554227721/search/?q=Easterhouse

Whilst Easterhouse’s problems may have been no more significant than those of other comparable Glasgow housing estates (Bartie & Fraser, 2017), it quite quickly became a stigmatised place on account of its highly publicised ‘problem’ reputation. Indeed, such was its notoriety that during the 1970s the city council considered abandoning the name Easterhouse and simply referring to the smaller individual neighbourhood localities (Garnham, 2018). It is evident that, even within its first decade, the effects of area stigmatisation were deeply felt by its residents, who reported implications for employability, educational attainment and mental wellbeing (Mitchell, 2010).

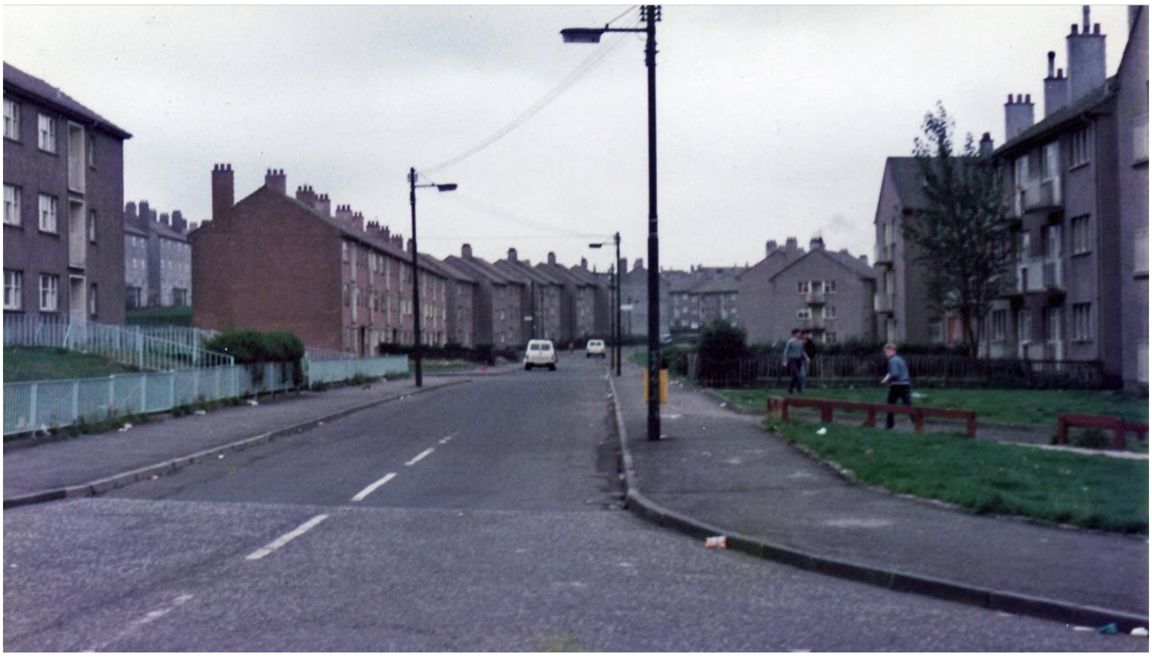

Figure 4.5 An Easterhouse street in the 1970s

Source: https://www.flickr.com/photos/billybill1205/4062011742/in/pool-1247488@N21/

Meanwhile, as early as 1960, housing in Easterhouse was beginning to show signs of damp and mould (Keating, 1987). This contributed to a high proportion of residents requesting housing transfers back to their neighbourhoods of origin. By 1969, one-third of residents had requested to be transferred, with three-fifths stating a preference for neighbouring districts of Glasgow's East End (Garnham, 2018). By 1972, almost a third of residents were found to have moved away within a year of moving to the estate (Garnham, 2018).

4.2.1 Economic Conditions in Glasgow and Easterhouse 1950–1980

During the early decades of the twentieth century, Glasgow earned a reputation as 'one of Britain's pre-eminent industrial cities' (Turok & Bailey, 2004, p.171). 'Carboniferous capitalism' (Hudson, 1989) was used to describe the city's economic specialisation in heavy engineering, including railway locomotives and shipbuilding. The incremental process of deindustrialisation in the UK from the 1940s onwards had catastrophic effects on both the local economy and employment opportunities for city residents.

Glasgow's first major phase of deindustrialisation took place in the years immediately preceding the Second World War. Employment fell dramatically from the early 1940s and contracted faster than national levels throughout the 1950s and 1960s (Pike, 2017). Subsequently, from the 1940s to the 1970s, the iron, steel, heavy engineering and shipbuilding industries in Glasgow fell into steep decline. By the early 1970s, rapid and prolonged deindustrialisation, alongside policy-based measures which discouraged inward investment, had seriously undermined the city's economic base (Collins & Levitt, 2019).

In Easterhouse, the city's depressed economic state was accentuated by a number of geography-specific factors. Employment within Easterhouse during its early decades centred around factories in Queenslie Industrial Estate. By the 1970s, the estate provided around ten thousand jobs (Garnham, 2018). Geographic isolation and reliance on public transport reduced already scarce employment opportunities (Keating & Mitchell, 1987). Costly commutes to neighbouring districts of Shettleston and Parkhead for shopping, social activities and work had a direct effect on the disposable income of many residents. The most-deprived people became 'marooned' on the estate on account of a lack of affordable public transport (Mitchell, 2010). The research period for this thesis, 1980–2021, begins during this stage of peak economic decline and the research population's young adulthood.

4.3 Neighbourhood Demographics 1980s to 2011

Much of the information in Section 4.3 is drawn directly from UK census data between 1981 and 2011. The Covid-19 pandemic resulted in Scotland's most recent census being delayed. As a result, 2021 data was unavailable at the time of writing.

4.3.1 Economic Activity

By the start of the 1980s, the UK recession had reached a peak, and depressed economic conditions evident in Glasgow from the 1970s onwards resulted in widespread unemployment throughout the city (Keating, 1987; Pacione, 1990). In older industrial cities such as Glasgow, whose economy relied heavily upon manufacturing, the effects of deindustrialisation were felt much more keenly than in rural and suburban areas in the UK (Turok & Bailey, 2004). Much of the established evidence suggests that deindustrialisation had disproportionate effects in peripheral estates like Easterhouse, where residents invariably started from a low economic base (Lever, 1991). Unskilled and semi-skilled male workers often possessed fewer transferable skills and families were more likely to be dependent upon a male breadwinner's wage (Phillips et al., 2020).

In Easterhouse, the recession resulted in the closure of a number of key local employers and by the mid 1980s most of the factories on the nearby Queenslie Industrial Estate had closed (Garnham, 2018). Over the past fifty years the proportion of Easterhouse working-age residents classed as 'economically inactive' has consistently been between 30 and 40 percent of the total population (Census 1981, 1991 UK, www.nomisweb.co.uk; Census 2001, 2011 Scotland's Census, https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk). By 2001, 58 percent of the total population was not 'in work' and a further 45 percent was benefit dependent (GEDC, 2001). The combination of persistent worklessness and Easterhouse's geographic isolation acts as an important backdrop to the violence, crime and addiction which became prevalent in some sections of the community.

For women, the rising cost of public transport and travel time (fifty minutes by bus to the city centre) was prohibitive to even part-time work and as a result the number of unwaged households grew significantly during the recession (Pacione, 1990).

It is noteworthy that female rates of registered unemployment are consistently lower than male rates (see Table 4.1 below) and will not reflect women experiencing hidden poverty, such as those economically dependent upon male breadwinners or undeclared work, part-time workers, students, pensioners and those who are sick long term.

Yet, over the decade following 2001, the benefit-claim rate in Easterhouse fell steeply to under a quarter of men and women in 2013, from highs in 2003/04 of 50 percent and 70 percent, respectively, reflecting the significant influx of a wealthier population and rising employment (Garnham, 2018). These changes, over the past two decades show that regeneration and physical improvement have resulted in Easterhouse expanding to absorb a new and less-deprived demographic. Yet, deprivation statistics continue to demonstrate that pockets of deep poverty persist, despite the addition of less-deprived localities (Lloyd et al., 2017).

4.3.2 Socio-Demographic Change – Residualisation and the Social Divide

From the 1980s onwards Easterhouse was subject to processes of neighbourhood change which resulted in population decline and deepening of socio-economic inequalities. Population decline was linked in part to the worsening condition of housing stock

(Mitchell, 2010) and gradual processes of abandonment of condemned blocks of housing scheduled for demolition and cessation of lettings. Furthermore, original settlers from the 1950s and 1960s had often been families with children (Garnham, 2018). As these early settlers aged in situ and families grew smaller or left home, households became smaller on the estate, following a city-wide trend of under-occupation of socially rented property. As the estate declined in popularity, larger families became less commonplace. This resulted in an ageing population and an increasing trend towards smaller households, lone-parent households often part of this trend. Depopulation was also partially connected to wider processes of residualisation happening across Glasgow's peripheral estates. Forrest & Murie (1983, p.42) define residualisation:

> A complex and multi-faceted process, relating to the role of social housing, its provision and consumption. It is associated with a downgrading in status of the tenure and is linked to issues of social exclusion, stigma and quality.

The impact of Glasgow's tarnished social housing reputation was that peripheral housing estates became increasingly less in demand and home to residents of the lowest socio-economic groups (Forrest & Murie, 1983; Robinson & O'Sullivan, 1983) and that many of the city's poorest residents, who often happened to be lone parents, became concentrated in the far edges of the city (Keating, 1987). This phenomenon can be explained in part by (1) deepening poverty in Glasgow connected to ongoing processes of deindustrialisation and a shrinking jobs pool; (2) the liberalisation of allocations policies through the 1980s, which began a movement towards housing those most deprived housing in areas with most available housing units; and (3) the fact that many who remained in employment and had been allocated housing in Glasgow in the post-war period had taken advantage of Right to Buy and were becoming homeowners by the 1980s and 1990s. By consequence, it might be observed that social housing in the city had always been subject to a degree of status and although the peripheral estates never ranked highly, their status slipped markedly from the 1980s onwards.

The 'classed geography' of the city had been long recognised within academic discourse (see Armstrong & Wilson, 1973; Damer, 1989). From their inception, criticisms had been levelled that the peripheral estates were a 'series of single tenure, one class estates' (Keating & Murie, 1988, p.154), the majority of early residents originating from slum clearance sites and working-class origins. However, the change which occurred in the social composition of peripheral neighbourhoods during the 1980s and 1990s led to a widening of the inequalities between peripheral tenants and their working-class counterparts in other parts of the city (Anderson, 2018; Gourlay, 2007).

Several factors contributed towards residualisation in Glasgow's peripheral housing estates during the 1980s and 1990s. First, social housing had by this time acquired a rather tainted reputation (Clapham & Kintrea, 1986). Those with the means to buy property became increasingly less likely to enter social housing during this period (Madgin & Kintrea, 2019). Key contributors were the city council's poor reputation for housing maintenance and management, and the declining condition of the city's housing stock (Wannop, 1990). Furthermore, the incentivisation of privatisation throughout Scotland, initiated by policies such as Right to Buy, had direct implications for housing provision in large municipal estates such as Easterhouse. Though uptake of Right to Buy in estates like Easterhouse was generally low, the shrinking availability of council housing in the city, especially in more-desirable areas, meant greatest availability in the unpopular peripheral estates.

A flagship policy of the 1979 general election, Right to Buy was quickly implemented by the Conservatives within their first year in office in the Housing Act and Tenants' Rights, Etc. (Scotland) Act 1980 (Forrest & Murie, 1983). Uptake of Right to Buy resulted in reduced availability of council housing stock throughout the city and increasing patterns of social and economic polarisation (Gourlay, 2007; Malpass, 2005) and many of the more-desirable two-storey homes and flats in suburban areas of the city being taken out of the rental sector.

Thus, the 1980s and 1990s marked a noticeable juncture in Glaswegian life where for the first time homeownership became an aspiration of the working classes. The upshot was reduced overall city housing stock, especially in more popular areas, and greatest availability of housing in undesirable housing estates for those with the least means or will to buy. Characteristics of decaying housing and the poorest demographic remained relatively static in Easterhouse until the early 2000s when the shift to community-controlled housing associations (CCHAs) prompted extensive housing renewal and significant changes to patterns of tenureship within the estate (see Section 4.4.1).

The shift to CCHAs initiated a slow process of demographic change framed by fresh approaches to resident consultation and governance. In addition, the CCHAs also placed a new focus upon tenure diversification within the estate (Hastings et al., 1996) and opened up a range of new housing options such as mid-market rent and some shared-ownership properties. Throughout the 2000s and 2010s, Easterhouse experienced major investment chiefly aimed at regeneration of the housing stock (McKee, 2007), which had a notable impact on neighbourhood demographics. This was achieved through housing improvement for existing residents, which slowly improved neighbourhood reputation and status. A drive towards private development on sites around the periphery of the estate also attracted a slightly wealthier demographic of working professionals in areas such as Barlanark and Garthamlock, which saw a quadrupling of population between 2001 and 2013 (Garnham, 2018).

Table 4.1 Population demographics in Easterhouse and Glasgow 1981–2011

Variable	**1981**	**1991**	**2001**	**2011**
Total population, Easterhouse	67103	47045	39476	37822
Males	32629	22052	18345	17530
Females	34474	24993	21131	20292
% Households with children headed by lone parent, Easterhouse	10	35.5	41	51.4
% Households with children headed by lone parent, city of Glasgow	15.2	25.7	44.3	29.6
% Unemployed males, Easterhouse	18.81	16.34	7.20	7.75
% Unemployed females, Easterhouse	6.19	6.89	9.43	4.67
% Unemployed males, city of Glasgow	14.00	13.22	6.05	3.77
% Unemployed females, city of Glasgow	4.67	5.08	2.34	6.10

Sources: Nomis Census Data (1981, 1991), Scotland's Census (2001, 2011)

Table 4.1 highlights that the population of Easterhouse fell by almost half during the period 1981 to 2011. However, the boundaries of Greater Easterhouse were redefined in the late 1990s to cover a smaller geographic area, which would account for some population decline. From the start of the research period, the city of Glasgow also experienced continuous population decline overall until around 2005 (Gourlay, 2007). Within the literature, emigration from Easterhouse has been linked to declining neighbourhood conditions and geographical isolation from employment opportunities in the central parts of the city (Garnham, 2018; Keating & Mitchell, 1987). A high proportion of those leaving the city were younger adults and those with greatest educational attainment (Pike, 2017). This data demonstrates the extent to which processes of deindustrialisation and residualisation contributed towards emigration particularly through the first two decades of the research period.

UK figures at the time demonstrate that one in three working-age men were unemployed by the start of the 1980s (Pacione, 1993). Table 4.1 shows unemployment amongst men and women in Easterhouse as higher than the Glasgow average throughout the research period. However, the reality of these figures is that the self-reported unemployment statistics are likely to reflect only those registered for unemployment benefits and not those dependent on other forms of benefit, or those experiencing the hidden forms of poverty described above. The extent of male unemployment and ‘hidden’ forms of worklessness have been suggested in the literature to have had significant negative implications for relationships between men and women in an industrial society which had historically been rooted in cultures of male ‘breadwinning’ and heavy industry (Craig, 2010; Hughes, 2004).

4.3.3 The Implications of Allocations Policies for Lone-Parent Households

During the 1980s, Glasgow’s peculiar tenure structure meant that the city held a proportionally higher stock of council housing than almost anywhere else in the country (Gibb, 2003), with three-fifths of all housing units being municipally owned (Paice, 2008). Working-class Glaswegians’ reliance on socialist paternalism meant their access to housing was significantly shaped by the implementation of allocations policies. Studies from the 1980s showed that they concentrated those most disadvantaged in the most-deprived neighbourhoods (Clapham & Kintrea, 1986). Other studies make connections between allocations policy and perpetuation of disadvantage through stigma (Dean & Hastings, 2000) and poor public services (Speak & Graham, 1999).

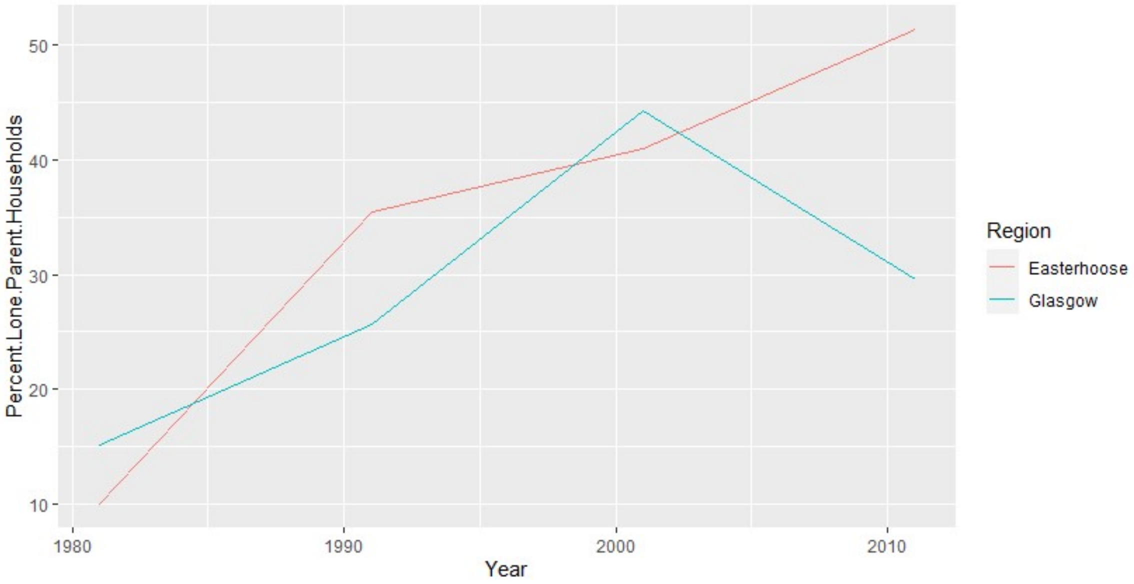

Figure 4.6 Percent lone parent households in Easterhouse and Glasgow, 1981–2011
Source: UK Census' 1981, 1991, 2001, 2011

Figure 4.6 shows that during the 1980s, lone-parent households in Easterhouse, the vast majority female-headed, increased threefold, and continued to increase by five times in the period 1981 to 2011. The dramatic rise in lone-parent households through the 1980s is a striking trend, especially in view of the fact that, at the start of the research period, Easterhouse sat at around two-thirds of the city average. Figure 4.6 also demonstrates that rates remained largely higher than the Glasgow average, save for a brief period in the early 2000s. By 2011, Easterhouse had around twenty percentage points or almost 75% higher (51.4% in Easterhouse and 29.6% in Glasgow, 2011) lone-parent households than the Glasgow average. Moreover, where lone-parent-headed households in Glasgow dropped significantly between 2001 and 2011, rates continued to follow an upward trajectory in Easterhouse. What is clear is that from the 1980s onwards Easterhouse experienced an explosion in lone-mother-headed households, which continued to rise through the research period.

Evidence suggests that by the 1980s lone mothers had become disproportionately concentrated within the peripheral estates (Tulle-Winton, 1997). Some have argued that this phenomenon was linked to homeless allocation policies which placed homeless lone-parent families in the least-desirable areas, on account of need for quick rehousing after relationship breakdown (Brailey, 1986; Tulle-Winton, 1997). These authors suggest that lone motherhood and experience of domestic abuse had a direct bearing on likelihood of being allocated housing in peripheral estates during periods of personal crisis. The extent to which allocations policies were implicated in rising numbers of lone mothers in peripheral neighbourhoods, however, remains unclear. What is clear is that changes to homelessness allocations policies through the 1980s resulted in homeless families with children receiving greatest priority for rehousing (Clapham & Kintrea, 1986).

Clapham & Kintrea (1986) also highlight the relationship between homelessness and likelihood of rehousing within a deprived neighbourhood. During the 1980s and 1990s, homeless families were restricted to a single housing offer in new homes that were unlikely to reflect preference for schools, family support or local connection, in contrast to the plentiful offers made to their non-homeless counterparts (Clapham & Kintrea, 1986). This approach to homeless allocations policy is likely to have had important implications for lone mothers, who might be expected to have strong requirements for support, connection and belonging.

Taken together, the literature suggests that allocations policies, particularly those relating to homelessness housing applications, may have aided rapid rehousing and been likely to direct the most vulnerable and disadvantaged women towards peripheral estates in the early decades of the research period during its era of municipal landlordship. Thus, the effects of housing policies became part of a self-reinforcing problem. As numbers of low-income, lone-parent families grew within the estate, the effects of area stigmatisation, substandard amenities and geographical isolation reinforced the disadvantage they experienced (Dean & Hastings, 2000). However, where women in previous decades might have had no right to social housing and faced penalties such as institutionalisation or losing children when attempting to leave, new homelessness policies and relative ease of obtaining housing in residualised estates may have influenced women’s agency to leave abusive relationships.

4.3.4 Area Deprivation and Health Inequalities

Sections 4.3.1–4.3.3 have examined how polarisation caused by processes of residualisation, central allocations policies and uneven effects of employment contributed towards concentrations of deprived groups of people within the four peripheral housing estates. Of these, Easterhouse has been evidenced as suffering from the most pronounced and persistent deprivation. Lloyd et al. (2017) found that the ten most persistently deprived areas in the UK between 1971 and 2017 were all in the city of Glasgow, with two of the top four within Easterhouse. The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (Scottish Government, 2020) noted eighteen of twenty areas in Greater Easterhouse were in the 10 percent most deprived in Scotland, and thirteen were in the 5 percent most deprived. Therefore, Easterhouse is significant as a neighbourhood of special interest with regards to persistent poverty within a city whose reputation for deprivation is unparalleled anywhere in Europe (Lloyd et al., 2017; Walsh et al., 2016).

Associations between poverty and poor physical and mental health are well established (Townsend & Davidson, 1982). In the early 2000s, male life expectancy in Easterhouse was 69 for males and 74 for females. This compares with 79 for males and 81 for females for residents of the city’s least-deprived district (Walsh et al., 2016). Over the past fifteen years, health in the neighbourhood has improved, with life expectancy for both males and females rising closer to the Glasgow average. However, it is still considerably lower than the Scottish average, particularly for men (Understanding Glasgow, 2023). Records from over the past forty years demonstrate that life within Easterhouse makes residents susceptible to poorer health, earlier death and a greater likelihood of adopting risky health behaviours than their counterparts in less-deprived areas of Glasgow (Easterhouse Housing and Regeneration Alliance, 2021; MacLean, 2003; Rose & McAuley, 2019). Moreover, as already discussed, Easterhouse has been shown to be more susceptible to housing residents of the lowest socio-economic groups already susceptible to poor health because of generational exposure to poverty on account of the effects of residualisation. Although health outcomes are slowly improving, they are still markedly below those in less relatively deprived areas of Glasgow (Duckett, 2022).

4.4 Housing and Neighbourhood Change

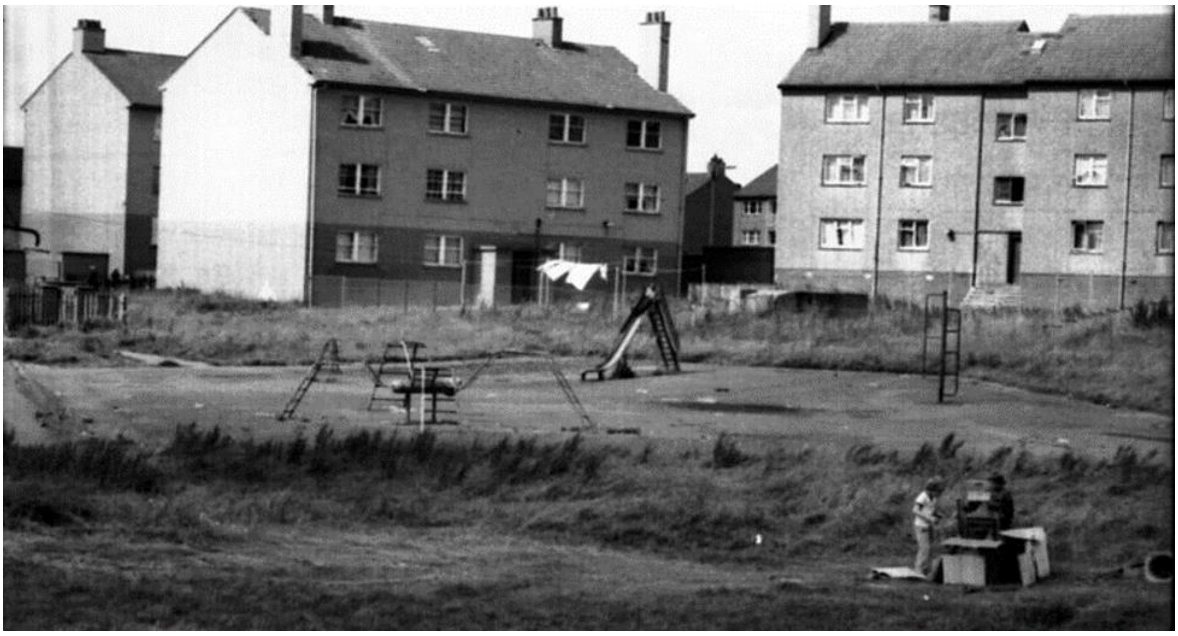

Figure 4.7 Buchlyvie Street, Easterhouse, 1985

Source: https://www.facebook.com/74frankfurt/posts/housing-schemes-of-scotland-buchlyvie-street-easterhouse-glasgow-1985-pic-billy-/1272999816376153/

By the 1980s Easterhouse was still overwhelmingly a municipally owned housing estate comprising grids of mid-century, grey-concrete tenemental blocks of flats and several high-rise developments (Craig, 2010). A large proportion of the housing stock had, by the start of the research period, fallen into serious disrepair, due to poor design and materials, hasty construction and lack of investment in repairs and maintenance (Gibb, 2003; Kintrea, 1996). The regimented design of the buildings made the estate a ‘bleak, cold place’ for those living there (Paice, 2008, p.7). The concrete blocks and metal window frames used in construction made the flats cold, damp and expensive to heat (Clapham & Kintrea, 1986; Gibb, 2003).

The council’s failure to address issues of housing stock deterioration resulted in widespread perceptions that Glasgow had effectively washed its hands of the unmanageable physical, social and economic problems of the peripheral estates (Keating & Mitchell, 1987). During the first twenty-five years of the research period, housing conditions continued to deteriorate, with the majority of post-war properties suffering from chronic damp, mould and condensation (McCormack, 2009). Poor-quality housing resulted in squalor, ill-health and low morale for tenants. One Easterhouse resident, lone mother and activist, Cathy McCormack, became a well-known campaigner for housing and human rights after long struggles with Glasgow City Council to take notice of the severity of resident housing issues in her local neighbourhood (McCormack, 2009).

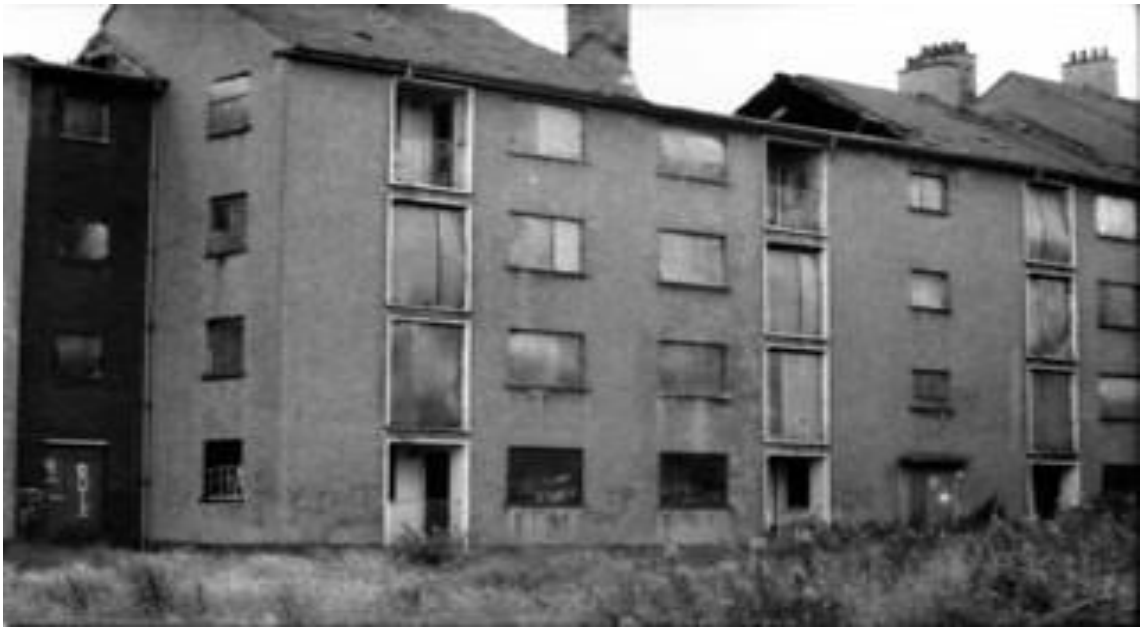

Figure 4.8 Boarded-up tenemental housing, Lochdochart Road, Easterhouse, circa 1980
Source: Flickr,
www.flickr.com/photos/billybill1205/albums/72157622503227302/with/3975731016

In 1986, the Grieve report (Grieve, 1986) was commissioned to investigate the condition of Glasgow's housing stock. In Easterhouse, the report highlighted the same issues of overcrowding, dampness, condensation and hard-to-heat homes subsequently highlighted by activists like McCormack (2009). The inadequacy of housing management and allocations policies which contributed towards segregation of those who were poorest were highlighted as key in the estate's economic and social decay (Grieve, 1986, p.18), the council left facing huge costs of modernising and refurbishing relatively new accommodation.

The report's recommendations became a catalyst for a number of major housing-based changes, including the development of a network of CCHAs within the estate, which initiated a slow a process of housing renewal spanning over two decades, and tenant-led management structures in the neighbourhood from the 1990s onwards (McCormack, 2009).

Figure 4.9 Easterhouse, 1980s

Source: https://www.flickr.com/photos/glasgowfamilyalbum/8424360492

4.4.1 The Birth of the Community-Controlled Housing-Association Movement in Easterhouse

The first major milestone in housing regeneration coincided with the recommendations on ‘community ownership’ published within the Grieve report (1986). In 1984, four small localities, some from within deprived areas of peripheral estates, had been identified as potential pilot areas for transfer to community ownership (Clapham & Kintrea, 1986). The housing associations were designed to empower resident management committees, their establishment viewed in some circles as a mechanism for residents to challenge poor management and improve housing conditions from within (Robertson, 1989). In 1986, Calvay, a residential area within Greater Easterhouse, was identified as one of the sites for the community housing association pilot scheme. By the mid 1990s, five housing associations and co-ops had been established and became increasingly influential within Easterhouse (Garnham, 2018), staffed by paid employees, volunteers and community activists (Madgin & Kintrea, 2019).

By the end of the 2000s, the housing-association movement in Easterhouse had grown significantly, with eight CCHAs managing three thousand units of housing stock throughout Easterhouse (Easterhouse Housing and Regeneration Alliance, 2009). The tenant-led associations had become a major force for housing-based change within the area by the start of the twenty-first century (Gibb, 2003).

4.4.2 Housing Stock Transfer

In 2002, tenants in Glasgow overwhelmingly voted to transfer eighty-five thousand properties from local authority ownership to the newly formed not-for-profit organisation, the Glasgow Housing Association (Daly et al., 2005), its mission to improve the city's former council housing stock, a task largely achieved by the mid 2010s. In Easterhouse, the Glasgow Housing Association era of housing management has been most notable for its focus upon demolition, primarily in the outlying areas of Easterhouse, which were generally least popular for allocation and in poorest condition (Mitchell, 2010). The establishment of community ownership models in the 1990s had initiated a movement away from large municipal holdings of housing units. The aim of housing stock transfer was to continue the movement towards community control by implementing a longer-term plan for distributing housing in the city to smaller housing associations, the rationale being that the smaller associations would be more responsive and rooted in local community priorities (Gourlay, 2007).

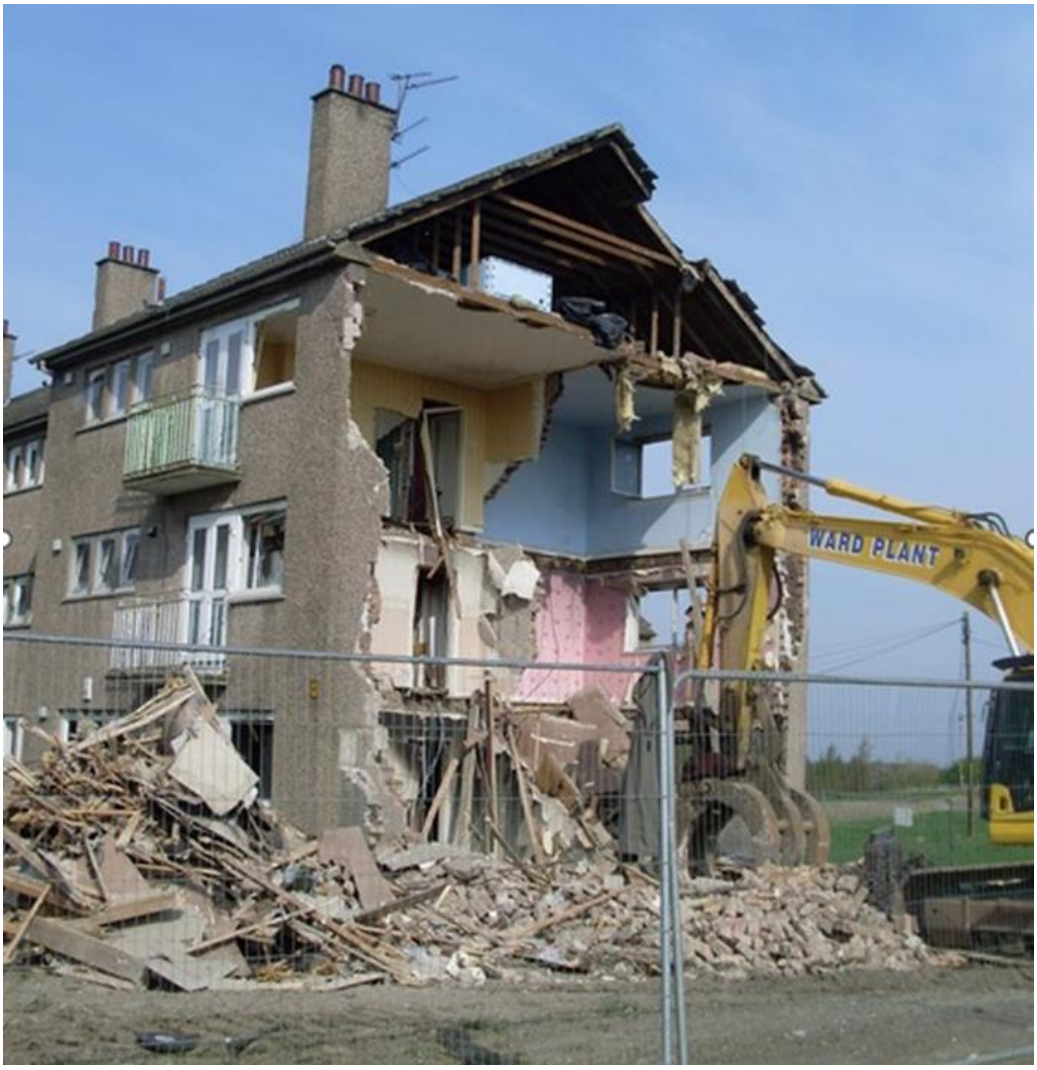

Figure 4.10 Demolition of Council Housing near Lochwood, Easterhouse, 2003
Source: www.geograph.org.uk/photo/1261977

The most observable impact of housing stock transfer lay in its focus upon demolition and redevelopment. In Easterhouse and throughout the city during the 2000s and 2010s, many of the older-style tenements and high-rise developments were demolished and replaced with newer terraced housing. In addition, some of the older buildings within the estate were reduced from three to two storeys and many were redesigned to include front and back doors and private gardens (MacLean, 2003).

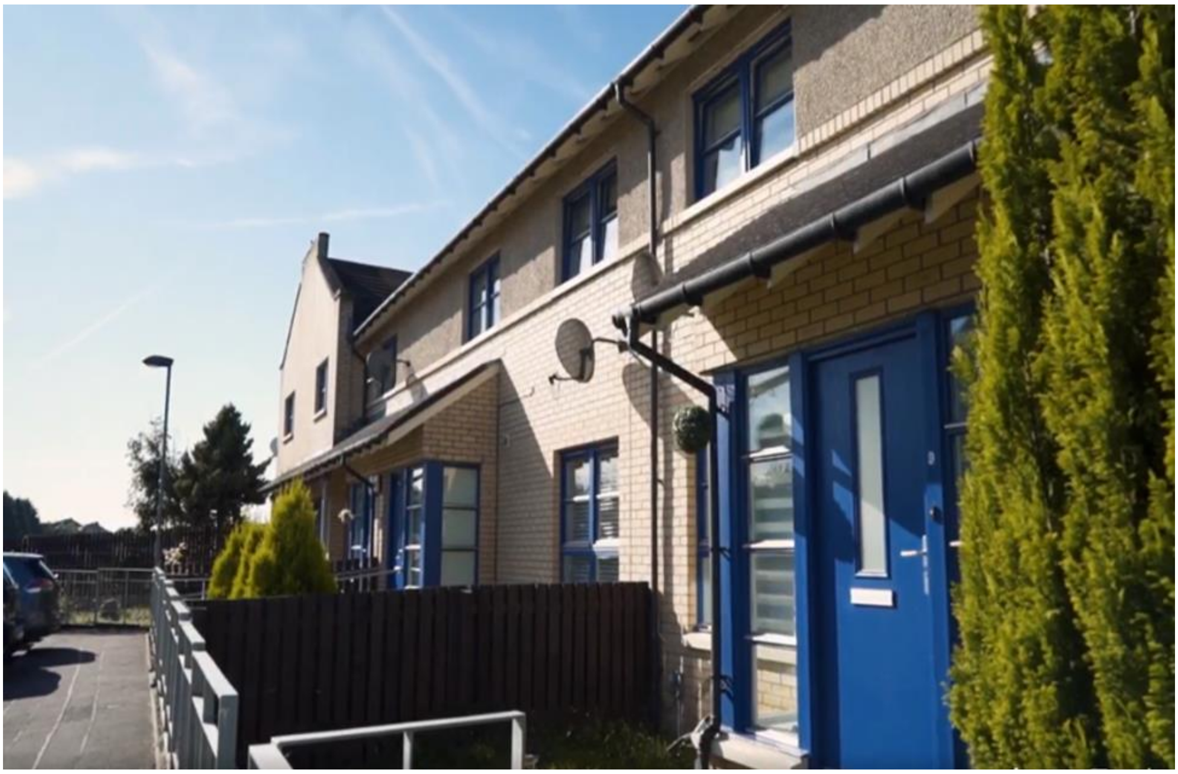

Figure 4.11 Housing association homes in Easterhouse, 2020

Source: https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=307926903901394

This programme of renewal and physical neighbourhood improvement on the part of Glasgow Housing Association and the CCHAs through the 2000s and 2010s has helped to stem population decline and improve resident perceptions of housing desirability (Garnham, 2018). However, it should also be noted that these improvements must be measured against the coexistence of many areas of semi-derelict waste ground and run-down public spaces, which continue to speak of the area's decline. Finally, housing stock transfer resulted in significant diversification of tenure within the estate as a result of new schemes for affordable homeownership and incentivisation of homeownership created by improvements to the built environment and a greater selection of public services and amenities (Garnham, 2018).

4.4.3 Housing Association Activity and the Growth of Community Activism in Easterhouse

During the early years of the 1990s, the housing associations in Easterhouse sought to broaden the scope of their services to include a wider range of community-based activities. These 'wider role' activities aimed to address some of the more pervasive social and economic issues evident within the community (Scott, 1997). A new range of services began to emerge which would deliver welfare benefit advice, energy advice, play groups and other services aimed at community engagement. In this way, the housing associations began to develop an approach to housing provision which became ‘more than just bricks and mortar’, with new services adopting community-development approaches to address issues of structural inequality.

Meanwhile, from the 1990s onwards community activism within Easterhouse began to gather momentum, local activists increasingly seeking community-based solutions to the issues of structural inequality evident within the neighbourhood (McCormack, 2009). The period from the 1990s onwards saw community groups become important sites for residents, support, education and community organising (McKee, 2007). Amidst this landscape of grassroots community organisations, many of the most instrumental were attached to outreach activities within local churches.

In 1989, academic and Christian youth worker Bob Holman established the first youth club in Easterhouse from a disused shop in a derelict tenement block. The youth club went from strength to strength and, in 1990, Family Action in Rogerfield and Easterhouse (FARE) was established with the aim of tackling poverty and its effects through the delivery of community education and activity in Easterhouse. FARE quickly became a community anchor organisation, delivering training, youth activities, a creche and adult education classes. By 2003, the organisation was run by over fifty volunteers and paid members of staff (Holman, 2001) and was an active centre for community activists and changemakers.

The early 1990s also saw the establishment of Greater Easterhouse Women’s Aid in response to the high volume of domestic abuse support referrals received by Glasgow Women’s Aid (Montford, 1991). The organisation aimed to support women and children to escape domestic abuse and seek refuge, giving counselling and housing and benefits advice. A network of community organisations concerned with addressing inequalities, such as FARE, CCHAs, Citizens Advice and Women’s Aid, began to support local residents to organise themselves and identify the ways in which the critical issues of neighbourhood and community might be addressed at citizen level. These new streams of community-based activity also heralded the emergence of a new range of employment opportunities in sectors concerned with social justice. Housing improvements coupled with the increasing volume of community activities being delivered by organisations such as

FARE contributed to reports of greater resident satisfaction through the 2000s and 2010s (Garnham, 2018).

4.5 Neighbourhood-Based Crime

Within the literature, a great deal has been written about the correlation between area-based deprivation and crime (Bannister et al., 2018; Hipp & Yates, 2011). From the 1980s onwards, poverty and crime in deprived areas became associated with urban sprawl and neglected peripheral estates. In turn, estates became synonymous with both crime and moral dubiety (Mooney & Danson, 1997). It has not been possible to access historical area-based crime data from Police Scotland relating to the decades of the research period. Subsequently, much of the crime data in this section originates from ‘insider’ accounts, professional perspectives and grey literature.

Within this literature, housebreaking, theft, assault and domestic abuse are cited as pervasive characteristics of neighbourhood life through the 1980s and 1990s (MacLean, 2003; McCormack, 2009; Mitchell, 2010). The extent of resident involvement in criminal activity within Easterhouse has been contextualised by both ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ academic authors as a direct product of neighbourhood conditions (Gildart et al., 2017; Holman, 1994; MacLean, 2003; McCormack, 2009; Mitchell, 2010) and as responses to poverty and social exclusion (Atkinson & Kintrea, 2004; Galster et al., 2000).

Several observations can be made regarding high levels of crime within Easterhouse during the research period. Local community worker and academic Holman (1994) linked a lack of leisure activities and worklessness during the 1980s and 1990s to high levels of criminal activity. Holman’s perspective suggests that youth crimes such as vandalism, assault and theft were a product of lack of resources and access to other more meaningful activity. Moreover, high levels of worklessness and low levels of higher education uptake have been used to explain high levels of youth crime and delinquency (Holman, 1994).

The continuing presence of gang culture in deprived areas of Glasgow for over a century would suggest that this cultural phenomenon is somewhat entrenched (Bannister & Fraser, 2008; Bartie, 2010; Fraser, 2010; Jeffrey, 2009; MacLean, 2003; Quinn, 2004). Yet gang-based violence has gradually become less of a public spectacle in deprived areas of Glasgow over the past fifty years (Fraser, 2010). The implications of youth involvement in gang-related crime can be demonstrated to have distinct implications for women and mothers in Easterhouse. High levels of youth crime and violence within the area have been cited within the literature as contributing towards decreased perceptions of personal safety and increased fear around children's involvement in criminal activity (Holman, 2001; MacLean, 2003; McLean & Holligan, 2018). The continuing phenomenon of violent youth crime is likely to impact mothers and older women's negotiation of neighbourhood.

By 2002, some grey literature suggested that threat of crime within Easterhouse was having distinct effects on residents' perceptions of personal safety. Fifty-eight percent of respondents reported feeling at least a bit unsafe at night, due mainly to the fear of gangs, young people and those with drug addiction (SIP, 2002). The locations most people reported wanting to avoid fell into two categories: specific named streets and central public spaces, such as residential waste ground and the central shopping area (MacLean, 2003; SIPS, 2002). These statistics demonstrate that security and fear of violent crime were clear concerns for the majority of residents by the early years of the twenty-first century.

4.5.1 The Intersection of Place, Violence and Toxic Masculinity

The city of Glasgow has always had a particularly high incidence of violent crime in comparison to other UK cities (Mooney & Danson, 2005). Section 4.1 explained Easterhouse's historical reputation as a centre of violence and territorial gang fighting. Much has been written about male violence, especially in relation to gang culture during the 1960s and 1970s (Bartie & Fraser, 2017; Jeffrey, 2009; Keating & Mitchell, 1987).

Gangs in Glasgow have been identified as sites of masculine identification, where 'belonging to' and adopting the cultural habitus of gang behaviour forms a rite of passage for accepted working-class masculinity (Fraser, 2010). As noted above, violence in Easterhouse has found its expression in gang fighting, housebreaking and continuously high levels of knife crime (Garnham, 2018). Violent gang-related crime within Easterhouse has been noted as particularly exaggerated in comparison to other deprived neighbourhoods in the city over the past thirty years (McLean & Holligan, 2018). Some sources have argued that violence acted out in gang settings in Glasgow forms a mechanism for men and boys to transfer feelings of shame and stigma into 'pride and solidarity' (Moran, 2015, p.5).

What is clear is that, increasingly throughout the post-war period and beyond, males in Glasgow became subject to a form of toxic masculinity which directed them towards ‘hard man’ forms of behaviour, which often included violence and territorialism (Craig, 2010). McLean & Holligan (2018) link the rise of male violence in deprived areas of Glasgow to deindustrialisation, unemployment, monotony and men’s inability to express masculinity in the workplace. The study suggests that male violence in Glasgow has become a form of poverty- enforced protest and an accepted way to ‘do masculinity’ (McLean & Holligan, 2018, p.3). Kupers (2005, p.6) describes this kind of toxic ‘hypermasculinity’ as expressed through ‘aggression, gym musculature, physical dominance, violence and esteem within the dominant gender hierarchy’.

Viewed through a gendered lens, the culture of working-class male violence has distinctly hierarchal and misogynistic dimensions in post-industrial Glasgow (Craig, 2010; Hughes, 2004). Some authors have suggested that toxic working-class masculinities have been most accentuated in persistently deprived neighbourhoods like Easterhouse as a result of high unemployment, poverty and crime (Craig, 2010; Hughes, 2004).

4.5.2 Domestic Violence in Glasgow and Easterhouse

Skafida et al. (2021) highlight that Scottish lone mothers from the poorest neighbourhoods have a one in three chance of having experienced some form of domestic abuse. Generational poverty and youth (being aged under 21) along with having a male child were directly correlated with lone mothers’ likelihood of having experienced domestic abuse. Other studies suggest that domestic abuse and ‘contemptuous’ relationships between men and women in Glasgow have distinct geographical and class dimensions (Craig, 2010; Hughes, 2004).

The decision to establish Greater Easterhouse Women’s Aid in 1993 related to the high volume of referrals from the neighbourhood to the city-wide organisation, Glasgow Women’s Aid. By 1995, the service had seen a 25 percent increase in referrals in just two years (GEWA, 1996). Little robust data exists on the incidence of domestic violence incidents in Easterhouse through the 1990s. However, evidence from 2002 demonstrates that in Easterhouse an average of forty domestic abuse incidents per month were logged by community police (Community Police, 2002). Furthermore, according to the Health and Wellbeing Survey (SIPS, 2002), 21 percent of residents in Greater Easterhouse felt that domestic abuse was very common in the area, compared with 4.8 percent of residents within other outlying areas of Glasgow's East End (SIPS, 2002).

Domestic violence is recognised to be a significantly under-reported crime across the UK (Rose & McAuley, 2019). Consequently, public opinion of the prevalence of domestic abuse during the research period might be regarded as one of the best measures of the actual extent of the issue within Easterhouse. Further studies examining the relationship between poverty and 'getting by' have suggested that the prevalence of domestic violence in Easterhouse, in conjunction with the extra financial pressures imposed upon families by austerity measures between 1998 and 2016, have had direct implications for family breakdown and poor maternal mental health (Rose & McAuley, 2019).

The small body of available data would suggest that domestic abuse has been a prevalent and pervasive issue for women through the 1980s up until the present day. However, the available evidence is scant and somewhat vague. Some evidence suggests that domestic abuse might be related to a majority of homelessness family housing applications in peripheral estates in Glasgow through the 1990s (Tulle-Winton, 1997). However, the extent to which this is reality is not adequately evidenced.

4.5.3 Cultures of Addiction

Studies note availability and usage of heroin and crack cocaine in Scotland's deprived urban housing estates as a growing concern from 1980 onwards (Ditton & Speirits, 1981; Morgan, 2014). Between 1990 and 1991, drugs deaths in Glasgow quadrupled, the combined effects of heroin and other drugs implicated in all deaths (Hammersley et al., 1995). Acquisitive (and total) recorded crime in Scotland peaked in 1991, aligning with the UK peak in heroin/crack cocaine use (Morgan, 2014), with studies such as that of Hammersley et al. (1995) highlighting the frequency and range of crimes, including shoplifting, burglary and vehicle theft, required to sustain daily heroin users.

Prostitution was the second most widely reported crime for female heroin users, making addicted women increasingly vulnerable to sexual violence and male coercion (McKeganey et al., 1992). Where crimes such as theft or prostitution may previously have been viewed as poverty-survival mechanisms, criminal acts were, increasingly after the 1980s, rooted in desperation to fuel addictions (Ditton & Speirits, 1981). A 1992 study estimated that 1150 women in Glasgow would be involved in street prostitution that year, and of those 72 percent were intravenous drug users (McKeganey et al., 1992). Taken together these findings suggest a clear relationship between rises in violent crime and sex work through the 1980s and 1990s.

The ‘heroin epidemic’ of the 1980s and 1990s had a particularly devastating impact on Easterhouse’s persistently deprived population. In 1989, Scotland’s first needle exchange for intravenous drug users was opened in the local health centre (Gruer, 2004). Local authority data from the early part of the millennium demonstrated that 74 percent of residents felt drug activity in Easterhouse was very common – this compares with 26 per cent of all Greater Glasgow Health Board respondents (SIPS, 2002). Furthermore, Gruer (2004, p.54) observed of Easterhouse: ‘It is here that drug misuse has become a way of life for many, supported by flourishing networks of drug dealers and a thriving black economy based on stolen goods.’

McKeganey & Barnard (2007) examined the lives of families living with parental heroin addiction in several peripheral estates including Easterhouse. Their study demonstrated that heroin addiction within families exposed children to a host of risks including neglect, violence, abuse, accidental harm and mental health difficulties. The study also highlighted the strain placed upon extended family members through fear for loved ones’ health and extended childcare responsibilities of grandparents (McKeganey & Barnard, 2007). Taken together, the existing knowledge clearly points to the reality that addictions within families in Easterhouse have had significant implications for life-course trajectories of the participant group. However, there exists little specific knowledge relating to how older women in the estate have been impacted by cultures of addiction within families.

4.6 Amenities and Public Services

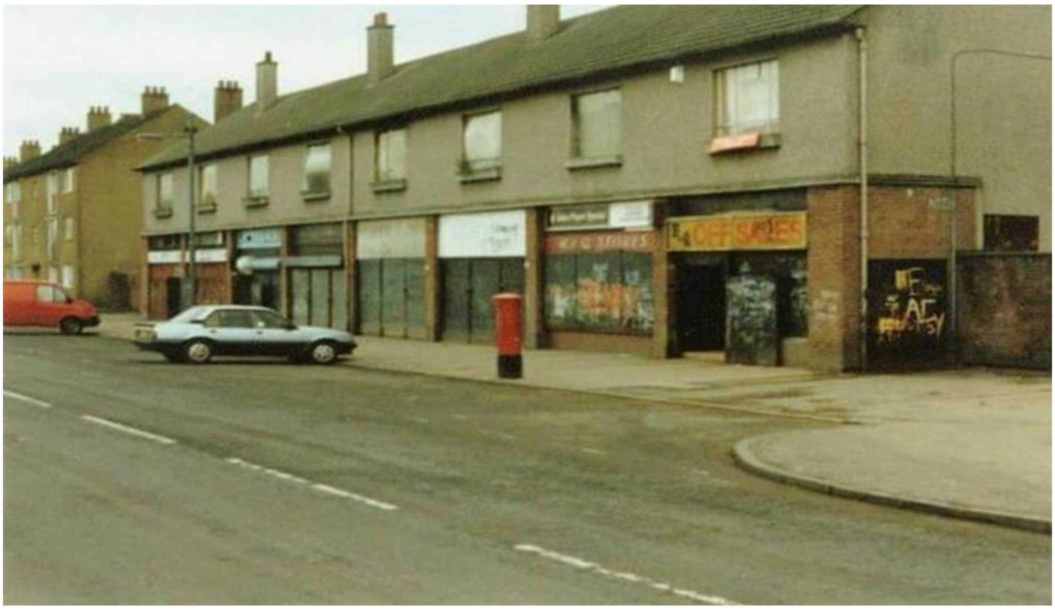

Figure 4.12 Provan, Easterhouse, 1980s

Source: https://twitter.com/74frankfurt/status/1317003533598773248

Section 4.2 set out the limitations of amenities and public services in Easterhouse in the first two decades after construction. By the 1980s, many amenities such as shops, health services and public transport were still vastly insufficient in their capacity to serve the local population (Mitchell, 2010).

