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***Transforming Neighbourhoods: An Exploration of the Neighbourhood
Management Process in Ilfracombe, Devon.***

**Submitted by Kim Ward, to the University of Exeter as a thesis for the
degree of *Doctor of Philosophy in Geography*, September 2011.**

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Abstract

The neighbourhood became one of the key sites for urban policy development during the previous New Labour government, and Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders were amongst their final strategies to combat "*the most difficult problems faced by deprived neighbourhoods*" (SEU 2000:5). This thesis explores the process of neighbourhood management in the coastal town of Ilfracombe, Devon. Ilfracombe features the characteristics of decline found in a number of coastal towns across the country, and suffers from high levels of deprivation (House of Commons Report 2006). Consequently, the neighbourhood management pathfinder 'Transform' was deployed in Ilfracombe in an attempt to address high deprivation. This thesis uses empirical findings collected through interviews and focus groups to examine the process of 'Transform', from its conception to its practical operation. It specifically considers the 'voices' of residents whose opinions and experiences, as targets of neighbourhood intervention are not always sufficiently documented within policy narratives. Consequently, the thesis unravels the process of neighbourhood management through findings generated by qualitative research 'on the ground'. These are then examined through the lens of governmentality, allowing the methods, practice and outcomes of government, to be unpacked through a presentation of my empirical findings (Foucault 1991). These examinations take a particular interest in notions of community engagement and participation, partnership working, and the process of social exclusion. Here, partnership is demonstrated to be a tentative and fragile process underlined by local histories and differing temporal frameworks for action. But, this research also demonstrates that joint working can be improved through neighbourhood management which widens routes of communication to officers 'on the ground'. However, what this thesis hopes to demonstrate most strongly is the continuing depth of problems felt by residents in Ilfracombe and that the process of 'inclusion' through paid work and 'active' citizenship, underlined in Labour's neighbourhood renewal strategies, is not tackling some of the main problems of 'deprived' neighbourhoods, as experienced by the residents themselves.

“When we came into office, we inherited a country where hundreds of neighbourhoods were scarred by unemployment, educational failure and crime. They had become progressively more cut off from the prosperity and opportunities that most of us take for granted. Communities were breaking down. Public services were failing. People had started to lose hope. That’s why I asked the Social Exclusion Unit to work on developing a new and integrated approach to reversing this decline.”

(Tony Blair SEU 2001:5)

“In a monoculture, in particular in seaside areas and coastal areas, they [the white working class] don’t have the energy- they haven’t come from a culture where they’ve got to work, they think there’s a more limited range of things they can aspire to. You have to open their minds that they can go to the city that they can go abroad. You can’t turn around a school without turning around a community”

Liz Sidwell, Schools Commissioner (Vasagar 2011)

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Acknowledgments

First I would like to thank Professor Mark Goodwin and Dr Julie MacLeavy for their support and guidance throughout this process.

I would also like to thank all the people who gave up their time to speak to me during this research, particularly Ian Higgins from North Devon District Council and the residents of Ilfracombe, for being so open and honest during this process.

This research took place within Geography at the University of Exeter where I was lucky enough to find myself amongst a group of supportive postgraduates who had created a wonderfully welcoming and energetic atmosphere to work in. I express my thanks to them for making the last four years so enjoyable. In particular I would like to thank Agatha Herman, Liz Roberts, Joe Daron, Kim Mack, Tom Roland and Jenny Barnett for their friendship, encouragement and enjoyable company at differing periods over these past four years.

I would also like to thank my parents for being wonderfully supportive, as always.

Finally, my biggest thank you goes to Sam Jones, without whose love and support, none of this would have been possible.

Introduction

To begin, I open by stating the names and objectives of my external PhD sponsors, endeavouring to provide the reader with some context to as to the direction of my research. This PhD research has been externally sponsored by two separate bodies: Great Western Research (GWR) and North Devon District Council (NDDC). GWR is a foundational research project which specialises in the examination of all aspects of sustainability. Additionally, the PhD was part funded by the Environmental Health and Housing Department of NDDC. Consequently, this PhD broadly aims to combine a research project concerning the themes of social sustainability and housing.

Due to its association with NDDC, the PhD research was given a focus for its direction from the outset. NDDC were particularly interested in the low-cost private rental sector of housing in North Devon, and more specifically, in the high level of Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMOs) which were abundant in a number of the larger north Devon towns. Up to 40% of this housing sector in north Devon had been classed as 'non-decent' to live in, and I was directed to this section of housing by NDDC as a platform to use as a basis for my research (North Devon District Council 2008: 7). These built up HMO 'neighbourhoods' had become particularly noticeable in the coastal town of Ilfracombe. Consequently, at its core, this thesis examines the low-cost rental housing sector, but more specifically, it examines issues enveloping residents living in Houses of Multiple Occupancy in the coastal town of Ilfracombe. The aim initially was to present, explore and examine the HMO housing process in Ilfracombe and identify examples of best practice as well as gaps in policy, in conversation with North Devon District Council (NDDC). This was to be implemented through a series of interviews with NDDC officials and with HMO tenants. Yet the research became about more than just this. It became about the lives of the tenants living within these houses, and it became about the conception, operation and experience of a Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder which had been

deployed to the town. Hence, the empirical findings of this thesis are built around the practical experiences of residents and housing officers in relation to this housing sector, and to the process of neighbourhood management.

'Transform' was the neighbourhood management pathfinder that had been deployed to, and was operating within Ilfracombe during the time of my research. The pathfinder had evolved from New Labour's national strategy for neighbourhood renewal and was consequently developed in Ilfracombe in reference to Policy Action Team report 4 (PAT4). According to PAT4, the role of neighbourhood management should be:

"to help deprived communities and local services improve local outcomes, by improving and joining up local services, and making them more responsive to local needs" (SEU 2000:7).

In light of this, it appeared an ideal opportunity for this research to explore the resident and officer experience, in an area dominated by poor housing and high deprivation, to the process of neighbourhood management.

In conjunction with a policy-based focus favoured by my external sponsors, I was also able to find an academic basis from which to explore my empirical research. Academic literature and research surrounding *social exclusion* and 'active' citizenship formed a key basis to my critical approach, as did Michael Foucault's concept of governmentality (Foucault 1991). The concept of governmentality seemed an ideal framework through which to analyse my empirical research-which focused on neighbourhood-led regeneration. The process of neighbourhood management in conjunction with a plethora of neighbourhood regeneration policies of the New Labour government, were arguably designed to govern *through* community. Foucault's concept of governmentality refers to an analysis of *governing* – opposed to an analysis of *Government*, and provides a framework through which to analyse the rationale and practices of governance through the processes of 'community participation' and 'engagement'. These are

two themes which feature highly in this thesis through a presentation of my empirical findings. Therefore throughout my empirical chapters I use the concept of governmentality as a basis for academic analysis and exploration of neighbourhood management process.

The part sponsorship of this PhD by NDDC came with some advantages. It opened up access to local authority staff knowledge, policy documents and other important resources such as their housing database which recorded the HMOs registered in my research area. Due to this sponsorship I was given interview access to NDDC staff, including housing officers, Head of Housing, Head of Environmental Health and Housing and the Chief Executive of North Devon District Council. This relationship allowed me access to knowledge and opinions which play such a vital role in the shaping and re-shaping of housing policy across North Devon. It also gave me the opportunity to go on HMO visits with officers and establish connections with tenants from the very beginning of this project. Their openness to me and to my research was vital to my understanding of HMOs in Ilfracombe and was also vital to my initial links with a number of HMO tenants.

Ilfracombe is a small town whose central ward had been identified as suffering from high levels of deprivation. Additionally, it suffers from a high level of inadequate and poorly maintained rented housing. These factors can, and do, have serious consequences of 'exclusion' of many of the residents living within these neighbourhoods. This will be demonstrated throughout this thesis. This research aims to explore the process of neighbourhood management in relation to these concerns, in particular, it aims to explore the opportunities for residents to participate, engage and enrol in the decision making processes of neighbourhood management.

'Community involvement' was an integral backbone to New Labour's neighbourhood renewal policy and local 'intelligence' and 'participation' was

prioritised as vital to the renewal process (SEU 2000). This thesis explores the extent to which these aims are met, and examines the process of neighbourhood management process in relation to the ‘reach’ of community engagement and participation and the position of ‘active’ citizenship within the project.

The empirical research of this PhD was conducted between 2008 and 2010, when the previous New Labour government were still in office. Throughout New Labour’s government, a prominence was given to “the neighbourhood” as a key scale at which to administer urban policy on a social basis. This was driven through the governments freshly established Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) which led the development of policy for neighbourhood reform from 1998 -2001. The policy of Neighbourhood Management examined in this thesis, emanated from this national framework. This thesis situates Neighbourhood Management within the discourse of New Labour and acts as a “look back” to frame the process of neighbourhood renewal as a specific moment when New Labour led the direction of urban policy. Subsequently, the key objectives of this thesis focus on the construction and development of neighbourhood management within New Labour’s governmental framework. However I wan to note that many of the themes of this PhD, such as community engagement and local regeneration, transcend any one political context.

In Chapter One I set out to explore some of the key academic concepts which form the foundation for this thesis. The purpose in this chapter is to provide a conceptual framework from which to examine my empirical findings in more detail. Chapter One begins by situating urban policy within New Labour’s ideals of social renewal, and consequently, the concept of social exclusion, is explored in more detail first. After being elected to government in 1997, New Labour prioritized the tackling of *social exclusion* through the instigation and development of neighbourhood renewal policies. Hence, the first half of this chapter explores the concept in more detail, conceptualizing its position in British politics and exploring its practical measurements on the ground. This chapter

then presents Michael Foucault's concept of governmentality, providing the reader with a foundation and explanation as to the concepts use as a tool of political analysis within this thesis. Following from this, Chapter One explores New Labour's changing impetus towards 'inclusion', and discusses the rising position of the 'active' citizen in processes of 'community' regeneration. From these discussions my research, in the following chapters, is able to explore the process(s) of exclusion and inclusion, in relation to resident experiences of neighbourhood management, in Ilfracombe.

Chapter Two begins by presenting a discussion in relation to housing and the growing housing problems that many 'vulnerable' individuals face in Britain today. This begins by stating that, as you are reading this thesis, over 1.7 million people are waiting to be housed in social housing, highlighting the severity of the housing crisis at the low-end of the sector, a particular crisis which is not always well-reflected in our media and news today. Consequently, this section explores and demonstrates the links between residents of the low-cost private rental sector and the process of *social exclusion*. Through a series of discussions concerning inequality, empowerment, insecurity, political engagement and access to jobs and services, I argue that housing, particularly this sector of housing, can act as a cause and effect of social exclusion. This is an argument which underlines the empirical findings of the thesis.

The chapter ends with an examination of New Labour's neighbourhood renewal project. It begins by discussing the national strategies of neighbourhood renewal. The purpose here is to explore the central policy of neighbourhood renewal from which the outline for the management pathfinder Transform was developed. Central to this examination is a discussion of the morality of neighbourhood renewal, and academic discourses of exclusion, presented in the first half of the chapter, are used to argue that neighbourhood renewal is embedded within a morally tinged inflection of New Labour's Third Way ideology. Subsequently, this section presents Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders in more detail,

highlighting the key principles of neighbourhood management identified in PAT4 (SEU 2000:7-10). These principles will be reflected upon in the following empirical chapters, particularly during the Chapters Four and Five when examining the position of Transform as a community-led, engaging process of neighbourhood renewal. Finally, this chapter considers neighbourhood management using a framework of governmentality and examines the rationale and operation of the process of neighbourhood management over 'neighbourhood' space. Here, I argue, that government deprivation data is used as a form of 'expert' knowledge to identify and embed 'deprivation' as a moral indicator in an overarching rationale of government which is then used to identify and locate *socially excluded* individuals. This argument is placed alongside a broader discussion of the governmentalities of neighbourhood renewal. This argument will be used in Chapter Four, to inform my demonstration of Ilfracombe as an object of governmental targeting and reform, partly evidenced through the use of the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004.

Whilst Chapter One and Two established the context of this research, Chapter Two moves forward to introduce the research objectives of this thesis and present my methodological framework of action. The chapter presents four research questions for exploration. The first three of these focus broadly around the concepts of *exclusion* and *inclusion*, and concern the process of neighbourhood management in relation to official and resident experiences of its conception, development and operation in Ilfracombe. The purpose here is to establish how Transform has been experienced on the ground in relation to notions of 'participation', 'engagement' and 'joint working' highlighted by *A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal* and the PAT4 report on neighbourhood management (SEU 2000, SEU 2001). The forth research question concerns the use of governmentality as a framework for this thesis. Subsequently this chapter provides a description of my methodological approach, and discusses the ethics and context of this research, this includes a detailed section on my positionality as a researcher, a point that I felt was particularly important to highlight given

many of the interviewees were deemed to be ‘vulnerable’ and ‘hard to reach’ members of the community by policy documents such as the House of Commons Report (2006).

Chapter Three begins the basis of the empirical findings of this thesis. Following from the context provided in Chapter One and the methodology described in Chapter Two, this chapter aims to introduce the research in the context of Ilfracombe. It begins by situating Ilfracombe within the context of English coastal policy in Britain. This, I argue, is vital to the readers understanding of the high levels of deprivation and poor housing conditions as a characteristic of many coastal towns across the country (House of Commons Report 2006). Therefore this first section demonstrates that Ilfracombe could be provided as a case study which in many ways reflects the ‘problems’ found in other coastal towns across the country. In doing this, the neighbourhood management process can be explored within the coastal context and its outcomes could be situated within wider coastal policy.

The second half of Chapter Two is an important turning point of the thesis. This half of the chapter aims to present the reader with a set of key neighbourhood issues that were identified through the empirical analysis of resident interviews. These issues provide an illustration of the depth of problems experienced by residents in the central ward of Ilfracombe and aim to provide the ‘bottom-up’ context to this thesis. These key issues are then explored in the concluding half of this chapter, and in the following chapters, concerning the wider objectives of this thesis through notions of ‘engagement’, ‘participation’, ‘social exclusion’ and ‘partnership’. It is my intention in this half of the chapter, to present a ‘resident’ voice as, I argue, the traditionally top-down approach to policy analysis often bypasses the lived material realities of residents and officers on the ground. In relation to this thesis, I argue that presenting and examining these lived-experiences can significantly unravel and expose the practical operation and outcomes of neighbourhood renewal policies on the ground. This chapter begins

this process by highlighting *housing*, methods of *participation* and *engagement*, *access to the labour market* and *access to information* and key issues for residents of Ilfracombe central ward on the ground. These issues are then explored further throughout this thesis.