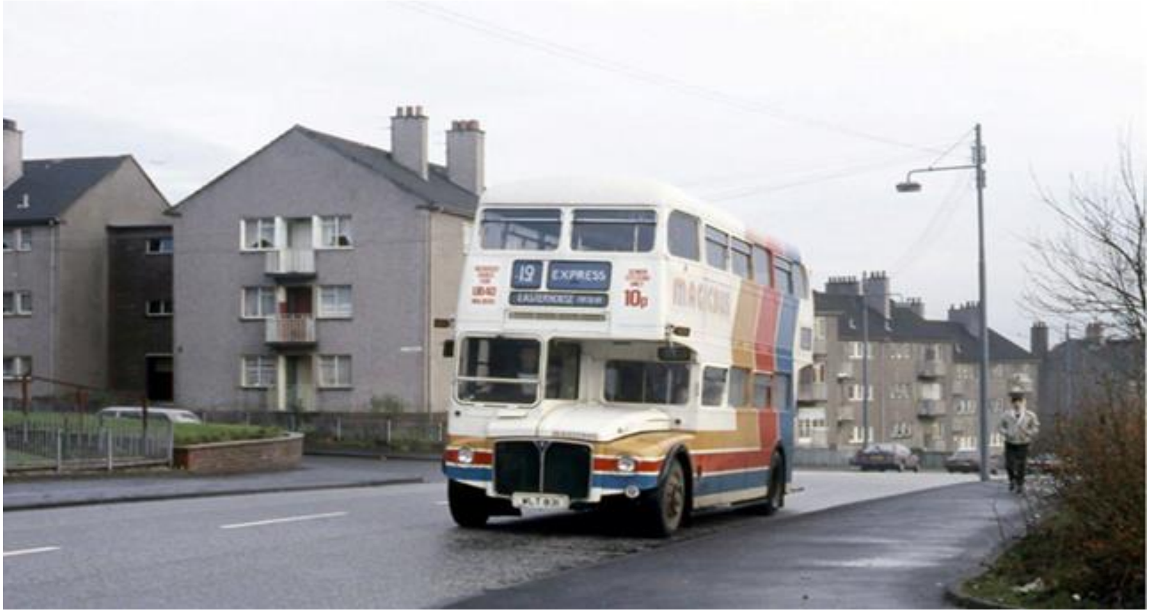

Figure 4.13 Auchinlea Road, Easterhouse, 1980s

Source: https://www.facebook.com/theglasgowchronicles/photos/a.1862795580493516/1862795620493512/

The cost and limitations of public transport to the estate were noted during the 1980s and 1990s as an important barrier to employment and engagement with health services (Garnham, 2018). In 1990, some 83 percent of households did not own a car (Pacione, 1990). By 2003, Halden et al, was still noting clear connections between inaccessibility of public transport and social exclusion.

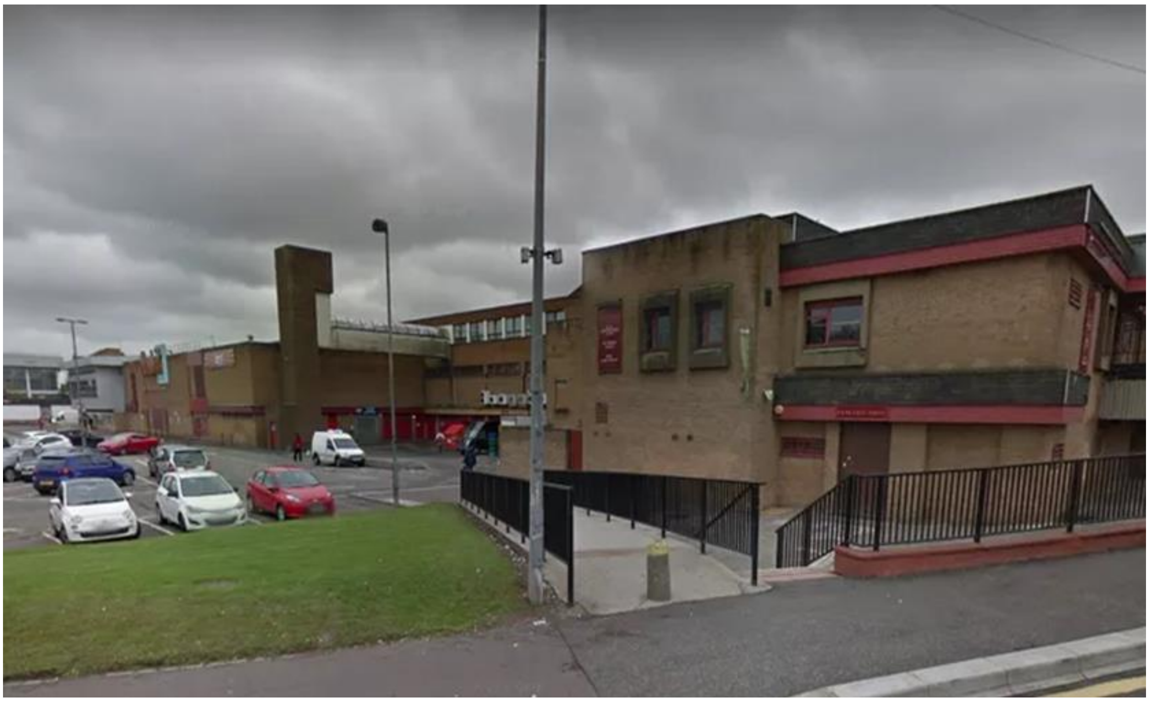

Figure 4.14 Shandwick Square Shopping Centre, Easterhouse, 2018
Source: https://www.glasgowlive.co.uk/news/glasgow-news/east-end-shopping-centre-renamed-14776448

Construction of the Shandwick Square Shopping Centre (later renamed The Lochs) started in 1972 and was finally completed in 1980. Yet by the 1990s, the shopping centre was recognised as a ‘problem space’ within the community, used as a congregational point for heroin dealing. By the 1990s, the population of Easterhouse was still only served by one cash machine and shopping provision within the area was widely deemed insufficient (Mitchell, 2010). Shopping provision never grew to reflect the size of the population and leisure facilities were largely absent until the 2000s (Paice, 2008). Many areas within Easterhouse were not within reach of a shop and some neighbourhoods (Lochend and Commonhead) lacked any local shopping provision (Garnham, 2018).

A number of early residents set up mobile shops in order to serve the basic needs of the vast and sprawling housing estate (Mitchell, 2010). Ice cream and grocery vans performed an essential service providing basic groceries, such as bread, milk and cigarettes. Such vans continue to constitute an important aspect of community life and basic service provision within the estate. Indeed, van culture within the estate became national news in the 1980s when gangland violence erupted over turf wars relating to ice cream vans which had been used to sell heroin in the estate (Mitchell, 2010).

The 2000s heralded some further development of local amenities and public services. In 2004, the Glasgow Fort shopping complex was constructed just a mile from the original Shandwick Centre. It was designed as a major retail, catering and leisure park which would provide easy motorway access to a huge range of high-end retailers, restaurants, gyms and leisure activities. The Fort initially proved a much-needed asset to the local economy, with 80 percent of retail jobs within the complex being taken by local residents (Mitchell, 2010). However, there have also been ongoing criticisms that the shops and facilities are unaffordable and out of reach for the majority of local people (Mitchell, 2010). The Fort's location makes it ideal for car owners to access but more difficult for those on foot or public transport who may have mobility issues or struggle to walk long distances. Thus, the Fort's construction has proved contentious.

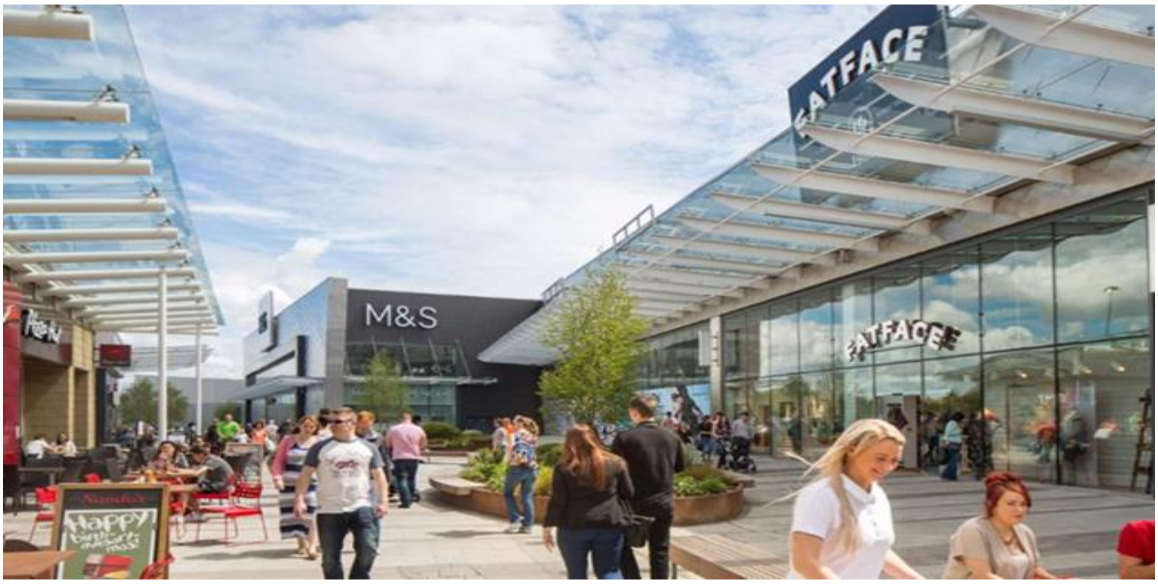

Figure 4.15 Glasgow Fort Shopping Centre, 2023
Source: https://www.visitscotland.com/info/shopping/glasgow-fort-shopping-centre-p994641

The central region of Easterhouse has also been subject to some major development over the past twenty years. The Bridge Arts Centre and John Wheatley College campus play host to a range of cultural, educational and leisure activities. Residents are able to access theatre, swimming, library and learning opportunities from within one central hub. Westerhouse Road in the centre is also home to Easterhouse's leisure centre and new 'super health centre', which houses a range of healthcare providers including dentists, GPs, nurses and physiotherapists. Just beyond Westerhouse Road, the Forestry Commission have developed the Bishop Loch and Seven Lochs Wetland Estuary making outstanding local natural resources more accessible for residents. Local rangers lead regular walks and work with local schoolchildren to become more active and experience Easterhouse's natural environment (Boyd, 2013).

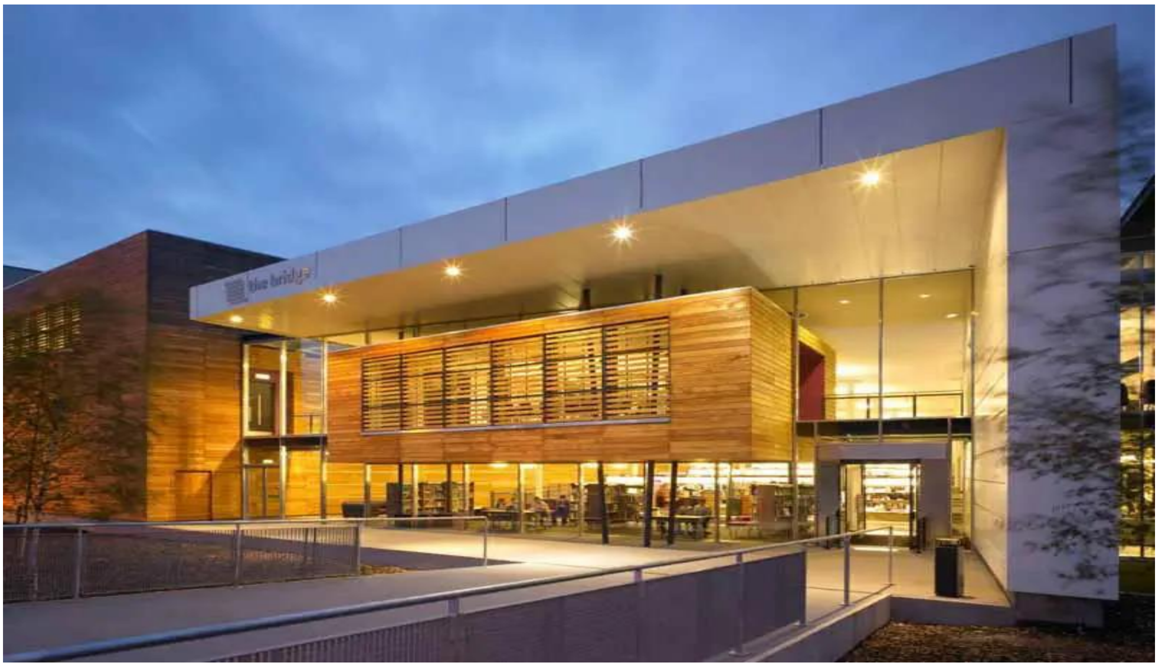

Figure 4.16 The Bridge community library and arts space
Source: https://www.glasgowarchitecture.co.uk/hub-wellhouse-community

It can be argued, then, that aspects of public and private service provision have improved dramatically in Easterhouse over the past twenty years. Amenities such as the Glasgow Fort have improved labour market opportunities, especially for younger people, and introduced new shopping and leisure opportunities. Similarly, the arrival of a super health centre and college campus mark clear developments towards addressing the health and educational inequalities so evident within the estate.

4.7 Conclusions – Easterhouse Today

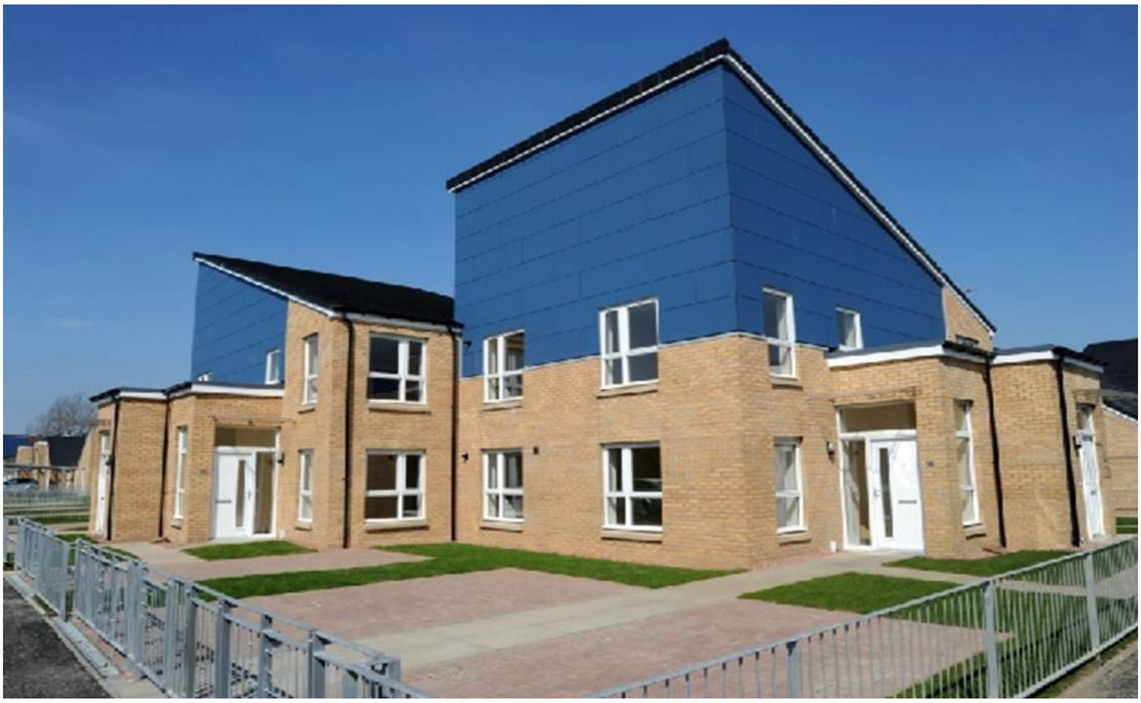

Figure 4.17 New build housing, Rogerfield, 2018

Source: https://www.glasgowlive.co.uk/news/glasgow-news/easterhouse-set-transformed-400m-project-11945940

Thus far, the chapter has shown evidence to suggest that the research population – older, female, long-term residents – continues to be negatively affected by the legacy of post-war planning and social engineering. Today, Easterhouse is still one of the most-deprived communities in Scotland, with eighteen out of twenty data zones ranking amongst the 10 percent most-deprived areas in Scotland (Understanding Glasgow, 2023).

The collective evidence suggests that socio-economic polarisation and the spatial divide of class geography in the city have continued to deepen as a result of historical allocations policies and residualisation, and cultures of violence and addiction which have become embedded due to geographical separateness and homogeneity of class structure. Social segregation means that people in estates like Easterhouse are '*a part of* but *apart from*' (Bisset, 2023) life in the rest of the city (McGarvey, 2017). The discussion in this chapter has shown that, in spite of massive physical renewal of housing and public spaces, Easterhouse today continues to be a deeply marginalised place where residents still experience notable disadvantage and marked health inequalities.

Most recently, in Greater Easterhouse, eighty residents lost their lives to Covid-19 between 1 March 2020 and 30 April 2021. Per head of population, Greater Easterhouse had a Covid-19 death rate 2.8 times higher than Scotland’s least-deprived communities, highlighting the ways in which neighbourhood effects have increased vulnerability and how gendered positioning of low-paid caring roles has placed women at the coalface of risk (Easterhouse Housing and Regeneration Alliance, 2021).

Yet, it is also important to balance the sobering realities of the neighbourhood’s enduring health and socio-economic inequalities with the positive dimensions of neighbourhood change which have taken place since the start of the research period. As indicated above, neighbourhood-based violence and crime related to drug addiction are declining in comparison to their peak in the 1980s and 1990s (Lymperopoulou & Bannister, 2022). Central housing investment and the efforts of CCHAs have also led to radical transformation of housing and the built environment over the past twenty years (Garnham, 2018).

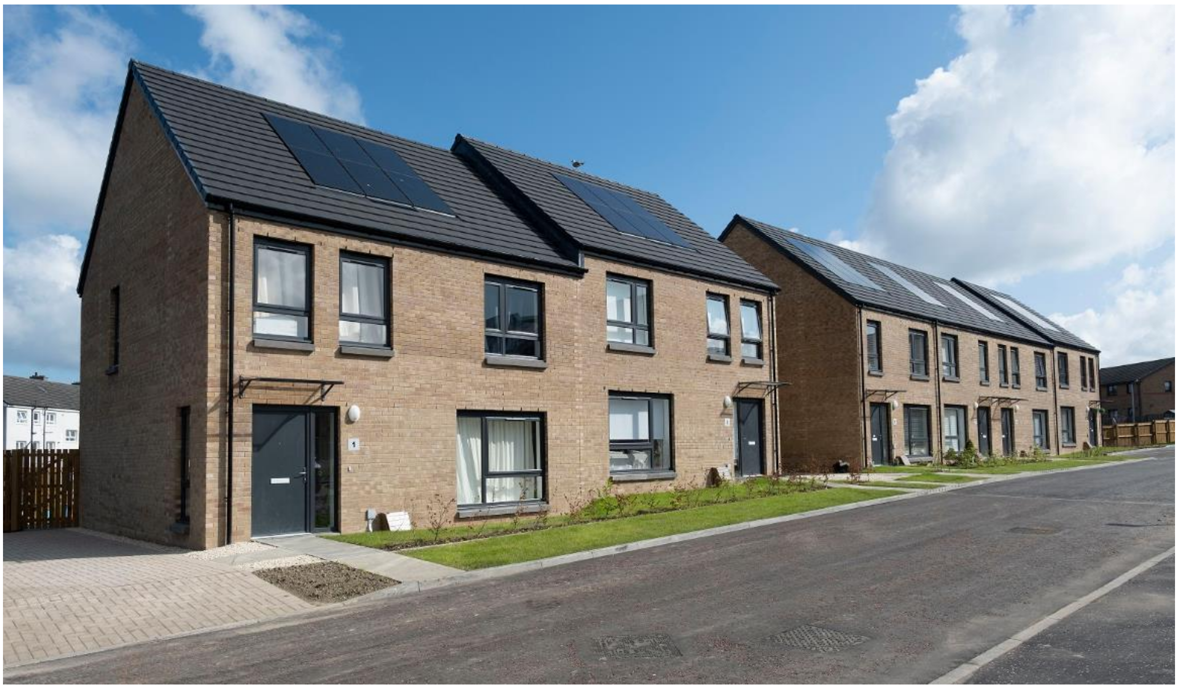

Figure 4.18 New social housing, Barlanark

Source: www.crudengroup.co.uk/construction/news/calvay-housing-association-delivers-much-needed-housing-barlanark-community

Housing associations have had an important role in empowering residents to gain greater control over neighbourhood development as have community-development approaches to addressing socio-economic issues (Scott, 1997). Easterhouse residents also benefit from a wider range of high-quality public services such as a college, arts centre and greenspace managed by the Forestry Commission. Similarly, the estate is now well served by shopping and leisure provision, notably the Glasgow Fort complex.

Economic conditions in Easterhouse would appear to have improved marginally, particularly within the outlying areas where private housing and diversification of tenure has attracted a wealthier demographic (Garnham, 2018). Some evidence suggests that women of the research population's generation may be less susceptible to 'deep poverty' than in earlier stages of life-course for a number of reasons. First, into later life, lone mothers are less likely to be responsible for the financial wellbeing of offspring. Second, older women may be eligible for private pensions, disability benefits and free public-travel passes, which ease the financial constraints apparent in earlier stages of the life-course (MacLean, 2003). The 'triple lock' in place since 2010 also ensures that the state pension stays in line with wage inflation (Cribb & O'Brien, 2022). Easterhouse has also experienced growth in financial services such as credit unions, welfare rights and income maximisation over the past twenty years. Increased availability of money advice projects likely positively contributes towards improved financial wellbeing (Hoskins et al., 2005).

It is reasonable to summarise that women's lives in Easterhouse have changed dramatically since the 1980s. Many of the worst effects of poverty and mass unemployment were being felt in the period around the 1980s and 1990s. Gradually, over time and thanks to regenerative efforts, the area has begun to improve. Yet, Easterhouse remains a deeply classed space, struggling at times to absorb the habitus of a new demographic of 'upper' working-class residents and workers in new public spaces. Economic and health inequalities persist and residents who have lived through the heroin epidemic and decades of poor housing carry the scars.

4.8 Introducing the Research Questions

The research questions addressed in the thesis emerged in response to the literature reviewed in the preceding chapters. The review process highlighted some important gaps in knowledge, which helped to shape the direction of the inquiry. Section 4.8 contextualises the research questions by situating them within existing literature.

Overarching research question:

To what extent have female social networks been important in enabling women who have been resident in Easterhouse since the 1980s, and have experience of lone motherhood, to ‘get by’ and ‘get on’ through the challenges of gender, place, poverty and motherhood?

Sub-questions:

What kinds of support do female networks provide (instrumental, informative, emotional, etc.)? What kinds of outcomes has this support allowed lone mothers to access that they might not have otherwise achieved?

Have female networks formed an important consideration in enabling lone mothers to ‘get by’ and ‘get on’ or have they been more likely to rely on other kinds of support networks or operate autonomously?

How important has the support of female contacts been perceived to be in comparison to individual traits such as hardiness, thriftiness, knowledge of systems or local knowledge?

Have women used female social networks as a mechanism to promote their own life chances or those of their children? Or are female networks more likely to be viewed as a mechanism for survival?

Easterhouse has experienced some of the highest rates of consistent area-based deprivation in Europe since the 1970s (Lloyd et al., 2017). Relatedly, the estate also holds the record for severe and persistent health inequalities in a city renowned for health inequality and excess mortality (Understanding Glasgow, 2023; Walsh et al., 2003). Chapter 4 has established the 1980s as a significant point in time, where socio-economic inequalities and substandard housing conditions within the estate had reached endemic levels. The same decade saw a tripling in lone-mother-headed households, numbers of which remained well above the Glasgow average throughout the ensuing forty-year period (see Table 4.1). Taken together, these factors have influenced the selection of Easterhouse as a research site and the 1980s as a key historical point of interest.

In spite of the clear challenges posed by place and time, to date, no research has examined the topic of lone motherhood in peripheral housing estates in Glasgow, nor sought to understand how inequalities connected to gender, place, poverty and lone motherhood may have impacted life-courses and trajectories into and throughout lone motherhood. Moreover, whilst literature has looked at the economic and emotional strategies lone mothers employ to 'get by' and 'get on', much less is known about the significance of female networks in UK contexts and the extent to which lone mothers draw on intrinsic resources.

Some studies contend that the concentration of lone mothers in peripheral estates may be a product of historical allocations policies which directed the most desperate and disadvantaged homeless families towards neighbourhoods such as Easterhouse (Brailey, 1986; Tulle-Winton, 1997). Others suggest that men's emasculation in the wake of post-industrial Glasgow contributed to male disconnect from family life and cultures of 'lone rangerism' (Craig, 2010; Hughes, 2004). Some cite domestic abuse as one amongst others for lone parenthood in Easterhouse (Rose & McAuley, 2019).

In spite of theories surrounding causation, and the impact of Glasgow's economic destabilisation on heterosexual relationships, very little is known about the real challenges faced by the women of the time as they navigated journeys through lone motherhood and the measures employed to navigate these challenges. Men's suggested absence from the family unit (Craig, 2010; Hughes, 2004) also raises important questions around the significance of female networks and their roles in supporting lone mothers. In this way, the research questions developed to address the ways in which gender and place impacted lone motherhood *and* the extent to which female networks became important for 'getting by' and 'getting on' in view of male absence.

The overarching research question sets out to establish the specific dimensions of challenge attached to gender, place, poverty and lone motherhood. Yet it is crucial to recognise that the challenges which have shaped life-course narratives are largely products of powerful economic, political and institutional forces. The challenges of gender, place, poverty and lone motherhood are built into the research questions and must be viewed as intersecting dimensions of challenge related to inequality. Subsequently, the research questions form the basis for the enquiry into the life-course narratives of the group of lone mothers in Easterhouse and the intersecting challenges connected to evolving societal conditions and their passage through place and time.

Chapter 5: Methods and Methodology

5.1 Introduction

Chapter 5 presents and justifies the research methods and explores the philosophical orientation of the study. The chosen methods of repeated semi-structured interviews and photo elicitation were employed as a means to understand the relationships between gender, place, poverty and lone motherhood and the extent to which female social networks have been impactful in supporting women to navigate challenge since the 1980s. This chapter is structured in two parts. The first explains the methodological approach of the study and steps involved in operationalising the research. The second explores positionality, the philosophical orientation of the study and the mechanisms used to mitigate against personal bias.

5.2 The Methodological Approach

The study took a mainly qualitative approach using semi-structured, repeated, life-course interviews conducted in participants' homes in Easterhouse and photo-elicitation techniques. Chapter 4 supplements the qualitative data with contextual statistical evidence extracted from census data to illustrate shifting neighbourhood demographics through the research period (see Table 4.1). The chosen methods were selected to reflect the emancipatory philosophical approach outlined in Section 5.3.1 and for their ability to capture life-course data which could be used to understand women's evolving circumstances through the research period from 1980 to 2021.

5.2.1 Rationale for Participant Selection

The participant group was made up of ten women whose ages ranged from 55 to 82 years (mean of 69). Nine participants identified as White Scottish, one as White English, five as Protestant, two as Catholic and two of unidentified faith and one adhering to a belief system rooted in nature. To meet the research aims, my recruitment criteria required that I engaged older women who had spent the majority of their adult life in Easterhouse and had experience of lone motherhood. Although short periods away during motherhood were permissible, participants must have resided mainly in Easterhouse through their adulthood and into later life. Recruitment criteria also required that women be able to articulate experiences and reflect upon past life-course events.

For reference, Chapter 6 presents a series of life-course biographies for each participant, which can be used to reference personal circumstances from birth through to the time of interviewing. The biographies chart important milestones in family, intimate relationship, housing/domestic and economic circumstances.

The study's temporal focus required that women had experience of living and mothering in Easterhouse in its periods of peak disadvantage in the 1980s and 1990s. This was based upon the aim of understanding how peak socio-economic inequalities and narratives of neighbourhood change, including the steep rise in lone-mother households, affected lone mothers' life-course trajectories in the estate at this time. My criteria asked only that the women had experienced *periods* of lone motherhood during their adult life-course.

Participants ranged considerably in age, health and occupation. The wide age range meant that there was some variation in the stage of the life-course in which participants experienced phases of neighbourhood change. For example, some of the oldest participants remembered moving to the estate in the early 1960s when indoor toilets, private bathrooms, fitted kitchens and verandas were deemed relatively luxurious. By contrast, younger participants overwhelmingly associated the Easterhouse of their youth in the 1970s and 1980s with extreme violence, addictions and area deprivation. The variation also meant that by 'later life', or time of interviewing, some participants were still engaged in full-time work and active in the kinship care of grandchildren, whilst some were more frail and elderly.

5.2.2 The Recruitment Process

The study initially aimed to recruit fifteen women. However, early drop-out and concerns around home visits in the immediate aftermath of the Covid-19 national lockdown meant that the cohort eventually amounted to ten participants. Recruitment happened in two stages. Three women were recruited for the study's pilot stage, which allowed for testing of the research questions to ensure that the data elicited met the requirements of the research aims and objectives and for necessary changes to be made. Pilot-phase data is included in the final thesis. The second stage of the research involved the other seven participants.

Recruitment took place in the months immediately following the Covid-19 lockdown of 2020/2021. After the lifting of restrictions in 2021, I arranged three visits to Glasgow to visit over twenty community groups in Easterhouse and present my research in efforts to engage with women who met the study criteria. The settings included housing associations, women's groups, church groups, craft cafes, exercise classes and community centres. I gave a short presentation of the proposed research and then spent time discussing the requirements of the study with interested women and sharing participant recruitment materials.

I was accompanied on these visits by my two young children, aged two and four. As a new lone mother, I simply had no option but to take them with me. I had imagined that their presence would hinder my presentation and engagement efforts. Happily, however, the children turned out to be an important draw for the participant group. When later asked about motivations to engage with the study, most participants cited seeing me with my children as the main factor which attracted them. Whilst outsiders, especially academics, might be regarded with suspicion, another working-class lone mum trying to improve her prospects was regarded as a worthwhile cause with which to get involved.

However, I note that many other women who matched the research criteria declined to take part, citing a range of reasons including scepticism around agencies and academia, worries about benefits and housing being affected, concerns about jeopardising family relationships through the sharing of personal stories and concerns about risk of exposure to Covid-19.

5.2.3 The Life-Course Approach

The life-course element of the research design was an essential methodological dimension which set the research apart from any existing study of working-class women's lives in Scotland, to my knowledge. The focus upon older women's perspectives of lone motherhood over time yielded important new knowledge around the evolution of lone mothers' roles and responsibilities in deprived settings. Within the literature, lone motherhood is most often studied during periods of active childrearing (Moore, 1989).

Life-course perspectives draw upon biographical experiences and key principles of historical time, place, social contexts of transitions, timing and linked or independent lives (Holstein & Minkler, 2007). In this way, the life-course approach was a good fit for the research, which sought to understand how the passage of time and shifting local, national and global trends affected women's trajectories. Examination of each participant's whole adult life-course was an ambitious methodological device which necessitated much planning to ensure that data reflected the evolving circumstances of women's lives.

Retrospective interviewing meant that recollections were often hazy or jumped abruptly between various stages in the life-course, making it sometimes difficult to interpret where they belonged on the historical timeline. The emotive nature of much of the material and the women often relaying traumatic events for the first time meant that care had to be taken to give due space and recognition. Pressing for specific years or dates would have been both impractical and insensitive in many instances. This created some challenges for a study which aimed to contextualise personal accounts within historical and political paradigms. The process required a skilled approach to extending authentic recognition of supressed trauma and curiosity about the context of these events.

The participant biographies in Chapter 6 therefore represent my attempt to piece together the events of participant life-courses and place them within their historical context. The biographies are important tools within the thesis for understanding both the broad sequence of events in participants' lives and the points in time when these events were taking place. Despite these challenges of matching life events with temporal periods, however, the life-history orientation of the study and the immersive nature of repeated interviews in women's own home environments yielded an exceptionally rich data set which successfully met the study's aims of capturing the evolving experience of lone motherhood over time and the history of lone mothers' socio-economic disadvantage in Easterhouse since the 1980s.

5.2.4 Rationale for Semi-Structured Interviews

From the planning stages, it was clear that the research methods would need to be grounded in qualitative inquiry. Quantitative methods were unsuitable for understanding the nuance, texture and depth of life histories and the holistic complexities of lone mothers' journeys through time and place (Barnes, 1992). Galetta & Cross (2013) note semi-structured interviews as research methods which allow for the possibility of directive enquiry, whilst also leaving space for new meanings and definitions to emerge. In this respect, the chosen method of semi-structured interviews repeated over a period of months performed well, eliciting both rich and powerful new knowledge relating to the questions and a number of unexpected findings.

The primary reason for selecting semi-structured interviews lay in the reality that, since little was already known about lone motherhood in Easterhouse, it would be important to be guided by the research questions *and* be open to the possibility that there may be unexpected elements of women's life-course narratives in Easterhouse which might fall beyond the parameters of the questions. Consequently, the semi-structured interviews allowed the research to be both directive and significantly participant-led. Moreover, the repetition of interviews allowed for the building up of a rounded understanding of each woman's life-course experiences and also the development of trust and rapport between interviewer and interviewee.

Methods such as focus groups were rejected on the basis that the research questions held a likelihood of eliciting sensitive and traumatic material. I also suspected that women would share less candidly within a group context where they were likely to recognise members of their own community. Surveys also held much less potential for the sharing of complex and sensitive data and may have excluded women with lower literacy.

Each interview was digitally recorded. The thematic agenda for each of the interviews was set by the interview topic guide (see Appendix 1), which I had produced during the planning stage to aid the interview process. The first edition of the guide was structured in a format which examined three stages of adult life-course: childrearing, children's teenage years and after children had reached adulthood. However, it became quickly apparent that the format was not capturing the required range of data. Two issues arose. First, my interview questions were based on the stages of mothering. Yet, participants explained that examining life-course in relation to stages of parenthood was not always relatable for them. During children's teenage years, for instance, many were retraining in new careers, forging new networks or starting new relationships. Stages of child development were not necessarily the defining features of *their* life-courses. Second, it was apparent that participants found spending time examining specific temporal periods of life-course challenging. Instead, most adopted a linear approach to narration which took the interview on a journey on how specific aspects of experience developed through life-course.

These discoveries necessitated a new approach to data collection. In the second phase of interviewing, I developed a revised topic guide which used themes from the research questions to frame each interview session and examine women's experiences of these themes through early, mid and later adult life-course. Thus, the first interview in each set focussed on place and gender, the second on the context of participants' experiences of poverty and female networks during adult life-course, and the third on questions relating to experiences of lone mothering and circumstances in later life/present day.

An essential aspect of the design related to interviewing the women at home. I visited the women three or four times in their homes and in total spent around eight hours with each. Borbasi et al. (2002) suggest that interviewing at home fosters an interplay of trust, rapport and self-disclosure. In the first instance, understanding living conditions through immersing myself in women's home environments was a central learning method. Second, it was essential that sensitive narratives be shared face to face. Third, spending time with participants at home allowed me to gain a broad insight into the rhythms, habits and relationships which punctuated participants' later lives. So, the research setting became an element of the methodology which allowed me to collect 'thick' data about the past and gain an insight into later-life and current circumstances.

5.2.5 Rationale for Photo Elicitation

Photo elicitation was chosen as a technique to promote recall of specific temporal periods in Easterhouse and as a means to anchor life-course memories to specific historical junctures. These methods have been recognised as underutilised as a means to understand the meanings people attach to place and their relationships with space (Stedman et al., 2014). During the pilot phase, I developed three flipbooks containing hard-copy sets of twenty historical photographs relating to three categories: housing and the built environment; amenities such as shopping, schools, health services and transport; and women and families in Easterhouse (see Appendix 2). The photo sets were designed to reflect the multifaceted and evolving nature of the neighbourhood and act as an *aide memoire* for different phases of the life-course. However, the alteration of the interview structure after the pilot phase also necessitated a redesign of the photo books into thematic strands relating to gender, place, poverty and lone motherhood.

Over the course of the fieldwork, I discovered that, rather than devoting dedicated time to the photo-elicitation process, flipbooks worked best when women were left to hold them as they talked. Often, during spaces in the interview, participants would settle upon an image which reminded them of an event, person or time and this would start a new narrative. Ultimately, photo elicitation yielded mixed results. Some women engaged well with the books and found their presence useful and stimulating, whilst others had less interest and preferred instead to focus upon personal unprompted recollection. Two showed very limited interest in engagement with visual prompts.

A final issue related to the tendency of some participants to take the images as a literal instruction to talk about the depicted image. In a few instances, a pictures of buses from the 1980s, which was supposed to aid memories around transport and travel to and from the estate, led participants to talk about buses. It was important for me to be explicit at the start of each interview about the purpose of the photos as a mechanism to aid memory of themes.

5.2.6 Ethical Considerations

The College of Social Studies ethics committee approved my proposals for participant recruitment material, information guide, topic guide, risk assessment and the proposed research methods in August 2021. On account of the recent lifting of Covid-19 lockdown measures, I was required to ensure that my presence within women’s homes did not present a significant health and safety risk. This was achieved through social distancing, ensuring that I wore a mask, limited touching of surfaces and windows being kept open prior to, during and after my visits.

An important ethical consideration related to the elicitation of traumatic material and the measures which I could put in place to minimise risk of distress to participants. Within the first few interviews it became clear that the interview questions were invoking traumatic narratives. Often these related to events such as rape, sex work, physical abuse, death and severe physical harm. The interviews were often the first time the women had narrated these events.

One of the biggest challenges was balancing the need to give due weight to the gravity of the women’s experiences with keeping the interview moving and exploring the full research agenda. Participants often needed time after disclosing traumatic events to explain the detail and impact of these. As a researcher and a mental health/suicide prevention practitioner, it was important for me to create the right balance of empathy and curiosity. I was able to draw upon my professional experience to sensitively pace interviews and build relationships of trust with the women, which I believe strongly contributed to the rich and candid data provided. After interviews, participants were provided with contacts for a range of support agencies with which they could engage and helplines to connect to immediate mental health support. However, many explained that they found the interview process of having their narratives listened to, believed and used as a historical record deeply cathartic. Most expressed no wish to seek further support. However, I supported two women to access details for counselling services relating to historical abuse.

Every effort has been made to respect the anonymity of the participants. The small scale meant that although all participants have been anonymised as thoroughly as possible, some of the details of their stories may make them recognisable to those with local knowledge. Specific details which could be disclosive have been changed to aid anonymisation. During interviewing, several women shared contentious accounts of local events, such as abuse within institutional settings, which they expressly asked not to be included.

A final issue regarding research ethics relates to the methods of repeated semi-structured interviews. Qualitative longitudinal research (QLR), which draws upon repeated interviewing techniques, has been observed to possess rich potential for building of reciprocal relationships of trust between participants and researchers. These may allow for deeper insights into lived experience of socio-economic disadvantage (Treanor et al., 2021) and understanding complex issues of change over time (Mahony, 2020). Although, the PhD research was largely rooted in retrospective reflection rather than tracking ongoing change some clear overlap exists between ethical dilemmas which can arise for QL researchers and those concerned with repeated engagement to retrospectively analyse effects of change over time.

Treanor (2018) highlights ethical dilemmas relating to privilege and responsibility for interviewers who become privy to deep, often previously undisclosed, knowledge of participant’s lives through this type of repetitive inter-personal engagement. This issue is drawn into focus by McGarvey’s (2024) commentary on tendency towards ‘over disclosure’ for people experiencing effects of trauma caused by structural inequality. McGarvey (2024) flags ethical responsibilities towards populations desperate to have voices heard and potentially conditioned towards ‘pleasing’ those who provide platforms for lived experience. McGarvey’s (2024) commentary also suggests a need for rigorous and regular interrogation of whether participants become inclined, with growing familiarity, to share biased or potentially regrettable self- narratives. With these ethical pitfalls in mind, trauma- aware research practice must consider the extent to which the publication of research exploring themes of trauma through establishment of relationships of trust, may be considered exploitative and ensure measures to mitigate against further re-traumatisation (McGarvey 2024; Treanor et al, 2021).

As noted above, the PhD research resulted in several disclosures made 'off the record' which were not shared on participants' request to respect confidentiality. However, it is noteworthy that the depth of relationships built with participants did sometimes result in the sharing of accounts which either fell outside the remit of the research questions or held potential for negative consequences if publicly shared. Additionally, as Treanor et al. (2021) highlight in recommendations towards approaching QLR, research presentation involved a rigorous process of 'stripping back' of disclosive data which may jeopardise participant anonymity. Taken together, these are important considerations for future researchers in deprived settings as we strive to empower and minimise future harm to marginalised groups.

A final consideration relates to the parameters required to maintain sufficient distance, objectivity, and self-care as a repeated interviewer with privileged knowledge of participant life courses. A crucial aspect of the research design lay in embedding clear expectations into the process of informed consent. Explicit guidelines on time commitment and frequency of interviews, parameters of confidentiality and clarification of the scope of my capacities to support participants were all agreed in initial consultations. Initial conversations included discussion of 'endings', my commitment to help participants make initial contact with a range of support resources should they be required and future opportunities for participants to engage with the findings through planned participatory events in Easterhouse. By adopting an 'ethically mindful' approach to the potential difficulties raised by my position and growing connection to the research population, I was able to mitigate against over reliance and unsustainable/inappropriate future relationships. My prior industry experience of working within mental health services formed a crucial asset in supporting me to assess how to establish spaces where women felt safe to share of themselves and manage clear boundaries around the scope and timescale of my role as researcher.

5.2.7 Fieldwork Notes and Reflexive Journal

I supplemented the digitally recorded interviews with fieldnotes (Appendix 3) and a reflexive journal (Appendix 4). Fieldnotes were written during interviews, including my thoughts on obvious disconnects between information being relayed and what I had been told in previous interviews, participants' outward presentation, issues with family which I observed, and thoughts about participants' neighbourhood and home environments. The women often asked questions about what I was writing and used my observations as springboards for deeper conversations around the questions from topic guides. The notes were an 'open book' of thoughts, which I often read through with participants during the recorded interviews. In this respect they were a public manifestation of my developing analysis of the research material and a tool for both data collection and strengthening aspects of the research where I wished to gain further insight or explanation.

Conversely, the written reflexive journal was my private methodology, invisible to participants, for rigour and reflexivity. Its purpose was mainly to reflect upon my feelings about issues that had been raised during interviews and to reflect upon and separate my personal assumptions about interview material from the actual information shared. Entries to the journal were usually made immediately after interviews, as I sat in my car. The journal became an important tool which allowed me to reflect upon my own positionality and to step back from my own quite significant involvement in the research setting and subject. The use of the journal as a tool to mitigate against personal bias will be discussed in full in Section 5.3.2. However, over the course of the fieldwork, I found that the journal also became an invaluable tool for unloading some traumatic memories and feelings of my own elicited by the interviews.

5.2.8 Data Analysis

An important aspect of the study lay in the transcription and presentation of interview material in the women's own vernacular. A key facet of the research design was to elicit authentic accounts of the life-course. The words of rarely heard oppressed women are deeply loaded politically. So colonised are working-class Scots that we often regard our language as a form of slang. During initial interviewing, most participants would unconsciously attempt to 'speak properly' for the first five minutes before reverting to their own natural way of speaking. The devaluation of working-class Scots language is part of the wider system of class subjugation which contributed strongly towards the culture of silence within working-class communities such as Easterhouse (Craig, 2010).

There is an important message here for academia. For too long the everyday language of working-class Scots, particularly Glaswegian, has been omitted or standardised within academic literature. Yet, this dumbs down the capacity of international audiences to appreciate the subtleties of regional dialects and contributes to the phenomenon of the ‘cultural cringe’, where Scottish working-class voices are portrayed as part of a ‘low culture’. In fact, the words of the women in my study are colourful, descriptive and, often against all odds, funny. It would have been unthinkable for me to sanitise the language by translating the vernacular into either formal English or standardised Scots: the quotes presented in the findings chapters are the bones of this thesis.

Qualitative data analysis software, NVivo 9, was used for the storage and management of all interview material and the coding and related data analysis. Latent thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was used to interpret the women’s life-course transcripts in relation to the research themes and the broader social context relating to local, national and global socio-economic paradigms. The iterative process of analysis began with familiarising myself with the research transcripts and initiating the process of line-by-line coding. The first stage of the coding began by organising the data into key themes implicit within the research questions: gender, poverty, place, lone motherhood and networks. The next stage involved refining the coded material subsections within these themes to inform the structure of the findings and discussion chapters. The plausibility and trustworthiness of the data (Patton, 2002) was ensured through the checking of initial coding by supervisors, reference to fieldnotes and reflexive journal and the analysis of thick description (Ledwith, 2005).

The selection of the research themes as a mechanism for organising the coding and management of data was made on the basis of their centrality to addressing the overarching research question. I was aware that my overarching question was ambitious in its efforts to capture several aspects of women’s lived experience and in its mission to understand the connection between stages in life-course and the passage of time. For this reason, I felt from the outset that the most straightforward approach to organising and presenting the data would be to draw upon this thematic structure as a device to anchor the findings to the research question.

The coded material regarding women’s network engagement was organised into three nodes: composition, functions and products. These categories were analysed against the theoretical frameworks set out in Sections 3.9.1 to 3.9.3 to directly address the aims of the research questions. The results of this stage of analysis were used to organise the final conclusions.

Where women’s own words are presented within the thesis, quotes have been selected on the basis of their relevance to the findings of the analysed data, and in an effort to illustrate the range of experiences. In some instances, examples of contradictory or ambivalent accounts are used. One notable example within the study is Janice, who is from England, as the study outlier. She had several distinct differences in life-course trajectory, which are used as a comparator against the majority, who belong to Easterhouse.

5.3 Positionality – A Working-Class Feminist Perspective

It is inevitable that social science researchers bring some elements of assumption, bias and personal interpretation to their research practice. The challenge of managing the potential for bias is in finding mechanisms to measure self-narratives against the wider research context through reflexivity. During the PhD, I have given much consideration to my own experience, which I bring to the inquiry, mainly as a result of the characteristics I share with the research cohort.

In Chapter 1, I shared elements of my personal connection to the research topic, which connect me to the women in this study. The purpose was to make plain my engagement with the subject and illustrate the ways in which my personal history has influenced my philosophical approach. I stress that the characteristics I share with participants fall within a continuum of similarity, difference and opposition (Chang, 2013). Similarities allow me to deeply relate, yet I also recognise that I do not fully belong to Easterhouse, nor to the era of my participants. The duality of similarity and difference allows for objectivity.

One entry from my reflexive journal notes a list of characteristics which link me to the women in my study. Sharing these may help the reader understand something of how my life experiences have brought me to this piece of work and shaped the inquiry. As we move through the chapters of this thesis it will become clear that many of the statements below apply equally to participants and their children. After reading this list, the reader will perhaps better understand the ‘personal politics’ of the research and my responsibility for transparency around how who I am influences my interest and expert knowledge in the field (Table 5.1).

Table 5.1 Characteristics that link me to the study participants

My family lived in Greater Easterhouse in the 1970s.
I grew up fatherless due to bereavement.
I spent my childhood in a deprived council housing estate.
My family members suffered chaotic lives, which I connect to neighbourhood effects.
I am a first-generation graduate from a low-income, lone-mother household.
I worked as a community worker in Easterhouse and the wider East End of Glasgow for over fifteen years.
I lived in a deprived area of Glasgow’s East End when I first started my PhD.
I have experienced domestic abuse.
I have been homeless.
I became a lone mother to a small baby and a toddler during the Covid-19 pandemic.
I have learned what it means to be ‘The One’ (see Chapter 7) through various stages of my children’s development.
I chose to relocate to a place where I would have female network support.
I provide reciprocal care to my mother in later life.
I have ‘got by’ for the duration of my PhD on a low income.
I have transcended many of the structures of my disadvantage.
I chose to ‘get on’ in a way that improves my options *and* promotes social justice.

My work is inflected with elements of auto-ethnography, described by Boylorn & Orbe (2014, p.4) as ‘the bridge between cultural curiosities and personal lived experience’. Yet, although elements of the discussion draw on personal reflection from fieldnotes and professional experience, the analysis is also influenced by my partial insider status but is always led by the words of my participants. As well as my personal interest in the topic, the research questions are also products of my literature reviews and identification of significant gaps in the knowledge. I did not set out to write a memoir of lone motherhood. Instead, pregnancy, relationship breakdown, the global pandemic, transition into lone motherhood, homelessness and relocation all happened during the second year of my studies.

5.3.1 The Philosophical Approach – Emancipatory-Feminist Pedagogy

This study borrows from feminist-autobiographical paradigms of ‘the personal as political’ (Letherby, 2014). To understand women’s intersecting experiences of gender, poverty, place and lone motherhood, the study is explicitly feminist. The philosophical foundations are based upon the values of emancipation inherent to Freirean-feminist pedagogy (Ledwith, 2016), and the recognition that power structures within society disempower both women and men and shape their relational patterns. Within the literature, there has been some interest in the extent to which politically motivated research that sides with oppressed groups can maintain its objectivity and mitigate against bias (Humphries, 2017). My study is based on the principles that debates which neglect the perspectives of oppressed groups create an imbalanced scientific landscape, and that the inclusion of working-class voices in the poverty-research landscape is an important development in the quest to decolonise academia and promote a fairer society. A full discussion of ‘othering’ and the effects of oppressions associated with class, gender, lone motherhood and residency in Easterhouse is found in Chapter 2. It is essential to recognise that the research population’s social class and related structural oppression is centrally connected to their disadvantage.

The philosophy of Freirean pedagogy centres around consciousness-raising and the practice of working with excluded groups to understand how their experiences relate to the power dynamics inherent in society and to empower these groups to challenge these structures through collective action (Freire & Ramos, 2017). Freirean pedagogy informs most modern understandings of community-development practice and is concerned with supporting oppressed groups to understand structural layers of disadvantage and find opportunities for counternarratives of social change. These ideas around the transformational potential of research are important ingredients of the study. In addition, many of the concepts discussed in chapters 10 and 11, such as hegemony, culture of silence and creating counternarratives, are rooted in the emancipatory approach of the research.

As a community education practitioner, I have approached the study understanding that the process of dialogue around experiences of oppression held potential for consciousness-raising. Whilst not the overt intent of the study, conversations around challenges relating to age, gender, neighbourhoods of deprivation and lone motherhood are by definition conversations about navigating forms of oppression. This phenomenon is exemplified by Lister (2004), who notes that simply naming the fact that one has been affected by lifelong poverty can bring about elements of catharsis. This process was evident throughout the inquiry and illustrated by women naming domestic abuse for the first time and making connections between stigmatising rhetoric towards lone mothers and their experiences of discrimination from institutions.

Despite lone motherhood being a topic of major political debate throughout the research period, the literature review uncovered a dearth of literature relating to lone mothers' experiences in Glasgow and Scotland. The findings in this thesis highlight that low-income lone mothers, particularly those from stigmatised housing estates, are a relatively hidden population whose voices are not evident within the literature. An important part of my philosophical approach lay in addressing the 'cultures of silence' (Freire, 2000) which existed in Easterhouse and in promoting critical consciousness-raising though women's own exploration of the challenges caused by structural oppression.

Therefore, the research has sought to centre the voices of the participants in order that they tell their own stories and learn to value their own knowledge. I conclude that Freirean pedagogy and feminism are symbiotic traditions which ultimately enrich each other in their missions to challenge power imbalance and social injustice in all capacities. Whilst recognising my academic privilege, I also recognise my oppressed identity. It is in the synthesis of these identities that I am able to learn with, and from, my research cohort as we jointly question our relationships with structures of power. I hope, too, that the auto-ethnographic inflections of the thesis may encourage future working-class academics who strive towards Gramsci's conception of the 'organic intellectual' – those who draw upon obscured perspectives of folk wisdom to challenge the dominant ideologies of the political sphere and represent excluded groups (Gramsci, 1971).

5.3.2 Managing Bias

In qualitative research, bias is the term most often used to denote any factor which influences or flavours the results of a study (Polit & Beck, 2014). The perspectives and experiences which researchers bring to their work inevitably require that their orientation towards the research be clearly expressed. Consequently, many qualitative researchers agree that the data must be demonstrably rigorous and trustworthy (Galdas, 2017).

As a researcher with close connection to the topic, it is important that I am explicit about the frameworks upon which I have drawn, to ensure that my work adequately separates personal opinion from new knowledge. The personal statement in Chapter 1 and Table 5.1 are intended as a foundation for the trustworthiness of the thesis, a way to show that I am both transparent about my connection and committed to delivering a measured representation of the results, and a mechanism to highlight how my personal experience has influenced my philosophical position. The presence of this personal material adds resonance and engagement to the topic and ensures that the research is ‘value explicit’ instead of ‘value free’ (Hadley, 2021).

I drew on a range of informal academic tools to ensure that the data remained rigorous and objective throughout the fieldwork, analysis and write-up stages. First, the fieldwork pilot allowed me to ensure that research questions were not unnecessarily leading or suggestive. After the first interview, I realised that at least three questions were confusing or leading and tailored their wording accordingly into a more neutral presentation. I also learned to be selective around the aspects of personal information shared with participants. Though most participants understood my lone-mother status during recruitment because of the presence of my children, I was careful to limit personal information about myself until after interviewing was complete. This technique was employed to minimise the extent to which my position of power as an academic in older working-class women’s homes would lead the content of the interviews.

Second, during data analysis, using fieldnotes and a reflexive journal, I reflected that my observations did have a place within the thesis, for example, with regards to my observations of the neighbourhood and women’s homes. I also used the journal to consider personal perspectives which did not belong within the thesis. One example relates to domestic abuse. The extent and severity of the women’s domestic abuse was unexpected. As a survivor, these accounts challenged my own emotional health during their recounting and resulted in long entries around gender and cultures of domestic abuse in Glasgow. Reading my journal notes retrospectively formed an important mechanism for separating my experiences from those of the women in the research. Similarly, the continuous loop of conversation and feedback with supervisors each month formed a crucial space for exploring insights and separating fact from conjecture.

Finally, during the write-up, I referred frequently to the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP, 2018) qualitative checklist, with its emphasis upon managing bias and building in research integrity to the structure of the results, discussion and conclusions.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the orientation and operationalisation of the research design, by examining the practical tasks involved in the PhD research project and exploring elements of my own personal auto-ethnography and its implications for the philosophical approach of the study. The thesis now moves to present the participant biographies.

Chapter 6: Participant Life-Course Biographies

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents schematic biographies for each of the research participants, comprising a short overview of key life events relevant to lone motherhood and a chronological timeline. The timeline aims to give a sense of participants' personal circumstances across the adult life-course. These circumstances are organised under four thematic headings implicit within the research questions: family, intimate relationship, housing/domestic and economic circumstances. A category of other key events is used to include any further significant events.

A key purpose of the biographies is to allow the experience of each woman to be understood in the context of the historical period when it occurred and within the wider context of their lives as a whole. Life-course representation provides an especially important insight into the experiences of older women as it places their lived experience within the wider holistic context of personal, historical, familial and economic paradigms.

Each participant's life-course biography is compiled from information provided during the semi-structured interviewing process, the nature of which meant that some fluidity existed surrounding the areas of life-course experience upon which women chose to focus. In addition, some lines of questioning held potential for eliciting trauma responses, which made some areas of life-course difficult or impossible to discuss. These combined factors meant that participants sometimes placed much emphasis on particular aspects of life experience whilst others may be missing or unclear. The events noted within the biographies are based purely upon participants' recollections of events and have not been verified with participants or any other involved parties.

6.2 Schematic Biography for Brenda

Brenda was in her late sixties at the time of interviewing. She was born in a relatively deprived area in the East End of Glasgow and moved to Easterhouse in 1978. A number of key events at different points of life-course emerged as significant in the interview discussions, in particular:

- a history of relationships that were controlling physically and/or economically and which were emotionally abusive
- a history of utilising risky strategies such as shoplifting and transactional sex work to navigate poverty
- several episodes of homelessness linked to domestic abuse.

Table 6.1 Biography of Brenda

Timeline	Family Circumstances	Nature of Intimate Relationships	Housing and Domestic Circumstances	Economic Circumstances	Other Key Events
1952	Born in relatively deprived inner-city region in East End of Glasgow.				
1978	Child One born.	Meets Partner One. Marries Partner One.	Moves to Partner One's social rental tenancy in Easterhouse.	Income derived from Partner One's wages as a joiner and some benefits. Receives sporadic weekly allowance from partner to pay bills and buy food, often struggling to 'get by', not being able to adequately clothe or feed herself, frequently pawning possessions and shoplifting groceries.	

Timeline	Family Circumstances	Nature of Intimate Relationships	Housing and Domestic Circumstances	Economic Circumstances	Other Key Events
1980		Partner One charged with Brenda's attempted murder and subsequently acquitted after running Brenda over in his car.			
1983	Child Two born.		Moves to two-bedroom social rental flat in Easterhouse. Tenancy in Partner One's name.		
1984			Short stay in homelessness unit due to domestic abuse. Returns to flat with children after a month.		Secret termination of pregnancy.

Timeline	Family Circumstances	Nature of Intimate Relationships	Housing and Domestic Circumstances	Economic Circumstances	Other Key Events
1985	Becomes lone mother for the first time.	Partner One dies in unknown circumstances.		Brenda's mother begins to refuse to lend her money insisting that she must 'stand on her own two feet'. Between 1985 and 1990 Brenda works numerous part-time jobs including shop assistant, bar work and cleaning roles. Also regularly receives 'cash in hand' from selling possessions at car-boot sales, shoplifts and carries out transactional sex work from her home. Claims benefits whilst also engaging in both 'declared' and 'undeclared' part-time work.	
1987			Brenda's niece, fifteen years her junior, moves into Brenda's flat and provides intensive childcare.		
1989		Relationship with Partner Two begins.			

Timeline	Family Circumstances	Nature of Intimate Relationships	Housing and Domestic Circumstances	Economic Circumstances	Other Key Events
1990	Child Three born.	Partner Two becomes progressively more emotionally, physically and financially controlling after birth of Child Three.	Niece moves out of Brenda’s tenancy in Easterhouse.		
1995			The family move to a three-bedroom private rental house in a relatively deprived area in the East End of Glasgow.		
1997			Child One leaves home.		

Timeline	Family Circumstances	Nature of Intimate Relationships	Housing and Domestic Circumstances	Economic Circumstances	Other Key Events
2000	Becomes lone mother for the second time.		Brenda and her three children spend eighteen months in a homelessness unit following Partner Two's physical abuse. Partner Two threatens to have Brenda and her children charged with assault after they defend themselves. Police advise Brenda to go to homelessness unit to avoid prosecution.	Income mainly from social security benefits.	
2002			Secures tenancy of three-bedroom social rental flat in Easterhouse.	Begins to work various part-time jobs and claims benefits. Resumes cash-in-hand work from car-boot sales.	
2004			Child Two leaves home.		
2005					Spends a year medically withdrawing from temazepam.

Timeline	Family Circumstances	Nature of Intimate Relationships	Housing and Domestic Circumstances	Economic Circumstances	Other Key Events
2010		Meets Partner Three.	Moves into Partner Three's owned three-bedroom house in relatively less deprived suburb of Easterhouse.		Begins to experience agoraphobia and struggles to leave her home.
2018			Child Three leaves home.	Main income is state pension.	Joins local women's support group and gains confidence leaving her home and going on buses.
2020	Becomes sole guardian to grandchild due to her own child's alcoholism.		Grandchild comes to live with Brenda and Partner Three.		

6.3 Schematic Biography for Mary

Mary was in her mid fifties at the time of the interviewing. She was born in England and moved to Easterhouse in her first year. After getting married, Mary left her family home in Easterhouse and moved to a socially rented flat in the neighbourhood. Since the breakdown of her marriage, Mary has lived as a lone parent with her children in the same flat within an outlying neighbourhood in Easterhouse. Mary reports deliberately attempting to minimise social networks as a means to protect her children from negative neighbourhood effects and potential abuse. A number of key events at different points in her life-course emerged as significant:

- experience of sexual violence and assault
- traumatic experiences of alcoholism and domestic abuse in her childhood home
- an abusive marriage
- severe and enduring mental health issues including several suicide attempts.

Table 6.2 Biography for Mary

Timeline	**Family Circumstances**	**Nature of Intimate Relationships**	**Housing/Domestic Circumstances**	**Economic Circumstances**	**Other Key Events**
1967	Born in north of England.				
1968	Moves to Easterhouse with parents.				
1988		Gets married.	Mary and husband move to two-bedroom social rental flat within Easterhouse.	Main income is husband's wages from employment in local factory. He is an alcoholic and she receives very little money for shopping and household bills in the early marriage. Mary is unaware of her husband's income and the amount she receives depends on the extent to which her husband has been drinking.	

Timeline	Family Circumstances	Nature of Intimate Relationships	Housing/Domestic Circumstances	Economic Circumstances	Other Key Events
1988	Child One born.	Domestic abuse and extra-marital affairs escalate immediately after birth.			
1990	Child Two born.				
1992	Period of lone motherhood begins.	Leaves husband after severe episode of physical abuse.	Moves back into her childhood home in Easterhouse with parents. The family are severely overcrowded and Mary's father is an alcoholic who physically and emotionally abuses her mother.	Claims social security benefits for the first time and works several simultaneous part-time jobs including cleaner, hairdresser, waitress and shop assistant. This pattern of working several jobs continues until 1997. Waitressing involves Mary's mother looking after children through the night until Mary returns at 5am. Her mother then leaves to start a cleaning shift at 6am.	

Timeline	Family Circumstances	Nature of Intimate Relationships	Housing/Domestic Circumstances	Economic Circumstances	Other Key Events
1993			Receives tenancy of three-bedroom socially rented flat in Easterhouse and continues to live there with Child Two to present day.		
1997			Mary's children live with grandparents in Easterhouse during Mary's hospital admission.	Claims disability benefits on the basis of mental health status.	Suicide attempt resulting in prolonged hospital admission.
2000					Further suicide attempt.
2006			Child One leaves home to pursue degree at prestigious English university.	Social security benefits continue to be the family's main source of income.	

Timeline	Family Circumstances	Nature of Intimate Relationships	Housing/Domestic Circumstances	Economic Circumstances	Other Key Events
2007					Experiences a severe mental health crisis which she attributes to one child leaving home and the other becoming more independent. Reports 'finally not having to hold it together anymore'. Reports that during the time her children were growing up she was scared to disclose her mental health symptoms for fear her children would be taken into care. Diagnosed with bipolar disorder.
2008	Child Two secures job in local call centre and is later promoted to management role.			Child Two's employment brings extra income into the home, contributing towards food shopping and household bills.	

Timeline	Family Circumstances	Nature of Intimate Relationships	Housing/Domestic Circumstances	Economic Circumstances	Other Key Events
2016					Joins women’s support group at local community centre.
2019					Begins to receive mental health support and gain confidence travelling on public transport for the first time, accessing areas of the city outwith Easterhouse.

6.4 Schematic Biography for Una

Una was in her mid-sixties at the time of the interviewing. She was born in a relatively deprived inner-city area of Glasgow and moved to Easterhouse after getting married. Una's marriage was extremely abusive, and she made several attempts to leave her husband before finally seeking support from Easterhouse Women's Aid and securing a tenancy in Easterhouse for herself and her children. In the years after the breakdown of her marriage, Una attained a Higher National Certificate (HNC) in childcare from the local college and went on to work in children's homes and secure units for a decade. Una has provided intensive care to three of her children who have all experienced heroin addiction and has become a guardian to her grandchild. A number of significant events at different points in her life-course emerged:

- an abusive relationship with the father of her children
- Una's children having all experienced challenges related to heroin addiction
- Una finding her oldest son dead in his home following a methadone overdose
- a history of mental health difficulties and a psychotic episode.

Table 6.3 Biography for Una

Timeline	Family Circumstances	Nature of Intimate Relationships	Housing/Domestic Circumstances	Economic Circumstances	Other Key Events
1954	Born in deprived inner-city area of Glasgow.				
1974	Child One born.	Meets Partner One. Gets married.	Prior to marriage, experiences a brief period of homelessness due to eviction from family home. Una attributes her haste to marry to needing to escape homelessness. Moves to socially rented flat in Easterhouse with Partner One.	Main income is related to Partner One's income at a local factory. He is an alcoholic and she reports often struggling to 'get by' due to his addiction issues.	

Timeline	Family Circumstances	Nature of Intimate Relationships	Housing/Domestic Circumstances	Economic Circumstances	Other Key Events
1975	Child Two born.			Claims social security benefits.	Partner One experiences a disabling industrial accident. He receives no compensation and is forced to leave work. His alcoholism and domestic abuse escalate.
1979			Una and her children move to a privately rented flat in her neighbourhood of origin to escape domestic abuse. Partner One follows them to new tenancy and moves in.		Una has her nose broken and teeth knocked out in a domestic abuse incident.
1980	Child Three born.		Seeks support from Women's Aid but cannot be taken on for unknown reasons. Becomes homeless but leaves temporary bed-and-breakfast due to concerns about her children in the accommodation.		Child One sustains a coma and severe brain injury after being assaulted by older youths at an area of waste ground in Easterhouse.

Timeline	Family Circumstances	Nature of Intimate Relationships	Housing/Domestic Circumstances	Economic Circumstances	Other Key Events
1981	Leaves Partner One. Period of lone motherhood.		Referral to Women's Aid is successful and the family spends a number of months in a refuge. Later in the year, Una and her children are offered a socially rented tenancy in Easterhouse.	Continues to claim social security benefits.	Severe episode of domestic abuse where Partner One threatens to kill her with a machete in front of the children.
1985	Gets divorced.				
1987		Meets Partner Two.	Maintains separate socially rented tenancy during this relationship.		
1989	Child Four born.				
1992	Becomes lone mother for second time.	Relationship with Partner Two ends.			Goes to college and gains HNC in childcare.

Timeline	Family Circumstances	Nature of Intimate Relationships	Housing/Domestic Circumstances	Economic Circumstances	Other Key Events
1993			Children One and Two both leave home.	Secures job in childcare and continues to work full time in this sector until 2002. Full-time work forms main income stream in addition to some supplementary benefits.	
1998	Becomes full-time residential guardian of grandchild due to parents' heroin addiction.		Child Three leaves home. Grandchild moves into Una's home.	Reports that in the years prior to and immediately after guardianship, she struggles to secure social security benefits relating to caring for her grandchild. This places the family under extreme financial strain.	Una's sister moves back to Glasgow and supports Una to care for her family whilst she works.
2002				Retires from working in childcare due to declining mental health. Income is comprised of social security benefits.	Experiences a psychotic episode and is hospitalised for a number of months. Una's sister cares for her children.

Timeline	Family Circumstances	Nature of Intimate Relationships	Housing/Domestic Circumstances	Economic Circumstances	Other Key Events
2008					Finds son overdosed on heroin following discharge from a mental health unit.
2015			Child Four continues to live at home.	Child Four starts job in catering at local retail park, and these wages supplement the household income.	
Present			Continues to live in socially rented tenancy in Easterhouse with Child Four and grandchild.		Provides intensive emotional and physical support to two oldest children, who continue to experience addiction issues.

6.5 Schematic Biography for Lorna

Lorna was in her early sixties at the time of the interviews. She was born in Easterhouse and spent twelve years working abroad, returning to Easterhouse for brief periods to live with parents and to holiday. Lorna returned to live in Easterhouse with her partner, whom she had met abroad, just before the birth of her child. When her child was two, Lorna and her partner moved abroad for a year. Lorna's relationship then broke down and she returned to Easterhouse where she remained single and brought up her child as a lone mother. A number of key events at different points in her life-course emerged as significant:

- coming from a large family of ten children and reporting a stable and loving relationship with both parents
- her father being an extremely positive role model and a respected member of the Easterhouse community
- converting to Christianity soon after her child was born; her faith and involvement with a local church have played important roles in helping Lorna to 'get by'.

Table 6.4 Biography for Lorna

Timeline	**Family Circumstances**	**Nature of Intimate Relationships**	**Housing/Domestic Circumstances**	**Economic Circumstances**	**Other Key Events**
1960	Born in Easterhouse. Lorna is one of the younger members of a family of ten children.		Lorna's family's socially rented home in Easterhouse houses twelve family members in three bedrooms.	Lorna's father experiences long periods of unemployment in Easterhouse and the family experience extreme poverty.	
1980				Leaves Easterhouse to work in various catering roles. Travels extensively with work through the 1980s, returning periodically to visit family in Easterhouse. Lorna's parents are initially unhappy she has left the family home as there is societal expectation that grown-up children will contribute income towards the household.	

Timeline	Family Circumstances	Nature of Intimate Relationships	Housing/Domestic Circumstances	Economic Circumstances	Other Key Events
1990		Meets partner whilst working abroad.		Income is derived from her earnings.	
1992		Gets married.			
1993	Child born.	Relationship with partner becomes strained after birth of child.	Lorna and her partner move to socially rented flat in Easterhouse prior to the birth of their child. Lorna's female friend comes to live with the couple.	Becomes reliant on partner's wages as income.	Lorna's friend who has moved into her tenancy supports Lorna through a period of postnatal depression.
1995		Relationship with partner breaks down within six months of being abroad.	Lorna and family leave Easterhouse and move to another continent after partner accepts offer of employment. Lorna's friend moves into her own tenancy in Easterhouse.		

Timeline	**Family Circumstances**	**Nature of Intimate Relationships**	**Housing/Domestic Circumstances**	**Economic Circumstances**	**Other Key Events**
1996	Period of lone motherhood begins.	Lorna never re-partners after relationship breakdown abroad.	Comes home from abroad with child. Initially lives with parents for some months until she is made an offer of a socially rented two-bed tenancy in Easterhouse.	Income mainly comprised of social security benefits.	In 1996–2001 Lorna and her sisters provide intensive care for their mother, who is living at home with dementia. Lorna converts to Christianity and becomes involved with the local church. Continues to have strong links to church to present day.

Timeline	Family Circumstances	Nature of Intimate Relationships	Housing/Domestic Circumstances	Economic Circumstances	Other Key Events
1997				After moving into full-time employment with the NHS, Lorna's income is mainly comprised of her full-time earnings.	Attends college and gains qualifications in English, computing and communications. A worker at Greater Easterhouse Development Company sets up voluntary work placement for Lorna at local health charity. Further volunteering position leads to Lorna being offered a post within the NHS Community Health Team.
1997–2010					Child receives support and childcare from various members of church congregation. Attends church clubs and classes. Friends from church become important figures in the life of Lorna's child.

Timeline	Family Circumstances	Nature of Intimate Relationships	Housing/Domestic Circumstances	Economic Circumstances	Other Key Events
2011			Child leaves home to attend university in another Scottish city.		
2016			Moves to accessible one-bedroom ground floor flat in another area of Easterhouse.		
2017–present					Lorna continues to work full time with NHS and attends local church.

6.6 Schematic Biography for Angie

Angie was in her fifties at the time of the interviewing. She was born in Easterhouse and has lived in the neighbourhood over her full life-course. After getting married, Angie left her family home in Easterhouse and moved to a rented flat in the neighbourhood. The year after her marriage, Angie and her husband were able to buy a property in Easterhouse, which they subsequently sold due to break-ins and feeling unsafe in the area. Angie remarried around ten years ago and has bought a home in Easterhouse with her present husband. A number of significant life events at different points emerged:

- a fifteen-year abusive marriage
- strong positive associations with the local community in Easterhouse
- the importance of employment as a lifelong strategy for ‘getting by’ and ‘getting on’; many of Angie’s job roles have centred around the local shopping centre in Easterhouse.

Table 6.5 Biography for Angie

Timeline	**Family Circumstances**	**Nature of Intimate Relationships**	**Housing/Domestic Circumstances**	**Economic Circumstances**	**Other Key Events**
1967	Born in Easterhouse.		Angie's parents' socially rented home in Easterhouse is overcrowded with nine sharing a three-bedroom flat.		
1985	Gets married.	Meets Partner One.	Angie and her husband move to socially rented property in an area close to her family home in Easterhouse.	Works as a factory machinist. Husband has full-time job in institutional setting within Easterhouse.	
1986	Child One born.	Physical and emotional abuse begin to escalate.	Angie and her husband buy a two-bedroom flat in another area within Easterhouse.	Reports that during this period her family are comparatively 'well off' due to both partners having full-time wages.	Angie's property broken into twice. Angie attributes the break-ins to territorialism and being an 'outsider' from another area of Easterhouse.

Timeline	Family Circumstances	Nature of Intimate Relationships	Housing/Domestic Circumstances	Economic Circumstances	Other Key Events
1987			Angie and her husband sell their flat and move to a socially rented flat closer to their area of origin within Easterhouse.		
1990			Physical and emotional abuse increases in frequency and severity.	Begins a period of working in various full-time roles within local businesses in Easterhouse. The period of employment lasts thirty years and includes various roles within the retail sector.	
1992			Attempts to leave husband and flee to England with child. Husband alerts police in England to her whereabouts and she is informed she must return to Glasgow within twenty-four hours or risk being arrested for kidnap of her child.		

Timeline	Family Circumstances	Nature of Intimate Relationships	Housing/Domestic Circumstances	Economic Circumstances	Other Key Events
1996	Child Two born.	Domestic abuse continues.	Attempts to seek support from Easterhouse Women's Aid to leave husband. She is advised she will be rehoused in another area of Glasgow. Returns to husband as she cannot imagine living away from her neighbourhood and community.		
2001	Period of lone motherhood begins.	Leaves Partner One after seeking support from Easterhouse Women's Aid.	Women's Aid supports Angie to secure a three-bedroom social rental property in Easterhouse.	After the breakdown of her marriage, Angie reports experiencing a period of extreme poverty, accruing high levels of debt. Attributes this to having to 'start from scratch' in a new tenancy and be the sole financial provider for her children. In 2001–2010 Angie's mother provides daily childcare which enables Angie to work full time.	Discovers that her sister, who has been a rich source of emotional support, has been having an affair with her husband.

Timeline	**Family Circumstances**	**Nature of Intimate Relationships**	**Housing/Domestic Circumstances**	**Economic Circumstances**	**Other Key Events**
2003				Child Two secures full-time retail job at local retail park and contributes a share of wages to household bills and food costs.	
2010		Meets Partner Two and they buy a flat in Easterhouse together.	Angie's children continue to live with Angie and Partner Two.		
2018				Begins working full time in a social care role.	Goes to college and gains social care qualification.

6.7 Schematic Biography for Joan

Joan was in her late sixties at the time of the interviewing. She was born in a relatively deprived inner-city area of Glasgow and joined the armed forces in her teens and travelled through the UK and Europe. During her time in the forces, Joan became pregnant after a short relationship with a colleague. Her partner was unsupportive of the pregnancy and urged Joan to seek adoption. Joan refused and returned to Glasgow to bring up her child as a lone parent. Joan never re-partnered after this event. A number of key events at different points in her life-course emerged as significant:

- experiencing a chaotic childhood and parental alcoholism
- attributing her reluctance to re-partner to a desire ‘not to be ruled by a man’
- being driven by her work ethic and sustaining continuous employment throughout her adult life.

Table 6.6 Biography for Joan

Timeline	**Family Circumstances**	**Nature of Intimate Relationships**	**Housing/Domestic Circumstances**	**Economic Circumstances**	**Other Key Events**
1953	Born in relatively deprived inner-city area in Glasgow. Parents experience issues relating to alcohol addiction.				
1970				Joins the armed forces and travels in UK and Europe.	Joan's parents are evicted from their home due to alcoholism and non-payment of rent during Joan's time in the forces. They become homeless.

Timeline	Family Circumstances	Nature of Intimate Relationships	Housing/Domestic Circumstances	Economic Circumstances	Other Key Events
1972	Joan becomes pregnant.	Brief relationship with partner. Partner is unsupportive of pregnancy and future relationship and urges Joan to have baby adopted.	Returns to Glasgow and moves into socially rented flat with brother and his family for a number of months in an outlying area of Easterhouse. The two-bedroom home is already housing a family of seven.	Leaves the armed forces due to military law which prohibits unmarried mothers from serving.	
1973	Child born. Joan becomes a lone parent.		Joan is allocated a two-bedroom socially rented tenancy in Easterhouse.	Secures full-time job in city centre. Income primarily derived from employment. Wakes at 6am daily to drop her child in the city centre so her mother can provide childcare whilst she works. Joan pays her mother for full-time childcare provision.	

Timeline	Family Circumstances	Nature of Intimate Relationships	Housing/Domestic Circumstances	Economic Circumstances	Other Key Events
1975			Joan's parents and brother are evicted from their private-let tenancy in central Glasgow. They come to live with Joan and stay for eight years.	Income is comprised of earnings and some benefits. During this time Joan experiences severe financial abuse from her family and her money is regularly stolen. Reports struggling to 'get by' due to her parents' alcoholism and financial abuse.	

Timeline	Family Circumstances	Nature of Intimate Relationships	Housing/Domestic Circumstances	Economic Circumstances	Other Key Events
1983			Joan requests to be rehoused because of her family's chaotic lifestyle. Joan and her child move to another two-bedroom social rental tenancy in Easterhouse.	Starts full-time work in a factory local to Easterhouse. Reports the early 1980s as a period where she begins to accrue extreme debt. Accumulation of debt continues over next twenty years. Joan attributes her debt to increasing ease of gaining credit and consumer pressures from 1980s onwards to have desirable clothing and household goods.	

Timeline	Family Circumstances	Nature of Intimate Relationships	Housing/Domestic Circumstances	Economic Circumstances	Other Key Events
1985					Child becomes increasingly involved in local church activities and converts to Christianity. Church members continue to play an important role in Joan's child's life until the child leaves Easterhouse in 1996.
1988			Ongoing housing improvement in Easterhouse leads to Joan's home being demolished. Joan and her child are decanted to temporary accommodation for eighteen months.		

Timeline	Family Circumstances	Nature of Intimate Relationships	Housing/Domestic Circumstances	Economic Circumstances	Other Key Events
1990			Joan and her child move into new socially rented tenancy on their previous street. Buildings have been reduced from four stories to two and have central heating, fitted kitchens, showers and gardens.	Continues to claim in-work social security benefits and work full time in various factory jobs.	
1991					Joan's child gains engineering qualification at college and goes on to attain a degree.
1996			Joan's child leaves home after securing a job with an engineering firm in North America.		Joan and her child take turns to visit each other yearly in the US and Scotland.
1998				Begins to work full time as a care assistant in a dementia ward. Income derived from employment.	

Timeline	Family Circumstances	Nature of Intimate Relationships	Housing/Domestic Circumstances	Economic Circumstances	Other Key Events
2019	Joan's child dies of a terminal illness in the US.				
2020			Child's life insurance allows Joan to buy a new-build two-bedroom bungalow in a more affluent area in the East End of Glasgow.	Receives a life-insurance payment after her child's death.	

6.8 Schematic Biography for Janice

Janice was in her late seventies at the time of the interviewing. She was born in the south of England and moved to Easterhouse after marriage in 1965. After getting married, Partner One quickly became extremely physically, emotionally and sexually abusive. Janice was particularly isolated within the neighbourhood due to being English and middle class. She faced daily stigma from her neighbours. Partner One was a practising Catholic and prohibited her from using contraception. Janice's attempts to control her fertility were linked to periods of significant physical abuse. Janice is mother to six children. A number of key events at different points in her life-course emerged as significant:

- feeling herself to be an 'outsider' in Easterhouse
- experiencing severe physical, emotional and sexual abuse in her marriage
- becoming mother to six children despite seeking out contraception options; Janice's marriage was heavily influenced by the local priest and Catholic church
- taking A levels at night school at forty years old and subsequently attaining a degree from a university in Glasgow.

Table 6.7 Biography for Janice

Timeline	Family Circumstances	Nature of Intimate Relationships	Housing/Domestic Circumstances	Economic Circumstances	Other Key Events
1943	Born in south of England.				
1965	Meets and marries Partner One.		Moves to privately rented flat in South Side of Glasgow.	Income derived from Partner One's wage as a joiner. Janice receives a small weekly allowance from Partner One for housekeeping.	

Timeline	Family Circumstances	Nature of Intimate Relationships	Housing/Domestic Circumstances	Economic Circumstances	Other Key Events
1966	Child One born.	Domestic abuse escalates immediately after birth.		Starts working at local maternity hospital until 1968. Income from this job is 'looked after' by Partner One. Janice has little autonomy over her earned money but enjoys 'getting out of the house'. Janice's mother-in-law begins to provide childcare to facilitate Janice's employment.	
1967	Child Two born.			Gains part-time job as nursery nurse.	

Timeline	Family Circumstances	Nature of Intimate Relationships	Housing/Domestic Circumstances	Economic Circumstances	Other Key Events
1968	Child Three born.			Quits jobs due to childrearing responsibilities and is again solely reliant on Partner One's weekly allowance. This financial situation continues until 1983 when Janice receives a student grant.	Local priest advises Janice to 'go on the contraceptive pill' to prevent further pregnancy. However, Partner One prohibits contraception.
1969			The family move to a four-bedroom socially rented house in Easterhouse.	Reports struggling to feed children and having to sew children's clothes from second-hand rags and unravel old jumpers from jumble sales to make new clothes for children.	Janice and Partner One are regular members of the congregation at the local Catholic chapel. Partner One is a member of charitable groups and organisations linked to the chapel and well known in the local community.

Timeline	Family Circumstances	Nature of Intimate Relationships	Housing/Domestic Circumstances	Economic Circumstances	Other Key Events
1970	Child Four born.				Janice is a member of a political party and attends regular meetings and social events in Easterhouse.
1972	Child Five born.	Domestic abuse continues.			
1973	Child Six born.				Covertly gets long-term form of contraception. This causes major issues within the marriage and domestic abuse escalates.
1975					Several break-ins to tenancy through the latter half of 1970s.
1982					Goes to night school and gains five A levels.

Timeline	**Family Circumstances**	**Nature of Intimate Relationships**	**Housing/Domestic Circumstances**	**Economic Circumstances**	**Other Key Events**
1983				University grant forms Janice's main income stream, supplemented with some child benefits.	Starts degree at a university in Glasgow. Partner One strongly opposes Janice going to university and Janice reports that neighbours disapprove and tell her she 'should be at home looking after the children'.
1985	Period of lone motherhood begins.	Partner One breaks Janice's jaw and leaves her badly injured after domestic abuse incident. Janice splits from Partner One.	Janice's mother-in-law takes in Partner One so that Janice can keep the four-bedroom socially rented tenancy in Easterhouse, for her large family. Child One leaves home to go to university in another Scottish city. Child Two leaves home to pursue work.	Claims state benefits. Reports being immediately better off after leaving Partner One and claiming benefits. Attributes this to having an income that she is able to manage herself rather than a small sporadic allowance.	Becomes a lone mother to her family of six.

Timeline	Family Circumstances	Nature of Intimate Relationships	Housing/Domestic Circumstances	Economic Circumstances	Other Key Events
1986		Janice divorces Partner One.			
1987					Graduates with degree.
1988				Secures a voluntary-sector role managing a community nursery. Works in management roles until 2004. Income derived from full-time employment until 2004.	
1990			Janice buys her four-bedroom house in Easterhouse under ‘right to buy’ legislation.		
1992			Child Three leaves home.		
1994			Child Four leaves home.		
1997			Janice sells house and buys another smaller house within Easterhouse.	Makes some profit on the sale of the house and uses this to supplement her income.	

Timeline	Family Circumstances	Nature of Intimate Relationships	Housing/Domestic Circumstances	Economic Circumstances	Other Key Events
2000			Child Five leaves home.		
2004			Child Six leaves home.	Retires from her management role and claims state pension and small private pension.	
2007				Claims disability benefits due to deteriorating physical health.	Provides support to Child Three who lives locally and has severe mental health issues.
2010		Janice meets Partner Two, who lives in England. He visits several times per month.		Reports struggling less financially in older age. Attributes this to not having to support children so much and having a combined income from pensions, benefits and proceeds of house sale.	

Timeline	Family Circumstances	Nature of Intimate Relationships	Housing/Domestic Circumstances	Economic Circumstances	Other Key Events
2017					Joins women's craft group in Easterhouse and reports building strong connections with the women in the group, a number of whom have shared similar life experiences.
2019			Child Five returns to live with Janice due to relationship breakdown.		Janice's sister in England is a source of regular emotional and financial support.
Present					Reports that although she is in rather poor health, she enjoys her life very much in older age. She has plans to holiday in Europe with friends this year and regularly takes taxis into the city to attend the theatre and other social events.

6.9 Schematic Biography for Anne

Anne was in her early eighties at the time of interviewing. She was born in a relatively deprived area of the East End of Glasgow. After getting married, she lived in two tenancies in deprived central areas of Glasgow and moved to Easterhouse in 1965 just prior to the birth of her fourth child. Anne notes that from the start of her marriage, her partner was often absent from the family home and was a heavy drinker. After her parents and sisters emigrated in 1967, Anne became particularly isolated in Easterhouse and had very limited network support. A number of significant life events emerged:

- having a husband who was an alcoholic and a ‘bully’ of whom the children were frightened
- being in an emotionally and financially abusive marriage
- having lifelong low self-esteem and difficulties in asserting herself in relationships
- experiencing postnatal depression, which has endured into later life.

Table 6.8 Biography for Anne

Timeline	Family Circumstances	Nature of Intimate Relationships	Housing/Domestic Circumstances	Economic Circumstances	Other Key Events
1939	Born in relatively deprived area in East End of Glasgow.		Seven family members live in a 'room and kitchen' flat with no indoor toilet or bathing facilities.		
1956				Starts working in an administrative role in city centre. Contributes towards parental household income.	
1957	Meets Partner One.				Becomes pregnant.
1958	Child One born.	Gets married. Attributes decision to marry to 'becoming pregnant out of wedlock'.	The family rent a 'single-end' in relatively deprived area of East End of Glasgow. Tenancy has no indoor toilet or bathing facilities.	Leaves administrative role and becomes reliant on husband's wages as factory worker. Husband often fails to give Anne any household allowance and she and their child often go hungry, and they struggle to pay bills.	Anne's husband is often absent and drinking heavily. Anne reports continuous emotional and verbal abuse from husband, particularly through periods of peak drunkenness.

Timeline	Family Circumstances	Nature of Intimate Relationships	Housing/Domestic Circumstances	Economic Circumstances	Other Key Events
1961	Child Two born.				Begins to experience postnatal depression.
1962	Child Three born.		Family moves to a 'room and kitchen' flat in West End of Glasgow.		Reports losing most of her social network connections due to moving around and time constraints of raising children alone.
1964	Child Four born.			Anne reports peak poverty and often going without food and essentials. Struggles to see family as she cannot afford bus fares and cannot walk across the city with four small children.	Reports husband being 'missing' from the home for several days at a time.

Timeline	Family Circumstances	Nature of Intimate Relationships	Housing/Domestic Circumstances	Economic Circumstances	Other Key Events
1965			Family move to a three-bedroom socially rented flat in Easterhouse. Anne reports that the flat in Easterhouse is a great improvement on their previous accommodation due to addition of indoor toilet, bath and back court, where children can play and washing can be hung out to dry.	Anne's husband starts job as a refuse collector in local depot. Anne's income is still solely reliant on the allowance that her husband sporadically gives her from his wages. Anne's husband gets paid on Fridays and rarely returns home over the weekend, so there is often not much left of his wage packet. The family continue to struggle to 'get by'. Anne's parents sometimes lend her money.	Reports regular suicidal ideation but no intention of acting on suicidal thoughts. Need to 'keep going' for children is the main factor preventing her from acting on these thoughts. Attempts to request the contraceptive pill from the doctor but is refused on the basis that 'lots of people have big families and they manage fine'.

Timeline	Family Circumstances	Nature of Intimate Relationships	Housing/Domestic Circumstances	Economic Circumstances	Other Key Events
1967	Child Five born.				Anne’s parents and sisters emigrate, owing to their frustration at corporation housing conditions in Glasgow and inability to secure suitable housing. Anne loses her established support network when her parents and sisters leave.
1968				Husband becomes unemployed and drinks heavily in the home daily. Anne feels he is unwilling to look for work or financially contribute. Anne starts full-time job in a local factory whilst husband provides childcare. Family income derived from Anne’s wages and social security benefits.	After several attempts over a period of years, Anne manages to persuade the doctor to prescribe the contraceptive pill.

Timeline	Family Circumstances	Nature of Intimate Relationships	Housing/Domestic Circumstances	Economic Circumstances	Other Key Events
1970				Husband continues to be unemployed. Anne secures office job in other side of city, involving a three-hour daily commute on public transport.	
1971					Travels abroad alone to visit sisters and parents. This is the only visit Anne makes and one of the few occasions that she sees her family after they leave Scotland. Children stay at home with father, who is drinking heavily.

Timeline	Family Circumstances	Nature of Intimate Relationships	Housing/Domestic Circumstances	Economic Circumstances	Other Key Events
1972	Period of lone motherhood begins.	Anne leaves her husband due to alcoholism and emotional abuse.	Anne and children secure three-bedroom socially rented tenancy in Easterhouse.	Income comprised of wages as full-time administrative worker and some social security benefits. Continues to work full time until 2000. Her local cousins and her older children provide some childcare. Notes that the family are noticeably 'better off' after split from husband as finances are 'easier to manage on my own'. However, Anne also reports struggling to furnish new tenancy and accruing debt in this period. Notes that for the first few years her tenancy in Easterhouse is extremely sparsely furnished and she relies on donations of second-hand furniture from neighbours.	

Timeline	Family Circumstances	Nature of Intimate Relationships	Housing/Domestic Circumstances	Economic Circumstances	Other Key Events
1979			Children One and Two leave home.		
1980–1990			Child Three leaves home.		Reports a period of extreme depression when she is very isolated, and her only daily activities relate to travelling to work and caring for remaining children. Anne never seeks medical intervention for her depression.
1987			Anne buys a three-bedroom flat in the area of Easterhouse where her previous tenancy was. Her ability to buy the flat is based upon the combined income of herself and two children who are in work and living with her.		

Timeline	Family Circumstances	Nature of Intimate Relationships	Housing/Domestic Circumstances	Economic Circumstances	Other Key Events
1990			Child Four leaves home.	Starts full-time administrative role in local industrial estate.	
2000			Sells her flat and buys a smaller two-bedroom flat in the same area of Easterhouse. Continues to live in this property with Child Five to present day.	Anne retires. Income is now mainly comprised of state pension and small private pension.	
2000–2010					Provides daily childcare for grandchildren who live in Easterhouse and regular emotional support to her children.
2018–present					Joins local women's craft group and establishes strong bonds with several women who have similar life experiences.

6.10 Schematic Biography for Christina

Christina was in her late sixties at the time of the interviewing. She was born in the West End of Glasgow and moved to Easterhouse when she was ten years old. After getting married, Christina lived in several tenancies within Glasgow and in ‘new’ towns.[2] After the breakdown of her marriage, Christina returned to Easterhouse to live as a lone parent. She reports deliberately attempting to minimise friendship networks as a means to protect her children from negative neighbourhood effects and potential abuse. A number of key life events during life-course emerged as significant:

- Christina’s parents were alcoholics. She experienced emotional and physical abuse in her family home and became a carer for her younger sister at an early age.
- Christina’s marriage was characterised by extreme physical, emotional, sexual and financial abuse. After her marriage breakdown, Partner One continued to abuse Christina by stalking her for a decade and threatening to abduct her children.
- Christina’s grandmother was a strong source of emotional, practical and financial support until her death in 1991. Christina provided intensive care to her grandmother in her later life.
- Christina has experienced lifelong mental health challenges and two periods of extended hospitalisation.

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[2] New towns, such as Cumbernauld and East Kilbride, were built in the 1950s as satellite towns around the city of Glasgow in response to the New Towns Act 1945.

Table 6.9 Biography for Christina

Timeline	Family Circumstances	Nature of Intimate Relationships	Housing/Domestic Circumstances	Economic Circumstances	Other Key Events
1952	Born in West End of Glasgow.				
1962			Christina's family move to two-bedroom socially rented flat with indoor toilet and bathroom in Easterhouse.		Mother physically and emotionally abusive. Christina cares for younger sister.
1964			Sent to residential school outside Glasgow for three years as parents 'not coping'.		
1968		Meets Partner One.	Moves in with grandmother in South Side of Glasgow due to chaotic domestic situation.		

Timeline	Family Circumstances	Nature of Intimate Relationships	Housing/Domestic Circumstances	Economic Circumstances	Other Key Events
1969		Gets married. Attributes desire to marry to need to escape traumatic family environment. Describes first year of marriage as 'happy'.	Christina and Partner One move to one-bedroom flat in central region of Glasgow.		
1970	Child One born. Christina takes train to hospital alone and 'in active labour' as husband is absent at pub.			Income derived from Partner One's wages as a lorry driver. Christina receives a weekly allowance to manage household bills.	Extreme physical, emotional, sexual and financial abuse begins. Partner One often absent and uninvolved with childcare. His extra-marital affairs begin. He is covertly using illegal drugs.

Timeline	Family Circumstances	Nature of Intimate Relationships	Housing/Domestic Circumstances	Economic Circumstances	Other Key Events
1971	Child Two born.		Couple move to two-bedroom tenancy in new town on periphery of the city. Notes that her new home and neighbourhood are of higher quality than her previous tenancies.	Starts part-time job as retail assistant. Attributes Partner One 'letting her' work to his desire to pursue an extra-marital affair in her absence.	Partner One locks Christina in her home regularly and assaults her often. She is knocked unconscious after being thrown down a stone stairway.
1972			Partner One moves his new partner into the two-bedroom tenancy whilst Christina and her children live there.		Partner One starts to become physically abusive to children. Throws oldest child across the living room.
1973	Period of lone motherhood begins.	Leaves Partner One and is granted divorce after family doctor provides testimony of domestic abuse.	Tenancy is in Partner One's name, so Christina is forced to flee with children. They move in with her parents and siblings in Easterhouse for six months. Flat is extremely overcrowded with seven sharing a two-bedroom flat.	Claims social security benefits. Experiences financial abuse from parents. Her mother holds and cashes her benefit books and steals money from her.	Forced to re-assume caring role for younger sister whilst parents are away from the home and drinking heavily.

Timeline	Family Circumstances	Nature of Intimate Relationships	Housing/Domestic Circumstances	Economic Circumstances	Other Key Events
1974		Partner One continues to harass Christina by stalking her and threatening to abduct the children and take them to another part of Scotland. Reports feeling 'frightened to be seen outside' with children and often takes them to secluded greenspace on edge of the estate to be out of public view.	Christina and her children are allocated a two-bedroom socially rented flat in Easterhouse.	Reports struggling to 'get by' financially and furnish new tenancy. Has no beds or cot for tenancy for first eighteen months. Grandmother helps Christina to 'get by' by buying occasional bags of shopping and children's clothes.	Enjoys the easy access to greenspace which her new tenancy allows and spends long periods walking in woods on edge of Easterhouse with her children.
1980			Christina's tenancy is scheduled for demolition due to chronic dampness. Allocated a new two-bedroom socially rented tenancy in a nearby area of Easterhouse	Reports starting to accrue extreme debt. Starts to skip meals to ensure that children can eat. Grandmother sporadically provides financial support.	A ten-year period of daily intensive caring for her grandmother begins, involving a long and costly commute to South Side of city.

Timeline	Family Circumstances	Nature of Intimate Relationships	Housing/Domestic Circumstances	Economic Circumstances	Other Key Events
1984					Oldest child truanting from school. Christina's mental health deteriorates, and she is hospitalised for a number of months and receives electric shock treatment. Neighbour and sister provide childcare whilst Christina is unwell.
1985					Christina suffers a severe mental health crisis and is re-hospitalised.
1987		Meets Partner Two. This relationship lasts until Partner Two dies in 2011. Christina and Partner Two maintain separate tenancies in Easterhouse.			

Timeline	Family Circumstances	Nature of Intimate Relationships	Housing/Domestic Circumstances	Economic Circumstances	Other Key Events
1991	Grandmother dies.		Child One leaves home.		Child Two is unwell and Christina's cousin takes on caring responsibility for grandmother for a few days, arranging hospitalisation, and grandmother dies in hospital within the week. Christina blames herself for having to take time off her caring responsibility.
1992	Child Three born.				
1993			Christina's house is scheduled for demolition. Christina and her children are decanted to temporary accommodation for two years.	Obtains a trust deed to make herself legally bankrupt and minimise debt repayments.	

Timeline	Family Circumstances	Nature of Intimate Relationships	Housing/Domestic Circumstances	Economic Circumstances	Other Key Events
1994			Child Two leaves home. Christina and Child Three move to current socially rented tenancy. New tenancy is a house with ‘front and back door’ and garden.		
1997				Begins to receive disability benefits relating to physical health issues, significantly improving her financial situation and ability to ‘get by’.	
2003					Begins to provide intensive care to Partner Two, who has cancer diagnosis.
2005					Becomes a member of local women’s religious organisation, which provides social interaction. Provides childcare for grandchildren.

Timeline	Family Circumstances	Nature of Intimate Relationships	Housing/Domestic Circumstances	Economic Circumstances	Other Key Events
2011		Partner Two dies.			
2012				Begins to receive state pension in addition to disability benefits.	
2015					Provides daily childcare for grandchildren and great-grandchildren.
2019			Child Three leaves home.		

6.11 Schematic Biography for Frances

Frances was seventy at the time of the interviewing. She was born in a relatively deprived area in the East End of Glasgow. After getting married, Frances and her partner moved to a one-bedroom socially rented flat in Easterhouse. Frances has moved to several different tenancies in the neighbourhood over her life-course. The first half of Frances's life was characterised by severe and continuous periods of sexual abuse perpetrated by various men. The abuse contributes strongly to the feelings of low self- esteem and worthlessness with which Frances still sometimes struggles. Since becoming a mother, Frances has been heavily involved with roles which involve community activism, including numerous community initiatives which have contributed towards promoting social justice and addressing inequality in Easterhouse. A number of key life events emerged as significant:

- extreme experience of sexual violence as child and adult
- an abusive marriage and husband who suicided shortly after Frances left the relationship
- continuous involvement in community activism throughout adulthood
- severe and enduring periods of depression.

Table 6.10 Biography for Frances

Timeline	**Family Circumstances**	**Nature of Intimate Relationships**	**Housing/Domestic Circumstances**	**Economic Circumstances**	**Other Key Events**
1951	Born in relatively deprived area in East End of Glasgow.				
1968				Starts working in administrative role. Contributes towards income of parental home.	
1970		Meets partner at night out with mother.			

Timeline	Family Circumstances	Nature of Intimate Relationships	Housing/Domestic Circumstances	Economic Circumstances	Other Key Events
1971	Gets married, attributing her decision to feeling like no-one else would want to marry her after history of sexual abuse.	Extreme physical abuse starts the week after marriage. Husband begins to pressurise Frances to become pregnant. When she resists by going on the contraceptive pill, physical violence escalates.	Frances and her husband move to a one-bedroom socially rented flat in Easterhouse.	Quits her administrative job after marriage. Husband's wages become sole household income. Reports that she receives a very small weekly allowance to pay household bills. Husband also works lots of overtime doing 'cash in hand' joinery jobs. None of the 'extra' income is shared with Frances, and she reports never knowing how much money is coming into the house.	Family doctor urges Frances to seek immediate divorce after seeing her injuries and offers to provide his testimony. Frances declines. Frances reports her self-esteem as being very low and she feels she is worthless and incapable of achieving 'anything meaningful'.

Timeline	**Family Circumstances**	**Nature of Intimate Relationships**	**Housing/Domestic Circumstances**	**Economic Circumstances**	**Other Key Events**
1976	Child One born.			Reports that during her marriage, she and the children are expected to eat inferior quality food to husband. Husband regularly buys expensive clothing whilst Frances and the children rarely have new clothes.	After encouragement from a local community worker, Frances begins volunteering at the playgroup which she attends with her child.
1977					Health visitor invites Frances to join a university course to study child development. After graduating she begins to deliver training to other mothers in local family centre.

Timeline	Family Circumstances	Nature of Intimate Relationships	Housing/Domestic Circumstances	Economic Circumstances	Other Key Events
1978	Child Two born.	Physical and emotional abuse becomes more severe.	Frances and her family move to a two-bedroom socially rented tenancy in another area of Easterhouse.	Husband's wages still sole form of household income. Frances begins to covertly take out loans and debt to pay for items for herself and the children.	
1980	Child Three born.				
1981				Begins to work in an administrative role within local social care office. Income from her job goes towards upkeep of family. Husband continues to keep most of his wages for personal use.	
1985					Frances seeks support from social services after husband threatens to physically assault her child.

Timeline	Family Circumstances	Nature of Intimate Relationships	Housing/Domestic Circumstances	Economic Circumstances	Other Key Events
1986	Frances leaves husband.	Husband suicides within two months of Frances leaving.	Frances and her children move to a homelessness unit. They are advised that as their case relates to domestic abuse they will be rehoused in another region of the city. Frances argues that her job in social services makes residency in Easterhouse a necessity, and the family are given permission to apply for housing in the neighbourhood.	Claims in-work benefits. Reports being able to manage much better financially after leaving husband due to being able to budget and independently negotiate debt repayments.	
1987			Family allocated a three-bedroom socially rented tenancy in another area within Easterhouse.	Reports escalating debt and difficulty in making repayments.	

Timeline	Family Circumstances	Nature of Intimate Relationships	Housing/Domestic Circumstances	Economic Circumstances	Other Key Events
1988					The family becomes increasingly involved with activities within the local church. Frances volunteers at groups and congregation members support the family financially, practically and emotionally.
1995			Child One leaves home.	Child Two starts work in retail and begins to contribute towards household bills.	Becomes increasingly involved in voluntary roles in community activism.
1996			Child Two leaves home.	Begins to make cash-in-hand money by selling homemade crafts. Continues to work full time in administrative role whilst engaging in several volunteering roles.	

Timeline	Family Circumstances	Nature of Intimate Relationships	Housing/Domestic Circumstances	Economic Circumstances	Other Key Events
2002				Frances and Child Three move to two-bedroom socially rented house in another area of Easterhouse. Their new home has 'back and front door' and garden.	Frances is invited to make a long-distance trip to represent the local community council at a public speaking event.
2010				Retires from work due to poor physical health. Claims state pension and small private pension.	
2010–present					Maintains a busy workload sitting on the boards of various local community organisations and providing childcare for grandchildren.

The following four chapters move on to explore the research findings, structured around the themes of gender, place, poverty and networks inherent to the overarching research question. The theme of lone motherhood runs as a motif throughout the findings.

Chapter 7: The Journey into Lone Motherhood – Women's Relationships with Men

7.1 Introduction

The following four chapters present the findings of the thesis. The first of these introduces findings relating to women's relationships with men and the bearing of these relationships upon women's trajectories towards lone motherhood. It might seem rather peculiar that the first findings chapter of a thesis examining female social networks should focus on relationships with men. However, the interviews made clear that relationships with men were a key contextual factor in understanding why lone motherhood occurred and how it was navigated. Moreover, the findings in this chapter relate directly to the stated research aim (see Section 1.3.1), which sought to investigate the challenges posed by gender and lone motherhood and residency in Easterhouse.

This chapter is structured in six sections. Section 7.2 sets out the findings surrounding the dynamics of women's relationships with men both prior to and during intimate relationships. Section 7.3 explores findings explicitly relating to male violence and control and Section 7.4 examines the findings relating to leaving intimate relationships. Section 7.5 looks at the research findings relating to the implications of domestic abuse on family life, whilst Section 7.6 examines relationships with men in later life. Finally, Section 7.7 concludes the chapter.

7.2 Women's Relationships with Men in Easterhouse

This chapter examines participants' relationships with men as a contextual factor for lone motherhood. It begins with an account of participants' early lives and entry into intimate relationships.

7.2.1 Family Environments – 'There Wis a Lot of Abuse.'

Six of the ten study participants grew up within relatively deprived Glasgow neighbourhoods outwith Easterhouse, whilst three were born and grew up there. The final participant, Janice, originated from England and grew up in a family where her father had a professional status and moderately high income. She moved to Easterhouse when she was twenty.