Chapter Four does not address resident issues directly, instead, through an examination of the conception, development and deployment of Transform in Ilfracombe, it explores the extent of community engagement and enrolment into the neighbourhood management process, and highlights the prioritization of particular forms of ‘local intelligence’ through an analysis of my empirical findings. Here, the role of a set of local ‘elite’ actors is explored in more detail. Also, this chapter examines in particular, the development of joint working between Transform and NDDC and discusses NDDC’s role as a partner in the effective service delivery of neighbourhood management. The engagement and position of other Transform partners is also considered in this chapter and the notions of ‘inclusion’ and ‘exclusion’ are used to examine the ‘community-led’ approach to neighbourhood management outlined in PAT4. To end, this chapter uses the empirical findings of this research to question the extent of engagement and participation by *whole* communities though the process of neighbourhood management.

Chapter Five builds on these findings by considering more widely the opportunities for engagement, participation and enrolment into the neighbourhood management process, particularly in relation to some of the key issues drawn out in Chapter Three. This chapter is split into two distinct sections. The first uses my empirical findings to present the process and depth of community engagement and participation in Ilfracombe. Here, one of the Transform 4 Work initiatives will be presented in more detail, drawing on discussions of ‘active’ citizenship and Levitas’s discourses of exclusion examined previously in Chapter One.

The second section of Chapter Five revisits resident and officer interviews to explore how the process of neighbourhood management has been experienced on the ground considering the notions of engagement and participation, access to knowledge and services and access to the labour market.

This chapter concerns the experiences of residents and officers to the neighbourhood management process and underlines the messy realities of policy translation to a practical ‘ground’ level. This messiness is underlined by disruptions in the top-down processes of power which highlights a point made by McKee (2011:2) that “*governing practices can be adapted, challenged and contested from below*”. The tensions and contradictions in the delivery of neighbourhood management outlined in this chapter are discussed in the context of the literature discussions presented in Chapter One. However a broader examination of the empirical findings in the context of these discussions is presented in Chapter Six.

Chapter Six aims to bring together the empirical findings presented throughout this research through examination and discussion of the key concepts outlined in Chapter One.

Above I have tried to outline the incentives behind my research and provide the reader with a brief outline for the reading of this thesis. Following from this, Chapter One provides a presentation and discussion of academic and policy-based literature which will be drawn upon to assist in the examination of my empirical results throughout this thesis.

I begin with a discussion of the key concepts used to examine the empirical findings throughout this thesis. .

Chapter One

Key Concepts and Literature Review

1.1. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to present a series of literature discussions around the key academic concepts which will be drawn from and explored during this thesis. These concepts will then be drawn upon to explore the aim and objectives of this thesis which are to explore the construction, development and operation of the neighbourhood management pathfinder “Transform” in Ilfracombe, Devon.

There are four main objectives which will be considered during this thesis. These four objectives are

1. Explore the process of neighbourhood management as a community-led partnership for the promotion of neighbourhood renewal.
2. Examine the process of neighbourhood management in relation to the key themes of (1) Social Exclusion and (2) ‘Active’ Inclusion.
3. Present and examine resident experiences of the LCPRS in Ilfracombe in relation to notions of social exclusion and citizenship.
4. Analyse the governing technologies of neighbourhood management using Foucault’s concept of governmentality as a framework.

However, the aim of this first introducing section is to provide the reader with a brief introduction to urban policy with the objective of providing a short historical basis to the proceeding sections- which explore in more detail, the concept and

use *social exclusion*, and Micheal Foucault's concept of governmentality, two key literatures which will be drawn on throughout this thesis. First, this opening section begins with an introduction of the formation of modern urban policy in the UK, beginning after post 1945, to situate the context of urban policy and area-led renewal within the structure of modern British society.

History of Urban Policy in Britain before New Labour

After the turbulence of World War II major changes occurred to the urban structure of Britain: policies were introduced to rebuild wartime urban destruction and to regenerate cities and regions over the next two decades following the end of the war. Importantly, a welfare state was established, and urban policy focused on re-housing inner-city residents and building peripheral housing estates and a modern infrastructure. A landmark movement was the Town and Country Planning Act which allowed local authorities to produce plans and oversee local developments, leading to greater action for planning and development of housing at a local level (Town and Country Planning Act 1948).

The concept of urban policy evolved even further through the shared notion that problems of physical degeneration, unemployment, poverty, delinquency and crime were usually located in the same spatial areas. Of these areas, the spatial area which most visibly reflected such problems was the inner city. Urban policy became therefore, a response by the government to area-based deprivation in the city with traditional concerns including the physical and economic development and regeneration of the city (particularly the inner city), as well as some social concerns including raising living standards for city dwellers and creating inclusive, harmonious communities to live in.

By the mid-1960' through to the late 1970's, other issues began to take a front stage in urban policy. These included a number of anti-poverty initiatives which sought to tackle the social and racial unrest which was stirring up at the time in the nation's inner-cities (Atkinson 2000). These initiatives, implemented by the

Old Labour party, included the creation of Education Priority Areas and Housing Action Areas, each specifically designed as a targeted, area-based policy, and used to combat the problems of ‘the inner city’ whilst underlining the importance of community participation and cooperation between central and local authorities. Then, from 1979 to 1997 the Conservative government controlled the development and direction of urban policy in Britain. The Conservative party was characterised by a free-market approach with an emphasis on economic growth and investment over concern for a welfare-led process of regeneration. The Conservative governments of the time saw the purpose of planning as acting to assist the development of the market itself, and therefore many urban policies were directed towards decreasing the role of the state, and towards a sector of privatisation and deregulation (Lawless 1991). The Thatcher government of 1979-1990 embodied these New Right ideas and withdrew interventionist micro-level urban policy and instead instigated a macro-economic strategy of market-led regeneration, famously intended to ‘trickle down’ to areas of deprivation without the need for micro-level welfare in the form of area-led renewal. The housing market in particular was characterised during this period through a number of changes which included the Right to Buy scheme, increasing rents in the local authority sector, the introduction of means-tested individual subsidies for tenants, and housing stock transfers from local authorities to social landlords (Tiesdell and Allmendinger 2001). As a result of this, the low cost housing sector was taken from the direction and regulation of local authorities and passed on to the market for a more efficient process of urban renewal based within an emerging neoliberal framework. These policies were important to note, as they form the basis for a number of the problems local authorities face today chiefly, the reduction of local authority housing stock available for social renting to individuals in the low-cost end of the private rental housing spectrum. This is a problem found in Ilfracombe, Devon, the case study area of this thesis.

The Conservative government of John Major continued these policies to some extent. This persistent deregulation agenda gave rise to an increasing amount of

quasi-nongovernmental organisations, taking physical and economic regeneration powers away from local authorities and passing it to organisations working at ‘arms length’ from government. However the Major government’s analysis of what had worked previously in urban policy led them to present a new emphasis on the involvement of local authorities, with business and enterprise, in a process of ‘partnership working’ which focused around ideas of competition, privatisation and market-led regeneration (Hastings 1996).