Whilst it was evident that the majority of the women had grown up in relatively disadvantaged circumstances, five disclosed that they had grown up in homes which were particularly challenging, perhaps even ‘chaotic’. Issues within parental homes included parental addictions, incest, sexual abuse and domestic violence. Each of these women explained that they had felt compelled to leave home at an early age because of such circumstances. Moreover, all but one explained that first intimate relationships with men were viewed as a means to ‘escape’ from difficult home environments. The exception was Joan, who had joined the armed forces as a means to escape her parents’ alcoholism.

By contrast, the other participants had no experience of particularly challenging family dynamics. Each of these women reported being raised within families where both mother and father were present. Two described their fathers as important positive role models during early years. Lorna explained that her father played an important role in influencing her interest in church and community. His commitment to nurturing his own children’s wellbeing also extended to young people within the wider community in Easterhouse.

> Ma dad wis so well known and popular, cause he hid time for people, and especially the boys in the area would come and chat tae him about things, and give them some life advice as well.

The women who had experienced settled family environments gave various accounts of how they met and, in most cases, married initial partners. Five had met partners at pubs and dance halls; the remainder had met through work. The majority of the women from within the stable family group reported pregnancy as the catalyst for marriage. The relationship between pregnancy and societal expectation of marriage was expressed simply by Anne.

> Ah had tae get married because ah wis pregnant.

Two of the women experienced periods where they were placed in institutional care or in the care of relatives. Christina was sent to residential school at twelve years old due to parental addictions and abuse at home.

> It wis supposed tae be fer a break. Ah dunno if it wis a break fer me or a break fer ma mother or whit, but ah wis going tae residential school and ah remember ma granny sending me food parcels when ah wis away.

Christina’s family dynamics continued to pose difficulty for herself and her children well into mid and later life (see Table 6.9). She described her marriage to Partner One as a direct response to her parents’ addictions and her home environment.

> The reason ah got married was tae get away from mum tae be honest. Instead ae doing better for maself ah did worse. The situation ah found maself in after ah wis married wis even worse than what ah’d left behind.

Frances had experienced sexual abuse perpetrated by male members of her immediate family and men from within her local community during her childhood and teenage years.

> There wis a lot of abuse in ma life. There wis this boy, he wis older than me. Ah always thought this man, really, there wisnae many years between us. He used tae get me in the street and make me go up closes[3] and he wid dae things tae me and sometimes his pal was there.

Frances explained that she accepted a marriage proposal from her partner within a few weeks of meeting him. She attributed her decision to marry so quickly to low self-esteem relating to sexual abuse and to the desire to escape her troubled home life.

Mary also had experience of addictions and domestic abuse within her family home. Mary’s father’s alcoholism and abuse towards her mother had a negative impact on her own attitudes towards relationships with men (see Table 6.2). Like Christina, Mary decided to marry based upon a need to escape from parental alcoholism and abuse. Mary described her early life in Easterhouse.

> There wis a lot of physical abuse went on at that time from ma dad, to ma mum and to us. If he wis in, we wurnae allowed dinner at night time. We had tae go tae bed hungry and ma mum would sneak us in sandwiches.

Mary went on to describe how her home life had influenced her decision to marry.

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[3] Shared communal stairways in tenemental properties.

> It wis no something ah wanted tae do, something ah had tae do. Ah had tae escape the house. Partner One came fae money, so we bought a wee flat, got married, hid the kids. Ah didnae really see his temper till Child One wis aboot a year old, and by that time ah wis pregnant wae Child Two.

It was clear that nearly half of the participant group were motivated to enter into first relationships by their desire to escape poverty and challenging home environments. All five felt that conditions within the home had forced them to embark hastily upon intimate relationships, which later became toxic. Moreover, youth, poverty, desperation and prior experience of abuse and neglect meant that the women from troubled homes were particularly vulnerable to men with predatory intent and had very limited options for returning home once relationships soured.

7.2.2 Gender Roles and Their Implications for Domestic Life – 'It Wis a Man's World.'

In order to explore the challenges of gender and gender roles implicit within the research question, participants were asked to explain what the experience of being a woman and mother in Easterhouse had been like over the past forty years. All explained that through the first two decades of the research period – the 1980s and 1990s – there were critical differences in expectations regarding men's and women's roles within families. One key difference related to the idea of men 'belonging to' and adhering to codes of conduct rooted in local constructs of masculinity.

The phrase 'He was a *man's* man' recurred in several interviews. Women explained that being a 'man's man' meant to 'belong to' other men and to construct one's male identity according to social norms of masculinity inherent within the local community. The majority of participants agreed that external sites of male 'belonging' often centred around pubs and the consumption of alcohol. However, other sites of male belonging were also noted such as 'dookits' (pigeon huts), 'bookies' (betting shops) and crucially the workplace. Brenda described her perceptions surrounding the critical differences between men's and women's roles.

> Ah always felt it was a man's world then. It wis aboot being a 'man's man', whereas the women were tae be the hard workers, tae dae aw the washing and cleaning.

For Mary, the association with her father being a ‘man’s man’ was tied up in notions of both heavy drinking and domestic violence.

> Ma dad’s always been an alcoholic, he’s always been a man’s man. As long as he can get tae the pub and have his drink and whatever, and then come back and jist hit out, or lash out, or whatever he wanted.

Conversely, in their roles as mothers, women became ‘The One’ to uphold domestic responsibilities including childcare, cleaning and household budget management. Where men’s cultural identities ‘belonged’ to external sites of masculinity, women’s were rooted in domesticity and motherhood. Brenda described what it meant to be ‘The One’.

> Just being ‘The One’ that’s tae be there for the kids. The worker. You’ve tae be ‘The One’, the main one ah would think.

Analysis of the data demonstrated that all research participants felt themselves to bear the majority of the physical and emotional load of childrearing during marriage. Indeed, all but one woman reported feeling that they were already effectively functioning as lone parents before the period of lone motherhood actually began. There was also a widespread recognition of women’s ‘suffering’ within intimate relationships and that being ‘The One’ meant that women had to command extraordinary levels of personal resilience. This sentiment was expressed simply by Mary.

> Ye hud tae be strong the whole time.

Thus, the findings highlighted clear distinctions between male and female roles which meant that men were likely to have greater levels of personal freedom and women greater responsibilities relating to their caring and domestic roles. For the majority of participants, male freedom meant that men often had periods of being ‘missing’ from the home. Absences ranged from days to a number of weeks at a time. During these periods, the women were usually unaware of their partner’s whereabouts and unable to get in contact. The following quotes represent women’s perceptions of power dynamics of the time, within heterosexual relationships. These also encompass the women’s feelings surrounding the lack of care which accompanied absence.

> He wis all fer his’self so he was. (Christina)

> Men just did what they liked more or less, and women were left to look after the kids. (Anne)

> Aye, aye. Not give a shit. Be wae all sorts of people and everybody. Go tae this yin's hoose or that yin's hoose, be away forever and jist no care. Jist went away and didnae let ye know whit they're up tae. (Brenda)

7.2.3 Limitations of Male Involvement in Childrearing – 'He Wis Never There.'

The interviews highlighted men's consistent low involvement in childrearing. Joan was not in a committed relationship with the father of her child when she became pregnant (see Table 6.6). She explained that he did not wish to be involved in either an intimate relationship or fatherhood. Joan's story is at the most extreme end of the continuum of absence and abdication of parental responsibility.

> Ah wis in the forces and ah slept wae a guy and he didnae want tae know when ah got pregnant. So, ah came home and went tae see a lawyer aboot going fur maintenance. But at the end ae the day ah went, well ah don't want money fae somebody ah'm gonnae hiv tae force. Ah don't need him, so that's it.

Across the participant group, however, all perceived that their male partners had been insufficiently involved in childcare. Anne described the period before transitioning into lone motherhood.

> No, ah wasn't actually on ma own, but Partner One was never there. Ah wasn't actually a single mother at that time, it wis later oan that ah wis a single mother, but ah might as well have been cause he wis never at home.

Christina found that not only was Partner One rarely involved in childcare, but on the occasions that he did look after children they were often abused or neglected. Christina revealed significant difficulties associated with Partner One's controlling approach to her children across several decades (see Table 6.9).

> He didn’t really take that much tae do with them. The day that he threw Child One across the floor, that was sort of the end of it fer me. Ah didn’t want him hivin anything more tae do with them.

Christina found that her partner could not be relied upon to provide childcare, and also posed a risk to the children. However, in other cases the absence of support was more subtle. Despite the significant abuse which occurred throughout Janice’s marriage to Partner One, he was never abusive towards their children (see Table 6.7). Janice’s frustrations regarding her partner’s ‘hands off’ approach to caring for their six children related to his lack of care, involvement and support during the fifteen years they spent together.

> He was involved in St Vincent of Paul, it’s a charitable organisation. I remember one of the older men coming on a Friday night to ask for Partner One’s help. The guy said, ‘I’m really sorry to have to take him on a Friday night, cause it’s bath night and you’ll miss his help.’ Miss his help?!!

For Janice, the most pressing difficulties surrounding her husband’s lack of involvement with childcare related both to the size of their family and to the fact that she could not rely upon his help during periods of crisis or ill-health.

> He didn’t help, when I had Child Four. On the twenty-second of December. My dad died on twenty-fifth December, Christmas Day. When it came the New Year just a week later, he wouldn’t stay with me. He went to his mum’s. So, I had all these children!

The testimony of the participants highlights the critical differences in the emotional and physical childcare carried out by men and women during the early decades of the research period. The accounts reflect the reality that for the vast majority of the women, support from partners in the realm of childrearing was absent, sporadic or risky. Nine of the ten women interviewed reported being frequently and consistently ‘let down’ by partners on occasions when they may have relied on them to provide care for children, whilst the tenth participant was abandoned during pregnancy.

To conclude, the dynamics of power within relationships suggested that it was common for men to have and want little involvement with matters relating to the home and childrearing. As suggested by the term ‘The One’, women widely reported feeling themselves to be parenting alone whilst partnered. Thus, in terms of domestic labours, women made clear that entering lone motherhood had little effect on their actual physical workload within the home. In fact, many highlighted that they managed better practically after leaving relationships as labours directed towards ‘looking after’ men decreased.

7.3 Male Violence and Control

The previous section highlighted major disparities between male and female involvement in family life. This meant in effect that many men chose to abdicate much of their parental and domestic responsibilities. Men’s lack of practical involvement can be viewed as an expression of male power. Whilst men had the power to choose limited engagement with family life, and maximum engagement with external sites of belonging, women’s options were much more limited. Later chapters show that there were clear gendered barriers to women gaining employment, travelling out of the estate and accessing housing, which all conspired to constrain women’s personal freedoms. Consequently, it can be summarised that men in Easterhouse wielded much power in their relationships with women during the early part of the research period.

7.3.1 Domestic Abuse – ‘It Happened in All the Houses. It Wisnae Just Ours.’

Perhaps the most striking finding of the study relates to women’s overarching experience of domestic abuse within marriage. Within the participant group all but Joan identified that they had experienced domestic abuse within initial and/or subsequent intimate relationships. Joan was abandoned during pregnancy, which might be interpreted as falling within the continuum of male control. For the majority of participants, abusive incidents were part of a continuum of day-to-day events which defined relationships with men. All suggested that domestic abuse was prevalent in Easterhouse during the time they were bringing up children.

> There wis loads ae it. There wis wan lassie that said tae me wan time, ‘Och, for every punch ah get, the next day ah get a nice wee bit of jewellery. He comes in the next day and he’s aw dead sorry and he gets me a wee thing.’ I didnae feel I got support. It was ma ain stupidity for letting him dae that. (Brenda)

> It happened in all the houses, it wisnae jist ours. It happened in most ae ma friends' houses at one point or another. It wis part ae life then. (Mary)

> Well, ye used tae see a lot ae women wae black eyes and they would say they 'fell'. (Joan)

The majority reflected that controlling behaviours began insidiously, and that emotional abuse had preceded episodes of physical and sexual violence. Two participants initially perceived their relationships to be 'mildly' abusive. However, during subsequent interviews they disclosed that abuse had been more pervasive than previously acknowledged. Lorna, for example, noted she had been stalked by a partner on two occasions after their breakup, had been regularly belittled about her appearance and had undertaken all childcare (see Table 6.4). Yet, it was well into our second interview before she concluded that there had been elements of abuse present within the relationship.

By contrast Anne did identify her relationship as abusive. She, however, minimised the effects of the abuse as she perceived that the physical abuse was sporadic.

> He never lifted his hands to me or hit the kids … much. There was the occasional time, but not very much. The children were scared of him, let me put it that way. They were frightened of their dad.

The remaining seven participants all reported regular and significant episodes of physical, sexual, financial and emotional abuse.

7.3.2 Physical Dimensions of Domestic Abuse

There was a range of experiences of physical abuse.

> For years I hid it, when it was just your arms or your legs. But I do remember with my broken jaw, I couldn't eat anything, and it was coming up to Christmas. I went to the butcher's, a guy called Bob, he always had a joke. I couldn't speak and he says, 'There's a ventriloquist in this shop!' I started laughing and it was so sore. So, he knew, I mean, the butcher knew, but it was never talked about. (Janice)

> Wan night ah wis standing doing a washing in the kitchen and Child Two wis just a baby, and he came in and stuck the heid oan me and broke ma nose, just for nothing. (Una)

> The kids will still remember the night he hid me pinned tae a chair, and he hid a pair of scissors in one hand and a knife in the other hand and the kids were in the other chair screaming. (Mary)

One participant noted that her ex-partner had been tried for her attempted murder and several others noted that their partners had made death threats or attempted murder. Una and Brenda’s stories illustrate the level of danger which domestic abuse posed to the safety of women and children.

> He came in wan night wae his friend and just started for nothing. He pull’t aw the kids oot ae bed, they were aw sitting on the couch. Child Two wis ten, Child One wis eleven, Child Three had just started school. He had a samurai sword; he took it and waved it in front ae the kids – they were aw terrified – and ah wis standing at the fireplace and he says he wis gonnae kill me and ah said, ‘Go ahead.’ I just didnae have any fear in me really. And he swiped aw the wall, there was aw hacks oot the wall. (Una)

> Ah wis at a party and somebody told him. It wis the taxi driver ah hink that told him, that he dropped me and a big crowd ae us all at this party. He came tae this party and threw me doon aw the stairs. Then he put me intae his motor and ah don’t know if ah tried tae get oot the motor. Ah remember lying in the street and he rolled the motor over me. He got done for attempted murder. … Anyway, ah hid a broken erm, ma teeth wir aw broke, ah had a broken ankle, two fractures in ma back. Aye, but ah don’t tell anybody that. (Brenda)

In addition to overt physical violence, over half the participant group reported having their movements monitored, scrutinised and curtailed.

> Ah couldn’t even go out without saying to him where ah wis going. If ah went out anywhere it wis ma fault. He says, ‘Where were ye going, why were ye going?’ Even going tae the shops ah wid get harassed. (Christina)

> Ah wisnae allowed out. Ah wisnae allowed new clothes or anything like that. It wis like going back in time. (Mary)

Having their movements scrutinised by partners resulted in increasing isolation from established networks during marriage. In addition to scrutinisation of movements, half of participants experienced stalking during and after relationships. Thus, the findings around physical abuse demonstrated that nearly all women experienced relationships with men which were characterised by violence and control and that their movements on the streets of Easterhouse were closely monitored.

7.3.3 Sexual Violence Against Women – 'I Couldn't Tell Anybody.'

During the interview process participants were not asked explicitly about how their sexual relationships with men had influenced their trajectory into lone motherhood. Yet for the majority, stories about sexual abuse were frequent within interviews. Half of the women disclosed that they had been victims of rape, incest or sexual abuse as children or during the time that they were partnered. Within this group, four had been sexually abused by intimate partners and all five had experienced sexual abuse perpetrated by family members and/or men within the local community. Additionally, women within the groups who had experienced sexual abuse tended to have experienced multiple forms of unwanted sexual contact from multiple men.

> Ah suffered an awful lot of sexual abuse from a very young age. There wis ma father, ma sisters' husbands. There wis so many. (Frances)

Frances's experiences sit at the most extreme end of the continuum of sexual abuse experiences (see Table 6.10). Yet though extreme, Frances's experiences of sexual violence were far from unique. During interviews, half of participants disclosed that they had been raped. Rape experiences were clearly traumatic to recall and important defining points in life-course which significantly altered their relationships with men.

It is important to give due weight and dignity to the stories of sexual abuse which women chose to share with me during the interview process. Frances and Mary's accounts will suffice to illustrate the brutality of sexual assault experienced by women within this group. Each of these events occurred during childhood or early teenage years.

> Ah wis thirteen. Ma sister hid twins that were ten month old. Her wee boy wis aboot two and a half. So, ma sister was taken into the hospital and ah stayed the weekend in her house looking after the three of them. But on the Saturday night her husband raped me. He came intae the room when ah wis in wae the kids. Ah couldnae shout out or anything cause ah wis frightened of waking up the children. (Frances)

> Ah moved down tae a town in England fur a wee spell fur about a year tae live wae ma aunt and uncle cause ah wisnae coping up here. Then I met a boyfriend, and ah wis gaun aboot wae the boyfriend for about four months, and he raped me. So, when ah came back home, Partner One asked me tae marry him and ah jist said yes. Ah hid tae see a way out, ah hid tae protect maself. And ah couldnae report it, ah couldnae tell anybody. Ah told ma mum, she said tae me did ah want tae go tae the police, and ah said 'No.' She's like, 'That's fine.' She went, 'We'll deal wae it wurselves, but don't tell yer dad.' (Mary)

The powerful narrative most evident amongst the group who experienced sexual violence is the pervasive shame and self-blame which they attached to the incidents of male sexual assault and the secrecy surrounding sexual assault. Within this group, all suffered ongoing periods of mental health crisis, which they connected to their experiences of sexual assault and post-traumatic stress, and four reported lifelong low self-esteem.

To conclude, the findings demonstrated that at least half of the participant group had experience of sexual violence perpetrated by men and for the majority by men within the local community in Easterhouse. This meant that there was a high probability that women would regularly come into contact with their attackers. The findings suggested that gender-based sexual violence was a significant issue for many women in Easterhouse, which shaped the lens through which they viewed and related to men. Rape and sexual assault were powerful tools of violence which affected women's relationships both prior to and during intimate relationships.

7.3.4 Reproductive Agency – 'You Weren't Allowed to Say No. It Was a Very Difficult Time.'

Reproductive decision-making and women's agency to choose how to manage their fertility was an issue which had distinct dimensions for several women within the participant group. Three women reported that they had been coerced by partners into becoming pregnant. All three were involved in relationships that might be described as controlling and abusive. When viewed alongside the findings regarding men's lack of involvement in childcare, reproductive coercion becomes a clear expression of male power.

Janice's husband had a long history of controlling and coercive behaviour throughout their fifteen-year marriage (see Table 6.7). He actively tried to prohibit contraception by destroying the contraceptive tablets which she had obtained after her fourth pregnancy. Janice perceived his objection to preventing pregnancy to be based upon his Catholic faith. However, to her surprise she was supported in her desire by her parish priest. Janice was one of two practising Catholics from within the participant group.

> I think society was still pretty much in the dark ages when you think of Catholicism. We had a really brilliant priest who was very forward-thinking. I had four children in four years and went to speak to him. I didn't believe in confession and all that claptrap, and he said, 'Oh for goodness sake, girl, go on the pill.'

Janice later reflected on her husband's insistence on controlling her fertility.

> It was bad enough having six children, which I didn't set out to have. I was forced to have them because he didn't agree with birth control. You weren't allowed to say no. It was a very difficult time, but you're so immersed in it that one year turns into another and another, and you get by. I was never happy, never.

A small number of participants reported requesting contraception from GPs in Easterhouse and being refused on several occasions. These events happened during the 1980s. Participants within this group described their desire to control their fertility as a product of both poverty and incremental decline in mental health attached to growing families.

> Well, ah went tae the doctors tae get the pill and wis told ah couldn't have it. The doctor never told me why. What she did say to me was 'Doctor MacKenzie's got five kids.' I thought to myself, 'But Doctor MacKenzie can afford five kids.'(Anne)

One participant found that a historical termination was disclosed during an antenatal appointment with her second partner. She felt this was a breach of trust from within the health services which made her vulnerable to additional abuse from her partner, who used the information to emotionally abuse her in her subsequent pregnancy.

To conclude, several women within the study reported that their attempts at controlling fertility were subverted because of their relationships with men. In some cases, difficulties in taking ownership of fertility were directed by partners. Where men insisted on more children, women became increasingly dependent and less able to leave abusive situations. In other instances, male professionals including doctors and priests became conduits in women's ability to decide and action their own fertility needs. For at least half of the women within the study, fertility was significantly directed by men, during the 1980s and 1990s.

7.3.5 Emotional Abuse within Intimate Relationships – 'He'd Say, "Right, It's Time for Bed."'

As well as physical abuse, emotional coercion and control was also a major issue within the vast majority of the women's initial intimate relationships. Several women gave extremely detailed accounts of the extent to which their partners controlled their personal freedoms.

> He'd say, 'Right, it's time for bed.' And ah'd go, 'Aw, ah jist want tae watch the end of this…' 'Naw.' And he'd turn off the television. So, ah wid let him walk away and ah'd turn it back on. One night he actually took the fuse, so the electricity all went off. So, ah hid tae go tae ma bed cause he told me tae. (Frances)

Additionally, the majority of the women's testimonies suggested that the most powerful abusive tactic involved the constant undermining of abilities and identities. Most women described situations where their versions of events were questioned so regularly as to make them doubt their own realities, which resulted in lowered self-confidence that delayed departure from abusive partnerships. Janice's story captures how her religion and nationality became objects of derision.

> He used to do that as well, you know, slagging me off for being English, slagging me off for being a Protestant. He knew all these things before we got married, but all of a sudden they became a weapon.

Taken together the data highlight that emotional abuse was present within the relationships of all but one woman.

7.3.6 Controlling Household Finance – 'He Gave Me What Ah Wis Allowed tae Get.'

During interviews household finance was a much-discussed aspect of intimate relationships. Research participants identified marriage as a key life-course event which contributed towards economic dependence on partners. Eight women reported being in full-time employment and able to manage financially prior to entering partnerships with men. The majority gave up work after the birth of their first child and remained out of work for at least two years. Some partners actively discouraged women from working after childbirth.

> He didn't want me working. My job wis tae look after the kids. The only time ah got working wis after Child One wis born, in the butcher's shop. That's when he wis seeing Other Woman at the time. That's the only reason he let me work, cause he wis in and out of Other Woman's when ah wis at work. (Christina)

Eight participants had married first partners and given birth to their first child within a year of meeting. Within this group all quit work by the time the first child was born. By contrast, one woman had already been unemployed at the point of meeting her first partner, and another had continued to work after marriage due to a two-year delay between marriage and the birth of her first child.

The majority who ceased work re-entered the labour market within ten years of their final child being born. However, during the periods where the women had ceased work and were in relationships, there were clear patterns surrounding the extent to which household financial resources were distributed within families. Two participants split with first partners during pregnancy or whilst children were infants. In these cases, the distribution of household finance held less relevance as neither experienced a significant period of reliance upon a male 'head of household'. However, for the rest of the women, who remained partnered for a year or more after childbirth, all reported economic dependence upon their male breadwinner and perceptions of financial inequality.

The majority of those who lived with partners after childbirth reported not knowing how much income their partner's wages brought into the family and not feeling able to ask. Patterns of female economic dependence within households fell within a continuum. The most common situation was where women were given a weekly household budgeting allowance, to pay for food, bills and heating. Participants reported varying experiences of the regularity and sufficiency of their weekly allowance.

> Ah thought it wis really hard then, that way, money-wise. The men just spent the money. Ah didnae really know anybody that hid a decent home life, money-wise. All ma friends, ma age, it was as if their men aw felt it was their money and naebody else's. (Brenda)

Frances's partner, who was a tradesman, carried out weekly 'homers' – cash-in-hand work – which allowed him to make extra income. Frances continued to receive the same small weekly allowance and was never aware of how much money her partner was making.

> He hid loads ae money and he jist blamed me fer no being able tae manage whit he wis giving me. It wis never a case ae me no getting enough money, it wis always me no being good enough tae watch how much ah'm spending.

Janice experienced a similar lack of transparency surrounding her partner's income. She stated unequivocally that the allowance which she received was sufficient to meet the basic needs of herself and her children. However, Janice also revealed that she consistently struggled to feed and clothe her family of six throughout her fifteen-year marriage, often resorting to measures such as unravelling old jumpers to obtain wool for knitting (see Table 6.7). This pattern of struggle is evident among the few women who deemed their weekly allowance sufficient.

> It wasn't shared equally. I was given the money and I just got on with paying the bills, buying the messages and things like that. And that was okay, it worked out. If I needed money to buy winter coats, I asked him for it and he gave me it. And I also once found a twenty-pound note in the washing machine, and I thought, 'Well, if he's got twenty pounds and he doesn't even know he's lost it then he must have too much money,' so it went in my pocket.

In three cases, women reported regular periods where men would not share wages with the family at all. In these cases, partners were heavy drinkers and were likely to be diverted towards the local pub on a Friday night and return home wageless by the end of the weekend. In these cases, the women and children faced regular and extended periods of financial crisis.

> Ma first husband wis terrible. Left me wae nothing. Ah've seen me mebbe going in the cupboards and ye were making a, mebbe a sausage that had been there fur a coupla days and ye were saying, 'Oh God, ah hope this disnae turn the wean's[4] stomach.' But naw, he came hame fae his work, went right intae the bathroom, got himself aw cleaned up and wis oot that door within five minutes, and nothing. Not a penny left, ye had nothing, not a bean. (Brenda)

> He gave me what ah wis allowed tae get. He used tae give me message[5] money, so much if ah wis going out for grocery money and say, 'That's all ye've got tae spend, go and get the dinner.' Then ah hid tae bring all the receipts home and give him all the receipts. It wis horrible. (Christina)

In a small number of cases, men not only retained access to personal income but also enjoyed access to better quality food and clothing than women.

> Ah got ma wages on the Thursday. Ah'd get a slice of steak for him and a sausage for maself – jist tae show ye the difference. (Frances)

What is clear from amongst the group of women who remained partnered for longer periods is that within homes where men worked and women stayed home, money was seldom shared equally. Furthermore, women and children were likely to be disproportionately affected by poverty in households with sole male breadwinners. Consequently, it can be summarised that male control of household finances and women's economic dependence were clearly tied to abuses of power within intimate relationships. For the vast majority of women, domestic labours were viewed by male partners as having little or no economic value.

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[4] Child.

[5] Groceries

Taken together, the findings in Section 7.3 have demonstrated that all women within the group experienced varying degrees of patriarchal control, violence and oppression. It is important to stress that this does not suggest that all men from Easterhouse during this time were abusive, but simply that nearly all the women within the study who went on to enter lone motherhood were subjects of extreme forms of male violence and control. This is an important finding with regards to the research question focussed on the challenges of gendered roles for lone mothers in Easterhouse.

7.4 The Journey towards Lone Motherhood – 'I Hid tae Make Smart Choices.'

Each of the study participants made their own unique journey into lone motherhood. Indeed, the interviews made clear that lone motherhood was *the* key transitionary point in life-course for each. It must be stressed that none of the women had wanted or intended to become lone mothers. The interviews demonstrated, however, that the decision to leave their partner was a juncture where the women harnessed important dimensions of their personal agency. Despite the agency involved in leaving, the experience of lone motherhood was not a particularly empowering experience for most. The majority explained lone motherhood to be a necessary but unwelcome product of their struggle to escape abuse. Mary expressed her perspective simply.

> Ah hid tae make smart choices for ma children. And the first smart choice ah made wis getting oot ae the marriage and bringing them up on ma own.

7.4.1 Barriers to Leaving – 'I Tried to Leave Once…'

The time which women spent in abusive situations varied. Joan was abandoned and spent no time in an abusive relationship. Three women remained in abusive relationships for under five years, two for between five and ten years and four for between ten and fifteen years. The majority made several attempts to leave before their final exit. Half of participants went on to have further intimate partnerships, whilst the other half deliberately abstained from future relationships. Within the abstaining group, all attributed this decision to loss of trust in men and wanting to protect children from further abuse.

Women’s testimonies highlighted three common issues which acted as barriers to leaving abusive relationships: lack of family support, men’s connections to powerful networks and fear of having children removed. First, participants identified a prevailing attitude to domestic abuse from within families and members of their immediate community. One phrase relating to domestic abuse recurred many times during interviews – ‘You’ve made your bed, now lie in it.’

The interviews also suggested that a key contributor to the length of time women remained in abusive relationships related to men’s involvement in institutional structures of power. Half of the participant group relayed that they had been deterred from leaving abusive situations by their partner’s status or connection to powerful institutions. Institutional connections, including those with police forces, churches, the local council and even taxi firms, were all implicated in tracking and harassment linked to domestic abuse. Consequently, the data showed that men often drew upon their bridging capital in Easterhouse to reinforce male structures of power there.

Angie was one such example. Her partner held a position of status within the local community. The local police force stopped by his workplace to socialise daily. Angie made several attempts to leave during the course of her fifteen-year relationship, which were each thwarted by police intimidation and legal threats of having her children removed. She perceived a link between her husband’s close relationship with local police officers and their swift action to locate her on the occasions she fled.

> Ah tried tae leave once when ah only hid ma aulder daughter, she wis about six or seven. He wis at work and ah’d left. Ma brother stays in England, so ah went away doon tae England wae ma daughter. Ah wis gonnae try and start up again doon there wae him, wae his family. By the time ah got there the police hid already been, cause he knew that’s probably where ah wid ae went. So, he sent the police saying that ah’d kidnapped ma daughter and if ah hidnae hid her back within twenty-four hours then ah wis getting arrested. So ah hid tae go back home.

When Frances’s husband refused to admit her back into her family home one night, the police advised that she and her children be placed in a temporary homelessness unit. However, her husband was able to use his employment-based networks within the council to locate her within twenty-four hours.

> Ah went up tae the homeless unit and told them whit hid been happenin and that. They said, ‘Well, that’s fine, jist stay here and we’ll get things sorted for you.’ Because Partner wis a joiner wae the city council, he found out where the homeless unit was. He turned up the next day.

Angie and Frances’ testimonies highlight some of the ways in which men’s involvement in powerful institutions such as the police, church or local council extended the reach of their power and control within abusive relationships. A stark finding of the research is reflected in the fact that men were able to use their male social networks as a mechanism to control and coerce women in half of the cases within the study.

Fear of having children removed was also a real and significant threat which delayed half of participants from leaving abusive relationships. For some such as Christina this fear was rooted in anxiety around stalking and threats of kidnap (see Table 6.9). In other cases, women actively feared having their children removed by social services. Most within this group perceived that becoming a lone parent would make them more visible to social services and place them under greater scrutiny from education and social services.

In some cases, men suggested to women that their children would be removed. In other cases, the women’s confidence had been eroded to such an extent that they doubted their abilities to cope with the challenges of lone mothering. Since most women had direct experience of neighbours having children removed, this fear was particularly pertinent. Angie explained her fears surrounding leaving and losing custody of children.

> Jist the thought mebbe that ah wisnae a good enough mother tae keep them, or mebbe they wid say that they should go and stay wae their dad. No that he would probably ever get them right enough cause ae his abuse, but that couldnae hiv been proven because every time ah got the police oot tae the house, they didnae take any notice.

Despite significant and numerous barriers to the women leaving, eventually each embarked on lone motherhood.

7.4.2 Leaving – ‘I Realised I Just Couldn’t Carry On.’

In all but one case, incidents of domestic abuse prompted women to finally leave. Joan’s story was a rare example of entry into lone motherhood which was not an explicit result of violence. Joan explained that she discovered she was pregnant when working abroad in the armed forces. The options presented to her at this point were to have a termination, adoption or to be dismissed. Strikingly, the armed forces offered Joan support towards every available option besides keeping her baby. This meant that in effect she experienced what she felt was a double abandonment from both the father of her child and the armed forces.

> Ah wis actually in the forces when ah fell pregnant, and in those days ye were put out. No nothing, ye know. If ye wanted, they offered me an abortion right away. Ah wis only twenty, but ah said, ‘No, that’s murder.’ Dunno where that came from cause ah never really thought about babies. Then they offered that ah could go somewhere and hiv the baby adopted, and ah said, ‘No, ah’m going home.’

Lorna was also living abroad when she decided to end her relationship (see Table 6.4). Lorna perceived her decision to return home as a response to her partner’s emotional and physical unavailability.

> At first it wis really hard, cause ah hid phoned fae abroad and said ‘Ah’m coming home,’ and they’re like, ‘Okay.’ In a sense ah suppose ah felt like a failure, but ah also knew it wis the right thing tae do, and ah knew ah wis worth more than what ah wis being treated.

In all other cases the women reported that the decision to leave was based on the culmination of domestic abuse over time and a final incident of violence or betrayal which acted as a ‘turning point’. For five women the turning point came when partners began to physically abuse their children. In fact, only three of the ten women reported that their children were never physically abused.

> He threatened tae hit Child Three, and really that wis it. Ah’ve said it so many times, it wis awrite he wis hitting me, but he’s no gonnae hit ma kids. The person ah’m talking tae is saying, ‘But, Frances, why is it okay tae hit you?’ Cause that’s aw he’d

> always done. But as soon as ah knew he was gonnae hit ma kids, or threaten them, that wis it. He hid actually already pushed Child Three. (Frances)

Frances also described the events which led up to her finally leaving.

> Ah says, ‘Partner One, ah’ve hid enough ae you hitting me. See if ye hit me again, ah’m gonnae leave.’ ‘Aye, awrite’ *slap*. So, the next day he came in fae work and ah wisnae in. Ah jist got up in the morning, got the kids and went doon tae ma mum’s. So, he wisnae long in coming doon, saying he wis sorry, getting a taxi tae take us home, saying everything would be fine. Cause he was promising me the earth, ah went home, but it wis soon after that ah thought, ‘Ah really don’t want tae take any more ae this.’

Infidelity was another major factor which influenced women’s decisions to leave. Four of the participants reported leaving when their partner’s infidelity became overt. These women reported that they were aware of infidelity during relationships but left when it was no longer hidden from view. The infidelity noted in both cases below is at the most extreme end of the spectrum. In Christina’s case, her husband moved his new partner into their family home whilst she still lived there with the children.

> Ah think it wis the time he brought his other woman into the house, and he threw Child Two across the floor. She came in and the two ae them went up the stairs and left me sitting in the kitchen wae Child One and Child Two. Child Two wis breaking her heart cause he hid thrown her across the floor. (Christina)

> It wis actually when ah caught him wae ma sister. And that wis ma sister who supported me through the breakup, and she broke up wae her husband at the same time. That wis at ma birthday party in her house. So, that wis the end. That wis like, ‘Enough’s enough. Ah cannae take this any mair!’ (Angie)

Janice’s turning point came after fifteen years when an episode of domestic violence resulted in her jaw being broken. Two women noted that their turning point came at the same time that they finally decided to ‘fight back’.

> I slapped him. He was going nark, nark, nark in my face, and I just hit him. I don’t know where it came from, I just hit him. I knew that was a mistake, because he

> would probably hit me back, and he did … Basically he broke ma jaw. I realised then I just couldn't carry on. (Janice)

> He came in and Child Two wis aboot thirteen, fourteen. She wis getting bigger and he came doon moanin aboot money or something and I jist threw the money at him. So, he went tae hit me and Child Two grabbed him and she says, 'Don't you dare hit my ma.' So, we started hitting him. He locked his'self in the kitchen and phoned the polis. The polis came and he says, 'I'm sorry, ah need tae tell ye's tae go.' The polis put us oot. The polis took us tae the homeless unit and that wis it. (Brenda)

In conclusion, the decision to leave partners and embark on lone motherhood was, for the majority, the product of both cumulative effects of domestic abuse and a final major act of violence or betrayal. However, the interviews highlighted that effects of domestic abuse often continued to impact family life after relationships ended.

7.5 Implications of Domestic Abuse for Family Life – 'I'd Like to Think They Heard More Than They Seen.'

Interviews highlighted that for the majority of families, domestic abuse continued to have negative effects on family life after relationship breakdowns. During interviews, most women expressed worries relating to children's mental health and exposure to domestic abuse and strategies employed to minimise this. Frances described her tactic of silencing herself to limit her children's exposure to abusive incidents.

> Ah wid like tae think that they heard more than they seen. It got tae the stage when we were arguing that ah jist stopped talking, thinking that if ah wis quiet the kids'll no wake up or come intae the living room.

However, despite these measures, participants invariably explained that domestic abuse resulted in a range of emotional challenges for children. Over half connected their children's emotional and mental health difficulties to domestic abuse.

> Ye don't realise that the kids are actually taking aw this on board and listen tae everything that's getting said tae me and stuff, know whit ah mean, so it wis kinda

> hard fur them as well. Ah think the younger wan wis a bit too young, but noo that she's aulder, when she thinks back, she kind of remembers stuff. (Christina)

> Child One basically isnae in a relationship. He disnae want tae get intae a relationship in case history repeats itself, in case he gets intae an abusive relationship. (Mary)

All participants within the study reflected that over life-course, they had found it difficult to support children to manage feelings around fathers, abuse and leaving. This was attributed to the cumulative pressures of mothering alone and the struggles the women themselves faced in processing domestic abuse experiences. Several women appeared to be conflicted about whether they had been able to adequately meet their children's emotional and physical needs.

> I couldn't meet them all. I couldn't because I had my own. I know that sounds selfish, but unless I got things together for myself, I was no use whatsoever. (Janice)

> Aw, my daughter's completely went doo-wally. Ah've been tae therapy and aw that and they tell me that she's just took in so much aboot her faither and ah think that's mebbe whit it is. She jist took it so hard no hivin her dad. (Brenda)

Frances's partner suicided very shortly after she left him (see Table 6.10). His suicide had a major impact on the wellbeing of the family, which resulted in her children experiencing serious mental health issues. Frances explained that she perceived his suicide to be a final grand act of control: a long-lasting emotional punishment for leaving.

Four women told stories which illustrated that children's subsequent relationships with fathers resulted in emotional instability and strain and additional emotional labours for mothers. Moreover, the majority of the women experienced stalking and threats of children being taken by fathers after relationship breakdown. These threats contributed strongly towards fear and paranoia for many participants. Moreover, at least half the group reported significantly altering the places they went to and the people they socialised with in order to minimise risk of contact with abusers.

> After him and I split up, he used tae phone me all the time threatening, saying if he seen them in the street he wis gonnae take them tae a remote part of Scotland and

> ah'd never see them again. I couldn't trust anyone and I kept to the back streets. (Christina)

Taken together these findings demonstrate that the ripples of male abuse continued to have an emotional impact on all families after the transition to lone motherhood. Though the extent of these effects varied between families, the extra labour involved in supporting children to navigate mental distress formed a significant additional emotional challenge for most mothers. Whether the women had successfully managed to meet their children's emotional needs was subject to much rumination amongst the participant group and invoked a range of complex feelings.

7.6 Relationships with Men in Later Life

Whereas the chapter has thus far has been based on analysis of interview material, the final section also draws upon fieldnotes taken during interviews in participants' homes. This allows for a more rounded snapshot of the places and circumstances in which I found participants. Fieldnotes related to home environments, family dynamics (including overheard conversations with family members) and outward aspects including health and appearance.

> I think it's changed enormously, men and women's relationships. Most people I know of my age are a bit adrift, they look after their parents, they get out and do things, many of them are not dependent on a man. Women tend to live longer than men, so we have to adapt. Most of us just get on with things and start enjoying life. (Janice)

Half of the participant group did not re-partner after leaving abusive relationships. Some, like Anne, who remained single hinted that interactions with men no longer fell within the sphere of friendship.

> Ah know men, but ah don't know them as friends if ye know whit ah mean.

Indeed, the findings suggested that around half of the participant group experienced a distinct shift after lone motherhood which meant future connections with men were tainted with fear and mistrust. Some indicated that counselling they received when engaged with Women's Aid awoke new awareness of power dynamics within relationships with men.

Of the five that went on to re-partner during mid and later life, four were in relationships with men at the time of interviewing. Significantly, the majority of those who did re-partner disclosed further domestic abuse. This finding demonstrates the prevalence of male abuse as an embedded issue within intimate relationships in Easterhouse and might justify the scepticism towards men in the abstaining group. Whilst abstainers exercised personal agency by avoiding relationships, those who did re-partner most often abstained from cohabiting in an effort to avoid residential and economic dependence. My fieldnotes conclude: ‘The vast majority of women sought to maintain independence by keeping men at “arm’s length” to varying degrees.’

The findings also demonstrate that subsequent relationships could often be regarded as less conventional, with, at the time of the interviews, two participants living separately from partners and two married or cohabiting. Women who partnered in later life explained that they were more financially and residentially stable than in previous stages of life-course. Stability meant that nearly all those who were partnered were less inclined to cohabit. The majority made clear that maintaining financial and residential independence was a strategy to mitigate against dependency. Overwhelmingly, the findings suggested that by later life both women who chose to enter relationships and those who abstained were employing strategies to protect themselves against further male abuse, which was viewed as inevitable. This mode of self-protection can be seen as an important facet of what ‘getting by’ meant for women in Easterhouse in later life (discussed in detail in Chapter 11. By later stages in life-course, all participants understood that intimate relationships with men carried a high risk of exposure to control and violence.

> Ah couldn’t trust a man. Ah could never trust a man to live with again. Not after ah’d went through with Partner One. In all the time ah knew Partner Two, he never hit me. Once he lost his temper and put his fist through the door, but he never ever hit me. (Christina)

Christina went on to explain the complexities of how in later life she consciously became both partnered and a lone parent.

> Ah met Partner Two when the girls were at secondary school. We never ever got married or anything, but at the time ah wis looking after ma grandma and the girls were at secondary. We had a son, Partner Two’s only child. Ah brought Child Three up on ma own. Partner Two stayed in his house and ah stayed in mine.

Other women, such as Janice, also engaged in non-conventional relationship models in later life which meant avoiding dependence on men. Janice has been in a long-distance relationship with her partner, who lives in England, for many years. Janice's relationship highlights the shift in societal expectation of marriage. Not only has Janice's second relationship not resulted in marriage or cohabitation, but it also involves regular air travel for her and her partner. Janice's mobility marks a stark contrast between her isolated and economically dependent circumstances in earlier stages of life-course (see Table 6.7).

Another observation from fieldnotes highlighted that those women who engaged in less-conventional relationship models consistently indicated relatively high satisfaction with relationships. Most reflected that they enjoyed the choice and freedom associated with living separately and suiting themselves.

> He moved to England, so we see each other about once a week – he flies up. … It's a great arrangement. You know people think there's something weird if you only see him once a week and go out for lunch. We don't conform to the norm, and it suits us. Love him to bits. (Janice)

Women in partnerships gave no strong indication of new partners providing emotional support or being significantly involved in family affairs. Thus, I observed that women's relationships with men in later life appeared to follow some of the same patterns as earlier relationships in that they generated little support in the realms of emotional, practical or economic support and often displayed signs of male abuses of power. Yet, most women reported satisfaction with current relationships rooted in the absence of dependence. In my journal I observed: 'Those in relationships seem to still expect little from men beyond their physical presence.'

7.7 Conclusion

The findings presented in this chapter have shown that cultures of male dominance and control have had major and consistent implications for participants' entry into lone motherhood and subsequent negotiation of lone motherhood throughout life-course. To a large extent, the dominant male ideology of Easterhouse, especially within the early decades of the research period, dictated participants' personal freedoms and motherhood roles. By later life, most of the women were largely more guarded in their relationships with men on account of past abuse experiences. The following chapter will move on to address the research findings about the wider attributes of place and the challenges posed by residency in Easterhouse.

Chapter 8 : Negotiating Lone Motherhood in Easterhouse – ‘We Wur Powerless to Make Changes – Big Changes.’

8.1 The Journey into Lone Motherhood in Easterhouse

The data shows that all participants experienced toxic relationships with men, which strongly contributed towards lone motherhood. This chapter and the one that follows explore how life in Easterhouse and then the experience of poverty impacted on women after leaving these relationships. This chapter primarily addresses the aspect of the research question (see Section 1.3.3) which seeks to contextualise the challenges of place and gender for lone mothers in Easterhouse.

The findings relating to women’s experiences of living and lone parenting in the Easterhouse neighbourhood of Glasgow are presented. Building on the previous chapter, the first section focuses on how the context of Easterhouse influenced the transition to lone motherhood. Section 8.2 examines the findings around housing and the built environment. Section 8.3 explores findings relating to women’s engagement with public services and Section 8.4 to women’s perceptions of safety and crime. Section 8.5 examines stigma, and the final section looks at women’s interaction with place in later life.

8.1.1 Homelessness and Rehousing – ‘Ah Needed to Move Pretty Quickly.’

Overwhelmingly, housing posed the most immediate concern for all participants during the transition to lone motherhood. All but one experienced initial homelessness. Janice was exceptional in that she was able to stay in her four-bedroom council property after her marriage breakdown. Janice’s biography illustrates that homelessness was prevented by the intervention of her mother-in-law (see Table 6.7). With six children, Janice had a particularly large family. After the relationship breakdown, her mother-in-law insisted that her son move back to her home as four-bedroom council tenancies were relatively few in Easterhouse. This act of female solidarity meant that Janice was able to use her ‘Right to Buy’ to purchase the property and secure economic stability in later life.

However, all other participants experienced initial homelessness and sought housing support from a range of sources. Six received temporary refuge accommodation from Easterhouse Women's Aid, who supported them to make homelessness housing applications to Glasgow City Council (GCC). One woman was immediately placed within a homelessness unit by the police. Two further women initially moved in with family members and made homeless housing applications. Consequently, the majority of the women relied on female family members for support or feminist organisations such as Women's Aid to escape abusive situations.

It was evident in interviews that participants who initially moved in with family members experienced challenges relating to overcrowding and re-entering toxic family environments. Seven women had experienced severe overcrowding in their family homes in earlier life-course. For the women who returned to family homes with children due to homelessness, overcrowding and household poverty was often brought to crisis point. These women expressed awareness of the extra strain which their presence placed on already difficult family environments.

> Ye did things tae keep the peace. Ah wis sharing a bedroom wae ma three sisters and ma two kids. It wis hard. (Christina)

Women who entered the homelessness housing system directly or through Women's Aid faced other challenges. GCC allocation policies during the 1980s and 1990s stipulated that women who were homeless as a result of domestic abuse should be rehoused in other parts of the city. Frances explained her experience of navigating domestic abuse allocations policies.

> Well, when ah wis in this homeless flat, they said, 'Well, yer living in Easterhouse, so we'll move ye tae the other end of the city.' Ah went, 'Ah've a job in Easterhouse.' It wis just round the corner. They said, 'For yer own safety, yer better off going tae the other end ae the city.' Ah said, 'That's no gonna work fer me, ah've got a job and kids at school, ah don't want tae move away. Ma husband will find me wherever ah go.'

Each of the women who took part in the study wished to be rehoused in the estate due to their established social networks and local connections. All those who experienced homelessness agreed that rehousing across the city would not only disrupt family connections but also dislocate children from schools and friendship groups. Despite policies advocating relocation, each of those who had experienced homelessness managed to secure tenancies in Easterhouse. This involved making a case for their preference and sometimes enlisting advocacy support. Women's Aid were noted as key housing advocates for the majority of women.

> Ah needed tae move pretty quickly. The housing department[6] got Women's Aid involved. The council says they'd put me intae a homeless unit, like out the way where he wouldnae find me. But the thought ae that scared me even more than being wae ma husband. (Angie)

Several women highlighted difficulties in accessing housing information and support. Challenges relating to housing advice after domestic abuse were a symptom of the wider absence of domestic abuse services in Easterhouse until the mid 1990s. It is important to note that each woman who reported difficulties in accessing housing advice had split from partners prior to the establishment of Easterhouse Women's Aid in the 1990s.

> Back then ye weren't told what ye could do or where ye could go. There wis no help there. Ah didn't know whether ah coulda got a house in the town where I was living or anything. (Christina)

Christina fled from her abuser, leaving behind all her household possessions and furniture.

> Yeah, cause when ah hid ma own house in [nearby town], ah hid all ma own things, but when ah moved back tae ma mum's ah didn't have anything except the baby's cot – everything was left behind.

This was the case for nearly all participants. After women were made offers of housing, they often struggled to furnish properties. Some were able to access limited furniture from Easterhouse Women's Aid. However, the interviews indicated that the majority received little support to access the furnishings they would need to make their new homes comfortable. In most cases, women took up to a decade to feel like they had begun to adequately 'make a home' for their families.

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[6] Housing allocations department within GCC.

> Don’t get me wrong, ah had tae start over from nothing. Most of the stuff we got was second hand, but it didn’t matter because it was ours. We made do. (Christina)

Participants highlighted that housing instability during transition was one of the most difficult stages of lone motherhood. Yet, each reflected positively that they had been rehoused relatively quickly. Population decline during the 1980s and 1990s meant that women could expect to be allocated housing in Easterhouse quickly due to the number of empty properties.

> See, years ago in the auld days ye used tae say, ‘Oh, if ah hiv a wean ah’ll get a cooncil hoose,’ and ye probably did because there wis tons ae cooncil hooses then.

This suggests that, despite homelessness allocations systems initially proving difficult to navigate, once applications were in place, systems worked efficiently to provide housing. During interviews women were asked to reflect on their allocation of housing in Easterhouse. Though nearly all had expressed a preference for rehousing within the estate due to local connections, most felt their choices to be limited. All were aware of Easterhouse’s deprived and undesirable status.

> Nobody wanted to live there. Ye were living there because there was nowhere else for ye tae go. (Mary)

Despite ambivalence, most felt compelled to stay due to established support networks and local connections. In most cases local connection was closely tied up in notions of support, safety and security.

8.1.2 Mental Health and Early Lone Motherhood – ‘Sometimes Ye Get tae the Edge of Whit You’re Able to Do. It’s Like Stepping Off a Precipice.’

The previous section highlighted that entering lone motherhood resulted in a range of practical challenges related to housing and short-term financial crisis. In fact, the physical act of entering lone motherhood was a powerful and defining life-course event for all. Often, the practical challenges were those upon which participants initially chose to focus. However, as interviews progressed and trust was built, the women began to reflect more broadly on the emotional effects of lone motherhood, which evolved with new stages of child development.

Across the group, all but one woman reported ongoing mental health issues. Each of these women explained that mental health issues were already present during intimate relationships. Half reported that they had experienced diagnosed or undiagnosed postnatal depression. Additionally, over half relayed that they had experienced severe mental health crises, which resulted in single or multiple periods of hospitalisation. Half disclosed suicide attempts or thoughts of suicide during or after relationships. Moreover, four women disclosed histories of addiction.

The high incidence of mental health issues highlights that the combined effects of poverty, place and lone motherhood had a distinctly negative impact on mental health. The majority of the women connected mental health struggles most closely to domestic violence and the emotional strains of transitioning to lone parenting. The powerlessness associated with being abused and the enforced responsibilities of being 'The One' resulted in mental health deterioration for most.

> Ah think sometimes ye get tae the edge of what you're able to do and when ye get tae the edge ye can fall over. It's like stepping off a precipice that ye didn't know wis there. (Christina)

Six reported hiding mental health issues from family, friends and professionals. This came at a high cost, with those who did not seek support all experiencing periods of mental health crisis once children reached teenage and adult years. Most women who hid mental health issues reported fear of children being taken into care as their main barrier to seeking help. Mary explained that she refused support for fear of having her power to choose taken away. Mary's biography (see Table 6.2) reflects that her fears were well founded. She had several periods of enforced hospitalisation in later life after seeking help for her mental health issues.

> Ah've spent that many years on ma own, it wis too hard tae let people in. Ah wis frightened they would take ma kids away and frightened what they would do tae me.

Amongst the women who hid mental health struggles, most experienced several periods of crisis.

> Ah had two serious breakdowns; both times ah wis hospitalised. Ah hid six lots of electric shock treatment both times. Ah wis actually in a locked ward for six months at a time. It wasn’t as if ye could go home at the end of the day. (Christina)

Crucially, five participants also explained that neighbourhood conditions within Easterhouse compounded poor mental health related to the onset of lone motherhood. All described the exterior state of housing during the early part of the research period in very negative terms.

> It wis a slum. They put the underprivileged in there. (Mary)

> Even jist looking at the buildings years ago ye used tae feel depressed. (Brenda)

Janice, the only participant who hadn’t grown up in Glasgow, described her perspective of Easterhouse when she moved there in 1969:

> My first impression was just horrendous. It was just row upon row, upon row, on row of housing, all the same.

Entering lone motherhood and being rehoused within Easterhouse was reported as a major life event which resulted in distinctly negative mental health effects. Whilst many women had experience of mental health issues prior to entering lone motherhood, most recognised that these were compounded by the negative effects of male hegemony, neighbourhood and strains of lone motherhood.

8.2 Housing and the Built Environment – The Early Decades

During the interviewing process all participants were asked to provide their impressions of Easterhouse during the 1980s and 1990s. Photographs of housing, local landmarks, transport and public spaces were used to aid recall. The majority of women tended to focus upon their impressions of housing conditions on the estate. This was perhaps unsurprising, given the significance of home as the main arena of women’s lived experience. The inadequacy of public services at that time meant that housing was the overwhelmingly dominant feature of the built environment until the twenty-first century.

Half of the participant group moved back to Easterhouse in the 1980s and 1990s. Returners gave particularly powerful accounts of their impressions of the neighbourhood after living away. The insights of these women were important as they provided a different frame of reference from those who had always lived within the estate. Indeed, all women who later expressed dissatisfaction with housing repair and design belonged to the group who had lived elsewhere and moved back to Easterhouse. Thus, it might be observed that women who lived continuously in Easterhouse were more likely to be accepting of poor housing conditions.

> Well, ah wis used tae Easterhouse cause ah'd grown up in it as a kid. It wasn't nice coming back from [New Town] because it was all new. It was all new, lovely and clean and so were all the houses. So it was a let-down leaving [New Town] and coming back tae Easterhouse. (Christina)

Other returners were more measured about their impressions of housing. Both Lorna and Joan recognised poor housing conditions but also noted that these were particularly concentrated within specific neighbourhoods. Lorna returned in the 1990s.

> The area wisnae as run down actually as whit it used tae be. Cause it wis quite run doon when ah left. Ah think we were so used tae it being run down ye didnae feel like ye were different fae anywhere else. Ah think that it had started to show signs of improvement in some areas, but probably not the area that ah wis in.

A few women noted that there was a period around the start of the 1980s where they began to notice a new demographic of larger families moving into the estate who were more visibly impoverished. Table 4.1 shows that both unemployment and rates of lone-parent families grew markedly during the decade. Some participants suggested that the evident poverty of new residents combined with their lack of resources to make houses and gardens homely contributed towards their perceptions of Easterhouse as a slum.

> Easterhouse wis quite poverty stricken in the early eighties ah wid say. Ah felt as though the families that came in wur worse off. They were worse off than we had been and most ae them that came in wur oan benefits all the time. There wisnae always households wae working people in them. (Lorna)

The distinction between different neighbourhoods within Easterhouse was clearly important. A sense of belonging tended to be attached to smaller neighbourhoods. Additionally, belonging to specific neighbourhoods attracted additional respect or stigma depending on neighbourhood status. The majority of women identified specific neighbourhoods, streets or buildings which were regarded as particularly ‘poor’, run down and undesirable for housing allocation.

However, many identified that whilst the exterior conditions of housing in Easterhouse made the estate identifiable as a ‘slum’, the interior conditions were most impactful on their abilities to ‘get by’ and navigate the emotional challenges of lone motherhood.

8.2.1 The Domestic Realm – ‘Her Indoors’

Several participants noted the importance women in Easterhouse attached to housekeeping and keeping a clean home. During interviews, several suggested that cleanliness was a strategy used to negotiate the shame that could accompany poverty. All were aware of Easterhouse’s undesirable reputation and the connotations of poverty and filth. Thus, maintaining household cleanliness was an act of agency which gave dignity to their experience of poverty. To maintain internal cleanliness in the midst of ‘slum’ housing conditions signified a refusal to assimilate the characteristics of poverty.

> Very poor [outside], but they took a pride in the indoors. (Janice)

Participants also reflected on the internal condition of homes and the implications for ‘getting by’. Women who had been rehoused prior to the 1980s tended to reflect positively on the benefits of amenities such as fitted kitchens, bathrooms and central heating. Anne moved to Easterhouse from a ‘room and kitchen’ in the mid 1960s (see Table 6.8).

> Well, it wis great fer me because we hid three bedrooms and a bathroom. I could have a bath! It wis great fer us because we used to have an outside toilet. We actually had tae go to the swimming baths if we wanted a bath.

However, not all participants were as satisfied. The majority relayed stories of poor-quality housing in the early years of lone motherhood. The women’s testimonies strongly echoed the description of housing challenges in Easterhouse set out in Chapter 4. Overarching issues relating to dampness, mould and ‘hard-to-heat’ properties during the 1980s and 1990s were identified by almost all.

> Well, at first it wis coal fires and it wis hard tae heat, but then ah got gas fires in the living room. Ah hid tae use the wee electric blowers for the bedrooms. It wis steel frame windows and in the wintertime they used tae freeze up. Ye hid icicles in the windows. It looked lovely but it wis freezing. (Christina)

Women who experienced persistent damp and mould noted health conditions in their children. However, they felt unable to directly connect these to housing conditions due to lack of evidence. Despite repeated attempts to address these issues with the local council, each struggled to access adequate repairs.

8.2.3 Dependency on Structures of Power for Allocations and Repairs – ‘We Wur Powerless to Make Changes, Big Changes.’

Section 8.1.1 set out the difficulties posed by homelessness allocations policies after domestic abuse. GCC held much power during this time to prescribe areas in which women may be rehoused. The interviews also highlighted that once women had been rehoused, they often continued to be relatively dependent on the council for repairs and building maintenance. Frustrations around housing repairs was a source of challenge and strain for half the participants.

All but one were council tenants during the early years of lone motherhood. Angie was the exception. She had bought a house with her husband soon after marriage, but conceded that this was unusual amongst her peer group in Easterhouse. Angie was also unusual in that she moved between social housing and owner occupation several times over her life-course (see Table 6.5). Angie went on to buy several properties and currently owns her home in a development in which she had aspired to live since its construction in the early 2000s.

> Ah got married 1986, at nineteen, but maself and ma husband wis working, so we hid a good wage coming in. After a year married we were able tae buy a house, well a flat, so we were, ah widnae say ‘well off’, but it wis a far cry fae whit ah grew up wae ten years before.

The remaining nine participants were all council tenants during the 1980s and 1990s. Four tenants reported no specific issues relating to housing repair during that period. These women had all remained in partnerships for at least ten years. Three of the four were partnered with men employed in trades. All described satisfaction with housing conditions and noted that partners were involved in maintaining and improving décor and housing fixtures during relationships. This demonstrated that home improvement was one domestic area where men tended to be more involved. It also highlighted that partnered women tended to experience less difficulty relating to poor-quality housing due to men's practical skills and resources. Conversely, however, women in partnerships continued to be dependent on men to fulfil household maintenance.

Amongst the five who did experience difficulties accessing repairs, all were council tenants during the 1980s and 1990s. These women perceived the council to have 'washed their hands' of housing in Easterhouse during this time. They often reported feeling repeatedly 'fobbed off' by the council when they attempted to report issues such as damp, mould or crumbling walls.

> It wis only major repairs, like being like wind and waterproof, and that wid be what repairs ye got done. But internal repairs were very much 'No, if ye want it fixed ye need tae fix it yerself' basically because it wisnae a priority. They always, they 'never had the money' they said. (Lorna)

In her interviews, Lorna went on to describe how she felt GCC had abdicated responsibility for carrying out repairs to properties, which contributed towards poverty and poor mental health.

> It was very, very stressful. Ah used tae get quite upset with the housing officer cause they would jist say, 'No, it's not our problem,' and ah'm like, 'Well, ah don't have any money tae do it. How am ah supposed tae get it fixed!' … Quite often being a female it wis harder because they knew ye were there on yer own and they wurnae listening. So, even if ye were in the right, that part ae ye being a female, it wis like 'Ach, it disnae matter.'

Taken together, the data suggests that women were often extremely dependent on structures of power within the local council in terms of both allocations and maintenance of allocated properties. Lone women replaced dependence on a partner with dependence upon the local council. The problem with this was that housing repair departments were often governed by men who adhered to the same male working-class ideological orthodoxy as intimate partners. This translated into lack of care, not being willing to spend money and devaluing lone mothers’ emotional and physical labours.

Consequently, the findings suggest that lone mothers were impacted particularly badly by poor housing conditions due to their reduced social status and lack of practical and financial resources. Several women described feeling powerless to affect any positive influence over their housing situation. Indeed, amongst most a real sense of resignation to the futility of attempting to improve housing conditions was apparent.

> We wur powerless tae make changes, big changes. (Mary)

Accounts highlighted that at least half of participants felt that the change to housing-association landlordship in the 1990s and 2000s contributed towards improved housing conditions and resident empowerment. Some observed the importance of housing associations as social landlords in driving forward significant housing improvement. Others placed more emphasis on welfare-based services provided by associations.

> The local housing association, much as people sometimes moan about them, they hiv made a big, big difference tae the area because they’ve been able to access money, funding, and also what they bring in tae make changes tae the properties and make them more liveable and give people back a bit ae pride in their home ah suppose. (Lorna)

To conclude, the data highlights that the 1980s and 1990s was a period where lone mothers were likely to be especially negatively affected by poor housing conditions in Easterhouse. At least half reported difficulties in accessing council repairs. Poor housing repair resulted in declining mental and physical health for women and children. The development of the housing-association sector was viewed by many as the beginning of positive change in housing. This was attributed to responsiveness and associations being led by the needs of the local community. Furthermore, for a significant number, the rise of the housing-association movement in Easterhouse represented an important source of community empowerment.

8.2.4 Housing Improvement – 'People Take More Pride in Where They're Living.'

> Ah think the first thing that anybody would see when they came intae Easterhouse is the new houses. The number of people that've been away and come back and said, 'Ah couldnae believe ma eyes, driving through Easterhouse and seeing all these new houses.' (Frances)

All participants reported that both neighbourhood and individual housing conditions had dramatically improved over the past twenty to thirty years. Moreover, there was wide consensus that the physical environment of Easterhouse is better now than it had been during women's earlier life stages.

> It jist kind of a brings the morale up, knowing that yer no looking at auld dingy tenement buildings that's falling apart. … They were derelict fer years, so ye looked oot the windae doon the street and that's aw ye seen. Noo they're aw away and they're building nice new hooses. Ah think it jist makes ye feel better knowing that ye live in that community that's looking a lot nicer. (Angie)

Chapter 4 set out the history of regenerative interventions in Easterhouse from the 1980s onwards. The literature highlighted that though some regeneration was targeted towards addressing socio-economic decline, the central focus from the 1990s onwards was housing demolition and redevelopment. Thus, it was somewhat expected that women unanimously cited housing improvement as the most meaningful aspect of neighbourhood change experienced during their life-course.

A number experienced being 'decanted'[7] with their children during periods where tenancies were being improved or demolished. The language of 'decantment' suggests a refined experience of being seamlessly poured from one environment to another. The reality for most families, however, was a process of being shunted between various forms of temporary accommodation over a period of several years. Furthermore, the experience caused disruption and further poverty for women who had often put meagre financial resources into home improvements.

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[7] To be temporarily rehoused during housing improvement.

> When ma daughter wis fifteen we got decanted. We were actually hoping they wouldn't need tae decant us, but we got decanted anyway. We were up there fer a year and a half. Our homes used tae be four high and they brought them doon tae two. They were absolutely lovely. Fitted kitchen, central heating. (Joan)

Joan's account reflects both the difficulties and positive results of displacement and regenerative housing improvement. Participants' testimonies suggested that prior to major housing redevelopment GCC had adopted a 'do it yourself' approach towards housing maintenance. It has already been noted that women perceived that they had often to foot the bill for improving substandard housing. Demolition and redevelopment meant the loss of much of the investment they poured into improving crumbling properties.

During interviews, participants were asked to elaborate on the aspects of housing improvement which had been most impactful. Several emphasised benefits such as more space, higher ceilings, central heating and fitted kitchens and bathrooms. Some noted the benefits of more-diverse forms of housing which made the built environment less uniform. Most agreed that housing improvement resulted in greater pride and resident satisfaction.

> I think it's made a huge difference. People take more pride in where they're living. (Janice)

An important focus for all women was that many of the newly designed flats included the addition of 'back and front doors' and gardens. Back and front doors were something to aspire to, having always inferred a degree of respectability in Glasgow.

> Housing's a lot better, aw they big stupit tenement buildings are aw doon. It's aw lovely wee hooses wae back and front doors. (Brenda)

Over half of the women reported newly acquired gardens as a major source of pride, which contributed towards better mental health. Christina explained that having access to her own garden was an important milestone. Her garden became a sanctuary which allowed her to connect with nature and improve mental wellbeing.

> It's freedom. Ah love tae watch the animals and the birds, ah've got ma bird feeder right outside. Ah love tae see flowers growing and everything. That's where ah take ma enjoyment from, watching things like that.

Thus, the accounts highlighted that the women generally felt a greater sense of pride in the neighbourhood following housing regeneration. Interestingly, some perceived housing development to have altered women's engagement with the neighbourhood. Joan reflected that regeneration investment in housing meant that residents were more willing to invest personal resources.

> The housing did change a lot ae people, ye know, new houses, and they thought, 'Oh, ah need tae keep it like this.' So ah think in that way it did help tae change people.

8.3 Neighbourhood Infrastructure and the Sufficiency of Services in Easterhouse

The public and private services discussed within this section relate directly to transport, shopping provision and greenspace, services which underpinned the mechanics of daily life in Easterhouse through the research period. The findings are based upon the data gathered during the photo-elicitation stage of the research and focus upon the aspects of public services emphasised by participants.

8.3.1 Public Transport and 'Hoofin It'[8]

Easterhouse's geographical isolation from Glasgow city centre and the neighbouring East End meant that leaving the estate involved significant travel. Chapter 4 highlighted that car ownership was very low throughout the research period. Moreover, women were statistically less likely than men to have access to a car and consequently relied heavily on public transport to leave the estate (Keating, 1987). None of the study participants held driving licences. Interviews clearly demonstrated that economic deprivation would have prohibited any of the women from accessing driving lessons or buying vehicles during earlier stages of life-course. Yet, half were partnered with men who drove and had access to vehicles. Thus, reliance on public transport and social isolation were issues with strongly gendered dimensions.

The data highlighted that seven of the participant group rarely travelled on buses during early and mid life-course due to cost. These women reported rarely leaving Easterhouse and relying mainly upon walking or 'hoofin it' for transport. Women who mainly walked also highlighted that buses often did not stop in or near their neighbourhoods. This meant that even accessing bus stops presented challenges. For Una this meant an eight-mile round trip to visit her mother.

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[8] To walk a long distance on foot.

> There wouldnae be a bus or anything like that gaun up there, ye walked most places, and lack ae money. Most times ah put the weans in the pram and walked doon tae ma mum's at Parkhead.

Several of the women explained that their poverty meant that they were demotivated to travel. The majority of those who did not regularly use public transport felt that to travel was futile due to lack of money. Furthermore, trips into the city centre were rare.

> Ye felt disconnected, cause it wis only the wealthy people that could go intae town. Ye couldnae go shopping, that wis jist a no-no, cause there wis no money tae go shopping. (Mary)

Janice explained that her reluctance to leave Easterhouse was rooted in shame around poverty.

> I did go in once [to Glasgow] for some particular reason. I remember walking down Sauchiehall Street [9]… It was lunchtime and people were coming out of the shops and offices and things like that, and everybody was so well dressed, really smart, and I felt so shabby. I was crying when I got home because I felt drab, because I couldn't afford the things that other people seemed to be able to afford.

In addition to poverty, motherhood presented its own challenges to leaving Easterhouse. A number of the women explained that only one pram would be allowed on a bus at a time. This meant in effect that having children who were too young to walk prevented women from leaving the estate on buses before the era of fold-up push chairs. In the absence of accessible public transport, women were literally marooned. Moreover, the experience of being 'stuck' within the estate with children meant that Easterhouse was the main arena for the vast majority of daily lived experiences.

Anne described her struggles to visit her parents, who lived on the other side of the city.

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[9] Glasgow's main shopping precinct at the time.

> We walked. When Child One and Child Two were young, he wid be in a pram and Child Two wid be walking. Then when Child Three came, Child Three wis in a pram and they two were walking. … Eventually the two ae them would be walking cause there wis another baby. Of course, there wis no way ye could get a pram on these buses at that point.

Three participants reported regularly using public transport in both early and mid stages of life-course. Each of these women used buses and trains to travel to places of work daily, notably without children. By contrast to the experience of the women who mainly remained within Easterhouse, this group perceived public transport to be adequate and reliable. Furthermore, all lived within central parts of the estate with easy access to bus stops.

> It wis quite easy. Easterhouse has always really had a good bus service. I cannae moan about it. (Joan)

8.3.2 Shopping and the Pursuit of Leisure – 'Ye Didnae Get the Best ae Stuff.'

The previous section established that the majority of women had limited access to transport and travel during childrearing years. This meant that Easterhouse was the central focus for most women's daily routines. During the discussion, women also discussed other key attributes of community infrastructure which powerfully affected their experience of place, shopping and access to parks and greenspace.

Access to shops and shopping within the estate was an overriding concern for almost all, mainly for the purchase of food. Over half noted that prior to the construction of Glasgow Fort,[10] shopping centred mainly around The Lochs[11] and small local corner shops and mobile shops (vans).

Women's reliance on small businesses was attributed to their willingness to 'give tick'[12] and accessibility. Ice cream vans that stopped on the street several times per day sold some groceries and offered credit and were important cornerstones in the fabric of Easterhouse which allowed women to get by until payday. Eight participants within the group reported that reliance on poorly stocked local shops and vans negatively impacted on household diet. Most of the women acknowledged that food, especially fruit and vegetables, was both more expensive and poorer quality in local shops than in bigger, outlying shops.

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[10] A large 'out of town' shopping and leisure park on the western periphery of Easterhouse. It houses a large number of relatively high-end retailers.

[11] Built in the 1960s and previously known as the Shandwick Centre. It houses a small selection of low-cost food and grocery outlets as well as some cafes.

[12] Short-term credit, usually granted from week to week.

> Ye didnae get the best ae stuff. Ye never got yer good veg and yer good fruit. (Brenda)

Additionally, a majority recognised links between food and class. It was widely acknowledged by most that limited shopping facilities and poverty resulted in poor diet. Nearly all women disclosed feelings of shame relating to feeding their families on convenience foods which were readily available from vans and corner shops. The findings suggested that the lack of affordable food and accessible shops was an issue of which many women were keenly aware but powerless to change.

The class-based diet disparity was highlighted by Janice, the only participant who originated from a middle-class background. Janice was acutely aware of her English, middle-class background and the ways in which her cultural habitus set her apart as different (see Table 6.7). During interviews Janice noted both the lack of access to fresh food within her local neighbourhood and the critical differences between her family's diet and that of her neighbours.

> I remember one young mum going up and down to the nursery and we were talking about what we were giving the kids for lunch, and she said, 'Aw, ah'm just giving him a roll 'n' chips, what're you giving him?' I said, 'A banana sandwich.' She went, 'A banana sandwich?!'

In addition to small local shops, The Lochs was highlighted by participants as a central amenity. Indeed, its indoor design made it a popular meeting place for many of the women. During the 1990s the centre became a well-known place of drug use and was noted by several women as a space within the estate which was particularly unsafe. The majority of women recognised the centre as a symbolic site of decay which mirrored the decline of the wider estate. Moreover, the prevalence of drug users within the shopping centre led many women to stay away and rely solely on local corner shops and vans.

> At one point the shopping centre hid a toilet that the junkies[13] would all use tae do what they do. Eventually the toilets got shut because ae the junkies using it. (Christina)

The construction of the Fort in 2004 was noted by all participants as a major milestone for Easterhouse which brought an increased range of shops and public services. However, over half the women reflected that it was a public space in which social class was experienced negatively. Participants reflected that the prices of high-end retailers were completely beyond the means of most people in Easterhouse.

> Ah think that local people felt as though the Fort wis built fer outsiders tae come in, rather than fer us tae use. They deliberately made the Fort fer a different clientele fae Easterhouse. (Frances)

However, four welcomed the new facilities as bringing opportunities for entertainment and leisure. Amongst this group, each had been in full-time employment and was a homeowner, with associated improved financial wellbeing.

Other leisure facilities and new services such as Platform Arts Centre and the sports centre were noted as spaces in which women felt financially and culturally stigmatised. On one hand, they praised the growing range and quality of public services and at the same time reported feeling that their class and financial status excluded them from making use of these spaces.

> They built the sports centre and there’s aw this hype, but they outpriced local people and local people couldnae afford tae use it. Although that wis a great amenity, local people couldnae use it. (Frances)

8.3.3 Wasteland, Greenspace and Parks – Negotiating Public Space

When discussing photos provided in the interviews, women emphasised reliance on greenspace and parklands as a means to get by the challenges of daily life. Seven highlighted the value they placed upon proximity and accessibility of countryside and parklands. Una explained that walking and enjoying the local countryside were important aspects of place which supported her to manage mental health issues whilst her children were growing up.

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[13] People with heroin addiction.

> One thing ye could do was take them walks. We used tae walk, eight miles there and back to Drumpellier Park wae the kids in the pram. Some ae the farmers still hid their wheat fields, and ye could play hide 'n' seek and everything else.

Like Una, Christina used the woods and countryside close to her home as an escape from trauma related to domestic violence and stalking. Her grandmother had taught her to love and respect nature. During midlife her ex-partner continued to stalk her and threaten to abduct her children after her relationship breakdown (see Table 6.9). Christina relayed that spending time in the countryside surrounding Easterhouse was an important strategy for promoting wellbeing. After being allocated a new 'back and front door' flat in the 2000s, Christina's garden became another important focus for her love of nature.

> Having that bit of countryside was tremendous because it gave me an escape from everything else. Ye could lose yerself down the woods. The girls liked making pictures wae broken trees and leaves, making wee dens. We'd pick flowers then came back home and tried tae find out what the flowers were and if they were any good for anything. Berries, brambles, wild strawberries and raspberries.

However, the proximity of greenspace and disused industrial land also meant that the natural environment was a source of anxiety for mothers within the estate who worried about children being hurt whilst playing in urban wasteland. Danger within public spaces was often linked to delinquency and threat of violence. Three of the women noted that their children had been abducted or seriously injured whilst playing on wasteland around the estate linked to disused railway lines or canals. Two of Una's children experienced near-fatal injuries.

> Ma son had hid an accident playing on a rope swing up the auld school. Aulder teenage boys were there. He wis only a wee boy, and they told him to get off it. But he widnae, so they pulled the bottom of the swing. … They pulled it, and pulled it taut, and bounced him right up in the air. Came back doon on his head and he wis in a coma fur aboot seven days. Thought we wur gonnae lose him.

During interviews, the women reflected on their use of designated parks within the neighbourhood. Over half of the participant group noted significant barriers which prevented them from using parks and play equipment. Mary explained that she avoided using her local park when her children were small.

> There wis a big park behind us, but ye wurnae allowed in it. They widnae let ye play in it cause it wis aw flowers and roses and things like that and the park keepers wouldnae let ye play oan the grass.

Five women explained that parks in Easterhouse were often unsafe spaces for women and children.

> Even in the park at Auchinlee, ah think they do a lot ae drugs and whatever. Cause a lot ae the time there wis aw needles buried in the sandpits fer kids. (Anne)

> As a wummin ye wouldn't go intae the park by yerself. (Christina)

Eight participants disclosed that they continued to avoid or had to be escorted in public spaces due to threat of violence. Christina went on to explain that despite regeneration, parks and open spaces continued to be unsafe spaces for women.

> Ma son won't allow me tae go intae the park by maself. Yeah, he says it's too dangerous tae go in.

To conclude, fear of violence within public spaces such as parks posed a significant concern for the majority of the women within the study. Parks were noted as key sites of territorial gang violence and substance abuse. The majority of the women reported feeling safer and more relaxed in the countryside surrounding Easterhouse. Consequently, the greenspace was viewed by the vast majority as an important resource for escaping conditions within the estate, taking exercise and promoting mental wellbeing.

8.4 Danger and Personal Safety – 'It Was Worse if They Found Out Ye Were a Single Parent on Yer Own.'

Women's preoccupation with safety and security emerged as a prominent thematic strand which ran through many of the narratives about life in Easterhouse. Several women contextualised their fear of violence by explaining violent neighbourhood conditions in the estate through their early years. Those who had lived in Easterhouse during the 1960s and 1970s often relayed memories of their own experiences.

> Ah wis actually whit we used tae call ‘jumped’ when ah wis younger. Ah wis gaun tae the shops fur ma mum, getting the shopping, ah hid a fiver … and an aulder boy and his pal stopped me and ma pal. She ran away, but the boy split aw my hand open wae a glass bottle tae try and make me release my money. Ah widnae let the money go, cause ah thought, ‘Ah’m no gaun hame tae my ma tae tell her that ah’ve no got dinner fur aw ae us fur the night, that a big boy stole it aff me.’ (Angie)

The findings showed nine participants had been victims of violent crime or had witnessed violent crime unrelated to abusive relationships during adulthood. A few like Joan reflected on the high-profile violence of the ‘Ice Cream Wars’[14] to illustrate the powerful neighbourhood context of violence which framed daily experience.

> We actually hid the Ice Cream Wars up at oor place. There wis only wan van up there at the time and then when every time the wan stopped there’d be two ice cream vans at either side ae them.

The ways in which women identified with personal safety in Easterhouse, however, was complex. All women shared stories which suggested that fear and staying on high alert were important aspects of their lived experience. Half the group relayed extreme fear related to crime and male violence throughout lone motherhood.

> It was worse if they found out ye were a single parent on yer own and nobody there with ye, cause it wis famous fer break-ins and things like that. (Joan)

> It was frightening at night with all the housebreakers. (Janice)

> There wis a lot of violence ’n’ break-ins. I was frightened for us. (Mary)

The remaining participants reported feeling mainly safe within Easterhouse. Yet all had experienced violent crime. Data analysis suggested some conflict between women’s statements about safety and their experience of violence. Anne was one such example. She described memory loss and temporary amnesia after being mugged, yet maintained that she always felt safe in the estate:

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[14] The Ice Cream Wars were turf wars in the East End of Glasgow in the 1980s between rival criminal organisations selling drugs and stolen goods from ice cream vans. Much of the most extreme violence and loss of life happened in Easterhouse.

> Ah’ve always felt safe in Easterhouse, ah really have. Even at that point, ah lost ma voice mind you, and instead ae going back up tae ma daughter’s house, ah jist didnae know whit ah wis dain, ah really didn’t.

The reality was that all participants reported violence and coercion as a dominant feature of life in Easterhouse. As Chapter 6 noted, many had experienced violence as children, and all had experienced domestic abuse in intimate relationships. It appeared that developing a tough exterior had been an important coping mechanism for women. To admit fear to an outsider would be to admit the existence of fear. Admission of fear even in later life was an admission of vulnerability. Lorna told a story which expressed simply her approach to facing male violence.

> It wis quite terrifying, although the boys never knew that ah wis terrified. Ah thought, I cannae go down tae this level and let them see that it’s worrying me.

8.4.1 Crime and Financial Coercion – ‘Takin’ a Lend.’

One of the most overriding concerns relating to the neighbourhood was to avoid being ‘taken a lend of’, which might involve coercion or simply being the victim of crime or theft and referred to women’s desire to avoid further abuse within the neighbourhood. One of the most common experiences was of financial abuse by neighbours and family members. This was noted by several women to be particularly humiliating as it was felt that to be financially abused was considered a sign of weakness.

> Ye know like, tae be at yer door tae ask fer a lend ae money and no come back wae it and things like that. (Joan)

Four women described circumstances where they had experienced regular financial abuse and intimidation from family or neighbours. Brenda explained how she, as a young adult, had sought protection from being ‘taken a lend of’ from a woman from a ‘hard family’. The relationship became financially abusive, and the abuse restarted when she returned to

Easterhouse after her relationship breakdown (see Table 6.1). Brenda described shameful feelings around her inability to stand up to her neighbour's coercive behaviour.

> Ah remember, ah wis only young, and wan ae the lassies fae [neighbourhood in Easterhouse] wis a big crazy wummin. She married the big gang leader, fae here. But ah hid tae dae a lot tae please her, like steal stuff, go oot shoplifting, go oot drinking wae her. … Later oan in life ah hated masel fur it. Before that, ah hid a right good few doins[15] aff ae lassies jist cause they thought, 'Aw, she's soft, jist batter her.' Ah used tae say, 'Oh my god, whit's coming next?' In later years ah hid moved away fae [Easterhouse neighbourhood] fur a long time, but then when ah hid tae come back cause ae circumstances, she ended up the alcoholic and she used tae keep coming tae ma door trying tae sell stuff. Ah didnae want her in ma hoose. It wis so hard and ah felt like, 'God, whit did ah come back here fur?'

Brenda's story illustrated the difficulties faced by lone mothers in Easterhouse. She identified that she was vulnerable to successive cycles of financial abuse due to her vulnerability as a 'soft' woman and later as a lone mother. She was one of only two women who identified themselves as 'soft'. In both cases the soft women felt their passiveness to be a serious barrier to 'getting by' in Easterhouse.

In other cases, women's experiences of crime within the estate were much less insidious. Four women reported being victims of housebreaking through the 1980s and 1990s. Several noted the visibility of heroin addiction on the estate from the 1980s onwards and made a connection between break-ins and rising rates of addiction in Easterhouse.

> Houses were getting broke intae a lot in they days. Ah wid say like starting early eighties. Ah'd been mebbe like intae teenage years and ah wis still hearing there wis people like sniffing glue 'n' stuff, instead ae like noo they take drugs. (Angie)

Housebreaking was noted as a terrifying experience for women on their own with children, with several participants relaying that fear of burglars intensified poor mental health. Women also disclosed being victims of a range of other crimes. Half had experience of being mugged in the estate. Over half of the group disclosed that children had been victims of territorial violence,[16] which in three cases resulted in lifelong disability, and reported difficulties in persuading children to leave the house and in some cases go to school. Janice's story demonstrates how fear of violence within Easterhouse affected the dynamics within families and added to women's emotional labours.

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[15] A 'doing' means to be physically battered.

> My children were scared. They didn't understand territorialism at all when they were young. If I asked them to go to the shops they were very reluctant, because one of them had money taken off them once. They were scared because of the reputation Easterhouse was given.

It is evident that the culture of violence within the estate had broad implications. The data strongly suggested that cultures of violence came to define the very core of women's identities. Being 'hard' and having no fear became such an enmeshed response in women's personas that they often struggled to distinguish between this and their real feelings of fear. Moreover, even within neighbourly relationships women needed to cultivate scepticism for fear of being 'taken a lend of'. Finally, the culture of violence had real implications for offspring, especially boys. Territorial gang violence led to severe and enduring injury for several children and was a source of anxiety for many more.

8.4.2 Staying Safe – 'See if Anybody Even Looks at You the Wrang Way, You Come tae Ma Door.'

The previous section described that fear of violence and crime was a significant challenge relating to the neighbourhood for all women. Most recognised that lone motherhood made them more vulnerable to further abuse. During interviews women described a range of approaches which they used to mitigate against neighbourhood-based risks. First, half of the group reported isolating and deliberately constraining social networks during childrearing in an effort to protect families from harm.

> Ah jist shut ma door 'n' ignored it. Ah thought it wis better to do that than hiv confrontation. Ah don't like confrontation, ah never have done. So, the things round

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[16] Territorial violence has been a recognised issue within Easterhouse dating back to the 1950s, when the estate was synonymous with razor gangs who feuded over territory of neighbourhoods within the estate. Violent territorial gang culture has evolved significantly but gangs and territorial disputes have continued to be dominant features of life within the estate through the research period. Territorial violence particularly affects the movements of young men and boys.

> about me – drugs, alcohol – none ae that ah let intae ma life cause ah didnae want ma kids seeing that. (Mary)

Five women noted that area-based connection and their connection to known families within the estate offered them some protection against violence.

> Ah remember one day ah wis sitting at the close mouth and this man came up tae me and says, 'Are you big ***'s daughter?' Ah went, 'Uh-huh.' He says, 'Well, listen hen, ma name's ***, and see if anybody even looks at you the wrang way, you come tae ma door.' (Joan)

Joan went on to explain that her father linked her local connection, protection and the assurance that she wouldn't be 'taken a lend of'.

> Ma daddy told me, 'He'll put the word out, nobody'll come near you.' Ye know, tae yer door tae ask fer money, and no come back wae it. He says, 'You'll no get that,' and ah didn't.

Others such as Brenda deliberately constructed social ties in an attempt to avoid being 'taken a lend of'. The findings demonstrated, however, that the currency of social capital within Easterhouse had unpredictable geographical dimensions. Angie described her experience of moving to a new neighbourhood within the estate where her family connections offered her no protection. An experience of housebreaking resulted in her relocating back to her neighbourhood of origin.

> They wid say 'Hiya' like they were friendly enough, they were never bad tae me. Well apart fae one ae them broke intae ma house – ah found out later on it wis the wummin in the bottom flat's brother that hid done it. … Ah thought, well, they obviously don't see us as wan ae their ain cause ah don't imagine they'd be breaking intae their pal's hooses that stays roon aboot them. (Angie)

Two women relayed that being broken into resulted in relocation back to neighbourhoods of origin. Thus, the interviews highlighted that lone mothers relied heavily on social capital generated by their bonding capital with neighbours, friends and family as a means to stay safe. One important product of their social ties was the sharing of locally situated knowledge. However, the dynamics of territorial violence within the estate meant that social ties could be unpredictable and could vary from street to street and even close to close. Moreover, women's reliance on such survival networks were often tied up in a form of paternalism which meant that they were dependent on the goodwill of key 'hard families' for wellbeing. As Brenda's story illustrated, this form of dependence was fraught with uncertainty and could result in feudal subservience to protectors.

8.5 Intersection of Stigma – Daft Lassies and Benefit Scroungers

Overwhelmingly the interviews highlighted that all participants were keenly aware of Easterhouse's reputation as a centre of violence and extreme poverty. The women's narratives suggested that outsiders' perceptions of the estate had little bearing on the ways in which they themselves identified with their community. Although Anne recognised violence as a pervasive issue, her own son having been the victim of a particularly ferocious territorial attack, in her interview she explained her frustrations towards pathologising narratives of Easterhouse.

> It wis like as if, it wis a stigma, the name Easterhouse, it wis a stigma. Even when yer telling people now that ye live in Easterhouse, the reaction is, 'Oh, why would ye live there?' Ye know, that's basically what they're thinking.

All women told stories which indicated that they had been ridiculed, undermined or actively discriminated against as a result of living in Easterhouse during early and mid adulthood.

> When ye went out anywhere and somebody says 'Where dae ye come fae?' and ye said 'Easterhoose' and they'll go 'Where's yer knife?' Then they'd try to make out it was a joke. (Joan)

> I mean your postcode gave it away, and the number of times people would say … 'Don't put your postcode down if you're applying for jobs because you won't get it.' That's a really bad indictment of society in the eighties. (Janice)

> Folk thought it wis just commoners that came from Easterhouse, the riff raff that wis thrown out of Glasgow and put intae the outskirts. Even nowadays if ye say ye come fae Easterhouse ye get a dirty look. (Mary)

> Just people that think they're better than you. Ye feel people look down their noses. They just think that they're better off. (Christina)

Neighbourhood stigma was an issue which was deeply felt by all women. Several explained that it was felt most deeply when interacting with outsiders such as employers, health and social care professionals, and Glaswegians from other neighbourhoods. Other women explained that they had experienced direct discrimination from employers and tradespeople because of their postcode. Thus, the wounds of stigma were most often inflicted by fellow Glaswegians; the existence of extreme disadvantage in peripheral schemes allowed them to distance themselves from their own marginally less extreme poverty shame. The city had in effect developed a caste system in which isolated peripheral tenants, in declining estates, became lowest of the low. Yet, neighbourhood-based discrimination was only one facet of how women experienced stigma. Most recognised that the area was home to a higher-than-average number of lone-mother households.

> There wis lots of people who were single parents here. There's jist as many single parents as mixed parents really. (Christina)

For two participants, high numbers of lone mothers within the estate was viewed as a positive factor as it meant that lone motherhood was relatively normalised.

> Not so much stigma for being a single mum, because maybe there wis that many people were single mums roon aboot me. (Frances)

However, eight of the participants relayed that they had faced stigma as lone mothers. The data suggested that the derision they felt was mainly from their coupled counterparts.

> At the beginning, when ah first moved here and ah wis a single parent, people looked down their nose at ye cause ye were a single parent wae young children. There was nobody else in the close that wis a single parent, so they used tae jist walk past me in the street, or wouldnae say hello, things like that. (Mary)

> As a single parent ye were sorta a second-class citizen more or less. (Christina)

Lorna had left Easterhouse as a married woman and returned as a lone mother (See Table 6.4). During one interview she articulated a feeling which many of the women hinted at, that to be a lone mother was to be a failure at traditional family life.

> Ye felt like a failure. In a sense ah suppose ah felt like a failure, but ah also knew it wis the right thing tae do, and ah knew ah wis worth more than what ah wis being treated.

Brenda explained that being a younger lone mother meant that she felt herself to be written off by neighbours as a ‘daft lassie’ owing to youth, gender and lone motherhood.

> People, even aulder neighbours, would look doon on ye and say, ‘Stupit wee lassie.’

A few of the women linked their reduced social status to political and media discourses during the 1980s and 1990s. These women indicated some awareness of the negative stereotypes of lone mothers perpetuated in the tabloid press. A few relayed that they recognised the inference of promiscuity and benefit reliance.

> It was like, single mothers, ‘Oh they’re only having babies so they can get council houses,’ this kind of rhetoric all the time. It took me a while to realise that it wasn’t true what they were saying. Sometimes you fall into that ‘Well, it must be right, it’s in the papers,’ but it was there all the time and people struggled. They didn’t just have babies to get a council house – who would? (Janice)

Taken together the findings demonstrate that the vast majority of participants were disadvantaged by the intersection of neighbourhood-based and lone-mother stigma. To be an Easterhouse resident was reason enough to be discriminated against. Yet, lone mothers faced a more nuanced and extreme form of exclusion. All within the group entered lone motherhood as a result of escaping abusive relationships. However, far from being applauded for their decision to remove themselves and their children from abusive situations, most were shamed. Moreover, several women noted awareness of the layers of oppression which lone mothers faced and the ways in which negative political and media discourses fuelled pathologising perceptions of lone mothers within Easterhouse.

8.6 Later Life – ‘It’s a Better Place Than It Used to Be.’

All participants regarded neighbourhood conditions within Easterhouse to be vastly improved by later life. Where the findings in Chapter 7 made clear that the built environment in early and mid life-course contributed towards low morale, all agreed that housing and public services had dramatically improved.

> It’s a much better place than whit it wis. (Brenda)

Moreover, the time spent with women in their homes demonstrated that neighbourhood conditions had also improved dramatically in the ten years since I had last worked in the estate as a homelessness support worker. The majority of women’s homes were, for instance, entered by main doors instead of closes and were modern flats which had been refurbished and had access to garden spaces. Fieldnotes document impressions of the interiors of participants’ homes as mostly modern and freshly decorated and furnished. All participants expressed clearly that they took pride in their homes.

Home exteriors, too, posed an important source of wellbeing in later life. The majority reported newly acquired gardens as a major source of pride which contributed positively towards mental health.

During the nine months I spent interviewing in Easterhouse, I was consistently struck by the dramatic change to both the built environment and the squalid interiors which had been common during my years working as a support worker in Easterhouse. Gone were the dank, dirty closes with broken intercoms, walls dripping with mould and condensation, and boarded-up windows of condemned tenements of the early 2000s. Yet, despite the improved façade, signs of poverty were still overt on the streets. My fieldnotes recorded:

> Some streets where I’ve visited to meet with women are barely recognisable compared to ten years ago. The demolition of tenements and new build housing has completely changed the character of many of the areas of Easterhouse that I’ve visited. However, despite the dramatic changes to housing, poverty remains highly visible. It is evident in the faces of people I walk by, the shabby clothes of children, by the prevalence of visibly addicted people I see on my route, and barbed wire perimeter fences which surround local shops and community centre.

In terms of access to public services, the majority of women enjoyed strikingly better access to public transport in later life. The majority reported regularly using buses and taxis to travel to the east and central regions of the city. Most women were in receipt of sickness benefits, which they explained helped with taxi and travel costs.

> I have a pension and attendance allowance as well. I use that to help me get around because I take taxis a lot, so I can get out and about more. (Janice)

Women's increased bus and taxi usage reflects improved economic circumstances, which will be discussed in the following chapter, and the Scottish Government's commitment to free bus travel for over sixties. Some women also reported gaining confidence in using public transport due to improved mental health, which they attributed to support received through informal community networks in later life. However, the findings showed that at least half of participants still felt significantly concerned about personal safety in Easterhouse. The majority reported feeling safer within the neighbourhood than they had during early and mid-stages of life-course.

> For the aulder women it's maybe a wee bit safer. (Brenda)

Increased safety was attributed to perceptions of lower crime rates and reduction in territorial violence. However, despite perceptions of greater safety, at least half of the women reported avoiding specific public spaces within the estate due to fear of violence. The women particularly explained that parks and areas of waste ground were considered unsafe places for women during the day and night. Fieldnotes observed:

> A majority of the women now in later life express fear of male violence in specific public sites in Easterhouse. Where the home was once the place where violence was most feared, now the most public of spaces pose the greatest risk and offenders are likely to be strangers rather than kin.

The next chapter now turns to examine challenges relating to poverty.

Chapter 9: Poverty and Lone Motherhood – 'It Wis a Struggle.'

9.1 The Poverty Experience

The previous chapter presented the research findings relating to women's experiences of negotiating neighbourhood conditions within Easterhouse. The interviews showed that neighbourhood context posed a range of challenges for women relating to housing, travel, shopping, violence and stigmatisation. This chapter builds upon these findings by examining the themes of poverty and lone motherhood. Consequently, this chapter mainly addresses the theme within the overarching research question which explore the challenges of material poverty for lone mothers in Easterhouse.

Section 9.1 examines poverty experiences and strategies for negotiating poverty in early and mid-stages of life-course. Section 9.2 looks at participants' economic circumstances in later life and Section 9.3 concludes.

9.1.1 'Getting on Yer Feet' and 'Starting from Scratch'

The interviews highlighted, overwhelmingly, the transition from marriage to lone motherhood as a period of life-course where women faced the most marked financial insecurity. As detailed in Chapter 8, all but one connected this period of economic strain to relocation after relationship breakdown. For most, this key period of material disadvantage was linked to leaving behind possessions and 'starting from scratch' in new homes. During their flight, two women took only children's possessions and the vast majority fled without any substantial personal belongings.

> It wis jist bare walls. It wis empty and cold. Ah hid no money tae buy furniture. Ah eventually managed tae get furniture from social work, but it wis nearly all second hand and dirty. But what we had did us, right up until the girls were going tae secondary school – that's when we started getting newer things. (Christina)

Seven participants relayed that they had relied on donations from charities and social work grants to furnish new homes even partially. Yet, in the majority of cases, charities were unable to provide adequate furnishings.

> It took me a few years tae get back on ma feet. Ah walked intae an empty house wae just a coupla bags of stuff fur me and the kids. It wis Women's Aid who helped me wae some furniture. Just the basics. Tae build up ma own wee house ah hid tae borrow the money. (Angie)

Only one woman received financial support from her ex-partner after leaving. Six participants were solely reliant on social security benefits at the point of transition and four were in employment.

> I wis living hand tae mouth, living jist fae day tae day, we jist got by wae whatever ye could get, whatever ma mum could give me. (Mary)

Despite all facing extreme periods of material disadvantage during the transition period, within the first year of lone motherhood all women reported being able to manage better financially.

> We had debt, but ah took the books away wae me and paid whitever wis owed. It wis in his name. But ah wis better off financially. Ah didnae need tae buy special food like buying steak fer him and sausages fer me. Ah wis better off when ah left him, even though ah wis a single parent. (Frances)

Thus, the findings demonstrated that the transition to lone motherhood was a key period in which women struggled financially. Yet, despite the experience of extreme poverty during this period in life-course, all women reported higher satisfaction in their abilities to budget and manage financially.

9.1.2 Making Ends Meet – 'Some Weeks We Didn't Have Much Left for Food.'

One major strategy for negotiating poverty was particularly linked to early and mid life-course. Most participants reported regularly skipping meals and 'doing without' necessities such as heating and clothing. Yet, amongst these, six intimated that the poverty associated with lone motherhood was preferable to poverty associated with staying in abusive relationships. These women explained that where they had previously ‘gone without’ at the behest of male partners, the choice to ‘do without’ to benefit children was perceived as an empowering personal freedom. Overwhelmingly, women’s stories highlighted that self-sacrifice was an inherent aspect of raising children and lone motherhood.

> Ah wisnae really worried aboot the money because ah wis only glad tae get oot the situation ah wis in. So having little money wis a compromise that ah wis willing tae make. To go without fur maself, use hand-me-down shoes fae ma aulder daughter and this kinda stuff. Fur me it wis a good trade off and ah think fur the girls as well. (Angie)

The interviews highlighted that woman often utilised overlapping strategies for getting by. Half of the group described meticulous budgeting and ‘planking’[17] of money for various aspects of household expenditure.

> Ah tried tae budget. It did affect you in different ways. Maybe one week ah’d have tae buy something for ma auldest, then the next week it’d be the younger wan, then ye were still paying for yer gas and electric. Some weeks we didn’t have much left for food. (Christina)

The majority of participants described using practical skills to generate ‘extra’ income. Knitting and sewing were common skills, which six participants used to make clothes for children and to sell within the community.

> I used to go to jumble sales and buy clothes for 10p or whatever, unpick them and use the material to make skirts for my daughter. I used to buy men’s knitted jumpers to get the wool … I would use the wool to make hats, scarves, jumpers, all sorts of things, because I couldn’t afford to buy them. (Janice)

Several women reported regularly pawning possessions and two relied on income from selling personal items at car-boot sales to supplement household income.

> Mainly, I did it fur food and tae pay yer gas and electricity. I remember gaun tae ma maw wan time and ah wis gaun tae tap[18] her fur money. She says, ‘Naw, am no geein

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[17] Hiding money around the home.

> ye any mair money.’ And that’s when ah says, ‘Right,’ and ah went away and selt or pawned ma jewellery and ah started dain the car-boot sales. (Brenda)

Taken together, the findings demonstrate that women employed a wide range of overlapping practical strategies for ‘getting by’. These were often labour and time intensive and were those which could fit around domestic commitments. It was clear that these strategies were facets of women’s hidden struggles to negotiate poverty and that developing new and innovative tactics for generating and saving money was part of an ongoing struggle to stay afloat and provide for children.

9.1.3 Providing and Protecting Children from Poverty Shame – ‘Ye Jist Couldn’t Keep Up with the People That Hid Money.’

All participants agreed that providing for children had been a source of continuous struggle during early and mid stages of life-course. It was clear that poverty limited how women were able to raise their children.

> My daughters understood money-wise that it didnae jist grow on trees and that ye cannae jist ask fur this, that and the next thing. (Angie)

However, the vast majority of the group intimated that they felt under extreme pressure to provide for children in a way that would help them to conceal visible poverty. Participants explained that supporting children to minimise the effects of neighbourhood-based stigma was a powerful motivating factor. Yet, pressure to provide signifiers of artificial affluence often put women under extreme financial strain.

> You were under pressure. You didn’t always manage, but you tried yer best. (Christina)

Furthermore, a majority of participants explained that the pressure to provide expensive items of clothing, often sportswear, was rooted in their desire to ensure that their children did not stand out as more relatively deprived than peers due to growing up in a lone-parent household.

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[18] To borrow money.

> It wis very, very hard tae get the same as others. Things were expensive, ye jist couldn't keep up wae the people that hid money. Ah think that wis what my daughter felt, cause her pals were aw dressed tae the nines. They didn't want tae go out looking different than their pals. (Christina)

Janice named the 1980s as a period where she felt that children became more concerned with fashion and global consumer goods. She often had to refuse her children items which they perceived as necessary to avoid poverty shame.

> Ma son would go, 'I need those trainers.' I'd say, 'No way are you getting those!' That's just one episode in the way society was changing. You didn't wear sandshoes to school, you wore fancy trainers that cost a fortune.

Thus, the findings suggest that discourses of global consumerism began to have a growing impact on consumer habits within Easterhouse from the 1980s onwards. The pressures associated with conspicuous consumption were products of the media advertising barrage which began to gain momentum from around the start of the research period. Messages of global capitalism had powerful implications for the culture of the estate. For lone mothers and sole providers, the pressure to conform was immense. Several women reflected that cultural pressures were exacerbated by the guilt they felt at having 'inflicted' lone motherhood on their offspring.

> It was the guilt that ye couldnae provide a mum and a dad for them. That stability of having a mum and a dad in the same hoosehold. (Mary)

Many participants had internalised discourses of lone-parent homes being 'broken' or 'less than'. Most alluded to similar feelings of deficit. Angie and Joan described the ways in which they used consumption as a means to mitigate against their own feelings of guilt around having inflicted 'brokenness' on their families.

> So, in ma head ah probably thought that ah'm trying tae make up fur jist having a mum and no a dad. Cause he didnae take anything tae dae wae them when we broke up, so ah always felt guilty. (Angie)

> If anything, ah overcompensated for being a single parent cause ah got intae a lot ae debt jist tae make sure she hid all the latest things. (Joan)

In fact, over half of the women intimated that the pressure to avoid appearing visibly impoverished was just as powerful for themselves as for their children. Brenda described the shame she felt as a young woman.

> If ye did go anywhere ye'd hiv the same claes that ye hid when ye were single. Ye were still wearing the same hings and it wisnae fashionable. Ye were jist wearing an auld jumper and couldnae afford tae go and get yer hair cut. People knew when they looked at ye, ye musta been skint, ye were poor and hid nae money. Ye jist felt doon.

9.1.4 Credit and the Accumulation of Debt – 'Don't Know if I Ever Really Managed to Get Myself Back out of Debt.'

All participants disclosed that they had relied upon credit during lone motherhood, which resulted in the accumulation of debt. The severity of debt over life-course varied. For some, debt centred around regular borrowing from small high-interest lenders such as Provident,[19] mail order catalogues and local businesses. Angie explained her experiences of working in the local shopping centre during the 1990s and the prevalence of women relying on Provident cheques to pay for clothing. Angie's commentary demonstrated the extent to which reliance on credit had become part of the fabric of life for women during this period and a key dimension of 'getting by'.

> They wid come in wae Provvy cheques. A lot of the mums came intae the shops to spend them. So, there wis nae 'Aw, imagine hivin tae come in and use them fur getting yer weans's claes.' Some of the families wurnae working and that wis jist their way ae life. Most ae their money went on paying the Provvy cheques back. Ah got intae a situation where ah hid tae dae it tae start wae. It took me a few years tae get maself oot it.

Seven participants reported regularly relying on credit to pay for children's clothing and for larger items such as Christmas and birthday presents. In each of these cases, women reported managing to pay off debts over periods of two to ten years.

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[19] Provident plc is a specialist bank which offers high-interest short-term loans to borrowers who may not be able to obtain credit from mainstream banks and lenders. The company was established in 1880 and is and has been a major source of borrowing for residents in Glasgow since its inception. So commonplace are loans from Provident in Glasgow that terms such as Provvy cheque and The Provvy Man are well known within the Glasgow vernacular.

> Ah hid tae end up getting, like, loans from Provident and stuff, and using catalogues jist tae get by and get the kids’ Christmases and birthdays. Never got them anything extravagant. It wis so that they did hiv something. Cause ah couldnae jist go oot and buy like a fifty or sixty pound bike off ma wages. (Angie)

> Ah wis very guilty of getting stuff out of catalogues. That wis the only way ah could get Child One the brand-new stuff that she wanted. When she wis getting older in secondary school, getting her the stuff out jumble sales wisnae any good … and that’s when the catalogues came in, and ah did get maself intae a lot of debt wae the catalogues. (Christina)

Only two women noted the importance of ethical lenders such as the local credit union and community minodges[20] in supporting women to access low-interest loans and savings for larger expenses. A range of negative implications were identified relating to reliance on credit. Una’s story, although recounted with humour, demonstrated that not being able to repay loans was a source of stress for many lone mothers which might, as confirmed by a few, result in having to hide from lenders until debts could be repaid.

> My son shouted, ‘Here’s he’s coming!’ Ah wis like that, ‘Get doon, get doon!’ We were aw bending doon under the windae sill hiding till he went.

Debt became a debilitating lifelong issue for three women, which resulted in bankruptcy. For these women, debt was reported as a significant strain on mental health. For one participant, extreme debt resulted in working long hours of overtime, past retirement age. Each woman who had filed for bankruptcy had been supported by local money advice projects.[21]

> Ah don’t know if ah ever really got out of debt. Ah got maself intae bother wae credit cards at the bank. … It wis a money advice place ah hid tae go tae and they worked out a balance for me. It wis one ae the times it wis getting on top of me, it wis a few thousand ah owed and they worked it out. Ah think it wis a pound a month they took. Even now they still take it, a pound a month. (Christina)

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[20] A Glaswegian term for menage, which refers to an informal savings circle usually involving women. Each member would add in a set amount of cash per week, each having a turn of taking home the cumulative sum.