It was at this point when the phrase ‘partnership working’ evolved from being used to describe mutual working and co-operation between central and local government, to being used to describe co-operation with the private sector, most notably in terms of investment and direct involvement of regeneration projects. An early example of the importance placed on private investment by the Conservative government shaping urban policy is Enterprise Zones (EZs) – set up after the 1980 Local Government, Planning and Land Act – which were used to target and regenerate specific local areas (Potter and Moore 2000). These encouraged investment using a number of incentives which included:

“exemptions of property from local business rates, enhanced capital allowances against corporation and income tax liabilities for investment in property, exemption from Development Land Tax exemption from Industrial Training Board levies” (Potter and Moore 2000: 1280).

The introduction of the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) was another pivotal point in a discussion of the Conservative government’s development and use of urban policy. The SRB was introduced in April 1994 and became one of the main sources of urban regeneration funding for local authorities. It was a fund which was competitively bid for, and then used to tackle specific areas suffering from economic and social deprivation by the fund-winning authority (Hill and Barlow 1995). This policy –which was continued through the early years of New Labour’s return to power in the late 1990s - was the first step towards the expanse of competitive bidding for government funding as a central element of urban policy.

New Labour and Urban Policy

The year 1997 marked an important moment in British political history. The ‘New’ Labour Party was elected to government in May of that year by a landslide victory, a victory based partly on the broadening of their appeal to middle-England as well as to their previous working class base. The ‘New’, in New Labour was particularly important, reflecting the shift in their political ideology and policies from a democratic socialist party to one which followed a new, Third Way, of thinking. This new government inherited policies and an institutional framework from their conservative predecessors besieged by neoliberal values and centred on market-led approaches. It created a platform from which New Labour rescaled, restructured and modernised the state, particularly through an urban governance regime which emphasised the duties and responsibilities of individuals and communities for themselves.

Urban social regeneration quickly became one of the party’s most prominent agendas. This was reflected by the development of the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU), and in the implementation of programs such as New Deal for Communities (NDC) and the prominence of Actions Zones (AZ) for health, education and employment. Many of the policies stemming from the SEU used an area based approach, through the construction of ‘neighbourhoods’ and ‘communities’, to combating the problems identified as being associated with urban decline. Such area-based policies have led to/from a resurgence in the use of the concepts of spatially defined ‘communities’ and ‘neighbourhoods’, and not only imply that such communities exist, but that they can be effectively targeted by area-based initiatives of reform. The use of these concepts in regard to the notion of ‘social exclusion’ and ‘citizenship’ played a pivotal role in the reinvention of urban policy initiatives by New Labour and consequently reflect Third Way ideology, which stresses the importance of involving ‘communities’ in the processes that surround the creation of dutiful citizens (Imrie and Raco 2003).

Neighbourhood Regeneration and Social Exclusion

When New Labour formed government in 1997 the concept of social exclusion, as a more dynamic and far reaching measurement of poverty- and its associated causes and concerns- was introduced at the heart of their urban social policy agenda. Consequently, it informed much of their social and urban initiatives.

From the outset of the New Labour government, social exclusion was an integral ‘buzz phrase’ used within and across many policy lines. Its presence was quickly felt in the realm of urban policy with the implementation of the interdepartmental Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) within a year of New Labour being elected into office. Consequently, the SEU developed initiatives such as the ‘New Deal’ under the banner of neighbourhood renewal, and subsequent urban social policies were aimed at tackling the ‘problems’ associated with social exclusion in targeted deprived areas. The policy of neighbourhood management was amongst one of the latter urban policy initiatives delivered by New Labour to address these issues and consequently, this thesis explores the concept of social exclusion and processes of ‘inclusion’, in relation to the neighbourhood management pathfinder deployed in Ilfracombe. Therefore the first section of this chapter will address the concept of social exclusion in more detail to provide a platform to draw from when discussing my empirical findings throughout the thesis.

1.2. Social Exclusion

1.2.i Introduction

Following New Labour’s election, the ‘neighbourhood’ quickly became a contested political space, thereafter becoming as important as a moral space for social renewal, as a physical space for regeneration. This was, in part, reflected by the Social Exclusion Unit’s (SEU) explicit responsibility for neighbourhood renewal, before the establishment of the cross-departmental Neighbourhood Renewal Unit (NRU) in 2001. The morality of this ‘neighbourhood’ space was,

and still is in many ways under the new Coalition government, concerned with the creation of responsible, self-activating citizens through New Labour's inflection of the Third Way. The creation of these responsible citizens was closely linked to participation and citizenship by local communities and thus, during Labour's twelve years in government, the 'neighbourhood' became one of the fundamental sites of welfare politics, and firmly positioned it as a key target for social democratic renewal.

Across this neighbourhood space polices were deployed which sought to encourage individual responsibility, and schemes were implemented which aimed to create opportunities of 'inclusion', for those currently not 'active', into a fulfilled societal life. In addition to this, the neighbourhood was also established as a key space for the promotion of civic engagement and community participation, all key policy agendas for Tony Blair's New Britain (Giddens 1998, Lister 1998, Powell 2000). By examining the key themes of neighbourhood renewal and its close initial association with the SEU, it becomes apparent that the regeneration of neighbourhoods through urban policy focuses on the themes of *community participation*, *active citizenship* and the *moral renewal* of neighbourhoods, themes which shall be examined throughout this thesis.

New Labour sought to transform deprived neighbourhoods through a programme of neighbourhood renewal, arguably attempting to reform the social, economic and cultural features of deprived neighbourhoods, often over the call from local communities for physical regeneration. During this time then, 'the neighbourhood' and neighbourhood policy has been constructed in a specific way, as noted, with a close tie to the concept of social exclusion. Although during the later years of New Labour's government the phrase 'social exclusion' became gradually filtered out of policy documents, often replaced by a discussion of 'inclusion', it was in many ways, the foundation upon which urban social policy initiatives of New Labour were built upon and as such it will be examined in more detail here to provide some context to the history of the term.

1.2.ii. Tracing the Concept of “Social Exclusion”

Despite the popularity in political and popular culture during the 1990's and early 2000's of the term 'social exclusion', precise definitions of the concept are still often contested, and consequently its meaning has been interpreted in a variety of ways in both academic and political literature. This section endeavours to shed some light on the evolution of 'social exclusion' from its modern political beginnings to its integration into New Labour discourse and policies of the last decade. It also aims to discuss the concepts' development through academic debates and discuss its relevance in contemporary academic and political deliberations. Such a discussion is important in the context of human geography due to the, often ubiquitous, use of the term running through European and British sustainability policies over the last decade.

In Britain, for example, the New Labour government formed the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU), its intention, to monitor and tackle the causes and consequences of 'social exclusion' using a cross-government approach to addressing the problems of deprivation and exclusion. After almost a decade of work this unit was replaced by the Social Exclusion Task Force (SETF) in 2006 due to a governmental shake-up, but continued to operate under the same basic principles and aims of its predecessor. Therefore, it is apparent that the concept of 'social exclusion', or perhaps more importantly 'social inclusion' has been an integral backbone New Labour's ideology, embedded in policies targeted at tackling crime, poor housing, health and employment. Such policies have seen New Labour move away from redistributive justice of the Old Left, and the concept of social exclusion was often used in government rhetoric to discuss problems which are about *more* than income poverty. It is imperative therefore that social exclusion and the root of its causes (although these causes will vary depending on definition) are explored here in their entirety.