[21] During the 1990s and 2000s a range of money advice services such as Greater Easterhouse Money Advice Project and Welfare Rights Advisors based in housing associations began to deliver advice and assistance to community members around income maximisation, benefits advice and debt management.

> When ah got ma redundancy in 2007, that covered nowhere near whit ah owed. So, ah’d tae go tae wan ae these debt management companies and come tae an arrangement. Some ae them took a smaller lump sum tae pay it off. It took me many years, but ah got oot ae debt. (Joan)

Joan went on to raise two points which had important resonance for the whole participant group. First, for some, credit was preferable to borrowing from immediate networks as the perceived penalties for missing payments were less severe and, secondly, credit had become increasingly accessible. This would suggest that the 1980s were both a period of rising consumer pressure in Easterhouse *and* a period where credit was relatively easy to obtain. This combination amplified the likelihood of accumulation of debt for lone mothers, particularly those who were in work and able to borrow from major lenders.

> I wouldnae borrow from people I knew jist in case ah couldnae afford tae pay it back. Ah wouldnae want tae lose a friendship over money. That’s why ah always went tae the banks, credit cards ’n’ that, because they were like faceless things. No somebody ye hid tae talk tae face tae face. It was too easy to get in debt in those days. Ah had the catalogues and everything, bank loans – it wis too, too easy. (Joan)

9.1.5 ‘Dodges’ and ‘Getting By’ on the Wrong Side of the Law – ‘I’m No Proud ae It. But I Did It.’

The interviews highlighted strategies for ‘getting by’ which were sometimes outside of the law. Women were asked if they had ever done anything they would consider risky or illegal in order to ‘get by’. It was interesting to note that whilst several participants described being aware of ‘dodges’,[22] only a few disclosed personally engaging in these activities. Over half noted various strategies which others used to navigate poverty that were common within Easterhouse. These included drug dealing, engaging in undeclared work and the ‘fixing’ of energy meters.

> Ah wis practically the only wan in the street that he hidnae fixed the meters for. Ma neighbour kept asking me. For all that ah had nothing and ah wis in debt, ah’m no a dishonest person that way. Ah says, ‘Naw, yer no fixing ma meter.’ (Joan)

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[22] Illegal strategies for ‘getting by’.

Brenda was more candid about her engagement in activity which might be considered legally dubious. Brenda's testimonies recounted a range of 'darker' strategies for 'getting by', including shoplifting and transactional sex work (see Table 6.1). During interviews, Brenda struggled with conflicting emotions: regret and recognition that these were survival strategies. Brenda also pondered whether her current struggles with her adult children were 'divine punishment' for her past behaviours, whilst simultaneously reflecting that her actions had been a response to financial abuse and male coercion. During one interview Brenda waited until her male partner had left the house to share her story of transactional sex work in Easterhouse during the 1980s.

> The majority of the punters would be a good wee bit aulder than us. Ah'm talkin aboot ten, fifteen year aulder than ye. They knew what they were dain. Back then there wis a lot of girls dain it. Ah'm no proud ae it, and ah think that's how ma two eldest daughters are kinda no very good wae me. Ah hink mibbe they're sayin tae theirselves noo 'Aw those men!' It's a bit embarrassing tae kinda think aboot it. But, as I say, I had tae dae it then.

Brenda went on to describe her experiences of shoplifting during lone motherhood. Her recollections reflected that her engagement in 'dodges' was a dimension of the range of strategies she employed to survive poverty.

> Ye'd go intae Asda and put aw the stuff under yer pram. Then put a cover or something aer it. The dear things, like nappies cause they wur a fortune. … It wisnae make-up or anything like that, or fancy hings like chocolates or anything. It wis the real stuff, like food, like a packet of meat or nappies or wee things fur the weans[23].

Whilst only one woman disclosed details of her own illegal strategies for negotiating poverty, over half the group recounted awareness of other women's reliance on such strategies. It is difficult to assess the extent to which illegal activity constituted a significant mechanism for negotiating poverty. The interviews suggest that regardless of participant involvement, activities such as shoplifting, meter fixing, prostitution and undeclared work were recognisable facets of some women's poverty experience in Easterhouse through the 1980s and 1990s.

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[23] Children

9.1.6 Participation in the Labour Market

The census data presented in Table 4.1 showed a trend towards rising female employment between 1981 and 2001, with unemployment rates falling by one-third in the period. Previous chapters established that the vast majority of participants had initially left work after the birth of their first child, with only two continuing to work within the first year after childbirth. However, within the first year of entering lone motherhood, seven of the ten women had returned to full-time or part-time employment, the majority securing jobs within the estate or the East End of Glasgow. Entry into lone motherhood acted as a catalyst for most women to re-enter the workplace. Furthermore, the trend strongly reflected the wider female employment statistics from the 1980s onwards, which showed that female employment rose sharply from the beginning of the research period onwards.

Joan was a rare example of one who returned to the workplace promptly after childbirth. Her daughter had been born severely premature and entered full-time nursery care at six weeks old. Having experienced extreme poverty and a difficult home life during early life-course, Joan had joined the armed forces as a teenager. She explained that being ‘in work’ was an important lifelong strategy in the pursuit of financial security.

> Ah hid got her intae nursery at six weeks auld. It was very difficult to leave her but I had to work.

Despite all participants eventually returning to employment, work during children’s early years was often sporadic and part time. A recurring theme within the interviews related to the difficulties in securing work which could be fitted around childcare and would exceed welfare benefits. Having numerous children at different stages posed a major problem for several women as it meant that children’s attendance at nursery, primary and secondary schools resulted in each child having a different schedule and location for pick-up and drop-off. Participants explained that this alone posed significant challenges to holding down employment.

Within the discussions, there was also much recognition of the prevalence of unemployment in Easterhouse, particularly during the 1980s. As a returner from abroad, Lorna identified her perceptions of unemployment in Scotland during the period.

> There was quite a lot ae financial struggles ah think in the eighties. One of the times ah came back home in the early eighties was when, they called it Maggie's millions, when there wis so much unemployment, ah think that wis eighty-one. Ah think they were very angry that there were nae opportunities fer work for people coming oot ae school.

Others, such as Angie, suggested that securing continuous employment was considered as much a matter of luck as a product of competency.

> Ah wis lucky enough fae the age ae sixteen ah've been in employment.

Four women continued to work in a variety of low-paid roles over life-course. These women identified that they did not feel that they had assumed a definite occupation outside of motherhood. In the main, employment for this group was a means to increase household income and sometimes to break the monotony of childrearing, though it should be noted that employment in unskilled jobs meant that income was rarely significant.

Participants explained that returning to work had involved high levels of personal sacrifice. Several explained that periods of employment resulted in lengthy commutes using public transport. For the majority, the early years of childrearing had involved rarely leaving the estate. However, once work had been resumed a few began to commute to other parts of the city. Joan was an exception in that she resumed work when her daughter was only weeks old.

> It wis a struggle. Ye were up early in the morning tae get yer child up and dressed and out tae catch a bus, and then at night coming home. That wis the busy period, coming home, all the factories were coming out. People were actually quite good when they seen ye there wae a baby, or a child. They used tae say, 'Naw, you go on hen, you go on, get baby home.' But people in Glasgow are kind like that.

As well as the challenges of travel, seven women explained that they regularly juggled several part-time jobs simultaneously. For a few, undeclared 'extra' jobs, usually cleaning, constituted a key source of additional income. Thus, the scale of travel and managing the logistics of several jobs and children's daily routines represented a major challenge for most. Crucially, all women related that employment had resulted in deep feelings of loss relating to their perceptions of missing out on key stages and life events of children.

> We missed oot on a lot. It wis really hard. Between having tae hold down three jobs and keep a roof over the kids' heads and try and maintain some stability fur them as well. Tae say tae them, 'Ah'm here, if ye need me, ah'm here.' … Ah missed out on their first day at school, their first day at secondary school, cause ma mum had tae deal wae that. Ah couldnae take time off work, otherwise we couldnae eat and pay the bills. (Mary)

Chapter 7 related that a majority of women had described that being a mother in Easterhouse during the early part of the research period meant being 'The One' – the one who fulfilled many roles including financial and emotional caretaker. The findings around employment demonstrated that the pressures of balancing work and childrearing invoked much personal angst for women. All women reported an emotional pull between wanting to provide for children and wanting to be physically and emotionally present. Where being consistently present proved impossible, women often experienced enduring feelings of guilt and failure. The pull between domestic matriarchy and the labour market was, of course, an expression of the shifting landscape of women's domestic and economic roles in the UK in the latter part of the twentieth century. For lone mothers in Easterhouse, however, the pressures of poverty and cultural shifts towards consumption gave the conundrum additional urgency. Una worked in childcare.

> Ye feel guilty, cause the work in the homes wis aw different shifts, and ye'd hiv family looking after them if ye were on nightshift and ye felt as if ye wirnae there fur them. And you were watching other kids in a home, but your kids were wae somebody else, and ye wish ye coulda been wae them.

For Joan, the pain of missing out on her baby's milestones became so intense that she requested that the nursey not inform her of new developments. Her comments suggested fear that childcare workers had a more intimate knowledge of her daughter's development than she and perhaps a stronger bond.

> When she wis tiny, the workers used tae be frightened tae say if ma daughter had did anything new. It got to the point ah would say, 'Did ye know about that, has she done it before?' and she'd say she hadn't. She wouldnae say tae me, cause ah wid just take the humph. It wis jist insecurity on ma part. (Joan)

Women experienced considerable dissonance regarding their domestic and professional roles. For most, work constituted a necessary mechanism for keeping families afloat, which also generated much angst regarding missing out and not being sufficiently present. Conversely, the majority reported work as providing a source of meaning and accomplishment, particularly in mid and later life. However, the majority noted that their engagement in the labour market was only made possible due to the childcare support they received from close female network members.

9.1.7 Education and Personal Development as a Strategic Route out of Poverty – 'It Wis Very Unusual for Anybody in Oor Age Group tae Go On tae Further Education.'

Half the of the research cohort chose to retrain in midlife and enter professional occupations such as social work, childcare, housing, health improvement and social care. Lorna's comment, in the title of this section, reflects the reality that educational attainment was and has been historically low in Easterhouse.

The findings around retraining suggest that, for many lone mothers, 'poverty of aspiration' was not significantly evident.

The wider findings around education and attainment will be discussed more fully within the following section. However, within the participant group, securing meaningful and reasonably paid employment was a mechanism for both surviving and thriving, which most sought out in mid life-course. Most described securing skilled work and the status attached to employment as an important source of personal fulfilment and an important behavioural model for children.

> I did it fur a better financial situation, but also a better work/life family balance. Ah couldnae go back tae shift work, whereas trying tae find roles that were within the school hours woulda been most ae ma motivation. (Frances)

The research highlighted that the majority of participants recognised education and personal development as important mechanisms for both financial security and critical consciousness-raising. Whilst five clearly explained that developing themselves through education was a strategy for surviving and escaping poverty, there were also other more-philosophical drivers. Several reflected that their chosen studies provided opportunities to explore the meaning of their personal experiences and 'give back' to others in similar circumstances.

The half of the group who sought out educational opportunities all followed paths linked to community work, support work, social work or health promotion, seeking to address some of the inequalities which they themselves had experienced. In this way education became a cathartic tool for self-exploration and extending help to others. The women who had taken part in educational activities had strong insight into the extent to which women's education was considered radical in Easterhouse due to the historical lack of attainment.

> Ah never heard ae anybody gaun tae college or university when ah wis younger. (Angie)

Janice explained that she experienced severe disapproval from within her neighbourhood, relating to her decision to prioritise education and employment over staying at home to care for her large family. Yet, despite these barriers, attaining a degree in sociology from a university in Glasgow in her forties proved an important source of personal fulfilment. This was a remarkable achievement given her age, gender, large family and lack of practical support.

Crucially, Janice's account highlighted that she valued education as much for its role in raising consciousness as for its contribution towards her improved financial circumstances. During interviews, Janice actively recognised that her participation in education had contributed towards her ability to generate meaning and insight around her own life experiences. However, Janice's story also highlights that even where women sought to develop themselves, the pull of the domestic world also conspired to drive down aspiration.

> I was the talk of the town because I went to university when I was forty. I had never even thought about going to university. I did Highers at evening classes, really to get out of the house. I was in the house all day with children; it was the only way I had of escaping Partner One and getting a beating. Doing Highers at night school was a way of me entertaining myself. I enjoyed that. … There was just one thing that stopped me from going to do a post grad. … I opted out because my son said, 'This house is falling apart, Ma, don't you think you should do something about it?' I

> hadn’t been able to spend any money on the house, I had been living on a grant, and I thought, ‘I can’t be a student any longer. I have to provide for my family and make a nice home for them.’

Thus, it was evident that even in midlife, the emotional and practical demands of lone motherhood held potential to significantly constrain women’s attempts to move out of poverty. Other participants noted the prevalence of stigma within educational settings and explained how coming from Easterhouse and being a lone mother had resulted in them having to work harder than most to earn respect from tutors and pass courses. Una was one such example. She returned to college and attained a Higher National Certificate (HNC) despite extreme intersecting layers of personal adversity. During her studies, Una experienced finding her son overdosed on methadone and becoming a kinship carer for her granddaughter whose mother was addicted to heroin and navigating an ongoing domestic abuse situation, in addition to numerous other difficult personal circumstances (see Table 6.3). She described a difficult period where she felt discriminated against in education because of her class and residency within Easterhouse. She described the ways in which she overcame this adversity by modifying her behaviour and language to match the middle-class habitus of the course tutor.

> There wis times when ah used tae be crying. Ah didnae want tae go in tae ma placement. … And ah wis like skin and bone with aw the worry and stress, ah wis like a beanpole. And ah did go. But, by the end ae ma placement, that teacher couldnae huv been any nicer tae me. Her husband went away tae Marks & Spencer and got cakes and everything. Hud a wee celebration in the staff room, she gave me a lovely card and crystal candle holders. She called me a prodigy. At the time, ah thought, ‘She hates me.’ But she obviously didnae! She was very posh.

Attaining an HNC in childcare was a huge achievement for Una, which resulted in a career working in children’s homes supporting young people who had experienced similar issues to those she herself had experienced in younger years. The interviews highlighted numerous stories of women’s struggles to achieve personal growth in the realms of education and self-actualisation.

The interviews highlighted that children’s attainment was also an important source of pride and achievement for many women. Over half of participants noted that modelling a strong work ethic had been a powerful motivator for them during their years of child rearing.

Within the group, six women had children who went on to higher education, four of whom attended university.

Within the group who attended university, two exceptional stories of attainment shone through. Mary's son was selected by one of the most prestigious UK universities to study English literature. Meanwhile, Joan's daughter had progressed from the local polytechnic to university from where she was headhunted for an executive role with an international engineering firm. Joan's daughter never returned from abroad, where she died from a terminal illness. Yet, her exceptional trajectory of personal success represents a huge source of pride for her mother and others within the local community.

Thus, the research showed that women's commitment to raising children in Easterhouse has given rise to some remarkable stories of success and personal growth. Even in the midst of deprived neighbourhood conditions, the women were still promoting consciousness-raising behaviours, which generated remarkable achievements amongst offspring. Perhaps most importantly, the women and children made startling achievements in spite of the extreme structural barriers of neighbourhood and economic disadvantage that stood in their way. Thus, it might reasonably be surmised that many more would have experienced greater levels of personal and professional attainment were it not for the significant barriers posed by gender, class, place and stigma.

9.2 Economic Circumstances in Later Life

By the time of interviewing, six of the ten women were in markedly improved financial circumstances compared with earlier stages of lone motherhood. The findings also showed that those who were still on the lowest incomes were those with the most intensive caring responsibilities, often kinship carers and those who spent large reserves of time and money on providing care. Consequently, additional caring responsibilities were found to be a major contributor towards older women's poverty in Easterhouse. The findings surrounding the emotional and financial costs of caring in later life will be discussed in the following chapter.

Those who had managed to improve economic circumstances tended not to explain their improved situations explicitly and so understanding was formed by stories told about home ownership, access to better quality food, holidays abroad and lifestyle changes such as taking taxis to town for shopping, eating out in restaurants or taking part in trips with friends. These changes reflected a subtle but definite improvement in financial wellbeing for women in later life.

> I can enjoy things more because I have the financial freedom to do it. (Janice)

Thus, although most remained within Easterhouse, I observed that in later life women tended to be less stigmatised and relatively less deprived than during earlier stages of life-course. Mary described her financial wellbeing improving dramatically after she secured sickness benefits relating to mental health issues. For Mary, ‘getting on’ simply meant that she could be assured regular access to food.

> Back when the kids were wee ye went tae the fridge and it wis always empty. There wis nothing in it. But noo, shopping now is jist brilliant. Ah like gaun intae the shop and picking up whit ah want, and bringing it home, putting it in the fridge, and opening up the fridge door and seeing it full.

Most women attributed improved financial wellbeing to improvements in benefits, particularly sickness benefits, long-term participation in the workplace, pensions and home ownership. It should be noted that all those whose financial situations had improved were also those who retrained in midlife. Thus, motivation towards education and attainment was clearly, and somewhat unsurprisingly, linked to better economic outcomes in later life.

The findings also showed that in later life half the women were homeowners, two having bought their homes under Right to Buy legislation. The other half continue to rent homes from housing associations. This clearly marked a distinct change from early life-course where the vast majority rented homes from Glasgow City Council. Several indicated that homeownership was a major source of pride, which related to not only having survived lone motherhood in Easterhouse but also accumulated financial legacy, a generational feat which had not been possible for most women’s predecessors.

Largely, there appeared to be little visible difference between homes which were bought or rented. One participant had moved to a relatively upmarket bungalow in a leafy area close to Easterhouse following her daughter’s death. She explained that even after experiencing improved financial circumstances which had allowed her to live in a more prosperous neighbourhood, she still travelled back to Easterhouse on a daily basis. This finding was common to nearly all the women who explained that, even in later life, ‘belonging’ and local connections remained powerful drivers for remaining within the neighbourhood.

Although rarely explicitly discussed, the interviews highlighted that some women had used Easterhouse’s marginally improved neighbourhood status as a means to improve circumstances. Janice was asked to reflect on neighbourhood changes which had proved most impactful for her. She concluded that Right to Buy discounts and rising house prices in Easterhouse had contributed towards her improved financial circumstances in later life.

> The main one was the ability to sell my house, and that was a political decision made by the Conservative Party, and I think that affected quite a lot of people in a positive way. The downside of that was that it reduced the amount of council houses. I never liked Maggie Thatcher, but I was able to buy my house. So, I bought it and was able to move. Didn’t move very far, but I bought smaller.

The majority of the women experienced improved financial wellbeing in later life, particularly those who had sought education and been able to obtain mortgages to buy homes. Those who remained in the deepest poverty in later life were more likely to have spent midlife engaged in unpaid caring roles and as a result spent less time engaged in education and employment. Despite the divide between those who had improved economic circumstances and those who were still just surviving, nearly all women had access to better housing, travel opportunities and food than in previous stages of life-course.

9.3 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the dimensions of challenges posed by material poverty through life-course and the strategies drawn upon to negotiate these material and ontological challenges. The next chapter shifts the focus towards the final aspect of the overarching research question – the significance of female networks for ‘getting by’ and ‘getting on’.

Chapter 10: ‘Getting By’ and ‘Getting On’ – Networks and Internal Resources

10.1 The Dimensions of Female Support Networks – ‘Aw My Helpers Were Women.’

The findings within this chapter relate directly to the support networks and personal attributes which helped women to ‘get by’ and ‘get on’. Where the previous chapters have largely focussed upon the challenges inherent to lone motherhood and life in Easterhouse, this chapter addresses the personal agency of women in negotiating these challenges. The first and most substantial section of this chapter is orientated towards exploring the roles of female social networks. These are examined in terms of their emotional, practical, financial and informative significance at various stages of early and mid life-course.

It will be useful at this stage in the thesis to revisit the definitions of two of the key concepts underpinning this research (see sections 2.6 and 11.4 for the main discussion of these concepts). In this study, ‘getting by’ refers directly to acts of agency which enable individuals to cope with or ‘get through’ the difficulties associated with living in poverty. These acts are generally situated within the everyday activities and domestic routines of individuals and families (Lister, 2021, p.130).

‘Getting on’ is a term that has been developed from Lister’s (2021) economic conception of ‘getting out’ of poverty. Within the study, ‘getting on’ refers to personal perceptions of having successfully negotiated or moved through the challenges of long-term poverty over time, to have found success, meaning and purpose in spite of barriers of structural inequality. The development of ‘getting on’ as a conceptual device within the thesis is discussed in full in Section 11.4.3.

Section 10.1 addresses the research sub-question which deals with the functions of networks. Section 10.2 explores the significance and outcomes of women’s involvement with formal networks, mainly focussing upon the contribution of the women’s movement and church networks. Section 10.3 explores the findings around women’s caring responsibilities within networks. Section 10.4 examines the importance of women’s personal qualities as mechanisms for ‘getting by’ and ‘getting on’ through lone motherhood in Easterhouse. Finally, Section 10.5 examines women’s networks in later life.

It is noteworthy that the functions of support networks have been significantly shaped by the challenges of poverty, gender and place, *and* the context of male violence within Easterhouse. Although the research did not set out to investigate domestic abuse, it became apparent that male abuse had shaped all the women’s trajectories towards lone motherhood. Thus, the nature of network support was often a response to negotiating both patriarchal control and the challenges of lone mothering in Easterhouse. Furthermore, domestic abuse came to partially define many aspects of women’s lived experience, including how they engaged with support networks. The chapter endeavours to capture the nature of lone mothers’ evolving engagement with networks over life-course and dimensions of their own self-reliance.

10.1.1 Emotional Support

The early years of lone motherhood emerged prominently as a period of life-course where women required the greatest levels of emotional support. Leaving and coming to terms with relational abuse was noted as the most emotionally challenging issue during early lone motherhood. Although some variation existed surrounding perceptions of the sufficiency of emotional support available during this period, half the group perceived themselves to be extremely isolated and without adequate emotional support during early years and into midlife. The other half reported having some available emotional support but not enough. None reported adequate emotional support, and none identified any male sources of emotional support during this period.

> Most of ma helpers were women. (Lorna)

The group who described themselves as very isolated were particularly susceptible to poor emotional health. However, it should be noted that even the most isolated identified at least one key network connection who provided emotional support either in person or over the phone. Most deliberately kept networks small or non-existent in order to protect themselves from further abuse. Others described struggling to keep up social connections due to depression and distance from family. Regardless of motivation, all agreed that isolation and lack of emotional support had resulted in loneliness and poor mental health.

> I hid naebody really. That’s why ah hid a lot ae depression. Ah didn’t speak tae anybody about anything. Ah drew intae maself and ah’ve never really changed that. (Anne)

Amongst the group who were isolated after lone motherhood, all continued this pattern until children reached adulthood. However, several of the previously extremely isolated group became well connected in later life. The extent to which women were supported by mothers was mixed. Four, including Lorna, received regular support.

> My mother was always there when I needed her. She was my biggest ally. (Lorna)

Six participants reported receiving no significant emotional support from mothers during marriage and during transition. Several noted that their mothers were relatively unsupportive after they left abusive relationships and entered lone motherhood.

> Just after Child One wis born ah spoke tae ma mother and says tae her things weren’t going very well and she says, ‘Well, you made yer bed, you lie in it.’ (Christina)

Over half the women reported experiencing this attitude to domestic abuse, often from immediate family, especially mothers. The other half of participants relayed that they had kept abuse secret. This reticence was perhaps unsurprising, given the consistent lack of support shown to many women by immediate social networks. The ‘you’ve made your bed’ discourse might be interpreted as a product of women’s internalised acceptance of domestic abuse within marriage as a social norm during the period. As a contextual consideration, parental domestic abuse was present within the families of each of the participants from challenging family backgrounds.

Emotional support was more commonly provided by sisters, female cousins and friends. Brenda explained how relationships with female family members promoted positive mental health during her abusive relationship.

> They gie ye strength, yer sister, mother and yer pals, because ye see if they’re getting oan, well. Mibbe yer feelin doon that day and ye meet them and they say, ‘Och well, it’s jist wan ae they things’ and ye pull yersel the gether. Whereas mibbe if ye were in the hoose sittin, ye would draw yersel in.

The findings clearly demonstrated that women's ability to 'get by' in Easterhouse hinged on their ability to 'get by' emotionally. One of the most important functions that female networks performed appears to have been preventing lone mothers' mental health from 'going under', particularly in the early years of lone motherhood. Several women within the study explained that other women had ultimately kept them alive by preventing them from acting on suicidal thoughts. In this sense, female networks were in the most literal sense survival networks.

> I was having suicidal thoughts. Thoughts of, 'Whit's the point in being here, the wean's better off without me, he'll have a better life if ah'm not in it.' My friend was not having it. She wandered the streets looking fer me and sorted the wean out for my ex-partner. Then she just sat and she talked tae me, the positive stuff, telling me how ah'm worth it. She went back tae the house and got ma purse so's that ah could go tae ma other friend's and be safe. (Lorna)

Lorna was one of several women who explained that female network members had played crucial roles in preventing them for suiciding during early lone motherhood. Conversely, however, the research demonstrated that although female networks helped women to keep going, they held much less potential to support 'aspirational' activity. In fact, several explained that their close supports actively discouraged educational aspirations which defied class norms. Thus, female survival networks were key conduits in survival but often actually constrained women who sought to pursue other forms of self-actualisation.

> Although ma mum was there, she wisnae much good at kinda helping me tae move ma daughter forward. She used tae say, 'Whit's she wanting that education fur?' See trying tae tell her it's tae make a better life fur herself. (Joan)

The participant group was divided equally between those who deliberately kept networks very small during lone motherhood to avoid future abuse and those who did receive regular emotional support derived mainly from female family members. Over half described their mothers as emotionally unsupportive. Yet, where female network members did provide consistent emotional support, this was hugely helpful to women particularly in early lone motherhood when many experienced periods of mental health crisis. Those who had been prevented from suicide all recognised female contacts as being active forces which helped them preserve life. However, the same female networks often actively discouraged women during attempts to effect personal, educational and economic improvement.

10.1.2 Financial Reliance on Female Social Networks

A key finding of the research showed that all women were involved with various networks of voluntary small-scale borrowing and lending with other women during the childrearing years of lone motherhood. These female networks of small-scale financial support were recognised survival networks which supported women to ‘get by’. These networks of help were largely reciprocal in that women exchanged either financial, practical or emotional support for temporary financial loans. Networks of borrowing and lending were almost exclusively female in composition.

Borrowing networks were clearly divided into those which involved female family members and those involving female neighbours. All women relied on short-term loans from female friends or family on a regular basis during early and mid lone motherhood. During interviews, nine women shared that they were involved in regular cycles of borrowing from immediate family, in all cases involving female relatives. The exception was Janice, who was not from Glasgow and had no family in the area. Seven participants received regular help in the form of loans or gifts of money from mothers, two from sisters.

> My maw never hid ‘money money’ but if it wis jist a tenner jist tae the end ae the week then she wid gie me it. Or ah wid gie her a loan of it if I hid a wee bit mair money. Jist the way ye do wae family ah suppose. Ah hink a lot ae families kind of a lived like that at thay times, borrowed aff each other. (Una)

Women’s continuous engagement with patterns of borrowing and lending money demonstrated that finance was one area in which immediate female networks proved a vital source of reciprocal support for lone mothers through childrearing years. However, the means and scale of female lending networks were small and the help they provided was generally only enough to help women to get by from week to week.

> It wis always paid back in the same week. If two women got paid on separate days they helped each other out. If one gave some and then she wid get it back at the end ae the week. (Joan)

Neighbourly networks of support involved more varied and complex exchanges. In some cases, women described purely altruistic relationships with female neighbours. In other cases, relationships were based on mutual aid and reciprocal gain. Half of the participant group described relationships with neighbours where they regularly gave and received financial support. Moreover, the currency of exchange was often more transactional than economic. Examples included donating furniture and children's clothes, allowing neighbours to get credit on catalogues and sharing meals.

> Well, things like, ah got a new suite and gave my neighbour ma auld wan. Ah'd help her oot money-wise if she needed a loan ae money or something. At that time ah wis a bit better off. We wur just really good friends. And ah ran a catalogue and she didnae have any Christmas fur her son, so ah let her get a bike 'n' aw that oot the catalogue and helped her that way. … Jist anything at aw, we jist helped one another. (Una)

> If ye made a big pot of soup, ye would gie them mebbe a coupla bowls of soup doon. Ye wid share it roon aboot with neighbours. (Brenda)

The quotes above demonstrate that in addition to reciprocal support within families, there were strong notions of solidarity amongst female neighbours in Easterhouse which often found expression in the exchange of resources. However, the findings in the previous chapter also showed that a few women experienced financial exploitation from female neighbours. Thus, where female networks of family were largely always positive reciprocal networks, those involving neighbourly exchanges held some potential for being 'taken a lend of' and were often built up slowly over time.

Taken together, the findings demonstrated that female social networks formed an incredibly important mechanism for women as they negotiated the economic challenges of early and mid lone motherhood. However, it was clear that borrowing was often tied to 'belonging' to the neighbourhood. It was evident for instance that the only 'outsider', Janice, received very little local support, which might suggest a clannish dimension to how networks of reciprocal exchange operated.

So powerful is the Glaswegian notion of belonging and claiming their 'ain' that nearly all references within the interviews to family members prefixed names with 'oor'. For example, 'Oor Marie wis up [visited] today.' This mode of speech is common throughout the city and demonstrates the extent to which the naming and claiming of kin is knitted into the language and psyche of the people. Thus, Glaswegians usually make explicit those within the immediate network who are accepted as belonging. In Easterhouse the context of belonging was a complex mix of cultural, class, ethnic and gender identity as well as the more obvious context of belonging to the estate. Angie described simply her experience of moving to a different part of Easterhouse.

> You could tell I wisnae wan of their ain.

10.1.3 In the Know – Female Networks and the Sharing of Locally Situated Information

The research indicated that women relied heavily on their female networks as a source of information, particularly around navigating systems. Two distinct pathways for female knowledge exchange were identified relating to housing knowledge and benefits/employment information. The majority relayed instances where female friends and family members helped them to gather situated local knowledge regarding desirable closes for rehousing.

Three reflected that they had relied on female connections for vital support to access information around welfare benefits and labour market opportunities. Female-situated knowledge was particularly important for lone mothers, with women sharing information around childcare funding, the economic feasibility of living with new partners and how to interact with the benefits system.

> One ae ma friends here helped me. Ah'd came back and ah had no job or anything, and ah wis like, 'Ah need tae find work,' but the dole were on strike and ye couldnae get money. So she took us tae a dole office where they were giving emergency payments and she showed me how tae apply for things cause ah had no clue, because ah'd always worked. (Lorna)

Participants also relayed that other women often recommended them for cash-in-hand jobs which they knew could be fitted around childcare commitments.

> If somebody had a wee cleaning job and if they knew they were looking for somebody, they would say they know so-and-so who could be doing wae a wee job. (Brenda)

Thus, the research showed that female networks were important sites of knowledge exchange which significantly contributed towards lone mothers ‘getting by’. However, the capital involved in women’s knowledge exchange usually revolved around securing basic amenities such as welfare benefits or housing allocations. Consequently, information-sharing networks could be regarded as survival networks as opposed to those which would affect more meaningful change.

10.1.4 Female Networks and Practical Childcare – ‘She Wis a Godsend.’

The research clearly demonstrated that childcare was the most significant practical aspect of support provided by female contacts. Chapter 9 established that although the vast majority of the women returned to work quickly after entering lone motherhood, the duality of managing domestic and work commitments was a difficult balancing act. The majority were clear that work was only made possible by childcare provided by close female network members, including mothers, sisters, nieces and cousins. Thus, childcare was a crucial aspect of how female networks supported lone mothers to ‘get by’; nearly all women recognised that female family members were crucial network supports which allowed them to stay afloat financially.

In a number of cases women explained how female family members would tailor their own employment schedules to fill lone mothers’ childcare ‘gaps’. This shows that female networks often worked cooperatively to ensure that children were looked after and household income generated.

> I’d get home from working in the nightclub at four in the morning. Ah’d bring pizza in fur ma mum. She’d be sitting up waiting for me tae come in, tae make sure ah wis safe, and she’d go tae work at five. (Mary)

Three women noted nurseries and after-school clubs as their primary childcare providers. It is noteworthy that those who relied mainly on formal childcare providers were those with the least amount of family network in Easterhouse. This suggests that in common with female borrowing networks, childcare provision was tied up in networks of ‘belonging’. Female networks would tend to care for their ‘ain’ as an investment in reciprocal capital of care. Thus, having female networks in the estate was beneficial to lone mothers as these networks were generally helpful in providing support with childrearing. Yet, the care that was invested by network members would hold an unspoken expectation of reciprocation at a later date.

Brenda gave accommodation to her teenage niece, who wanted to escape a troubled home environment. In return Brenda's niece cared for her children during periods when she worked.

> Ma niece helped wae putting the kids tae bed 'n' that if ah worked tae aboot ten o'clock at night. Or she mibbe gave them their dinner. … Done their homework, took them to mibbe wee dance classes or the Brownies. Things like that, that I couldnae dae because I was always working.

Nearly all the women had previously been economically dependent on men and returned to work quickly after entering lone motherhood. This strongly suggests that work became an economic necessity for women once they entered lone motherhood. Most recognised that female network members were key actors in their ability to work. Thus, lone mothers' reliance on female network members to facilitate work must be regarded as a strong contributor towards participants often choosing to stay within Easterhouse after relationship breakdown, despite the recognised deficits of the neighbourhood. Help with childcare was a survival mechanism, which participants noted as an essential dimension of 'getting by'.

10.2 The Role of Formal Network Services

Chapter 7 noted the emphasis placed upon escape from domestic abuse situations. The findings showed that some community organisations and professionals emerged as key actors which supported women through domestic abuse and on into lone motherhood. Eight participants sought advice and support from statutory and voluntary services during the course of abusive relationships. These included GPs, police, homelessness services, social work services and Women's Aid.

GPs proved a particularly important source of advocacy, as divorces could be granted on the testimony of doctors who witnessed injuries. Conversely, this role meant that medical professionals (most often male) also held much power as gatekeepers of low-income women's release from abusive marriages. Thus, the power of medical professionals to advocate for divorce was an important consideration for women who often had little financial, emotional or practical resources to pursue independent legal advice.

> Ah wis married in 1969, ma first daughter born in '70, ma second one '71 and ah wis divorced by the time '73 came along because the doctor's testimony in the court. Ah wis divorced quicker than ah wis married. (Christina)

Participants who had sought support from the police during abusive incidents reported mixed experiences. Angie found that the police were ineffective at supporting her and enabled her abuse by insisting that she return home after fleeing. However, in other instances women found that police were keen to provide support through informal interventions.

> Well, I'd had the police a few times, but one policeman tried to goad him to hit him, so that he could charge him with hitting a policeman, but it never worked. (Janice)

As well as supports from statutory organisations such as health services and the police, two key community-based movements were noted as strongly contributing towards women's efforts to 'get by'. Easterhouse Women's Aid stood out as an organisation the majority of women recognised as most instrumental in supporting them to finally leave abusive relationships.

Easterhouse Women's Aid was established in 1993 in response to the high levels of referrals Glasgow Women's Aid received from women in Easterhouse. During the 1990s, most participants received support and accommodation from Easterhouse Women's Aid which allowed them to finally leave abusive partners. Until the 1990s no targeted domestic abuse services existed within the neighbourhood. Moreover, the fact that the majority of study participants had used Easterhouse Women's Aid as a means of escape in the early years of its inception demonstrates its significance as a key site of female solidarity.

Thus, Easterhouse Women's Aid formed an important female social network which promoted women's agency and power in Easterhouse. The significance of the Women's Aid movement lay in the intersection of legal, housing, emotional, practical and economic support. In order to leave, women usually required support in all of these areas. The findings also indicate that the 1990s were an important juncture in the history of

Easterhouse, where female activism began to empower women to challenge male control. Thus, the research highlighted the Women's Aid movement in Easterhouse as a key conduit that supported women to identify and leave abusive situations. This suggests that the arrival of situated domestic abuse support in Easterhouse during the 1990s acted as a strong catalyst for the growing trend towards lone motherhood.

The research also indicated that churches played an important role for the majority after leaving abusive relationships, their reach not confined to spiritual edification. It should be noted that throughout the research period Easterhouse had a high number of churches all notably engaged in anti-poverty work. Seven participants regularly attended local churches or chapels. All noted that churches were important sites of community solidarity and support. A few described how their Christian faith had proved an important mechanism for managing emotional struggles. However, the majority noted being drawn to wider activities and networking opportunities.

Chapter 4 set out the key role that church-based groups had played in establishing community-development projects in Easterhouse from the 1990s onwards. Consequently, churches became key actors in promoting social justice and addressing the effects of persistent deprivation in the estate.

> The churches were brilliant, because they would then start up community things and try and get people working together as a community. (Lorna)

The findings demonstrated crucially that during childrearing years the majority of the women relied on intensive weekly supports from church-based groups. Moreover, the dual spiritual and community dimensions of churches meant that they held unique potential for nurturing the spiritual, relational and material needs of women who had experienced ongoing challenging events over life-course. A range of church-based supports were noted. These included spiritual guidance, supportive networks which encouraged children into meaningful activity, friendship, respite from childcare and activities designed to relieve material poverty such as community meals, jumble sales and funded children's holidays. However, it is noteworthy that two women reported other much less wholesome dimensions of involvement with church groups which involved children's exposure to paedophilia and attempts at 'sexuality correcting' of young people (see Section 11.6.2).

Within the study, most participants described anxieties relating to children becoming involved in gang culture and crime within the estate. Seven women noted extreme stress relating to children's social activities, particularly during teenage years. All were aware of cultures of violence and crime which exist within Easterhouse and relayed that diverting children formed a major consideration in their daily emotional labours. At least half of the participant group noted intentionality in their efforts to schedule children's daily pursuits towards meaningful learning activities such as dance, martial arts and youth clubs. However, this kind of preventative scheduling often proved emotionally and financially costly.

> It's quite hard tae try and keep a teenager on track and not get intae bad crowds when yer working aw they hours and still trying tae keep a younger wan entertained. (Angie)

The majority of the women noted that engaging children in church-based activities was a deliberate strategy to keep them off the streets. For many, there was an added advantage that children became involved with friendship networks which encouraged educational attainment and the learning of new skills.

The research highlighted that all women whose children went on to enter further education were members of church groups, which they described as positive learning environments. Moreover, several women described the importance of positive male role models within the church on children's emotional development. Thus, the support provided by churches was often viewed as a mechanism for women and children to 'get on'. Joan was an example of one who attributed her child's academic success significantly to support received from churches.

> The best thing that happened tae ma daughter wis going tae the Baptist church. Ah mean, that's where her learning really started. There wis a family in there, aw the young wans would go tae their house and they would do their homework and play snooker. That grounded her. Ah think if she hidnae hid that, she widnae hiv got where she got.

To conclude, several key community organisations were noted as centrally important in supporting participants to get by during early and mid life-course. The interviews demonstrated that from the mid 1990s onwards the presence of a situated Women's Aid service within Easterhouse supported the majority of women to leave abusive relationships. It was a key support that recognised the complex needs of abused women and supported them towards ‘getting on’ and ‘getting through’ domestic abuse.

Once women had entered lone motherhood, church groups became an important source of support and connection for many. Several participants explained that the appeal of church groups was linked to being part of a community, several women describing their congregation as their ‘church family’. Churches fulfilled many functions of the nuclear family which women struggled to replicate as lone mothers. Aside from groups and activities, churches in many instances provided vital sites of belonging, acceptance and understanding. Moreover, for those who chose to adopt Christianity, biblical teaching provided a framework within which to construct meaning, comfort and purpose. Just as Women’s Aid provided a service which catered to the holistic needs of women during and immediately after domestic abuse, the dimensions of church support were very well matched to the needs of women during the childrearing years of lone motherhood.

10.3 Caring in Later Life – ‘It’s Still Jist Me.’

The research showed clearly that women’s engagement in caring activity tended to increase in later life rather than decrease after childrearing. All but one woman provided care for members of both immediate and extended networks. Moreover, the majority provided intensive end-of-life care for mothers and grandmothers in later life, and a number of participants became kinship carers for grandchildren or younger siblings as a result of parental addiction.

Where women might have expected childcare to end or reduce as their own children reached maturity, cultures of addiction within Easterhouse meant that women often inherited both support roles for addicted children and kinship care for grandchildren. This meant that nearly all women provided support to addicted children and three women in their sixties and seventies accommodated and cared for children and teenagers.

Una became an official kinship carer for two of her grandchildren, but explained:

> I ended up bringing up all eight grandchildren really, because of the way their parents were.

All kinship carers explained that having custody of grandchildren (in some cases more than one) exacerbated material poverty. Moreover, all explained that obtaining kinship care of grandchildren had involved lengthy and stressful wrangles with social services and struggles to access welfare benefits. The data made explicit that women's additional caring responsibilities invariably carried a high financial cost which was rarely reflected in the caring benefits which they received. The data from Section 9.2 showed that those with the greatest caring responsibilities over life-course were by later life those on the lowest incomes. Thus, it can be surmised that extended caring responsibilities increased material and time poverty. Section 9.2 highlights that women in their capacity as carers became an unpaid workforce firefighting the effects of addiction and endemic deprivation in Easterhouse and that those with the greatest caring responsibilities invariably found themselves in the worst financial circumstances in later life.

> With ma granddaughters, ah didnae even get allowances fur looking after grandchildren. Ah didnae get that tae the very last year I had them with me. It put quite a large financial strain on you, looking after your grandchildren who you weren't getting paid for. But ah worked in wee part-time jobs. Ah got by. (Una)

The vast majority of the women relayed that there was a cultural and gendered expectation that as women they would also fulfil caring roles for elderly relatives. Amongst the participant group, male relatives were never noted as active carers for extended family members. Furthermore, several noted that as lone mothers they faced enhanced pressure to fulfil extra caring roles as a perception lingered that they should have more free time available owing to not being engaged in 'looking after' husbands.

Most women explained that extended caring responsibilities were regarded as something of a rite of passage, the replication of female caring behaviours which had been modelled by their own female elders. All women who provided care to older relatives explained that their caring responsibilities were simply viewed as acts of reciprocity. In short, most participants accepted that where possible they would extend reciprocal care and support to women within their networks who supported them at earlier stages.

> Ah wis at ma gran's all the time when ah wis growing up, so ah wis jist returning the favour. It wisnae a burden tae me, ah wis happy to do it. Everything that gran had taught me about bringing up her younger brothers and sisters, I did too. It's life lessons, it's no something ye can get in a book. (Christina)

The interviews also made clear that there were definite conflicts around women's willingness to adopt additional caring responsibilities and actual capacity to deliver extra labours within families. Nearly all participants described the extreme logistical difficulties of managing the schedules of children, work and cared-for family members. Christina's experience highlighted the difficulties of providing care for an ageing relative whilst also being sole carer for her three children and kinship carer for younger sister (see Table 6.9). Her caring role for her grandmother involved a daily twenty-mile return journey by bus to the South Side of Glasgow, involving first going into the city centre and changing buses. Christina found that her caring role reduced her capacity to care for her own children.

> Ah couldn't do a lot ae the things that the kids wanted to do because ah wis really quite tired by the time ah got back from gran's.

On the sole occasion that Christina prioritised the health of her own child, her grandmother ended up being hospitalised and dying. Christina experienced deep feelings of guilt around this event and not being able to adequately meet the needs of all those who depended upon her.

> The only reason ah think she passed away wis, ma daughter took no well one day and ah couldn't go to see ma gran. It wis only the one day that ah didn't go over. Ah wis putting ma daughter first because she wis mine, she was no well and ah hid tae see tae her. That wis the hardest thing that ever happened, after all that time looking after gran, that wis almost 20 years ah done it.

Christina's testimony demonstrated that in a great many instances, women were pivotal actors holding together very precarious caring situations. Most participants were acutely aware of the importance of their ongoing support to family members. Like Christina, Brenda reflected on the centrality of her caring role within her teenage granddaughter's life.

> Ah wake up every morning and thank God that ah'm still here tae keep an eye on her, cause ah don't know whit she wid dae if ah wasn't here.

Nearly all participants were engaged in additional caring responsibilities that extended into later life, often placing strain upon participants' own immediate family units and increasing the financial and emotional burden of being 'The One'. Where care provided to older female relatives was often viewed as reciprocal and as a kind of ‘pay back’ for support during earlier life-course, caring for younger relatives was more contentious.

Addictions in Easterhouse resulted in at least a third of the participant group inheriting care of grandchildren after their own family were grown. This pattern of caring was often viewed as a role that had been thrust upon women rather than chosen. All those who took care of young relatives in mid and later life reported that this role constituted a significant strain, not least because the young people in their care had often experienced trauma relating to parental addictions. Thus, the extent of women’s additional labours of care formed an extra layer of challenge for most in later life. Moreover, many of the women explained that the pressures of additional caring responsibilities became more challenging due to age and infirmity and had a negative impact on physical and emotional wellbeing.

10.4 Internal Qualities and Resources – ‘It Wis Mainly about Whit I Could Pull from inside Myself.’

At the end of the interviewing process, the women were asked explicitly to reflect on mechanisms which had been most impactful for ‘getting by’ and ‘getting on’. These might include female, formal or informational networks, or their own intrinsic qualities. Across the group, the majority agreed that formal and female social networks had played important roles in helping them practically, financially and emotionally ‘get by’ in lone motherhood. Even the half of the group who considered themselves isolated besides close family supports recognised that ‘loose’ connections with neighbours or organisations had significantly supported them to manage at various stages in life-course. Consequently, all women explained that female networks had constituted key mechanisms for survival. Additionally, all women recognised the impossibility of complete autonomy and at least partial reliance upon network connections.

Crucially, however, the women all agreed that their own intrinsic resources were those which made the greatest contribution towards ‘getting on’. This finding was striking within the context of the accounts where women had shared unanimous experiences of domestic abuse, poverty and neighbourhood-based violence. What was clear was that the women who volunteered to participate in the study were those who had survived into later life and had enough insight to share their testimonies. Though rarely explicitly stated, each woman clearly shared characteristic ability to exercise personal agency. Thus, the research might suggest that those who possessed enough ‘drive’ to effect personal agency were often imbued with strong reserves of resilience. These women were the female survivors of Easterhouse – those who had chosen to stay within the neighbourhood and ‘beat the odds’ of succumbing to early mortality or lifelong domestic violence.

It has been noted that for this participant group, ‘getting on’ encompassed a wide range of markers of personal success. One of the most important findings was reflected in the emergence that women related ‘getting on’ to having found meaningful ways to navigate the challenges which they faced. It was, then, about much more than survival or social or economic mobility. For this group of women, getting on was connected to their attachment to personal skills, strengths and beliefs.

A profound moment happened in every interview at the point where each woman named the fact that she herself was most responsible for transcending the challenges of gender, poverty, place and lone motherhood. It was clear that this was a subject to which few, if any, had ever given much consideration. It was also interesting to note that the internal qualities, resources and beliefs which women set out as defining their journeys were subject to wide variation, although these can be grouped into five broad categories: tenacity, work ethic, resourcefulness, staying strong for children and faith.

First, several participants attributed ‘getting on’ to their own internal stores of grit, determination or fierce independence. In some cases, this was expressed as a purposeful refusal to give in to despair, in others an acceptance that there was really little choice but to keep going.

> Ye jist had tae cope, there wis nothing else for it. Ye either did that, or ye could’ve injured yer children. There were probably times when ah coulda lay down and cried, but ah didn’t. (Anne)

> It wis ma own strength and determination, cause ah don’t like anything tae beat me. Ah would always say ma ex-man wid never beat me. He’d never win. He used tae say that he’d make me that ugly that naebody else wid want me. Ah said, ‘Ye’ll never dae that tae me.’ (Una)

> Ah've always been kind of a self-sufficient tae be honest. I am quite an independent person, I jist wanted tae get oan wae it. Obviously, ah hid the help fae ma family, but ah don't think ah wanted outside people involved. (Angie)

> Ah wis strong enough then, and ah had tae continue tae be strong. (Mary)

Second, a few women explained that their work ethic and appetite for education and self-improvement was a powerful motivating factor. For these women, modelling hard work was viewed as the embodiment of a value which could motivate offspring to escape poverty. Moreover, most were keenly aware of the stereotypes of worklessness and slovenliness which were often attached to lone mothers in the media. The adoption of strong work ethics and high attainment might be viewed as a refusal to conform to these negative stereotypes of the time.

> Ah've brought ma kids up tae say, 'Don't be lazy, get oot there and work.' Ah wis never good at school, so that's how ah went fae wan job tae the next because it wis jist shop work and whitever ah could get. But ah brought ma two kids up tae kind of stay at school, be good at school and get decent jobs when yer aulder. (Angie)

> I wanted to pass on the same thing my dad wanted to pass on to me – the love of learning. I think, generally speaking, most educated people have better opportunities in life. (Janice)

> I wanted the kids tae realise that if ye want something ye need tae work for it, rather than sitting back. Ma mum would say tae me, 'Why don't ye jist give up work, instead ae holding down three jobs?' And ah wis like that, 'Naw, ah think better of maself than that.' The kids needed tae know fae day one that it wis important, that ye don't just get handed things on a plate. (Mary)

A third group of women recognised that their inner resourcefulness and ability to grasp opportunities and make smart decisions had significantly aided them to 'get on ' over life-course.

> Ah helped masel, cause ah went tae a lotta places tae get help tae get maself sorted out. (Brenda)

> Ah hid tae make smart choices, hid tae make really smart choices fur the kids. And the first smart choice ah made wis getting oot ae the marriage and bringing them up on ma own. (Mary)

> Ah wis always good at taking the opportunities that came up. (Frances)

A fourth internal driver was women's drive to simply 'be there' for children. Although, simple, 'doing it for the kids' was noted as an incredibly strong motivator which prevented at least two women from acting on suicidal thoughts. Thus, focussing in upon children's wellbeing was an important mechanism for emotional endurance.

> Ma kids kept me gaun and kept me sane, even through depressions, they kept me sane. It wis the fact that ah hid kids and needed tae look after them and hid tae be there fer them. That wis the main thing that kept me going. (Anne)

> Ah think it wis jist havin the kids, ah wis trying tae be strong for them. They didn't ask to be born. (Christina)

Finally, over half of the participant group explained the external strength they derived from faith or being involved with church communities to be a powerful intrinsic motivator. The previous section highlighted that a majority of women had derived instrumental supports from within church communities. However, those with faith explained that they felt sustained in their connection to their higher power. For most, faith was explained in terms of a relationship with the Christian God. Two women belonged to the Catholic faith and five were Protestant. Two did not specify. For one woman faith had a much more ephemeral essence based in nature and universal love.

> Ah've always been a believer in God. Ah used tae go tae church quite a lot, but that wis in the early days. Ah've no been in a long time. Ah jist pray every night and every morning – 'Please, God, let me be here for my granddaughter the noo.' (Brenda)

> Ah wid say first and foremost that it wis ma faith that really helped me. It wis like discovering Jesus and becoming a Christian, and coming through the depression and recognising it, and coming out ae the depression and understanding what ah'd gone through within that. Realising that, actually, ah've always been a confident person,

> and that ah've always went out and found ma way in life and that ah never needed tae depend on somebody, but wae the depression ah kinda lost aw that, lost a lot ae who ah was and ma own inner confidence. (Lorna)

> Ah suppose ye've just got tae work on what ye know. Gran had told me all about her growing up, working on the farm, and we used tae go camping every year. When we went camping ah used tae go and work on the farm, ah used tae love working wae the animals. Ah think it wis jist the fact that ah looked up tae gran and her beliefs and way of life and ah copied her respect for nature. Ah jist did the same sorta thing she did and looked after people. (Christina)

10.5 Network Support in Later Life

Social connections with family and friends played important but complex roles in later life. It was evident that nearly all women were heavily involved in giving and receiving forms of network support to immediate family members. Common expressions of support included lending money, helping with practical tasks, getting shopping and decorating. The supports participants derived from networks, however, rarely involved more intensive forms of caring such as the labours which the women themselves directed towards older relatives, children living with addictions and grandchildren. Most women spoke warmly about their relational connections with immediate family members.

> If ah need help in any way that they'll be there. Ma own family, kids, grandkids. (Anne)

In other cases, the acts of support which women valued most highly were linked to practical acts of solidarity.

> My sister's really, really good. Financially, she gave me a sum of money last year. Out of the blue she sent me a cheque for two thousand pounds. But yeah, she's emotionally supportive now, I just phone her up. (Janice)

Several women noted that in later life telephone support constituted a vital method for connection and 'getting by' emotionally. The role of the telephone was accentuated by the fact that the Covid-19 lockdown had just ended at the time of interviewing. Two participants hinted that the labours of care directed towards children in early lone motherhood were now entering into a reciprocal cycle in older age. Mary's comment inferred that though she didn't expect reciprocation, she understood that her accumulated labour was now being repaid.

> Ma kids are good tae me now, although they don't hive tae be but. My son phones me every day without fail.

However, the majority of participants were also involved in multi-facing caring roles directed towards adult children, older family members and grandchildren. This meant that instead of receiving care in older age of the kind that they delivered to members of the older generation, none of the participants received significant practical care from their own children. This was largely connected to cultures of addiction within Easterhouse and inherited care of adult children and grandchildren. To summarise, most women indicated that they relied on immediate family members in later life to some extent, for practical, emotional and financial support. However, even in later life, most women were still offering a high level of care to immediate family members navigating issues such as addiction and ill-health.

10.5.1 Peer Support – 'Ah'm More Outgoing Now Than Ah Ever Was.'

Participants were recruited from across a range of community settings. All but one shared a characteristic of weekly involvement with community groups within Easterhouse in later life. Thus, it was apparent that those who agreed to participate in the research were already those who had found value in attending community groups and sharing experiences. Christina, who was directed towards the study by a community worker, was the exception.

> Ah don't actually have any women in ma life now, apart from ma girls, and ma sisters occasionally. And ma granddaughter, her and I are the best of pals.

A central finding related to the role of community-based resources in supporting older lone mothers to 'get by'. In eight cases, women cited female friends within community groups as key sites of support, belonging and solidarity.

> Well, the crowd ae women that ah know noo have aw been through things similar. Naebody's any better than anybody else cause they're aw fae that wan area. They've

> aw mebbe hid some sort ae problem, and there’s things in the group that can help them. They kin aw sit and talk and maybe share yer problems. (Brenda)

Six participants belonged to women’s groups within Easterhouse and two belonged to church-based and housing-based groups, where they shared strong connections with other women. In all cases, women noted that their relationships with women in groups were more-important sources of emotional support than family connections. Moreover, all of the previously extremely isolated group reported themselves to be well supported in later life due to female community-based connections.

> When ah’m struggling ah kin reach out. (Mary)

Nearly all participants identified that they were still ‘The One’ within families who carried many caring responsibilities in later life.

> Ah mean any ae the problems the noo, it’s still me hivin tae deal wae it all. It’s still no any different cause ye feel yer jist oan yer own aw the time. (Brenda)

However, nearly all explained that strong connections to other women with similar lived experience made difficulties easier to manage. Despite the fact the none of the community groups were specifically set up as support groups, they were clearly utilised by women for connection and catharsis. Half of participants reported that the pandemic had increased their reliance on female supports from within groups.

> The women from my group were very supportive when ma two brother-in-laws died. We held a wee memorial for him during lockdown as we couldn’t have a service. (Anne)

To conclude, the findings demonstrated that in later life-course, peer support from women with shared lived experience took on increasing significance. The findings suggest that, where in earlier and mid stages of life-course women strategically drew upon formal network supports from within churches and the women’s movement, in later life they more intentionally linked with female peers as a mechanism for support and solidarity. This points to the fact that by later stages in life, women had begun to recognise the meaning and value generated by being a ‘survivor’ of lone motherhood in Easterhouse. Participants also explained that female connections fulfilled functions in later life which supported them to manage adult children’s problems such as addictions and relationship breakdown.

> What ah’m experiencing now, all the clubs that ah could’ve went to, or joined, it didnae even occur tae me tae go tae these places, because ah jist felt ma life wis a drunk man. (Christina)

Field observations noted that most participants inadvertently recognised that the value of these connections lay in the fact that peers were uniquely placed to understand the place-specific challenges of being ‘The One’, poor housing, gender-based inequality and enduring poverty. Moreover, shared experience made women able to offer meaningful support and advice. The research showed that both unpartnered and partnered women developed strong networks of female support in later life. These were most often linked to support from peers met through community activities. Thus, even in later life men tended to have only very limited importance in terms of supporting women.

10.6 Conclusion

Taken together, the findings demonstrate that female networks and formal supports were key structures which lone mothers drew upon to ‘get by’ in Easterhouse over life-course. By contrast to some studies on survival networks, this research found none of the brittle, transient qualities of survival networks mentioned in the literature. On the contrary, most women explained their continuing support of female network members into later life as a stressful but ultimately enriching reciprocal exchange.

The study also showed that lone mothers in Easterhouse were likely to engage with female networks and formal networks strategically at different points in life-course in order to plug support gaps. These findings show that lone mothers in the study ‘got by’ and ‘got on’ by drawing upon diverse networks of bonding and bridging capital, which were drawn upon strategically at different points in life-course to address evolving challenges. The findings also showed that in the Easterhouse context, the capital attached to ‘belonging’ was an important factor in women’s abilities to access the benefits of survival networks. In this sense, participants’ intentionality around situating themselves within Easterhouse after transition to lone motherhood can be regarded as a dimension of strategic engagement with networks for ‘getting by’ and ‘getting on’ over life-course. Moreover, within the continuum of personal agencies involved in ‘getting by’ and ‘getting on’, the two are symbiotically connected. In short, the participant group were only able to utilise the webs of personal and formal supports to ‘get on’ because of the informal supports they received at earlier stages to ‘get by’.

Chapter 11: Discussion of Research Findings

11.1 Introduction

Chapter 11 is a discussion of the findings which responds directly to the research questions. The findings are examined in relation to current and historical academic debates and the grand narratives of social change which have impacted the lives of Easterhouse residents since the 1980s.

Sections 11.2 to 11.5 explore the implications of the challenges of gender, place, poverty and lone motherhood set out in the overarching research question.

To what extent have female social networks been important in enabling women who have been resident in Easterhouse since the 1980s, and have experience of lone motherhood, to 'get by' and 'get on' through the challenges of gender, place, poverty and motherhood?

Finally, Section 11.6 responds directly to the research sub-questions, which deal exclusively with the functions and products of female networks.

What kinds of support do female networks provide (instrumental, informative, emotional, etc.)? What kinds of outcomes has this support allowed lone mothers to access that they might not have otherwise achieved?

Have female networks formed an important consideration in enabling lone mothers to 'get by' and 'get on' or have they been more likely to rely on other kinds of support networks or operate autonomously?

How important has the support of female contacts been perceived to be in comparison to individual traits such as hardiness, thriftiness, knowledge of systems or local knowledge?

Have women used female social networks as a mechanism to promote their own life chances or those of their children? Or are female networks more likely to be viewed as a mechanism for survival?

To appreciate the significance of female networks, it is first necessary to explore the challenges experienced by the participant group and the ways in which these challenges hampered efforts to ‘get by’ and ‘get on’ through lone motherhood. The discussion opens by examining the challenges of gender and the centrality of gender as an indicator of disadvantage within Easterhouse.

11.2 The Challenges of Gender

This section considers three overarching challenges of gender: childhood and early life-course, the effects of male hegemony, and the impact of societal change on gender relations. These were the challenges felt most central to understanding the experience of lone motherhood in Easterhouse through the research period.

11.2.1 The Prelude to Marriage

The findings in Chapter 7 illustrated that the cumulative effects of participants’ economic and social disadvantage in Easterhouse have been historically linked to cultures of male violence, which had major implications for lone motherhood, as well as interaction within networks. As a result, the challenges of place and lone motherhood were irrefutably framed by, but not limited to, gender. To appreciate the context of entry into abusive marriages, it is necessary to understand the early life-course experiences of the participant group. The majority had grown up in situations of extreme economic and social disadvantage within Easterhouse or other relatively deprived areas of Glasgow’s East End.

The research set out to explore the nature of women’s experiences of lone motherhood in Easterhouse during the adult life-course. Yet, the nature of life-course methodology meant that participants often contextualised testimonies by shifting between stages, including early and teenage years. The narratives supported evidence which shows that during the period where the participants were approaching adulthood, working-class women’s life choices in Glasgow were still extremely constrained (Hughes, 2004; Lynch, 2023).

These starting points of disadvantage offer insight into why this particular group of women often quickly entered into marriages which became abusive. The biographies in Chapter 6 show a pattern of marriage within the initial year of forming intimate relationships with men. The majority had grown up in households and neighbourhoods within Easterhouse which were affected by intergenerational poverty and at least half originated from homes where domestic abuse and addiction were present.

Most participants were educated in schools marked by low attainment and the majority left school with no academic qualifications. In consequence, few of the women entered secure, well-paid employment in early adulthood. Moreover, industry in Glasgow was still overwhelmingly controlled by men, and roles available to working-class women with limited academic attainment were still few (MacInnes, 1995). Participant biographies highlighted that prior to marriage, most were engaged in low-paid roles, such as sewing or low-grade clerical work.

By the start of the 1980s, social trends including women's increasing prominence in the labour market, sexual liberalisation and greater reproductive agency had barely reached Easterhouse. Those in more prosperous parts of the city enjoyed less pressure towards marriage and greater economic freedoms from the 1970s onwards (Lynch, 2023), yet twenty years later women from the participant group were still struggling to access the same freedoms. My results show that the historical juncture and effects of neighbourhood deprivation resulted in a lack of economic choice and limited experience of life beyond marriage, motherhood and the estate's confines.

Pregnancy was often a catalyst for marriage on account of societal prejudice towards unmarried mothers and limited earning potential, and it was accepted that to survive in a male-dominated society it was desirable to have a 'man at your back'. Marriage was often seen as an escape from situations of poverty, homelessness and abuse. Moreover, so ingrained was the culture of domestic abuse within the local community that subjugation was accepted as the benchmark for marriage. The constraints of class and gender resulted in many participants entering hurriedly into marriages which quickly became abusive. In this way, the challenges of gender were broadly set out for many study participants long before entering into marriage.

The findings expand upon accounts which explore women's economic positions in mid- to late-twentieth-century Glasgow (Abrams et al., 2018; Craig, 2010), and show that the geographical isolation of peripheral estates served to further constrict the options of the poorest women, making them particularly vulnerable to becoming economically and socially dependent. This propensity towards dependence was fuelled in part by limitations posed by class but more markedly by the gendered dynamics of power.

11.2.2 Negotiating Cultures of Male Violence

The findings from Chapter 7 showed that toxic gender relations constituted the single most important factor for understanding entry into, and subsequent negotiation of, lone motherhood. Moller (2007) terms patterns of male domination and the related subordination and oppression within communities ‘hegemonic masculinities’. These oppressive forms of masculinity are situated within wider societal structures of power. The thesis opens up new questions about how patriarchal power structures in neighbourhoods such as Easterhouse affect the relationship behaviours of men and women. Domestic abuse emerged as the root cause of lone motherhood for all participants but Joan, who was abandoned during pregnancy and did not marry. The centrality of domestic abuse to the findings of the thesis was wholly unexpected, since recruitment was drawn women from a range of community settings with no direct connection to domestic abuse support agencies.

Within the literature on Glasgow, several sources have evidenced a connection between processes of deindustrialisation and contempt between the genders (Craig, 2010; Hughes, 2004). Other sources have suggested that domestic abuse may be a single contributor towards lone parenthood in Easterhouse (Rose & McAuley, 2019). However, my study uncovered that it was actually part of a much larger, hidden problem of patriarchal control in and beyond the estate. Participant accounts made clear that negotiating male violence was the single greatest challenge relating to gender throughout their lives. After leaving abusive relationships, gender continued to disadvantage women in their efforts to ‘get by’, with a significant number reporting secondary abuse such as threats, stalking, punishments and harassment. Consequently, although gender formed only one theme of enquiry, toxic masculinity came to frame many of the other challenges addressed within the research question.

Participant accounts intimated that domestic abuse was an accepted and expected aspect of heterosexual relationships in Easterhouse as late as the mid 1990s. The relative absence of data on the effects of violent masculinities towards women and children, however, highlights the myth that men were the main casualties of hypermasculinity in Easterhouse. In fact, all participants regularly witnessed extreme male violence from childhood. Most participants also reported being ‘jumped’,[24] attacked and raped by grown men in childhood. My findings demonstrate that women in Easterhouse were likely to be conditioned towards compliance through fear of violence. Quinn's (2004, p.33) study of male violence in Easterhouse observes: 'Violence has to be thought of in its effects, in what it does rather than what it is.'

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[24] To be robbed and/or physically attacked on the streets.

An important contribution of the research lies in the discovery that lifelong exposure to neighbourhood-based male violence had a devastating impact upon participants' life trajectories. Cultures of male violence within Easterhouse are well documented but almost solely focus on understanding the impact of violence upon young men and male teenagers though territorialism and gang warfare (Bartie, 2010; Jeffrey, 2009; & Holligan, 2018; Quinn, 2004). Yet the silence around the impact upon women and girls points to a distinct lack of curiosity surrounding the parallel experiences of women. The visibility of women's perspectives of neighbourhood-based violence in this work contributes to knowledge and feeds into wider debates surrounding 'invisible women', data gaps relating to women (Criado Perez, 2019), in this case working-class women and the growing awareness of the magnitude of historical violence against women through movements such as the #MeToo campaign (Clark, 2019).

Within the literature, violence in heterosexual relationships has widely been proven to be more prevalent amongst couples experiencing poverty (Capaldi et al., 2012; Goodman et al., 2019). Whilst studies in Glasgow have shown that poverty and motherhood increase women's likelihood of exposure (Skafida et al., 2021), I do not suggest that domestic violence was a problem unique to Easterhouse nor that all men in Easterhouse were perpetrators of abuse. However, the extent of Easterhouse's entrenched social and economic inequalities and women's geographical isolation within the estate are likely to have contributed towards cultures of male control which had long-lasting detrimental effects on the life-course trajectories of women from my participants' generation.

Various authors have addressed the relationship between violent masculinities and industrial decline and worklessness (e.g. Campbell, 1993; McKenzie, 2015). In Glasgow, Craig (2010), Fraser (2010), Hughes (2004) and McLean & Holligan (2018) also indicate that violent masculinity has been concentrated in areas worst affected by male worklessness and deindustrialisation. Literature specific to Easterhouse also connects men's participation in 'recreational violence' to emasculation and loss of working-class male identities (Bannister & Fraser, 2008). The research expands knowledge on the gendered effects of industrial decline in Glasgow, suggesting that the combined effects of male worklessness, isolation and inhospitable housing conditions made many women in Easterhouse ‘sitting ducks’ for men’s hopelessness and rage. This meant that women were obligated to respond in the ‘quasi-therapeutic’ role described by Bourdieu (2001), helping men ‘accept the injustices of life’ (p.77). Without the perspectives of men, it is impossible to fully understand if the culture of male hegemony was wholly a product of worklessness-induced de-masculinisation. However, the women’s accounts highlighted that abusive husbands were often trapped in cycles of hopelessness associated with long-term unemployment, alcohol abuse and illness.

As well as abuse within marriage, violent masculinities ate into the fabric of women’s lives in other ways, such as fear of crime and being attacked in the streets, and fear for children as they negotiated territorialism. To conclude, my study found strong evidence that male violence had a devastating impact on the lives of women and children through the research period. What is less clear, however, is whether violence was the product of poverty and geography or more a symptom of dominant structures of patriarchy.

11.2.3 The Sexual Revolution’s Delayed Arrival in the Peripheral Estates

By the 1990s a range of societal changes began to create the conditions for abused women in Easterhouse to consider lone motherhood as an achievable option. More liberal attitudes and ease of divorce (Lewis & Welshman, 1997), depopulation and growing numbers of empty housing units from the 1980s onwards also made housing re-allocation favourable in the peripheral estates (Brailey, 1986; Tulle-Winton, 1997). Moreover, the situated presence of Women’s Aid coupled with benefit reform in the 1990s contributed strongly towards women being empowered to leave the most abusive marriages (GEWA, 1996). I cannot overstate the emphasis participants placed on these stories of leaving. It was clear that transitions were difficult not just for the emotional, economic and housing fallout, but also for the sheer audacity still required to openly defy the institution of marriage.

My study highlights the period around the start of the 1990s as marking the beginning of the sexual revolution which had happened some twenty years earlier in more-affluent areas of the city (Lynch, 2023) and as early as the 1960s in more liberal parts of the UK (Pugh, 2000). This is best illustrated by the majority of participants finally leaving abusive marriages during the 1990s after receiving support and advice from the newly situated

Easterhouse Women's Aid. The findings highlight the strategic importance of situating domestic abuse support in the peripheral estates, where violence against women was a growing concern (Brailey, 1986; Wainright, 1996).

Through the research period some global commentators on lone motherhood blamed the women's liberation movement for destabilising traditional family configurations (Auletta, 1981b; Murray, 1990; Wilson, 1987). My interviews highlighted that interventions from within the women's movement did contribute towards the destabilisation of participants' marriages. But its actions also contributed towards the refusal of domestic abuse as a characteristic of marriage and to a long-term shift in how the participants engaged in relationships with men (see Section 11.5.1). The crucial issue was that the nuclear families which were being destabilised were toxic sites of male power which oppressed women and children and were often very dangerous environments.

The 1990s also marked a period during which many of the professional 'helping' roles in which some participants later retrained were starting to become better recognised and established. These included roles within housing associations, childcare settings and community initiatives (Holman, 1998; Scott, 1997; Zhang et al., 2021). Access to a wider range of better-paid and often more-fulfilling professional roles contributed strongly towards women becoming less economically dependent and improving the economic circumstances of families. Within the first year of leaving, seven of the ten women were engaged in full- or part-time employment and by midlife half had sought education to train in professional roles (see Section 9.1.6).

The timescale of the research, however, highlights that improvements to women's rights were slow to come, with women continuing to struggle to access contraception and domestic abuse support right into the 1990s. The pace of change for women's reproductive rights in Easterhouse, for example, stands in marked contrast to that in more-affluent areas in the West End of the city, whose demographic was made up of a much more varied population that was better educated and held more liberal perspectives.

The important difference between women's rights in Easterhouse and elsewhere in Glasgow is illustrated by the presence of a family planning clinic in the West End in the early 1970s, which was attended by unmarried university students and local women as a centre for drop-in contraception and pregnancy termination. By the 1970s, women in Easterhouse were still served by just one GP surgery, a two-mile walk from parts of the estate. Moreover, even ten to twenty years later, a significant proportion of married women in Easterhouse had their reproductive agency dictated by male health professionals and/or their husbands.

Leaving abusive relationships was construed by participants’ wider families as a rejection of cultural values and norms. Many women experiencing domestic abuse lacked support from their mothers, who viewed refusal of abuse in marriage as a slight on their own marriages. The ‘you’ve made your bed’ discourse shows how patriarchal thinking had colonised the female consciousness and how women from the previous generation were used as conduits to enforce oppressive cultural norms.

Bourdieu (1986) suggests that patriarchal network interactions modelled at a micro level have an important role in influencing macro-level female oppression and subjugation. Farr (2004) and Hall (1999) have highlighted families and their daily relational exchanges as one of the prime sites of patriarchal and chauvinist reproduction. Others such as Fukuyama (1995), Putnam (1995) and Putzel (1997) recognise family units as sites of transmission of misogynist and racist behaviours. My study supports these theories. However, the key finding relating to gender was that men’s violence towards women eventually became the ‘straw that broke the camel’s back’; in most cases the extremity of violence and control within marriage forced women into lone motherhood.

Taken together, the findings show that the 1990s marked an important point of departure for women in Easterhouse, when developments relating to housing, benefits, employment and domestic abuse support helped women in the worst circumstances to begin to harness the power to embark on lone motherhood. The growing trend during the 1990s and 2000s resulted in a slow shift of heterosexual power dynamics in Easterhouse (Kiernan et al., 1998). However, the results are clear that, although refusing abuse and embarking on lone motherhood was in some senses an empowering move, in reality women were likely to face further discrimination after leaving on account of their stigmatised positions as lone mothers.

11.3 The Challenges of Place

This section examines the findings around the challenges posed by place. These include tangible challenges relating to housing, transport and services as well as some less obvious challenges of place. Easterhouse was not randomly chosen, but rather was selected on the basis of its remarkable history of long-term poverty and violence amid the arguably failed experiment of peripheral housing. The grand narrative of neighbourhood change since the 1980s broadly tells a story of physical improvement and improved public services (MacLean, 2003). Yet, despite such improvement, Easterhouse remains a deprived place and a classed geography within the city of Glasgow. My fieldwork journal reflections on current neighbourhood conditions noted:

> Despite Easterhouse's evident 'facelift' and improvements to shopping and transport provision compared to when I worked there in 2000s, participants' living conditions are really only now comparable to those of older women I've worked with in slightly less deprived parts of the city such as Maryhill, Dennistoun.

11.3.1 Housing

Participants' bleak descriptions of housing conditions during the first two decades of the research period confirm accounts from sources such as Clapham & Kintrea (1986), Gibb (2003) and Grieve (1986) which suggest that by the 1980s Easterhouse had reached a period of peak disadvantage and poor housing conditions. Despite recognising declining conditions, all participants opted to be housed within the estate after relationship breakdown, with half returning after brief periods of absence. Returners gave particularly powerful accounts of the neighbourhood decline during the 1980s, based on their experiences outside Easterhouse.

Accounts confirm that neighbourhood characteristics of the 1980s began to reflect those on the very lowest incomes, lone parents, large families and overcrowded households (Gourlay, 2007; Pacione, 1990; Paice, 2008). However, despite the breadth of discussion surrounding declining conditions in Easterhouse, there exists only a very modest body of insider literature (Holman, 1994; McCormack, 2009; Quinn, 2004). Lack of resident perspectives was one of the important issues raised by the literature review and a factor that has contributed towards the research design.

Insiders suggest that lack of re-investment from Glasgow City Council resulted in residents being consistently 'fobbed off' when attempting to advocate for housing improvement and repairs. My findings expand upon these insights to suggest that lone mothers often experienced the worst effects of dilapidated housing stock. Several participants described discrimination from within council housing repairs departments, who ignored requests for repairs due to gender and lone-mother stigma. Lorna conveyed her feelings in dealing with repairs departments powerfully:

> Ye were there on yer own and they wurnae listening.

Part of the problem for lone mothers in this context was historical dependence on men to deal with repairs and improvements during the first two decades of the research period. Women who remained in marriages longest reported the fewest issues with property repairs, whereas those who mothered alone for longer periods often reported wrangles to effect repairs and advice to 'do it yourself' from within the council repairs department.

The 1990s emerged in interviews as a period where neighbourhood regeneration and improvement to housing stock began to raise domestic living conditions. Housing renewal was linked to neighbourhood improvement alongside other streams of social change which together contributed positively to improved circumstances for most participants through the 1990s. These included increases to in-work and sickness benefits, aimed at incentivising work for lone-parent families under the Blair government (Gregg et al., 2003), and major improvements to shopping and leisure (Mitchell, 2010). Taken together, the evidence suggests that these streams of change and housing improvement had a significant impact on the wellbeing of the participants through the final decade of the twentieth century.

Whilst several studies broadly recognise processes of urban renewal to have improved the built environment (Gibb, 2003; Gourlay, 2007; Mitchell, 2010; Pawson et al., 2009), others have claimed that renewal constituted a mere 'sticking plaster' for the failed experiment of peripheral housing estates (McCormack, 2009; McGarvey, 2017). Contrary to these arguments, my study found that housing interventions did much to improve quality of life for women in the study and many connected the security that improved housing conditions afforded to their ability to pursue education and economic mobility for their families.

Interviews also highlighted the connection between increased satisfaction with housing, women's empowerment and the tenant-led structures of the CCHAs (McKee, 2007; MacLean, 2003). Over half the group were or had been involved in housing-association governance or wider role activities. As such, the housing associations took on an important role for women that extended beyond housing provision. My findings suggest that participants viewed housing stock transfer as a positive development which heralded something of a localised counternarrative to the ‘top-down’ approaches of dysfunctional council housing and a mechanism for women’s housing needs to be recognised and actioned.

In later life, women invariably perceived their housing situations to be more satisfactory. By the time of the interviews, six of the participants were homeowners. The trend towards lone mothers owning property can be argued to represent a success for the housing strategy that aimed to promote homeownership in peripheral estates (Hastings et al., 1996) and the development of new private housing in Easterhouse from the 2000s onwards (Garnham, 2018).

11.3.4 Access to Transport and Amenities

During childrearing, transport and travel constituted one of the main practical challenges of place. The interviews highlighted extreme gendered dimensions to geographical isolation that accentuated the impact of residualised neighbourhood conditions. None held driving licences and most rarely left the estate, despite half being married to men with access to vehicles. Chapter 8 highlighted the extent to which economic dependence, poor local shopping provision and limited access to public transport effectively conspired to maroon the majority of participants during the early years of childrearing. Isolation was a product of geography, lack of affordable transport and economic dependence.

These findings align with knowledge around the limitations of transport during the period (Mitchell, 2010; Pacione, 1993) and the extra layers of challenge faced by mothers in dislocated peripheral estates in staying connected to networks and work opportunities (Abrams et al., 2018; Tulle-Winton, 1997; Wainright, 1996). The findings in section 8.3.1 draw attention to the historical impossibility of using buses which only allowed for one pram and the impracticality of travelling long distances on foot with more than one child. The interviews made clear that, despite travel being a challenge for nearly all Easterhouse residents, for lone mothers leaving the estate was almost impossible. These limitations of travel also made managing the challenges of lone motherhood more difficult, with many participants explaining barriers in regularly visiting family outside the estate and accessing shopping and feeling trapped within Easterhouse.

By later life, many participants experienced better access to transport, although none learned to drive. This was largely connected to free bus travel for older people and greater disposable income to pay for services such as taxis. Consequently, most reported regularly travelling outwith the estate and making use of services and amenities within the wider city.

Interviews also raised conflicting perspectives relating to the new range of public services which arrived in Easterhouse from the start of the new millennium onwards. Most participants recognised the benefit of increased health, shopping and leisure provision, and regularly engaged with services such as shopping at the Glasgow Fort and arts and educational activities at Platform. However, at least half the group felt ‘out of place’ in these spaces on account of social class. The broad feeling about new services was that they were conceived around middle-class ideas of shopping and leisure which fitted with neither the budgets nor tastes of Easterhouse residents. This finding suggests some disconnect around how older residents adapt to the contradictory presence of historical and current conditions of deprivation and public services designed to engage a mixed-income demographic.

11.3.5 Belonging to Easterhouse

In addition to the tangible challenges of place, the study raises new findings around the challenges of belonging. By the start of the research period, Easterhouse was recognised as one of Glasgow’s most problematic neighbourhoods (Bartie & Fraser, 2017) with media coverage of life in the estate compounding negative resident stereotypes (Pacione, 1990; Wannop, 1986). The combined stigma attached to lone motherhood and belonging to Easterhouse in the early parts of the research period, which all participants recognised themselves to be tainted by, was an important challenge of place. A majority also identified that the intersection of belonging to Easterhouse and to the growing cohort of lone mothers contributed towards an extreme form of othering which resulted in discrimination from outside.

Yet, after leaving abusive relationships, most of the women actively chose to remain, despite the challenges associated with place and allocations policies which advocated for relocation to escape domestic abusers. It is of course essential to note that choice remained extremely constrained and that most simply had no knowledge of other parts of the city, having been raised in Easterhouse. This might suggest that it would be unlikely that women would want to move away from Easterhouse during a transitionary point in life-course which involved much uncertainty and upheaval. The other available options for housing were likely to be an equally undesirable Glasgow housing estate where one might benefit from none of the benefits associated with belonging.

The finding that all lone mothers in the study had opted to be rehoused in the estate is important, as it deviates from the perspectives of those such as Brailey (1986), Hughes (2004) and Tulle-Winton (2005), who suggest that growing numbers of lone mothers in Glasgow's peripheral housing estates might be attributed to the number of empty housing units during the latter decades of the twentieth century and women's need for quick rehousing. In fact, nearly all participants had originated from in or around the estate and strategised to stay. It is noteworthy that the recruitment strategy which aimed to engage women who had lived long term in Easterhouse may have excluded some women who moved from elsewhere when they became lone mothers.

At the point of entering lone motherhood, nearly all participants negotiated a period of temporary homelessness which necessitated intentionality around where to re-plant roots. In *Belonging: A Culture of Place*, bell hooks (2009, p.2) describes the notion of being 'wedded to place'. hooks's perspectives on belonging, deviate from the Easterhouse experience in that her interest in returning is rooted in a rural idyll and reconnection to working land. Despite the environmental dissimilarities, 'belonging' and recreating familiar patterns of family life were important draws for participants within the study. Women's testimonies conveyed that involvement in small reciprocal networks of female support was a familiar aspect of neighbourhood life which they perceived positively.

Other voices within the literature have discussed the phenomenon of 'estateism' and the cultural identity tied up with 'belonging' to deprived housing estates (Campbell, 1993; McKenzie, 2015), and the importance of 'place attachment' as a mechanism for understanding the affective bonds between places and the people who inhabit them (Madgin et al., 2016). Yet the parameters of 'belonging' to Easterhouse seemed to go beyond alignment with cultural norms. For the lone mothers in the study, 'belonging' was tied up with a complex system of survival, connection and resignation.

bell hooks's idea of being 'wedded to place' holds important resonances for lone mothers in Easterhouse. After marriages broke down, most women actively chose to situate themselves within the close female reciprocal culture of Easterhouse. Subsequently, most of the women became enmeshed in routines and networks which centred around the estate. Fraser (2010), Atkinson & Kintrea (2004) and MacLean (2003) have examined the effects of territorialism on men and boys in Easterhouse. However, there is a clear gap within the established discourse relating to how lone mothers have utilised protective networks of 'belonging' to negotiate hypermasculinity.

Nearly all women recognised 'belonging' to afford some element of safety from harm and being 'taken a lend of'. For women who had been conditioned to expect violence, it was largely unthinkable that they would go to another part of Glasgow where they would not experience the benefits of local connection and the protection afforded by 'belonging'. In this respect, the alternatives of relocating to another deprived neighbourhood where one did not have the benefits of 'estateism' simply held no benefit for this group for women. Moreover, the results clearly showed that women who either did not belong or attempted to move to a different neighbourhood within the estate quickly became victims of crime. Thus, to belong was to make a commitment to become wedded to the community and receive the benefits of local acceptance.

The research also clearly showed that on the whole women understood that remaining in the estate would give access to networks of practical support. Benefits attached to belonging and local networks will be examined in full in Section 11.6.

11.4 The Challenges of Poverty

Section 11.4 examines the dimensions of poverty challenge relating to 'getting by', 'getting out' and 'getting on' built into the overarching research question. Chapter 2 presented a comprehensive review of the terms 'getting by' and 'getting out' and the acts of personal agency used to ascribe dignity and direction to lives lived in poverty (Lister, 2021).

11.4.1 'Getting By' Poverty

Challenges relating to the experience of poverty ran through all the women's testimonies as a consistent thread, an inescapable reality of Easterhouse's classed geography. Although most participants managed to improve their economic circumstances by later life, all had lived lives characterised by ongoing periods of poverty which necessitated going without, debt and in some cases risky strategies such as sex work and shoplifting.

My findings show that most participants experienced economic dependence upon male breadwinners in marriage (see Section 7.3.6). During the transition to lone motherhood and early years of childrearing the majority were clearly only just ‘getting by’ as illustrated by participant accounts around struggling to furnish homes (see Section 9.1.1), making ends meet (see Section 9.1.2) and adequately clothe children (see Section 9.1.3).

One striking finding, however, is that although all women experienced their deepest poverty in the years immediately after transition to lone motherhood, all reported greater financial satisfaction and being able to manage money better in spite of having less. This suggests that ‘getting by’ was chiefly made possible by the presence of choice; the ability to choose to take out catalogue debt, engage in money lending networks or go out every week to sell at car-boot sales meant that women could scrape by. Living lives directed by husbands’ unpredictable participation in family life and approaches to sharing household finance clearly made the planning involved in strategising to ‘get by’ much more challenging. Subsequently, for women facing the most extreme abuse, lone motherhood was in itself one of the most important strategies for ‘getting by’ in Easterhouse.

Lawful strategies such as budgeting, car-boot sales, sewing clothes, acquiring furniture from neighbours, catalogues, ‘Provvy’ cheques and credit were all explained to be very ordinary dimensions of neighbourhood life. It was evident that these measures were employed almost universally by women on the estate regardless of marital status. Reciprocal networks of female support recognised and relied upon structures which supported most women in Easterhouse, irrespective of status, to negotiate cultures of male hegemony and low income. Yet, for lone mothers, the financial and transactional supports provided by network members became crucial means to keep families fed and clothed and were important expressions of solidarity which often prevented lone mothers from ‘going under’ emotionally.

My findings make clear that ‘getting by’ in early and mid lone-motherhood was rooted in cultures of reciprocity. Participants often reflected proudly in later life upon the extent to which they had exchanged financial support with other women. My findings show that in such a deprived setting, there is a delicate balance between ‘taking a lend’ and the cycles of taking and giving in which nearly all women took part. Subsequently, ‘getting by’ was significantly bound up in being viewed as a valuable actor who gives as much as she receives. This was especially important for the participants as lone mothers, who in many cases explained their desire not to be too much of a burden on their female networks.

Other women disclosed or alluded to involvement in risky and hidden strategies for ‘getting by’. What is interesting about these was that they were invariably described as survival strategies. Brenda, who disclosed involvement in sex work, made clear that she was rarely paid money. Rather, the men who visited her home would leave items such as electronic goods or jewellery which might be sold. Similarly, shoplifting was underlined as a means to acquire expensive items perceived to be important for children, such as nappies or joints of meat. It was observable in later life that participants tended to be highly self-critical of such strategies used in earlier stages of life-course whilst failing to recognise the dearth of choice available as younger women.

Finally, my findings highlight a further dimension of ‘getting by’ which relates to place. Nearly all women within the study had experienced extremely difficult lives, punctuated by frequent episodes of personal tragedy variously including attempted murder, rape, addiction, children dying through drug overdose, sex work and stalking. The findings in Chapter 10 demonstrate that few connected the extent of their challenge to place, and many blamed themselves for their difficult lives. My thesis is written in the present when trauma can be named and recognised but women of my participants’ generation and class did not grow up with a vocabulary of mental health. The research made evident that, although seldom named, the magnitude of the women’s suffering was directly linked to residency in Easterhouse.

‘Getting by’ in this context was as much about being able to weather the blows of class segregation as it was about strategising to manage the effects of material poverty. Nettle (2015) situates his ‘close to the edge’ theory around class-based distinctions of trauma and the likelihood of experiencing chaotic events. This poverty-orientated theorisation offers a partial explanation for the prevalence of trauma in my participant group. The research findings suggest, however, that although many aspects of trauma were linked to poverty and neighbourhood deprivation, a large proportion of the difficulties faced by women and children have been products of cultures of male violence (see Section 11.2). Events such as mental health hospital admissions, drug addictions, suicide attempts and periods of homelessness and financial crisis were most often explained as responses to men’s abuse of power.

My findings highlight that understanding the experiences of a research population of lone mothers in a place like Easterhouse requires a dual class- and gender-based analysis to fully capture the scope of how ‘getting by’ has been impacted by persistence of tragedy through life-course. Yet, gender relations have also significantly shaped women’s resilience. Surviving traumatic lives contributed towards the cultivation of personal strengths which women identified as the most important mechanisms in helping them to ‘get by’ and ‘get on’ (see Section 11.4.3). Subsequently, trauma significantly shaped both the context of ‘getting by’ in Easterhouse and the responses which it elicited.

11.4.2 ‘Getting Out’

During the pilot phase of the study, interview questions on ‘getting by’ and ‘getting out’ were orientated towards understanding how women had used personal agency to negotiate and move beyond the experiences of poverty. However, as interviewing progressed it became apparent that although Lister’s (2021) economically orientated theorisation of ‘getting by’ remained relevant, ‘getting out’ was a less satisfactory fit.

Part of the issue with ‘getting out’ of poverty relates directly to neighbourhood. Lloyd et al. (2017) highlight the extent of Easterhouse’s history of persistent and entrenched deprivation. Consequently, generational poverty was knitted into the lived experience of the majority of the women, who had grown up within the estate. The remainder, but for one outlier, originated from other, only slightly less deprived, neighbourhoods within Glasgow’s East End. All women in the study understood the implications of choosing to remain within the challenging confines of place.

Yet, the vast majority actively advocated to remain after relationship breakdown as a mechanism for support and to derive the important protective attributes of ‘belonging’ (see Section 11.3.5). Far from ‘getting out’ of this highly deprived place, most had advocated to be housed within the estate and had remained for the majority of life-course, often buying property in the estate in mid and later life. Yet, despite not ‘getting out’, by later life nearly all women felt themselves to have impressively transcended many challenges of poverty and gender. This signalled the need for a conceptualisation of transcending the challenges of poverty which did not relate to moving out of an impoverished neighbourhood context.

11.4.3 ‘Getting On’

The findings signal that ‘getting on’ is a more accurate descriptor for moving beyond the challenges of poverty. The findings make clear that although many of the participants have flourished in terms of acquisition of property, educational attainment and improved economic circumstances, these incremental improvements, as I observed, raised living standards only as high as older people in other slightly less deprived parts of Glasgow. Consequently, ‘getting on’ is observably a complex and personal journey, which might involve economic improvement that moves people experiencing poverty only into a place of marginally better economic circumstance.

In some instances, participants remained in deep poverty in later life, but considered themselves to have ‘got on’. Una reflected proudly on her achievements in securing her Higher National Certificate and negotiating a successful career in childcare whilst caring for her adult children experiencing addictions and acting as kinship carer to several grandchildren. Una noted that difficulties accessing caring benefits had contributed towards poverty over life-course *and* that she felt she had successfully overcome many of the challenges posed by poverty and living in Easterhouse. ‘Getting on’ was clearly as much about navigating structural disadvantage with dignity as about effecting better personal circumstances in later life.

Participants explained that to have ‘got on’ in life related to a range of personal outcomes which were viewed as worthwhile products of a life well lived. These facets of ‘getting on’ were often linked to perceptions of having carried out caring roles to a high standard, cultivated a rich spiritual life or instilled strong work ethics in children. In short, women’s perceptions of ‘getting on’ were rarely based upon escaping poverty but rather upon personal successes which were achieved in spite of poverty.

Several studies note the prevalence of low educational attainment amongst lone mothers, which is reflected in lower-skilled, lower-paid jobs (Bowman & Wickramasinghe, 2020; Stewart, 2009; Zhan & Pandey, 2004). However, despite disadvantaged beginnings, ‘poverty of aspiration’ was not evident amongst the participant group. Half retrained in midlife and were attracted to professional roles which addressed endemic issues of poverty within their communities. This would suggest that notions of ‘getting on’ were often linked to wider ideals of solidarity and support as well as ‘getting by’ and improving individual economic circumstances. Where Lister’s (2021) definition of ‘getting out’ suggests individuality and micro-level efforts at leaving poverty behind, this study highlights that, for the research population, ‘getting on’ was a more nuanced experience attached to community and solidarity with other oppressed people: an original contribution of the thesis. Women’s expressions of class and gender solidarity show that, by later life, most had attained a level of consciousness which suggests a move from the stage that Freire (1974, p.34) terms ‘magical consciousness’ and inevitability of oppression, towards a more critical form of consciousness which recognises and supports others to challenge societal injustices.

11.5 The Challenges of Lone Motherhood

Interviews made clear that most of the women in the study had few options but to embark upon lone motherhood due to the severity of abuse. In fact, men’s lack of emotional, financial and practical involvement meant that nearly all were mothering alone long before relationship breakdown. In this way, the majority of relationships were clearly aligned with the kinds of ‘lone ranger’ male behaviours set out by Craig (2010) and Hughes (2004) as typical of working-class Glaswegian fatherhood. Unanimously, lone motherhood was explained to be an imposed journey rather than a chosen one. Yet, the emphasis placed upon stories of leaving were often framed by some pride in exercising personal agency to escape and survive.

Some studies have suggested that women’s decisions to mother alone have been greatest in areas which have faced the steepest industrial decline. These studies surmise that men’s economic emasculation and subsequent un-marriageability have contributed towards the growing trend towards lone motherhood (Campbell, 1993; Rowthorn & Webster, 2007). Others such as Goodman et al. (2019), Robbins & Cook (2018) and Tischler et al. (2007) have recognised domestic abuse to be a single yet increasingly prominent reason for lone motherhood. However, the results in Easterhouse suggested that women *did* choose to marry during the 1980s and 1990s, a peak time of unemployment, albeit often under duress of unexpected pregnancy, the need to escape chaotic homes and in an environment largely untouched by changing attitudes to marriage and the family.

My findings showed that those who opted to be lone mothers were desperate to escape abusive relationships. The neighbourhood was demonstrably a particularly challenging and risky place to be a woman. Whilst most recognised not having a ‘man at your back’ increased vulnerability to wider forms of neighbourhood violence, all recognised leaving as a necessity for survival. Thus, the research showed clearly that lone motherhood in Easterhouse was universally a difficult choice which involved breaking with the conventions of marriage and hegemonic masculinities. Unanimously, the point of transition, where women finally harnessed major reserves of personal agency, was framed as one of the most important points in life-course.

11.5.1 Being ‘The One’

The findings in Sections 7.2.2, 7.6 and 8.4 show that most of the women in my study adopted a series of gender identities as responses to cultures of masculinity and as mechanisms for protecting children. ‘The One’ was a gender role which was thrust upon women by men’s refusal to involve themselves with family life. Being ‘The One’ to bear the vast majority of the emotional, practical and financial labours of family life became *the* great challenge of motherhood, which endured into later life. Feminist writers broadly recognise women as repositories of emotional and practical capital within families (Illouz, 1997; Reay, 2004), and within the West of Scotland women have often borne the majority of such labours within families (Craig, 2010; Hughes, 2004). However, my research uncovers that being ‘The One’ was a lifelong commitment which required carrying extreme levels of physical and emotional resilience into later life, owing to the persistent impact of health and social inequalities in Easterhouse.

Emotional labour within families tended to expand to include care for older relatives and for grandchildren displaced by parental addiction. The heroin epidemic of the late 1980s and early 1990s also resulted in non-addicted women inheriting extra caring responsibilities and receiving less care from their own children in later life (see McKeganey & Barnard, 2007). Moreover, male abuse continued to cause emotional fallout for families throughout teenage years and adulthood. The findings also show that in common with feminist voices that argue that women’s labours often hold less potential for transmission into other more valuable sources of capital (Bourdieu, 1989; Reay, 2004), women who undertook the greatest intergenerational caring responsibilities were invariably the least educated and least well off by later life.

As well as being ‘The One’, participants identified two other clear approaches to lone motherhood which were explained as mechanisms to protect families from further male abuse. The ‘No Fear’ label discussed in Section 8.4 was a defence against being perceived as vulnerable and a target for neighbourhood violence and applied to the majority of participants. Yet their narratives invariably reflected stories of feeling alone and frightened. This demonstrated that to some extent the fearless façade was an extension of the tendency to keep men at arm’s length, avoid real emotional intimacy and protect families. Thus, like the women in McKenzie’s (2015) study, presenting as ‘hard’ in the public sphere became an important mechanism for ‘getting by’ as a lone mother. Only two women within my study self-identified as ‘soft’; both perceived themselves to have been victims of enhanced levels of crime and financial coercion as a result of their passivity.

Finally, the identity of ‘The Sceptic’ (see Section 7.6) was a further protective mechanism in later life for negotiating relationships with men and protecting children from further abuse. By then most had cultivated sceptical perspectives towards men. Despite half the group re-entering relationships, only one received any regular emotional, practical or financial support from a male partner. In fact, the research highlighted that the majority who re-entered partnerships with men experienced further domestic abuse. After entering lone motherhood, all women tended to keep men at arm’s length to various extents as a mechanism for ‘getting by’ (McHanahan et al., 1981; Nelson, 2000).

After entering lone motherhood some women’s renegotiation of matriarchal orientation involved linking with new male partners. However, far from returning to relationships where men were relied upon to support women through motherhood, all understood relationships with men to be risky. Amongst those who re-partnered, unconventional relationships were common: the majority lived apart from partners and did not re-marry. In later life, most understood the embedded nature of men’s privilege and kept their own space and financial agency as a means to mitigate against further trauma.

It was observable that poverty encouraged male gender construction to base itself upon tropes such as ‘the hard man’ and ‘the man’s man’. The women in my study explained that orientation towards lone motherhood was broadly shaped by the desire to outwardly present as competent, independent, tough and able to handle themselves. This represented a broadening of the parameters of female subjugation involved with being ‘The One’.

11.6 The Significance of Female Networks

This section shifts its attention from negotiating challenges to discuss the significance of network supports.

11.6.1 Network Composition

One of the clearest findings of the research is that participants' networks were almost exclusively female at all stages of life-course, with the exception of formal support from churches (see Section 10.2). In this respect none of the participants fell within the category of 'stabilisers' noted by Keim (2018), arguably because cultures of toxic masculinity prevented women from linking with men who could provide a stable dynamic. By contrast five aligned with characteristics of 'changers' (Keim, 2018), suggesting that the culture of male hegemony in Easterhouse increased the likelihood of women directing energies towards education and attainment after entering lone motherhood.

The data showed that participants drew strategically upon various network compositions over the life-course according to support needs. Instrumental support was often provided by immediate family members such as mothers, sisters, nieces and cousins, and organisational support from within churches and community services. Financial support was linked to more-diverse networks of female family members and close-proximity neighbours. Finally, emotional support was largely connected to networks of friends and family members, with peer-to-peer support becoming increasingly important in later life.

The prevalence of domestic abuse within marriage resulted in nearly all describing marriage as the period during which they perceived themselves to have the least access to support of any kind, including from women. It was clear that the transition to lone motherhood initiated the period in life-course where female networks became essential actors in women's ability to 'get by'. After entering lone motherhood, half the group described deliberately limiting network connections to one or two female family members. However, even those with the most limited network involvement received crucial supports from female network members. Finally, in later life most women described themselves as well supported mostly on account of links to female peers.

11.6.2 Forms and Outcomes of Female Network Support

The first sub-question examines the forms of support provided by female networks and the outcomes generated from network support which might not have been otherwise achieved. Support from networks had three dimensions: instrumental, knowledge and information, and emotional.

Instrumental support was explained to be one of the most crucial functions of network support during active stages of childrearing. All participants, save for Janice, engaged in cycles of reciprocal childcare and cycles of borrowing and lending which enabled engagement with the workplace and managing poverty. The seven participants who returned to the labour market within the first year of entering lone motherhood explained that work was only made possible by the cooperation of female network members who tailored schedules to accommodate childcare and children's drop-offs to school and nursery. In this respect, instrumental support derived from female networks was an essential survival mechanism for participants during earlier stages of lone motherhood, especially in view of the absence of financial support from fathers in nearly all cases.

However, as suggested by Boeckmann et al. (2015), it was observable that the social norms relating to work were heavily enforced by female networks and that instrumental support in the form of childcare and financial support to supplement the 'hidden costs' of work were provided when roles were deemed to fall within 'acceptable' working-class aspirations. Women who attempted to transcend class norms reported being discouraged from education and progression and receiving less instrumental support as a result.

Informative support was closely tied to belonging. Female networks were often noted to be important sources of locally situated knowledge relating to navigating benefit or housing systems, avoiding being 'taken a lend of' and finding work. However, the emphasis placed upon female informative support was less pronounced. It appeared that the exchange of information was viewed as part of the currency of entertainment, banter and solidarity which ran through the women's daily exchanges with their network members. However, most participants recognised the benefits of this informal information exchange of knowledge which could reduce vulnerability to crime and ease the strains of poverty.

The sharing of information played an important function in helping lone mothers to identify specific closes and streets within Easterhouse where they would be least at risk of exposure to crime, drug dealing, bad housing conditions and anti-social neighbours. In common with Bissett (2023) and McKenzie (2015), the research found that belonging and access to locally situated knowledge were important mechanisms for protecting families from negative neighbourhood effects.

Emotional support was shown to be a central function of female networks at all stages of adult life-course. Four out of ten participants were actively prevented from suicide by women within their networks during early lone motherhood, demonstrating that female social networks were survival networks in the most literal sense. Those who deliberately restricted networks reported the worst mental health outcomes over time and the most extreme instances of mental health crisis. This might suggest that lone mothers who maintained more varied networks of support were those most likely to maintain reasonable mental health.

Relationships with female peers took on enhanced importance for catharsis in later life. Whereas Nelson (2000) found that female friendships held most cathartic significance during transition to lone motherhood, the research shows that peer-to-peer networks become extremely important sources of solidarity and support in later life. Crucially, the benefits of friendships were linked to shared experience of negotiating lone motherhood and neighbourhood conditions in Easterhouse.

To conclude, the research highlights that female networks were essential conduits for survival and ‘getting by’ the practical, financial and emotional difficulties of lone motherhood over life-course. The support attached to female networks held important value and resulted in a number of specific outputs. Instrumental support from female networks was universally explained to be the key contributor towards participants being able to engage in the workplace and keep families afloat. The importance of informative support was slightly less prominent but explained to be important for reducing vulnerability to crime and optimising decisions around where to accept offers of housing.

Finally, emotional support kept a significant number from suicide and in later life helped most to find meaning in the experience of lives characterised by persistent trauma. Across all stages of life-course, the most important outcome of female networks was explained to be the extent to which they simply helped participants to ‘keep going’ in their intensive roles as ‘The One’. The levels of endurance involved in upholding the pressures of lone motherhood across life-course have been discussed in Section 11.5.1. The accounts show that the female network supports were crucial scaffolds for family survival.

11.6.3 The Significance of Female Networks for ‘Getting By’ and ‘Getting On’

As noted in Section 11.6.2, female networks played crucial roles in supporting women to ‘get by’ during childrearing years. However, female networks were much less effective in supporting women to ‘get on’. Several participants explained that close female networks had actually discouraged personal development and activity which might be considered to transcend class norms.

Subsequently, lone mothers’ networks in Easterhouse aligned with the theorisations of those such as Adkins (2006), Fine (2003), Lowndes (2004) and Putnam (1993b), who argue that bonding networks are less useful for effecting social mobility, and those of survival theorists who argue that low-income women’s support networks often constrain aspirational activity (Belle, 1983; Freeman & Dodson, 2014; Dominguez & Watkins, 2003; Lowndes, 2004; Riley & Eckenrode, 1986). The findings show that participants attributed their abilities to ‘get on’ most centrally to harnessing of personal strengths and resources, coupled with supports from the women’s movement and churches, which provided crucial economic and social support and helped to promote life chances of children.

Female survival networks (e.g. Stack, 1974) also often provide crucial dimensions of instrumental support whilst limiting aspirational activities. Dominguez & Watkins (2003) suggest that survival networks are characterised by cycles of crisis and dependence. Others suggest that women often withdraw from survival networks once poverty ceases to necessitate membership (Belle, 1983; Freeman & Dodson, 2014; Dominguez & Watkins, 2003; Lowndes, 2004; Riley & Eckenrode, 1986). Female networks in Easterhouse shared a significant number of similarities with these but also important differences.

None of the research participants showed signs of wishing to disengage from their female networks or involvement in the transient, brittle network ties identified by other authors (Belle, 1983; Dominguez & Watkins, 2003; Freeman & Dodson, 2014; Lowndes, 2004; Riley & Eckenrode, 1986). Networks were so strong as to result in lifelong patterns of devotion and caring for network members. As such, reciprocal care was seldom explained to be an unwelcome product of network membership, though caring was observably a strain for those with the highest caring responsibilities. Furthermore, in later life, women actively chose to engage with new female network members who gave and received regular support which helped women ‘survive’ the challenges of mothering adult children.

That the majority of women succeeded in later life in impressively improving their economic and personal circumstances also suggests that there were inherent personal characteristics which resulted in them being able to transcend class-based barriers to education and attainment (see Section 11.6.5).

Participants identified two main streams of more-formal support which contributed towards ‘getting on’: feminist networks such as Women’s Aid and churches within Easterhouse, which made important contributions to most women’s family lives though their delivery of anti-poverty and community-development programmes (Kawachi, 1999; Myers, 2000; Pacione, 1990; van der Merwe, 2020). My research raises two main points. First, during childrearing many of the women strategically linked with church groups to channel children away from territorial and gang-related activity and towards more wholesome forms of education and activity. Second, women used church groups to plug some of the support gaps experienced by lone parent families, such as provision of holidays, supervised homework clubs and out-of-school activities. Churches played an important role in supporting lone mothers in Easterhouse to move beyond survival and access family-based activities which would otherwise have remained out of reach.

However, the findings about the positive impact of churches for ‘getting by’ and ‘getting on’ come with a caveat: two women’s accounts uncovered that involvement with churches exposed some children to risks such as paedophile grooming and attempts towards reprogramming sexualities, a less-talked-about and darker dimension of church involvement. The details of these events were not included in the biographies or discussed in the findings on account of the women sharing these narratives of abuse in confidence. Taken together, the findings around churches suggest that for some churches *were* an important mechanism for ‘getting by’ poverty and plugging support gaps. However, some participants explained that lone mothers in particular had to be mindful of the people and ideologies within these institutions, which held potential to harm as well as help.