1.2.iii. The Political Evolution of Social Exclusion

Modern political use of the term ‘social exclusion’ has been repeatedly traced by academics to French politics of the 1970’s (Pearce 2001). Originally applied by politicians to those with a physical or mental disability as well individuals suffering from poverty, artists and musicians who had not wanted to integrate into mainstream society were also classified using this term. The term was coined by the then Secretary of State for Social Action, Rene Lenoir, who was referring to the individuals mentioned above in his political discourse (Silver 1994). During this decade however, France was experiencing a period of slow growth, instability and widespread unemployment after the 1973 oil crisis, a problem which was leading to unrest within the country. The meaning of the term ‘social exclusion’ soon began to evolve within political discourse to incorporate ideas of an unemployed or low-skilled youth who had been excluded from the labour market. The popularity of this term grew as the French sought to move away from the term ‘poverty’ (which had an association with English rhetoric) and towards a new term which incorporated ideas of both deprivation and social withdrawal from society (Silver 2007). This shift in meaning of the term in political language was the beginning of social exclusion’s evolution into government policy with a focus on exclusion/inclusion in paid employment (Lister 1998). This change in meaning has played an integral role in the incorporation of the term into modern political discourse, specifically into that of contemporary ‘Third Way’ politics, an ideology which has appeared on the international scene over the last two decades (MacLeavy 2006).

In the era of the Third Way, the term ‘social exclusion’ began to overtake popular use of the term ‘poverty’ in political language which was becoming conceptually stigmatized and thought to be indecent/offensive language towards individuals suffering from disadvantage. It also implied inequality stemming from unfair distributions of wealth and income: an idea which is not central to Third Way ideology or to the wider march of neoliberalism through the politics of welfare in Britain. Hence the switch was made from talk of ‘poverty’ to talk of ‘exclusion’. In reality, although interrelated, these concepts describe different types of

deprivation and are measured in distinct ways. Later, this chapter will go on to describe some of the similarities and differences between ‘social exclusion’ and ‘poverty’ and will discuss their measurements and application as concepts. First however, the section will take a closer look at the Third Way and at the implications of its ideology for the evolving concept of social exclusion in Britain.

1.2.iv. New Labour, the Third Way and ‘Social Exclusion’

The transition from talk of ‘poverty’ to a discussion of ‘social exclusion’ was a vital component of Third Way politics in the UK. ‘Third way’ ideas became evident in international politics in the late 1980’s through western governments which sought to find an alternative to purely Leftist or Right principles. Following the line toed by the Clinton Administration, the Labour Party made this shift away from the Old-Left towards the ‘Third Way’ after the appointment of leader Tony Blair in 1994. On a basic level the Third Way represents a set of ideologies which stress the importance of achieving greater social justice whilst also concentrating on increasing the amount of economic growth within society (Brownlee 1998). It takes a different political direction from socialist/radical left policies of Labours traditional Old Left as well as from the largely conservative policies of the Right, hence its definition as a new, Third Way. However many argue that the direction is neither new nor distinctive and instead leans towards policies of the right rather than centre or left of centre (Powell 2000). Such opinions stem from evidence that policies favour ‘inclusion’ into society through paid work rather than through the redistribution of wealth.

This shift in the Labour Party political foundations allowed its new government in 1999 to put a greater emphasis on the redistribution of ‘opportunities’ in contrast to previous traditional emphasis on the redistribution of income/wealth. Such ‘opportunities’ include redistributing the prospects of employment, training and education amongst the population. By creating opportunities for all individuals to train and work effectively, the Third Way persuades us that all individuals who are willing to participate will gain, or be granted, ‘inclusion’ into society.

Commentators have argued that this ideology redefines the meaning of equality from ‘equality of outcome’ to ‘equality of opportunity’ (Powell 2000). Such policies could be interpreted in a variety of ways. First, it could be argued that such a distribution of ‘opportunities’ will empower individuals to make changes to their working life, stemming from the argument that as more training opportunities become available, more individuals will be able to further their education/employment, with a potential to place themselves at a higher level on the social order/hierarchy. However, this system relies on individual responsibility- another key element in the Third Way politics of New Labour. In this scenario, the Welfare State will not redistribute income to those who are not prepared to engage with society and this is particularly emphasised to individuals who do not wish to ‘actively’ participate in the labour market. Indeed the values of the Third Way are underlined by the ideas/ideals of responsibility, duty and accountability of individuals within society itself, particularly in relation to employment. According to this line of thinking, the distribution of training and education ‘opportunities’, means that every individual can gain training/employment in spite of their background. The inability of individuals to do so, within New Labour’s discourse, identifies such individuals as disengaging from society and not taking up the responsibilities and duties afforded to their ‘inclusion’. Such individuals, imply New Labour, are excluding themselves from society. This is a point which will be taken into consideration throughout this thesis and will be discussed in more detail in chapter in Chapter Five when exploring the Transform 4 Work initiative. This section will now present academic discourses surrounding the concept of social exclusion in British politics.

1.2.v. ‘Conceptualising’ Social Exclusion in British Politics

The concept of social exclusion is shrouded in number of different paradigms and discourses which serve to make the term ‘social exclusion’ open to various

interpretations. This section will explore the academic discourses used to interpret social exclusion.

Levitas discusses the concept of social exclusion in 'The Inclusive Society' and suggests that it is embedded within three distinct discourses in contemporary British politics (Levitas 1996, 1998). These discourses, each of which shall be discussed in turn in relation to New Labour, differ in the boundaries they work across, the solutions they put forward and how they view, discuss and treat individuals in attempts to 'include' members of society. These shall be drawn upon as one framework for analysis throughout this thesis.

The first of the discourses to be discussed by Levitas (1998:14-20) is the 'redistributionist discourse' (RED). RED advocates two main points: first, that social exclusion is a consequence of poverty, and second, that social exclusion is a consequence of the circumstances which surround people living in poverty. It is an egalitarian discourse which lists poverty and the consequences of poverty as the key causal factors of inequality and exclusion. Such a stance means that its method of identifying exclusion lies in the measurement of the amount income and wealth that individuals have at their disposal, i.e. a traditional measure of poverty. When embedded in policy, RED proposes that social exclusion can be defeated through progressive taxation of the wealthy and the redistribution of wealth to the poor through the increase of benefits and services, a method favoured by the Old Left. In contemporary UK politics however, the Third Way rhetoric spouted by New Labour poorly reflected RED.

As mentioned previously, the Third Way aims to combat poverty and exclusion through the redistribution of 'opportunities' rather than the redistribution of income. This new emphasis on the redistribution of 'opportunities' has redefined the concept of equality used in British politics, with stress being placed on the importance of education, work and training in the implementation and creation of equal opportunities. Such rhetoric, which focuses on redistributing 'opportunities'

can be seen as a move away from RED in the contemporary Labour Party and towards a more educational and work focused route to equality and ‘inclusion’.

In reference to this change, Levitas (1998:23-24) describes a ‘social integrationist discourse’ (SID) which is most prominently manifest in New Labour’s policies of employment. SID can be seen to be embedded throughout much of New Labour’s discourse and is a central dialogue which emphasises the idea that equality should be based on ‘equality of opportunities’ rather than ‘equality of outcome’. Such reasoning implies that all able individuals should partake in productive paid work as part of their moral ‘inclusion’ and obligation to society. Consequently, this discourse highlights the responsibility of the individual. It is their output as productive employees, and not productive humans (e.g. as caregivers etc), which is valued most of all. The prominence of this rhetoric allows the government to take a moral authority which is then used to control the distribution of benefits for those who cannot work to those deemed most appropriate. SID emphasises the importance of individual participation in *paid work*. It does not include the unpaid work carried out by carers, mothers, family members or volunteers. As many of the individuals in unpaid work are women (who are often the main care-givers), a portion of the female community could be perceived as being socially excluded from society due to their lack of participation in ‘important’ paid work. Due to this, some commentators view SID as highly gendered discourse and many women could be wrongly targeted by government programmes which put an importance on paid work as a meaningful contribution and inclusive passage into society (Levitas 1998:24).

As Levitas and other commentators have pointed out, SID was the predominant of the three discourses of social exclusion in the social policy of the New Labour government (Levitas 1998, Benn 2000). When considering New Labour’s work, training and family policies, many of them were deeply embedded in SID. Consequently, an emphasis on participation in paid work was central to New Labour’s and indeed most Third Way ideology. Some brief examples of such

policies could include strategies which introduce financial penalties or benefit withdrawal from individuals who are not ‘actively’ trying to participate in paid work or in government-approved training courses, and the example of tax credits for families with ‘working’ parents (Powell 2000).

An example of this emphasis can be presented in the New Deal, a policy initiative which made manifest New Labour’s preoccupation with both paid work *and* with distributing ‘opportunities’. It gave unemployed individuals the ‘opportunity’ to participate in training activities which should lead to gainful employment. Non-participation in this scheme could have led to the withdrawal of benefits from individuals giving the poorest of individuals little choice but to fall in line. The New Deal will be presented in more detail in the second half of this chapter. However policies which are embedded in SID such as New Deal conclude that non-participation in paid work leads to *exclusion* from income and social networks. This specific discourse, currently favored by UK policy, prioritizes participation in paid work as the key method of ‘inclusion’ and integration into society.

In conjunction with this analysis, commentators such as Levitas also argue that this type of discourse has links with a third discourse, labeled the ‘moral underclass discourse’ (MUD). For example, when discussing the New Deal, Blair complains of a workless class which will be “*brought back into society and into useful work*” (Levitas 1998:138). This comment reflects New Labour’s belief that only participation in paid work will integrate individuals into society and that only paid work is dutiful, worthy and most importantly, “*useful*” to society. It conjugates all the ideas that only paid work is carried out by valuable, responsible citizens. The importance of SID in British politics gives prominent weight to the ‘responsibilities’ of individual citizens. The government highlights the fact that opportunities come with a duty to society. The New Labour government had said (in relation to the New Deal) that the new responsibilities that citizens must take up to gain certain ‘opportunities’ would be enforced by harsh penalties for non-compliance (Lister 1998). This is another example of a New Labour policy which

combines both SID and MUD, stigmatizing individuals who do not take up employment responsibilities and so ‘exclude’ themselves from society. This more unnerving tone, embedded within New Labour’s discourse, will now be discussed further.

Levitas (1998:14-20) suggests that a ‘moral underclass discourse’ (MUD) is used to associate the delinquent and immoral behavior of the poor with social exclusion and other problems and is a discourse that is ingrained with neo-conservatism. Accordingly it implies that increasing benefits or services to these individuals would not work as an incentive for them to integrate into society. It implies such tactics should not be used as a solution to combating social exclusion and poverty. Alarmingly, MUD finds the behavior and morals of the poor as socially distinct from the rest of society where the poor are embedded in a discourse that outlines low moral and behavioral values when compared to those of other ‘dutiful’ citizens. It insists that inclusion of such people can only come about through a change in *their* attitude, behavior and moral values to meet those expected by greater ‘society’. MUD can be identified lurking beneath much of New Labour’s SID. It is reflected in Blair’s discussion of New Deal where, as mentioned previously, he isolates a ‘workless class’: a group of people who do not wish to engage in paid work due to an ingrained culture of irresponsibility and moral inaptitude. Similarly to SID, MUD is often gendered and focuses on criminal young men and sexually irresponsible young women. Use of MUD in New Labour’s policies has become more apparent over the last decade and often many of society’s problems (such as anti-social behavior) are subtlety attributed to an ‘underclass’ society who lack the same moral, cultural or political values as those in power. New Labour often embed this section of the poor in talk of a ‘dependency culture’ which further stigmatizes those ‘individuals who are receipt of benefits. Unfortunately, this is a discourse which appears to be embedded even deeper within the new Coalitions government’s policies concerning welfare and urban renewal.

Above, I have outlined Levitas's exploration of the academic discourses in which social exclusion has become embedded within in contemporary British politics. These explorations are used to analyse and critique neighbourhood renewal and more specifically, the process of neighbourhood management, during this thesis.

1.2.vi. Models of Exclusion

Levitas' examination of social exclusion through discourse has been used by a number of authors in human geography to examine the direction of New Labour's urban policy over the last twelve years. Another author however, discusses the concept on different terms. Silver explores the theoretical foundation of social exclusion in European social policy leading to her distinguishing between three diverse paradigms of social integration and inclusion in society (Silver 1994). A discussion of these paradigms will be used in Chapter Six as a basis for an exploration of my empirical findings.

In the paradigms described by Silver (1994), exclusion occurs when individuals experience social difference, barriers, or deviate from the correct social order set out in each of the models. Each paradigm represents a different set of "*theoretical perspectives, political ideologies and national discourses*" that underpin social exclusion (Silver 1994:539). She calls these the Solidarity, Specialization and the Monopoly paradigms and each will be discussed briefly below.

During Silver's discussion of French republican thought she describes the Solidarity model as the social bond between an individual and the larger order of society. When this bond is broken, exclusion occurs. In the Solidarity paradigm Silver stresses that individuals are connected to society through a variety of associations with 'mediating institutions' to which they are bound and specifically states that the social order is not maintained at an individual level. Social solidarity is created through shared identity and values and experiences and is therefore a context-dependent phenomenon. In 'The Division of Labour',

Durkheim discusses two types of social solidarity (Durkheim 1933). The Solidarity paradigm described by Silver is best represented by one of these, Durkheim's theory of 'mechanical solidarity'. This is frequently used to describe basic civilizations which are often governed by strong religious beliefs and values, in which citizens are dependent on the institutions and total social system. If an individual breaks away from one of these mediating institutions (e.g. if they break away from a religious institution or monarchy) they become excluded. Their exclusion is emphasised by the fact that other individuals are bound to that institution (not to each other as individuals) and the 'excluded' becomes excluded from society. Durkheim also discusses 'organic solidarity' to describe the development of social cohesion in more advanced societies where individuals have become more specialised, rely less on each other or a mediating institution and diversify into different spheres, with functional interdependence through economic relations (Giddens 1971:210-213). This is reflected in Silver's second paradigm.

Silver's second paradigm of social integration/inclusion is Specialization, a model where social, economic and political sectors are split into specialized spheres. These separate spheres connect citizens at an individual level, i.e. unlike the solidarity paradigm; individuals are not bound to a larger social order but are bound by their own interests and autonomy. Specialization is part of the liberal individualist philosophy. In this model, exclusion occurs when spheres are regulated by inappropriate rules, boundaries or the distances between spheres change, a process which may occur through the tightening of government restrictions, particularly regarding employment. The spheres represent different dimensions of society and it is possible for individuals to be excluded from only one of the specialized spheres or from many spheres at the same time.