11.6.4 Promoting Life Chances through Network Involvement

This section addresses the sub-question which explores whether female networks or other supports have been important for promoting the life chances of participants and their children. The research highlights that ‘survival’ supports provided by female networks were the crucial foundations which aided most participants to move through stages of ‘getting by’ towards ‘getting on’. As noted, by later life most participants experienced considerably improved economic and housing circumstances. Although female networks often constrained efforts to access education and training, the instrumental, informative and emotional supports provided participants with the strength to get through some of the most challenging aspects of lone motherhood and tap into personal resources to effect agency. In this way, female networks both constrained and enabled ‘getting on’. The overarching indicator of participants’ ability to get on appears to have been access to female support coupled with strong reserves of personal resource.

The findings also highlight that support from within churches played a crucial role in promoting children’s life chances. Within the cohort, six participants’ children went on to higher education, four to university, and two achieved exceptional educational attainment. All had been regular attendees of church-based activities in Easterhouse, which parents credited with keeping them away from negative neighbourhood effects. Consequently, there is a strong argument that the symbiotic relationship between female networks, women’s own personal resources and inputs from churches created the conditions for many lone mothers and their children to ‘get on’ through life-course.

11.6.5 The Centrality of Personal Resources

The final, and arguably most important, finding relates directly to a participants’ own internal strengths, beliefs and resources. When asked to consider which factors had been most impactful towards ‘getting on’ rather than simply ‘getting by’, women identified that, for lone mothers, the ability to harness personal agency was the most important determinant.

Section 11.4.1 explored findings relating to the extremity and persistence of trauma and the extent to which many internalised blame for traumatic events, rather than connecting them to place. My fieldnotes observed that many of the shameful feelings women expressed were reflective of misogynist media rhetoric. Yet most participants *were* able to transcend the stigmatising ideologies with which they wrangled. Nearly all women explained that the most powerful tools were the intrinsic resources often noted by poverty scholars, such as humour (Titterton, 1992), emotional resilience (Gillies, 2006) and faith (Chan & Rhodes, 2013; Mayo et al., 2022; Vandsburger et al., 2008).

Within the group, six women had retrained during early and middle stages of life-course and became engaged in work which directly addressed issues of inequality inherent within the neighbourhood. The ontological bent towards engaging in activity which promoted cooperation, community-building and social justice was an important aspect of getting on in addition to self-improvement. The trend towards community-based work demonstrated that the women had cultivated insight into the interconnected nature of their personal struggles and wider structures of inequality. What stands out is that the ability to make connections and harness available resources meant that these were women who had developed high levels of critical consciousness and resilience – they had not only survived and thrived, but also in many cases involved themselves in work which would help others to do the same.

The intrinsic resources identified by participants were wide ranging, including attributes such as personal grit and determination, orientation towards self-improvement, resourcefulness, promoting best outcomes for children and faith. These variations demonstrated that although the women shared common characteristics relating to residency, age, lone-motherhood status and ability to exercise personal agency, there was wide variation in the internal mechanisms of orientation. In this way, ‘getting on’ was explained to be a direct product of the women’s ability to identify and tap into personal resources which allowed them to act out personal agency and effect better personal circumstances within the limited sphere of resources available to women.

11.7 Conclusion

The discussion in this chapter has explored the findings around challenges and networks and the implications of grand narratives of social change over time and academic debates. The final chapter presents the overarching conclusions and contributions, plus recommendations for future research as well as practice.

Chapter 12: Conclusions and Implications

12.1 Introduction

The previous five chapters of the thesis have presented and discussed the rich information gathered from thirty interviews. The penultimate chapter examined the findings in relation to the overarching research questions and sub-questions, unpacking the specific challenges relating to gender, place, poverty and lone motherhood and the extent to which female networks are significant for ‘getting by’ and ‘getting on’. The concluding chapter develops a deeper synthesis of the research findings by explaining the extent to which the research met its aims and analysing the significance and limitations of the findings.

The first part of the chapter addresses the research aims (Section 1.3.1), considering the extent to which they were met, identifying the new knowledge generated via this research and its academic contribution. The second part sets out the contribution towards knowledge and directions for further study, reflections on methods and limitations, and implications for policy and practice, and closes with some reflections around the significance of place and time and the doctoral journey.

12.2 Research Aims

This section addresses the overarching research aims, explaining the extent to which they were achieved.

12.2.1 The Significance of Female Social Networks

Investigate the extent to which women with experience of lone motherhood in Easterhouse have used female social networks as a mechanism to overcome challenges associated with gender, place, poverty and motherhood since the 1980s.

The research achieved this aim fully by establishing a comprehensive understanding of how female networks were utilised in Easterhouse throughout the forty-year research period to navigate these overlapping challenges (see Sections 11.2–11.5). The life-course approach revealed that female networks of support played a crucial role in helping to keep the lone mothers involved in the study afloat through all adult life stages, and that the supports provided by networks varied to accommodate lone mothers' evolving support needs through early, mid and late stages of life-course (see Section 11.6.2). Section 11.3.5 highlighted that belonging to Easterhouse and its locally situated female networks was an important factor which influenced decisions related to remaining in, leaving and returning to abusive relationships.

The research clearly showed that female networks were crucial to surviving challenges associated with gender, place, poverty and lone motherhood. Ultimately, the supports provided to navigate intensive periods of childrearing enabled the majority to move beyond what might be considered periods of crisis and secure enough stability to pursue personal development including education, and faith-based and workplace opportunities.

In mid and later stages of life-course, 'getting on' was achieved through strategic engagement with formal network supports to plug support gaps, and tapping personal resources for strength and direction. The research suggested that the gender roles thrust onto women as a result of male hegemony, 'The One', 'No Fear' and 'The Sceptic', resulted in both extreme challenge over life-course and the development of high levels of resilience and self-reliance. In this way the majority of study participants by later life had found mechanisms for converting aspects of their disadvantage into assets, which could be drawn upon to navigate fresh episodes of challenge.

A key message of the research is that the 'survival' aspects of female networks were crucial to keeping many of the women alive and functioning to the extent that they could negotiate challenges and access resources which could help with movement towards more personal constructs of 'getting on'.

12.2.2 Significance of Female Solidarity and Reciprocity for Negotiating Poverty

Examine the history of women's poverty and socio-economic disadvantage in Easterhouse since the 1980s, and the extent to which female solidarity and reciprocity have enabled lone mothers to 'get by' and 'get on'.

This was achieved to the extent that the data collection both generated rich insight into participants' experiences of poverty and life in Easterhouse, and established clear findings around how much solidarity and reciprocity were present within female network relationships.

With regards to examining the history of lone mothers' socio-economic disadvantage from 1980 to 2021, the findings showed that structural inequalities played a central role in shaping all the participants' challenging trajectories and that life-courses were characterised by persistent episodes of trauma linked to toxic neighbourhood effects. However, the thesis highlights that the participant group were also beneficiaries of a range of public policies and societal changes which positively impacted women over the research period (see Section 12.7).

The research made clear that residency in peripheral housing estates resulted in long-lasting class segregation and a range of negative neighbourhood characteristics relating to male violence, addiction and stigmatisation, which contributed towards disadvantage and limited life choices and chances. The mid 1990s marked the key juncture when neighbourhood renewal instigated by CCHAs, regeneration initiatives, benefit reform (see Section 11.3.1) and women's rights interventions, specifically from the Women's Aid movement (see Section 11.2.3), began a slow process of improvement in women's economic and domestic circumstances.

Regarding the extent to which female solidarity enabled lone mothers to 'get by' and 'get on', the study evidenced strong currents of neighbourhood-based solidarity, as well as feminist solidarity acted out through the instrumental supports of the Women's Aid movement. Yet, it is important to recognise that nearly all participants were ambivalent about or dismissive of being labelled as feminist. This refusal of feminism suggested some dissonance given that the Women's Aid movement had supported most to make the transition to lone motherhood and escape abusive marriages. The disconnect with feminist ideology might be a response to the academic connotations of feminism or the long-term effects of living within an environment colonised by men. However, regardless of ideological drivers for engaging in 'helping' networks, the findings show that the performance of female solidarity was strongly evident within female networks.

In examining the extent to which reciprocity had enabled lone mothers to 'get by' and 'get on', the research demonstrated that the supports involved in female networks were reciprocal at all stages of adult life-course. In later life, most participants became engaged in labours of care towards female network members who had provided support in earlier stages, and most engaged in supportive peer-to-peer networks.

12.3 Academic Contribution and Directions for Future Study

The thesis makes six contributions to knowledge. First, this study represents the first of its kind to focus upon lone mothers' life-course trajectories and the impact of evolving forms of social change in a deprived Scottish neighbourhood. Whilst authors such as Bea Campbell (1993), Lisa McKenzie (2015) and Bev Skeggs (1997) have examined the experiences of lone mothers in wider UK contexts, this research is the only one to illuminate the perspectives of lone mothers in a deprived Scottish neighbourhood in 1980–2021, *and* chart the impact of gender, place, poverty and lone motherhood into later life. The research is also amongst a very small body of academic literature which presents the lives of low-income Scottish women in their own words; Scottish, lone-mother voices are relatively absent in the established literature. This research is the first to foreground the hidden histories of lone mothers in Glasgow's peripheral housing estates and to suggest a counternarrative to the widespread pathologising narratives of working-class lone motherhood.

The second contribution to knowledge relates to research design. To date, a small number of studies have utilised photo elicitation with older people to understand resident perceptions of place-based attachment and urban space (Madgin et al., 2016). However, none have, to my knowledge, used repeated interviews conducted in participants' homes coupled with photo elicitation to understand the life-course experiences of older women in socially segregated neighbourhoods. As examined in Section 5.2.6 reciprocal relationships built through repeated interviewing were a key dimension of the research design which contributed towards elicitation of extremely rich and previously undisclosed narratives. The importance of this approach lies in the level of trust and rapport built up through the time spent with participants, which allowed for the collection of emotive life-course narratives and the thick data generated as a result. The methodological commitment to authentic representation is strengthened by the presentation of participants' own vernacular to express the events which shaped their lives. The legitimisation of working-class Glaswegian is an important contribution which recognises the inherent value of working-class Scots language.

The use of the life-course approach combined with the methods described above also contributes specific insights around lone mothers' later-life trajectories. These are especially important since the majority of studies of lone motherhood tend to focus on stages of active childrearing (Moore, 1989). Much less is known about how lone mothers navigate later life. The research generates new knowledge around how neighbourhood effects in Easterhouse have impacted on sustained caring responsibilities, older women's negotiation of contested urban space and the negotiation of relationships with men in later life.

The third contribution rests in the new knowledge which was not fully anticipated, around the effects of male violence upon the life trajectories of women and children. Whilst the findings on the negative effects of male violence in Easterhouse strongly resonate with the literature which links violence and territorialism to area deprivation (such as Bartie, 2010; Jeffrey, 2009; McLean & Holligan, 2018; Quinn, 2004), my work addresses a gap in knowledge relating to the effects of male violence on women and girls. Where Skafida et al. (2021) make connections between poverty in Glasgow and a mother's likelihood of being exposed to domestic abuse, my study found that male violence was so prevalent in Easterhouse as to be the causal factor for all but one participant entering lone motherhood. Moreover, domestic and neighbourhood-based male violence was shown to be a continuing challenge for participants throughout life-course.

Some will argue that male violence has been shown to be a problem in deprived neighbourhoods elsewhere and that Easterhouse is not a special case. Yet to date, no other literature has examined how the phenomenon of male violence in Glasgow neighbourhoods impacts on women and their engagement with the neighbourhood and networks over time. In consequence, the findings make a clear contribution towards furthering understanding surrounding how male structures of power have impacted women's journeys towards lone motherhood, navigation of lone motherhood and later-life trajectories in Glasgow. Speculatively, the research also contributes knowledge towards the combined effects of poverty in post-industrial Glasgow, declining housing conditions in Glasgow's peripheral estates during the early part of the research period and women's increased likelihood of exposure to male violence.

The fourth contribution centres on the adaption of the term 'getting on', a term which develops current economic conceptualisations of 'getting out' of poverty (Lister, 2021) as a marker of working-class success. The findings showed that for women who started life from low base starting points of economic and social inequalities, economic conceptions of ‘getting out’ held only partial relevance. In later life, women often connected success to having lived life according to personal values and to having achieved in spite of poverty. The contribution comes from the findings that, by later life, women who started life from a low social and economic position *and* endured lifelong experiences of persistent trauma relating to neighbourhood-based inequality, often perceived ‘getting on’ to be rooted in the ability to tap into strengths which allow construction of meaning from difficult and challenging experiences.

The research’s fifth contribution relates to new insights on lone mothers’ patterns of network engagement in Easterhouse. Despite lone motherhood being widely linked to poor mental health in the literature (Bennett & Daly, 2014; Simpson et al., 2021), no other study to date has uncovered the extent to which female networks have acted as a protective mechanism against suicide. This is an important message of the study, which points to a need for further investigation into the potential of female support networks as a preventative factor for lone mothers experiencing suicidal ideation, as well as broader mental health challenges.

Finally, the research also identified how lone mothers’ strategic engagement with different forms of female network, organisational support and self-reliance over life-course allowed them to ‘get by’ and ‘get on’. Whereas studies such as those of Keim (2018) and Nelson (2000) make clear connections between maternal role orientation and lone mothers’ alignment with networks, my study discovered more complex motivations and patterns of engagement, which were directly influenced by relationships with men. As a consequence, the final research finding centres on the new knowledge generated around how patterns of male hegemony and structural inequalities altered future engagement with female networks and intimate relationships with men in mid and later life.

12.3.2 Directions for Further Research

The research raised three areas for future research. First, the dearth of qualitative literature available on women’s experiences of neighbourhood deprivation in Glasgow, and lone motherhood specifically, means that working-class women in the city are grossly underrepresented in academic and non-academic publications. Future research would benefit from participatory research approaches which empower women to lead on the construction of working-class histories and elicit authentic data which accurately represents the perspectives of working-class women themselves. Future participatory research in deprived Scottish neighbourhoods might usefully be directed towards examining current political and social trends: the extent to which economic issues such as the cost-of-living crisis, fuel poverty, and present-day changes to social security benefits and in-work benefits impact lone mothers' abilities to 'get by' and 'get on' in twenty-first-century Scotland.

Second, there is also the question of the 'missing men' in Easterhouse, representing the perspectives of separated fathers and their experiences of gender, place and poverty. Within their neighbourhood-based studies, authors such as McKenzie (2015) and Bissett (2023) devote attention towards understanding the perspectives of absent fathers. The study has raised that life in Glasgow's peripheral estates has had specific dimensions which have led to widespread cultures of male violence. Yet, although several studies examine the phenomenon of male violence in peripheral estates (Bartie, 2010; Quinn, 2004) and male territorialism (Jeffrey, 2009; McLean & Holligan, 2018), little is known about how hypermasculinity in Glasgow affects men's engagement with female partners and future trajectories after separation. A focus upon men's experiences in persistently deprived contexts such as Easterhouse may be useful for aiding understanding around how historical poverty and poor neighbourhood conditions contribute towards men's engagement with family life.

Clearly, it may be difficult to engage men willing to discuss their experiences as perpetrators of domestic abuse; nonetheless, future research might focus on understanding male perspectives of intimate relationships and of the challenges of gender, place and poverty in places such as Easterhouse. The value of men's perspectives in these contexts lies in understanding the drivers for behaviours such as 'lone rangerism' (Hughes, 2004) and violence towards women in deprived neighbourhoods (Skafida et al., 2021). Understanding how men perceive their roles in relationship breakdown where there has been domestic abuse may help to inform community education initiatives in deprived neighbourhood settings.

Finally, further research is needed to establish how stores of personal resource such as strengths, values and beliefs are accrued over life-course, the factors which influence their development, and interventions which may help lone mothers at various stages of life-course to tap into and utilise their internal mechanisms for self-help. Future research may consider using assets-based frameworks, which focus upon factors that generate health and wellbeing (Brooks & Kendall, 2013), to measure the extent to which lone mothers' experiences of challenge contribute towards the development of high-functioning coping mechanisms. Whilst various studies have examined internal resources such as humour (Titterton, 1992), emotional resilience (Gillies, 2006) and faith (Chan & Rhodes, 2013; Mayo et al., 2022; Vandsburger et al., 2008) for surviving the challenges of poverty, none has looked at how such resources might be operationalised by lone mothers to promote life chances. Assets-based approaches may be drawn on to understand how lone mothers identify their personal resources and develop these in order to build resilience and skills to cope with emotional and practical difficulties.

12.4 Reflections on Methods and Limitations of the Study

There are of course some limitations to the study, relating to research design and analysis. First, I will reflect upon the extent to which the recruitment strategy may have impacted the research sample. The sample was comprised of a relatively homogenous group of women who all unexpectedly shared domestic abuse experiences and had improved their economic positions in later life, which they related to high levels of personal agency and enmeshment in robust networks of female support. At the point of recruitment, I did not suspect that the participant group would share such a close range of characteristics beyond those of the research criteria. However, on reflection, I surmise that the recruitment strategy may have led to some homogeneity of participant characteristics beyond the stated research criteria.

It also seems likely that the ethical challenges relating to the coronavirus pandemic (see Section 4.10), which led to recruitment focussing solely upon women in group settings, resulted in a sample that met the criteria but also already shared the characteristics of connection to networks, high resourcefulness and resilience, and likely some financial mobility in later life. All participants were well connected to networks through involvement in community groups. The ability to link with groups might suggest that they were all lone mother survivors, who possessed sufficient resourcefulness and capacity to seek out supportive group environments. Subsequently, the findings may have been influenced to some extent by these limitations. Additionally, the self-selecting nature of the research design may have produced a cohort who possessed the confidence, connection and capacity to volunteer to be part of the study. This may have resulted in a lack of emphasis on voices of residents who were both less well connected to the local community and/or less willing to volunteer to participate.

Second, it might be suggested that the modest number of participants makes the results of the research less impactful. However, the small sample size meant that I was able to carry out an immersive period of fieldwork involving repeat visits to participants' homes. With a larger cohort, I would have struggled to build the rapport so essential to gathering sensitive data. Whilst the modest sample does not represent the experiences of all lone mothers in Easterhouse, the scale of the study has allowed for a rich and nuanced data set.

A third limitation relates to Easterhouse as a research context. Easterhouse was selected as a site of special interest on account of the dramatic rise in lone motherhood through the 1980s and continuing high rates of lone motherhood throughout the research period in relation to the city of Glasgow. The neighbourhood is also interesting on account of its scale, history of class segregation, geographic isolation and record for substandard housing. As such, the socio-economic context of neighbourhood and city have clearly played a significant role in shaping the life-course trajectories of the participant group. Consequently, conclusions drawn have a very specific focus upon how living in Glasgow's peripheral housing estates has shaped lone mothers' trajectories and perhaps have less applicability to lone mothers living within less-extreme contexts. The important point is that this is not a study of the mass phenomenon of lone motherhood but rather of lone motherhood in a rather extreme and unusual time and place.

The fourth limitation relates to data analysis and retrospective life-course interviewing, which holds potential for selective recall and one-sided perspectives. It should be recognised that the information relayed by participants was based upon recollection of events dating back forty years and that accounts are based upon the perspectives that women have formed about their pasts over time. These perspectives hold potential for limitation as the narratives relayed convey the meaning that participants have attached to major life events over time. Participants' post hoc narration may have in some cases also led to the lineage of life events being used to justify those that followed.

The final limitation concerns data analysis and the interpretation of where life-course events lay in relation to the historical timeline. Section 5.2.3 discussed the challenges around developing the participant biographies and eliciting specific dates during emotive interviewing. Difficulties in pinpointing exact dates may have in some instances meant that I was less able to link up participant biographies to time and place than was desirable. In this respect, the biographies in Chapter 6 provide an overview of life events within a pieced-together timeframe, rather than an exact representation of temporal events.

12.5 Implications for Policy and Practice

The historical focus upon life-course experiences in Easterhouse presents some challenges for informing current policymaking. Clearly, policymaking which affects lone mothers' trajectories has evolved significantly since the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s. Yet, one policy area which can be commented upon relates to older women's caring roles in later life in deprived contexts. The research highlighted that all but one participant carried out extended 'low pay, no pay' (Shildrick & MacDonald, 2012) labours of care in later life, contributing to the invisible economy of female care. The majority of caring responsibilities were directed towards older female relatives, adult children and grandchildren for whom they inherited kinship care as a result of parental addictions. The research showed that those with the greatest caring responsibilities experienced the worst economic outcomes in later life and that all kinship carers experienced financial hardship as a result of struggling to access relevant carers' benefits. Future policymaking might consider directing its attentions towards examining the impact of multiple caring responsibilities on older women's abilities to accumulate 'fallback' resources to mitigate against financial crisis and direct resources towards making claimant routes for carers' benefits more readily accessible for older carers, especially in deprived neighbourhoods where access to technology and communications may prove a barrier.

I also make two recommendations for future community-development practice in deprived neighbourhood contexts. The research highlighted clear benefits for ontological and physical wellbeing in later life relating to engagement in peer-to-peer relationships with other women who had survived domestic abuse and lifelong poverty. The first recommendation for practice is aimed towards community-development practitioners. The research found that older women favoured connection with others who shared similar levels and intensity of neighbourhood- and gender-based challenge but preferred to engage with groups not orientated as 'support groups', for example, craft groups and choirs. This suggests that future community-development initiatives in deprived estates may consider directing efforts towards facilitating spaces where older women can connect with peers and find new spaces for sharing the wisdom gathered through lifelong class struggle and neighbourhood deprivation. Challenges for future practice may involve engaging multi-sectoral approaches involving the health, social care, housing and voluntary sectors to create more opportunities for isolated or less-able women to forge robust peer-to-peer networks.

The sharing of suppressed narratives in a supportive environment was reported to be a useful and cathartic way for older women to make sense of lives characterised by trauma and structural oppression. Community-development practitioners might consider broadening opportunities for female elders in deprived neighbourhoods to pass on wisdom and contribute towards working-class histories. This may involve training community members in oral-history interviewing skills and creating more safe women-only spaces where dominant discourses can be safely challenged and explored.

12.6 The Passage through Place and Time

Section 12.6 presents a consideration of the significance of place and time upon the lives of lone mothers in Easterhouse.

12.6.1 The Significance of Place

The research sits alongside a growing body of literature examining the effects of residency in the UK’s most-deprived neighbourhoods (e.g. Bissett, 2023; Campbell, 1993; Damer, 1989; McCormack, 2009; McKenzie, 2015; McGarvey, 2017). A common theme runs through all of these geographically situated accounts: the devaluation of life in segregated housing estates and the narratives of ‘brokenness’. Deprived neighbourhoods and the presence of negative neighbourhood effects are national issues, as are many of the challenges relating to gender, poverty, place and neighbourhood described in the research.

However, it is crucial to recognise that the conditions described in Easterhouse are set against the backdrop of Glasgow’s dysfunctional past. Chapter 4 set out the extent to which processes of prolonged deindustrialisation and policy measures discouraged inward investment (Collins & Levitt, 2019) and contributed to mass redundancies, unemployment and population flight from the 1970s. Though deindustrialisation was a national phenomenon, Glasgow is recognised to have suffered worst from the effects due to its historical reliance on ‘carboniferous capitalism’ (Hudson 1989) and heavy engineering.

Recent evidence points to the fact that, compared with other cities affected similarly by deindustrialisation and poverty, such as Liverpool and Manchester, Glasgow suffers far greater levels of poor health, exemplified by its excess mortality rates being 30 percent higher (Walsh et al., 2016). The city’s notable record of excess mortality (termed ‘the Glasgow Effect’) is recognised to be a product of lagging effects of historical deprivation and overcrowding, negative effects of urban planning decisions and effects of UK public policy (Walsh et al., 2016).

It is important to recognise that the large-scale peripheral housing estates, characterised as ‘deserts wi’ windows’ were not unique to Glasgow, but existed in the context of the city’s particularly toxic position as a place that faced severe health, economic and social inequalities far worse than other comparable parts of the UK. The key point about the city of Glasgow is that the poorest residents were largely concentrated within peripheral estates from the 1960s onwards and that these estates were often likely to be relatively more deprived than those in other parts of the UK on account of Glasgow’s history of poor public health and planning and lagging effects of historical poverty. Subsequently, Glasgow residents were subjected to a much more accentuated experience of the effects of structural inequality than might be the case for their working-class counterparts in other parts of the country, exemplified by the prevalence of neighbourhood-based violence (Bartie, 2010; Jeffrey, 2009; McLean & Holligan, 2018; Quinn, 2004) and addictions (Greur, 2004; McKeganey & Barnard, 2007).

The second point about place concerns the attributes of the estate itself and the indelible marks left upon women’s life-course narratives. Geographical isolation and the slow development of even the most basic amenities such as transport, adequate shopping and healthcare made Easterhouse a trap for women who, without financial resource, were largely unable to escape the daily toxicity of life. The intersection of male cultures of violence, concentration of disadvantaged people, single-class structure, built form, lack of amenities and poor public services strongly contributed towards the participants’ challenging life-course events. It was, in short, glaringly apparent that the structures of disadvantage posed by Easterhouse resulted in patterns of risk which persisted throughout life-course. Easterhouse and the embedded cultures of poverty which existed within it were clearly the key factors in all the women's challenging life-course narratives.

Third, these challenges of place were also related to the peripheral estates being both *a part of* and *apart from* (Bissett, 2023) the city of Glasgow, so far divorced from the rest of the city that they developed unique identities and sub-cultures. Indeed, as a community worker in Easterhouse, prior to the construction of spaces such as the Glasgow Fort, I observed that many Glaswegians in less-deprived parts of the city had never visited nor observed living conditions in the peripheral estates. The segregation of large populations allowed Glaswegians in other parts of the city to distance themselves from the injustices of poverty. In this way, it can be argued that the people who came to live in peripheral estates were victims of both municipal planning and devaluation from the outside stirred up by insidious layers of political and media rhetoric. Despite the obvious improvements wrought by housing redevelopment and wider regeneration interventions, Easterhouse continues to be one of the most deprived and disadvantaged places in the UK (Lloyd et al., 2017). This is a vital fact to keep in mind as we consider the drive required by women, such as those of my participant group's generation, to rise above their disadvantage and 'get on' in the impressive ways demonstrated in this study.

My study found that the experience of 'getting on' for women in Easterhouse was invariably about breaking new ground. So many of the achievements of the participant group were firsts for local women. In common with those from less-deprived backgrounds, women of this generation were pioneering a range of experiences quite alien to the previous generation. Their movement towards rejecting male abuse and pursuing lone motherhood, careers and university degrees, sending children to university, and entering relationships with men not defined by marriage or cohabitation were all radically different ways of 'doing working-class womanhood'. However, despite the vast challenges of recent social change, lone motherhood continues to be dominated by being 'The One' and weathering the blows of class. It struck me as I reflected that these women were the first to be told they could 'have it all' – children, independence and relationships on their own terms. The study revealed that by later life, the majority enjoyed much greater freedoms, but that freedom still came with high personal costs in the unremitting pressures of time, caring responsibilities and emotional labours.

This was a group of women who approached freedom and attainment from a very low base and were consistently drip fed a rhetoric which cast them as feckless and morally dubious ‘single’ mothers. Yet it spite of the ignorance implied by their class, lone-mother status and gender, they were also encouraged to believe that it was possible for women of their time and place to experience the freedoms enjoyed by middle-class women. An interesting aspect of this study is that, despite the barriers posed by place and the disconnect of the messages around what women might be able to achieve in the era, the majority did go on to significantly improve their economic and social positions.

12.6.2 The Significance of Time

Whereas Damer (1989) warns of the centrality of historical analysis of working-class life, others like Holman (1998) caution against the perils of research which oversimplifies poverty experiences through snapshots and brief encounters. As Holman (1998) rightly suggests, descriptions of working-class life at a single point in time fail to consider the long-term insidious effects of poverty. The life-course approach to understanding poverty was summed up in a conversation I had with the first situated staff member of Easterhouse Women’s Aid. She spoke of some of the first women to come into refuge and observed: ‘You could see some of them had been poor for a very long time.’

When pressed to explain, she elaborated that there was a quality of hopelessness, brokenness, physical wretchedness, a style of dressing, a look in the eyes that spoke of the effects of whole lives lived in poverty. This reminded me of the importance of considering not just the passage of time, but also the cumulative physical and emotional effects of enduring decades of disadvantage. These reflections endeavour to capture the overarching picture of how life has altered for women in Easterhouse over the past forty years *and* how lived experience of oppression impacts the ways in which women are able to adapt to and embrace social change.

Chapter 4 set out the rationale for starting the Easterhouse research period in 1980, a period of peak socio-economic inequalities, residualised neighbourhood conditions and the explosion of lone-parent households. This section now zooms out to consider the significance of societal change and historical developments over the whole period and the extent to which the passage of time has altered the challenges discussed in the thesis: gender, place, poverty and lone motherhood.

Beyond Easterhouse's struggles to evolve and survive the ravages of poverty and municipal neglect, this thesis has raised the question of a less-talked-about struggle: the struggle for women's relative economic, social, personal and reproductive freedoms in the face of overt and implied male culture, which was quickly gaining ground at least in some sections of society, during the research period. The extent of gender as a driver for trauma and disadvantage through the research period was the major unpredicted element of this study.

Where the voices of the #MeToo movement highlight the uncharted extent of misogyny and sexual abuse in society at large. My research showed that childhood sexual abuse, attempted murder, rape, physical attacks, stalking and network intimidation were par for the course for nearly all women in my study. In short, male abuse of power acted as a major disadvantage to my participant group, and growing trends towards sexual liberalism acted as a mechanism which allowed women to engage in less-dependent, low-risk relationships from the twenty-first century onwards.

The thesis has shown that much progress has been made in addressing gender inequalities during the forty-year period. Section 11.2.3 highlighted the benefits of Easterhouse's delayed sexual revolution and improvements to reproductive freedoms, education around domestic abuse and growing economic equality during the 1990s. It is observable that women's social positions have altered dramatically since the time that the women in the study were reaching adulthood and becoming mothers. Greater access to the labour market through the outlawing of gender discrimination and promotion of equal pay (the Equal Pay Act of 1993) and further equalities legislation (the Equality Act 2010), coupled with employment legislation which ensured that women could return to work after maternity (the Employment Rights Act of 1994), and the shift in the economy towards service industry resulting in more jobs previously considered 'women's work', led to growing trends towards feminisation in employment through the 1980s and 1990s.

During the same period, participants reported easier access to reproductive advice and contraception, which resulted in more control over size of families and economic security. Moreover, increased access to social housing through rights afforded by the then new Glasgow City Council homelessness allocations policies (Clapham & Kintrea, 1986) was a hugely important change which allowed women to leave violent husbands and be rehoused with children. Consequently, women's increased empowerment to control reproduction, secure council housing after leaving abusive men and engage in the labour market resulted in increased agency and less dependence on men as husbands and breadwinners. Where it is observable that women’s social and economic positions rose dramatically during the forty-year research period, what is less clear is whether these improvements are relative to the improvements in comparative male social and economic circumstances.

With regards to place, it is heartening to recognise that the substandard housing conditions, which prompted activists such as Cathy McCormack to fight tirelessly to improve damp housing stock and the Grieve (1986) enquiry into housing conditions, are now largely consigned to the past. In the interim, Easterhouse has experienced vast physical renewal and expansion of public services and local amenities initiated by the regenerative efforts of local housing associations, stock transfer and the redirection of spending to ex-council estates. Similarly, the gradual refocussing of regeneration policy to council estates through the 1980s and into the early 2000s was key and was demonstrated in the study to vastly improve women’s domestic circumstances and living conditions.

Yet, it is noteworthy that in older age, several participants reported struggles to adapt to new facilities which attempted to integrate middle-class tastes into segregated working-class space. These findings around how older women adapt to patterns of creeping gentrification in spaces like Easterhouse raise the question of how older women with experience of lifelong class segregation cope with the coexistence of the persistence of class and economic inequalities and the changes wrought by regeneration and global capitalism.

The research highlights that the women in the study lived through a particularly challenging economic period, characterised by high unemployment through the 1980s and women’s transition from economic dependence on men towards becoming skilled actors in the workplace. Chapter 4 shows that Easterhouse now has many more owner occupiers and that neighbourhood demographics increasingly reflect, those in work and a marginally wealthier demographic (Garnham, 2018). However, the statistics also show that Easterhouse is home to some of the most-deprived pockets in the country (Lloyd et al., 2017) and for a great many residents in the deepest poverty the challenges of area deprivation and stark health and social inequalities remain. To exemplify, 55 percent of the population of Easterhouse is unemployed or benefit dependent and half of all families in

Easterhouse are headed by a lone parent (Understanding Glasgow, 2023). Deprivation in Easterhouse clearly endures.

The research makes the argument that poverty in Easterhouse has remained an endemic issue which continues to have accentuated effects for lone parents (see,Treanor & Troncoso, 2022). I surmise that the failure of policymaking to sufficiently address these issues over the past forty years constitutes a form of structural violence, framed by Lee (2019) as 'harm caused by human action'. The huge challenges of poverty and lone motherhood examined within the study were by extension products of the 'war without bullets' described by McCormack (2009), fought through the enactment of governmental policies which have discriminated against people in deprived communities such as Easterhouse and resulted in the forms of social apartheid already described. This study has drawn attention to levels of overt violence within Easterhouse. However, it is important to recognise that the people in Easterhouse had been long-term victims of structural forms of violence which have been described as a form of 'class war':

> The violence here was in the maintenance of social conditions of extreme economic hardship and the deliberate ramping up of social inequalities that, combined, created highly toxic social environments. (Duckett, 2022)

I reflect that, although many of the women in the study managed to markedly improve their economic circumstances in later life through access to improved housing, benefiting from public policies such as Right to Buy, education and attainment, many of those who were worst affected by poverty in later life were those who had endured the most challenging lives in terms of social inequality. Moreover, those who had improved economic circumstances often reflected that the improvements might only be so marginal as being able to fill the fridge regularly or travel to the city centre. I conclude that women's economic freedoms in Easterhouse have improved through employment and improvements to welfare benefits. However, it is crucial to remember that these women are survivors of forms of structural violence and that health and social inequalities in Easterhouse are still a massive concern, especially in the case of lone-parent families.

Finally, I turn to consider the passage of time and the experience of lone motherhood. In early 2023, Scotland's then first minister, Nicola Sturgeon, issued an apology to lone mothers in Scotland of my participants' generation, for the 'relatively common' practice of forced adoption of children born to lone women deemed unsuitable mothers on account of age, economic position, rape or mental health status during the 1960s and 1970s (Scottish Government, 2023). I raise Sturgeon's apology to foreground exactly how dramatically conceptions of motherhood changed during the 1980s and the extent to which the path of lone motherhood was still a radical life-choice when many of the participants were making their transitions. This brings into focus the relative powerlessness of the previous generation and how this affected woman of my participants' generation. This is particularly important in light of the findings relating to Easterhouse's lagging women's rights record. One of my participants, Anne, reflected:

> We wur powerless to make changes, big changes.

However, I reflect that this inertia was a part of the much more sinister reality. Despite the fact that government-sanctioned adoption largely ended in the 1970s, lone mothers during the 1980s and 1990s in Easterhouse were still discriminated against by institutions and were in danger of having their parental rights overridden on account of their poverty and stigmatised positions. All women who experienced mental health issues described concealing illness until the point of breakdown on account of fear of having children removed. Most knew of friends and neighbours who had lost access to children because professionals deemed them 'not coping'. Lone mothers' oppression was a little-talked-about but very real and very dangerous phenomenon which was enforced and endorsed at the highest levels through the first two decades of the research period.

I conclude that the mass phenomenon of lone motherhood during the 1980s, together with growing education and refusal of male control as a characteristic of marriage, started a trend towards normalising lone motherhood, especially in Easterhouse, where it had become widespread, and growing efforts from within community organisations to support lone-parent families. The study made evident that, although lone mothers in Easterhouse occupied a highly stigmatised position in the first two decades of the research period, by the 2000s their presence was better established and recognised.

12.7 Closing Reflections on the Doctoral Journey – Trials and Transformations

Applying for the PhD studentship in 2017, a strong motivator as a new mother was around finding an income stream which would allow me to work from home and care for my then six-month-old baby. I could not have imagined that over the course of my studies I would become a mother of two and leave Glasgow – my home of over twenty years – to become a lone mother myself and live in the north of England.

Motherhood turned out to be a deeply transformative experience which catapulted me into a state of perpetual tiredness and gave me insight into the struggles involved in raising children in Glasgow on a low income. I realised that despite my interests in community-building and activism, I had had little insight into the magnitude of challenge and change which motherhood confers upon women and the gendered inequalities of labour within families, employment and childcare. Thus, the process of consciousness-raising which accompanied motherhood was a powerful factor which channelled my curiosity towards the research topic. The supervisor-led scholarship which sought to examine the conjoined biographies of a deprived place and the people within it acted as the cornerstone for my developing interests in mothering experiences in deprived places. The focus on lone mothers as a specific research population shone new light on how the biographies of lone mothers were tied up with place and time.

My interest in Easterhouse and in women's poverty experiences was also situated in my own childhood and long-term community education work in the area. Undertaking the research allowed me to reflect on the relationship between my own working-class, fledgling low income and then lone-mother identity, and the world inhabited by my mother during her lone-motherhood journey. This reflective space has helped me to make sense of my own experiences as a child of a lone parent during the same period that this research covers and to reflect on how the time and place that my family lived through shaped our own trajectories. In this respect, the PhD journey has been a cathartic pilgrimage of sorts, which allowed me to step inside the past and piece together the conditions which shaped my own experiences as a child in a lone-parent family.

Working on the Easterhouse fieldwork and write-up also allowed me a portal into life in Glasgow, which I had recently left behind and often missed. The camaraderie I shared with women in Glasgow was crystalised for me on my first fieldwork trip, arriving late at night at my friend's house. As I struggled from my car holding a sleeping baby and dragging a toddler and bags up steep stone steps, an older woman walking by with shopping bags shouted over:

> Aw, hen, it's hellish, inn't it, no?

In that brief moment, her recognition validated my struggle and bolstered my determination to see the fieldwork through. In this way, the study allowed me a unique space to reflect upon and learn from the experiences I shared with the participant group – a rare privilege. I could immerse myself in the accumulated knowledge of a group of women with whom I share many characteristics, as well as many differences. Standing back, I see that this has been an important opportunity for me to garner the wisdom of elders who have weathered worse storms and apply some of the learning to my own lone-parent journey.

I recognise the intention articulated by many of the women who explained their motivation to participate as rooted in the desire to help another working-class lone mother to ‘get on’ by achieving her doctorate and creating a career that would benefit her and her children. I am forever grateful to the women who invited me into their homes to share their stories of surviving and thriving and to help me on my way. Their participation has already helped me to secure a lecturing post and consultancy work, which would not have been possible were it not for my doctoral research. My worst fear before starting was that my study of women’s lives could be viewed as a ‘poverty safari’ (McGarvey, 2017). However, the kindness shown to me helped me to understand that my own struggles to ‘get by’ and ‘get on’ are bound up in our collective struggle.

The fact that I approached the research as a lone mother interviewing lone mothers could not have been predicted at the outset. Yet my transition to this status resulted in my research process becoming a mirror of the research topic: an act of female networks helping a lone mother to ‘get by’ and ‘get on’ through her own life-course tale of transition. Participants helped me to find meaning in many aspects of my own personal experience and embark upon the early stages of my research career. At the same time, my partial ‘insider’ status allowed me to provide an outlet and a platform for participants’ stories of class and gender struggle and a cathartic space for reflection.

The richness of the data collected was made possible by the trust the women placed in me as a fellow working-class lone mother. My background in mental health and community work also allowed me to sensitively draw out and honour some of the deeper, more painful narratives. Our similarities, meant that the research became a piece of ‘transformative pedagogy’ (Freire, 1985), which allowed both researcher and participants to explore personal and structural realities. This experience has strengthened my confidence as a researcher and directed my interest towards development of interview techniques which encourage women to find meaning in the sharing of painful self-narratives.

This thesis contributes towards historical knowledge around the impacts of time and place upon women’s and mothers’ lives in Glasgow’s peripheral housing estates. Yet, to my mind historical knowledge of this kind is only really useful if it holds potential to create change. It is my best hope that the historical documentation of lone mothers’ hidden struggles in Easterhouse may help to situate current understandings around the impacts of structural inequalities, leading to interventions which acknowledge the cause and effect of economic and social inequity and poor outcomes for residents in deprived neighbourhoods.

I hope, too, that my research might encourage future working-class researchers to consider the possibilities for decolonising academia through the co-creation of working-class/feminist counternarratives.

Appendix 1: Interview Topic Guide

Interview Topic Guide

Introductory/Biographical Questions

Name, Age, Occupation?

Duration of time lived in Easterhouse? Duration of time residing elsewhere? Were you born in Easterhouse? When did you come to live here?

Who currently lives in your household? Who have you lived with in the past? Have you lived in different houses within the estate?

During which time periods did you have your children? What age are they now? During which time periods did you experience lone-motherhood?

Neighbourhood

What was Easterhouse like when you moved in?

What were the good and bad things about living in Easterhouse?

What is Easterhouse like now as a place to live?

Have there been benefits/challenges to living Easterhouse over the past 35 years?

If so, what have the main benefits/challenges been? (Each interview session will focus on different time period - 1980s, 1990s and 2000s)

Did these issues relating to where you live affect your personal life and relationships?

What are the major neighbourhood changes that have made a difference to your experience of Easterhouse since the 1980s? (i.e Housing, Amenities, Services, Crime, Community Development, Transport, Shops etc)

In your opinion, has life here changed for the better or worse? Which changes have been most important for you?

Gender and Lone-Motherhood

What has it been like as a woman to live in Easterhouse over the past 35 years?

What are the good and bad things about the estate that you can think of that have affected you particularly as a woman?

How do you think life has differed for men and women in the estate?

How important have your relationships with women been to you over the period? Have you felt a sense of women ‘pulling together’ or helping each other out? Or has there been negative implications to your connections with other women?

How did you come to be a lone- mother? Was it an active decision or one over which you had little choice?

Who have the important women in your life been over the past 35 years? Have you had connections with other women who have shared similar life experiences during the various stages in your life?

Have you had any experience of relationships with other lone mothers where you pulled together, or helped each other out?

Did your relationships with other women compensate in any way for the absence of your children’s father(s)? Please explain?

Female Social Networks

Who were the most important women in your life during the 1980s, 1990s and present decade?

What are the specific types of support that female connections might have provided at the various stages in your life? (i.e financial, emotional, practical, knowledge- based etc)

Did you reciprocate support to other women?

Have your relationships with other women helped/hindered you at various stages in your life?

Have your relationships with other women allowed or prevented you from achieving anything?

Are there differences between the connections you have with other women and male connections?

To what extent and in what ways did the support you got from other women help you to get by?

How important were your relationships with other women in comparison to your own personal abilities in allowing you to get by?

Were there disadvantages to your relationships with other women? What were they and how did they impact on your day to day life?

Are the women who are important to you now different to the ones who were important in previous decades?

How did you/or do you know the women who have been important at various life stages?

Are the kinds of benefits and supports you get from other women now different to those you might have received in the past?

How easy or difficult has it been for you over the past 35 years to get by?

What has your main source of income been over the past 35 years?

How has access to money affected you at different stages of your life journey? (i.e early motherhood, middle age and later life)

Have there been particular challenges associated with low income during 1980s, 1990s and on into this decade?

What areas of your life has income most affected? (i.e childrearing, social life, access to food, electricity etc, transport, ability to plan for future, debt, cycles of financial crisis etc)

Did you develop measures that you could use to help you manage these aspects of your life?

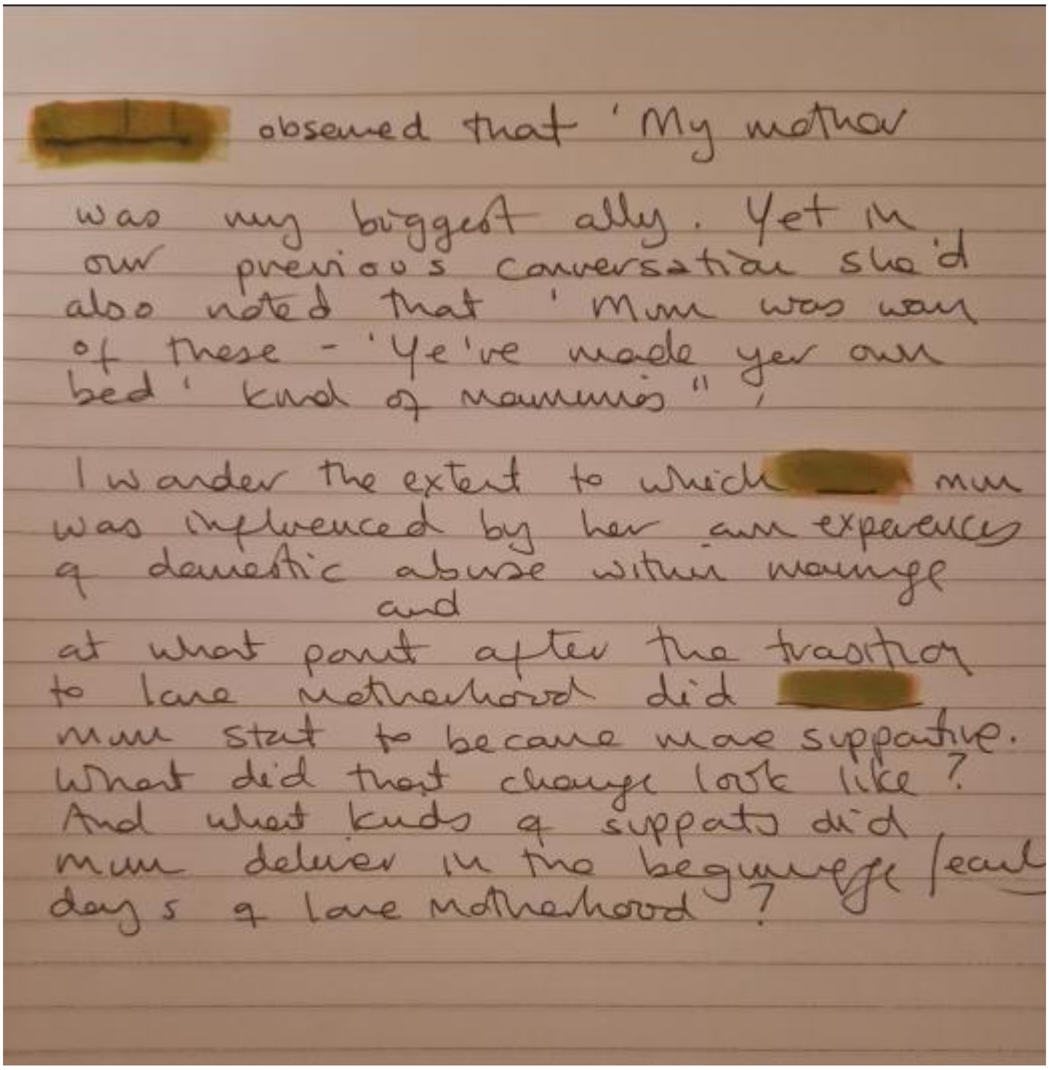
Did you draw upon personal strengths or skills to manage?

Have you experienced periods of personal crisis during your time living in Easterhouse? What was happening in your life at this time?

Who have you turned to most in times of crisis? What kinds of support did they provide? (Personal, financial, emotional, etc) Were there any negative things about accepting support from these connections?

Appendix 2: Sample of Photo Elicitation Flipbook

Appendix 3: Sample of Fieldwork Notes

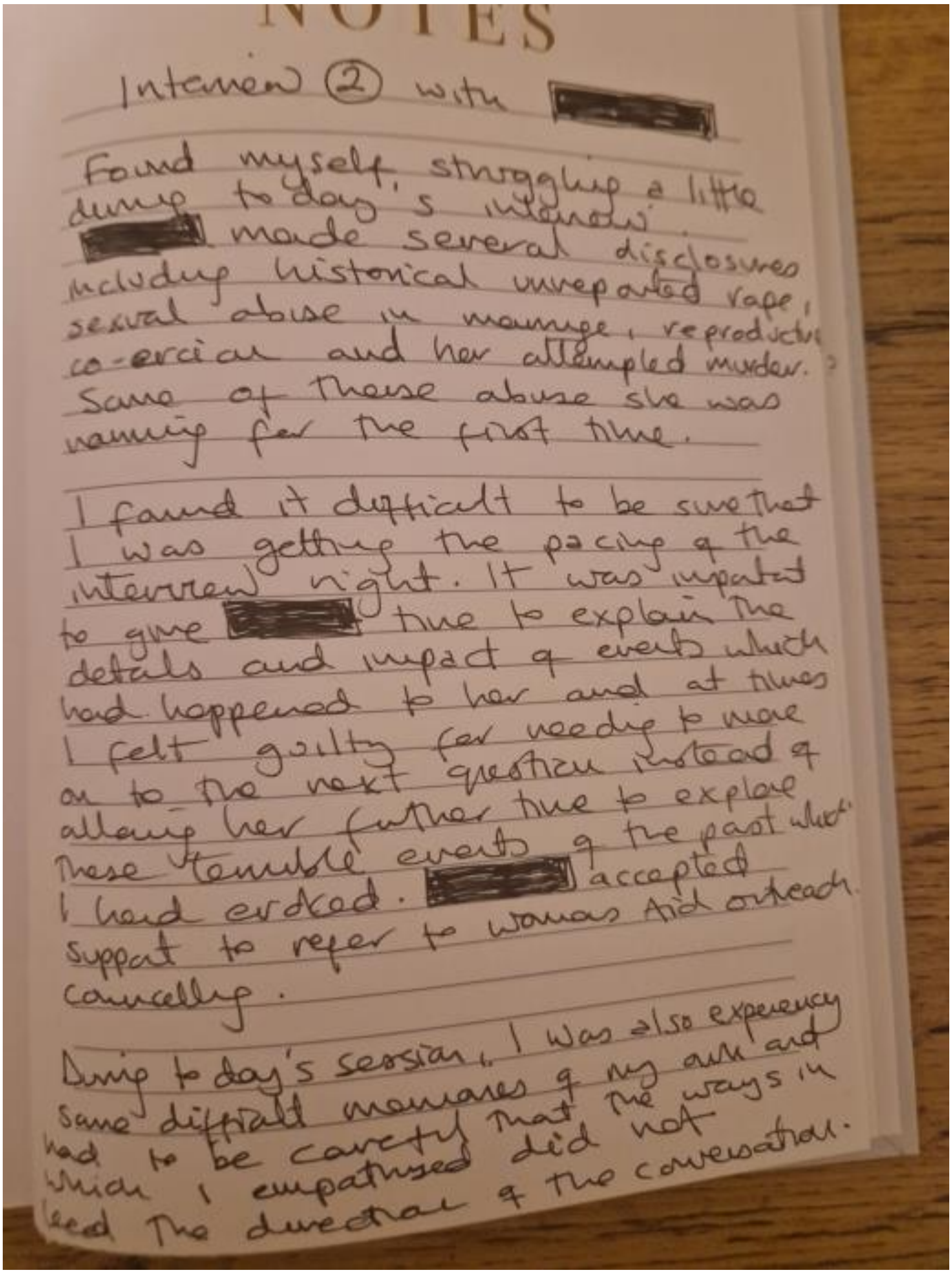


[redacted] observed that 'My mother

was my biggest ally. Yet in
our previous conversation she'd
also noted that 'Mum was wan
of these - 'Ye've made yer own
bed' kind of mammies" '

I wonder the extent to which [redacted] mum
was influenced by her own experiences
of domestic abuse within marriage
and
at what point after the transition
to lone motherhood did [redacted]
mum start to became more supportive.
What did that change look like?
And what kinds of supports did
mum deliver in the beginnings / early
days of lone motherhood?

Appendix 4: Sample of Reflexive Journal



NOTES

Interview ② with [redacted]

Found myself struggling a little during to-day's interview. [redacted] made several disclosures including historical unreported rape, sexual abuse in marriage, reproductive co-ercion and her attempted murder. Some of these abuse she was naming for the first time.

I found it difficult to be sure that I was getting the pacing of the interview right. It was important to give [redacted] time to explain the details and impact of events which had happened to her and at times I felt guilty for needing to move on to the next question instead of allowing her further time to explore these terrible events of the past which I had evoked. [redacted] accepted support to refer to Womens Aid outreach councelling.

During to-day's session, I was also experiencing some difficult memories of my own and had to be careful that the ways in which I empathised did not lead the direction of the conversation.

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