In contrast to the individualist sentiments of the Specialisation paradigm, the creation of the social order in the Monopoly model is stated to come about through a set of hierarchical relations (Silver 1994:543-544). This hierarchy

could be built on notions of class, status and the services and resources available to members of society. In this model, exclusion from the social order can occur when individuals experience low levels of any/or all of the above notions (i.e. class, status, resources). This particular model can use boundaries to continue to exclude people or it can encourage values of citizenship to ensure that individuals are ‘included’.

Silver’s three paradigms, outlined above, are basic models and, as Silver notes, it is unreasonable to use just one paradigm to depict a particular society. Indeed all three paradigms could be perceived as acting in a society at once. These paradigms will be drawn upon in Chapter Six to explore the processes of exclusion at work in Ilfracombe.

1.2.vii. Active and Passive Exclusion

New Labour’s Third Way ideology puts a particular emphasis on the creation of ‘active citizens’. Indeed the infamous “*no rights without responsibilities*” mantra of New Labour’s Third Way guru, Anthony Giddens (1998:6) is the epitome statement of a government which places emphasis on the active participation of individuals and communities to be granted an inclusive path into wider society. Taking this into consideration means that social exclusion can be elaborated by ideas of ‘active’ or ‘passive’ exclusion.

People who are actively excluded are done so by the enforcing of boundaries that keep certain individuals ‘out’. This could be most visually identified in Silver’s Monopoly paradigm of social integration whereby hierarchies are developed which keep people in a particular social order, deviation from the social order will result in exclusion. Boundaries, hierarchies and certain social policies (National boundaries, educational attainment ...etc) work to make people ‘actively excluded’. An example of this could be shown as the international, national and community barriers to immigration and the consequential exclusion this causes. In contrast to this, ‘passive exclusion’ occurs when individuals

become excluded in a process which is not deliberate or premeditated by governments, organisations or society. Sen gives an example of passive exclusion as poverty which is generated under a “*sluggish economy*” and consequential build up of poverty over time (Sen 2000:21).

Expanding the term the further again for discussion during my empirical chapters, the concept of social exclusion can again be elaborated by ideas of voluntary and involuntary exclusion. Involuntary exclusion occurs when individuals are excluded by means beyond their own control, i.e. through the process of active or passive exclusion. Voluntary exclusion however occurs when an individual/group choose to ‘opt-out’ of the duties, responsibilities and ‘opportunities’ of the society that they live in. This may include ‘deviant’ or marginal individuals who resolve not to be ‘included’, often following different lifestyles, morals and values.

‘Deep exclusion’ is another term, generally applied to the measurement of social exclusion, which is used to describe exclusion which occurs when an individual is affected by exclusion across more than one dimension (Levitas et al 2007:25-30). These dimensions (discussed in the next section) have been suggested as measures of exclusion by a number of researchers trying to determine the concept in relative terms. Deep exclusion is an amalgamation of exclusion from a number of these dimensions and leads to severe negative consequences on the life of the individual. Many people who are considered ‘socially excluded’ are not regarded as suffering from ‘deep exclusion’.

From this summary of the ideas, discourses and models that surround the concept of social exclusion it is clear that the term is often contested, context-dependant and is constantly evolving. This makes ‘social exclusion’ a concept which is hard to define precisely. In spite of this, social scientists *have* sought to identify and measure indicators of social exclusion. This development and implementation of this process shall now be discussed to provide a wider context for the use and measurement of social exclusion in this thesis. Though the PSE

Survey is not used explicitly, some of these ‘identifiers’ will be used to examine the process of exclusion in Ilfracombe in this thesis.

1.2.vii. Methodical Dimensions of Social Exclusion

Social exclusion is a relative concept, i.e. social exclusion occurs within the context of particular society and individuals in a society can only be excluded in comparison with other individuals in the same society. The manner in which it is defined or experienced by individuals varies across different nations, cultures and religions. This makes it extremely hard to develop definitive measures or indicators (or even a definitive meaning) for social exclusion. Separate societies will have different ideas of what it means to be socially excluded and the ambiguity of the concept may well be one reason why it has replaced the more definitive term of poverty as the prominent measurement of disadvantage. As discussed, in the UK, a popular political discourse (i.e. SID) has been promoted that defines non-participation in the Labour market as a key factor in social exclusion. Other societies may focus on religion, race or gender, as key determinants of social exclusion emphasising that ‘excluding mechanisms’ that operate within the social order are context-dependent. However, despite the variety of the types, causes and outcomes of social exclusion, particular indicators of social exclusion have been identified, developed and used to measure the concept in Britain. These shall now be discussed.

In 2003 the EU presented two Joint Exclusion Reports and defined a set of primary indicators for social exclusion. It is notable that the key themes running through these indicators are those of poverty and employment (European Commission 2003). The 2003 Joint Report highlighted the need for a more multi-dimensional approach to be taken to measure social exclusion in the future. Unlike much New Labour policy, which focuses on inclusion in paid work, the methodical approaches to exploring social exclusion see the concept as a multi-dimensional problem which stems from many sources. This suggestion was

taken on board by social science researchers. One such study which examined indicators of social exclusion was an empirical investigation carried out in 2005 (Barnes 2005). This investigation covered seven dimensions of social exclusion including: income/finances, housing, social relationships, health (both mental and physical), goods ownership and quality of neighbourhood. Similarly, Burchardt et al (2002) used four dimensions (consumption, production, political and social engagement) to measure levels of social exclusion. Both papers use a number of different indicators and insist that it is as a broad multi-dimensional process.

Another study, The Rowntree Foundation Poverty and Social Exclusion (PSE) Survey (2000) also measured a number of multi-dimensional indicators of social exclusion as an assessment of deprivation with the prospect of using these measures as a more compelling concept than poverty alone (Gordon et al 2000, Levitas 2000). This survey distinguished between four dimensions of exclusion: exclusion from (1) income, (2) exclusion from services, (3) exclusion from the labour market and (4) exclusion from social relations, also distinguishing micro-factors of exclusion within these dimensions (Bradshaw et al 2000, Pantazis et al 2006). The aim of the PSE Survey was to investigate the levels of social exclusion and poverty in Britain, insisting that such analysis is critical in allowing the relationship between social exclusion and poverty to emerge. Currently, the ESRC is funding the Poverty and Social Exclusion Survey 2011. However, this section will now go on to discuss the dimensions used and the findings from the PSE Survey (2000) in relation to social exclusion.

First of all, *exclusion from the labour market* is identified in the PSE survey as an important dimension of social exclusion. This will provide a point for discussion during chapters Three and Six of this thesis. This is because participation in employment secures an income whilst also providing a place to become involved in social interactions and build relationships. Non-participation in paid work could cause exclusion from a regular source of income and social relationships. However many individuals who are not in recognised (paid) employment, in so

called 'jobless households' may not be excluded from social interactions and have meaningful occupations as carers, students, mothers or pensioners amongst others but under this premise would be counted as 'socially excluded'. As mentioned previously in relation to this point, Levitas (1998:24) has emphasised the level of participation in unpaid work by women, this can highlight the stigmatizing effects that SID policies may have on them and the individuals they care for. Therefore a measure of this dimension *alone* would not be an appropriate measure of social exclusion.

Service exclusion is a second dimension identified by the PSE Survey that can be used as an indicator of social exclusion. It lists a lack of access to services such as transport, shopping facilities and power sources (i.e. electric and gas) amongst others as important services for participation in society. The survey suggests that a lack of access to three or more services would be an indicator of social exclusion from this particular dimension. Such exclusion could be due to a number of factors such as low income, long-term illness or disability, calling attention to the notion that the dimensions of social exclusion interrelate with one another.

One of the innovative features of the PSE Survey was its identification of *social relations* including the notion of 'participation' as a dimension of exclusion. . One micro-factor determined as a measurement was (non)participation in social activities which were seen to be a necessity of modern life due to lack of money. Examples include having appropriate clothes for a job interview and being able to attend weddings, funerals or other such occasions. Disengagement with civic society was seen as another micro-factor, and this was assessed by asking participants if they were actively involved in any of a wide range of organisations. Lastly, the confinement of an individual was measured, derived from their ability to participate in activities beyond their home relating to the cost or health implications that doing so would incur. Each of these variables measures individual's participation in varying levels of society from areas of family life,

hobbies and friends...etc. Inclusion in these types of activities may also affect and be affected by financial resources, social relationships, resource access and physical or mental ability, referring back to the multi-dimensionality of the concept.

Exclusion from an adequate income is the fourth dimension of social exclusion identified by the PSE Survey, which is a measure of poverty itself. This may manifest itself in a variety of ways and could be a consequence of exclusion from employment, benefits, resources or pensions. As with all four dimensions of social exclusion, each dimension may affect, or be affected by another dimension of social exclusion. Hence the concept is viewed as an evolving, context-dependent and broad process.

The results of the PSE survey conclude that social exclusion:

"is a complex, multi-dimensional process. It involves the lack or denial of resources, rights, goods and services, and the inability to participate in the normal relationships and activities available to the majority of people in a society whether in economic, social, cultural or political arenas" (Levitas et al 2007:9).

As discussed above the authors of the PSE Survey chose to measure social exclusion by sets of indicators (or 'micro-factors') within each dimension rather than a single indicator in one dimension alone. This reflects the complexity of the concept they are striving to measure. The choice of indicators will depend on the (cultural, national or political) context within which it is being measured, demonstrating the evolving nature of the concept. Some commentators may argue that this makes the concept ambiguous and susceptible to particular political persuasion. Alternatively, I believe the concept is adaptable and could be used efficiently to measure disadvantage in specific contexts but not across different contexts. Using this measure in Britain alone, a nation which is governed by the same laws, resources and basic social expectations, could be used as a notable measure of disadvantage.

Social exclusion is therefore, a multi-dimensional process which is a consequence of being excluded from one or more of the dimensions described above within a particular context. The PSE Survey identified four dimensions and other studies have identified a number of others as discussed previously. The use of different indicators and dimensions also shows that the concept is dynamic, evolving and contested even when happening in the same cultural context, i.e. contemporary Britain.

During the following chapters of this thesis, I will explore the process of exclusion in relation some of the ‘identifiers’ set out in the PSE Survey. My empirical findings will particularly draw on these identifiers when exploring resident experiences of exclusion from the *labour market*, *income* and the process of *civic and political engagement* in relation to the neighbourhood management pathfinder in Ilfracombe.

1.2.viii. Social Exclusion and Poverty

In the measure of things, ‘social exclusion’ is a comparatively new term used to describe individuals or groups of people living in relative disadvantage, with particular connotations in modern politics focusing on participation in paid employment as a way of individuals finding their own way out of this disadvantaged state. However, long before the term social exclusion became popular, ‘poverty’ was the term which drew much theoretical and empirical attention relating to people living in disadvantage- and the denial of the existence of poverty by the Thatcher government in a large part led the development and use of social exclusion by New Labour as a more attractive concept to be discussed and used in policy.

Poverty is a concept which traditionally defines individuals as suffering from severe financial and service/resource disadvantage. It was defined by Rowntree in 1941 as the minimum income/resources by which an individual could live

efficiently. Townsend (1979) developed this further by including the idea of relative poverty, the resources available to an individual to enable them to participate in society (an idea which reflects the later concept of social exclusion). In addition to the concept of poverty, in 2001, the European Union incorporated the concept of social inclusion in greater depth into their policy framework, with an increasing interest in the concept for combating poverty and inequality (Atkinson et al 2002).

The addition of 'social inclusion' in the definition of overall poverty, as well as the addition of inadequate income as a dimension of social exclusion leaves the two concepts interlinked and somewhat interchangeable. Both concepts have opted to view disadvantage as a complex multi-dimensional process which involves both the ideas of poverty and social exclusion. However poverty is still a relatively one-dimensional concept (focused on income and resources) whereas social exclusion focuses on the multi-dimensional aspects of disadvantage. This suggests that a deeper analysis of social exclusion could prove a more satisfactory measure of deprivation than measures of poverty, a notion, which over recent years, has been accepted by social science researchers such as those who carried out the PSE Survey and others (Bradshaw et al 2000, Gordon et al 2000, Barnes 2005).

However, opponents of the term 'social exclusion' have argued that it is an open-ended concept which could be used to describe practically any circumstance and could be applied to those who are not really suffering from severe disadvantage in a way that poverty would not (Sen 2000). Absolute poverty, worked out mathematically, has a precise formula and can be measured and analysed (although it is still difficult to get accurate income data for individuals which can skew this process). Yet compared to the more open concept of social exclusion, which is measured by relative indicators which vary from place to place, measuring absolute poverty could seem the easier option. In this context it is understandable that 'poverty' had made a come back in the later years of New

Labour's government in political and economic discourse (particularly through New Labour's commitment to combating child poverty in the UK) with its precise definitions and economic measurements. However, a report by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation concluded that income poverty and social exclusion need to be tackled together to ensure a fairer future for all members of society (Pantazis et al 2006).

However, one problem that is emerging in the UK and in other European countries is the spatial concentration of the poor, in terms of either social exclusion or poverty (Gotham 2003). As the rich get richer a gap is increasing between the rich and poor, causing socio-spatial polarisation which could lead (and perhaps is leading) to the polarisation of the poor, particularly in urban areas and causing disadvantaged groups to become more detached from the traditional form of economic, political and social participation. These disadvantaged individuals or communities tend to be concentrated in poor quality neighbourhoods and houses such as those found in my case study area of Ilfracombe. This concentration is both a consequence of their exclusion (through gentrification, rising house prices etc), and can itself exacerbate their exclusion from society. This is a point which will be discussed further throughout the empirical chapters of my thesis in relation to the central ward of Ilfracombe.

1.2.viii. From Exclusion to 'Inclusion'

The initial impetus on social exclusion to New Labour's urban policy agenda was epitomised by the responsibility of the SEU for policy lead on neighbourhood renewal. However in 2001 the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit (NRU) was created as part of the Department for Communities and Local Government which then took on responsibility for neighbourhood renewal policy. Many of the key aims and objectives of the NRU remained the same but the emphasis on social exclusion is joined by a more intense emphasis on 'inclusion'. This emphasis is driven more overtly in 2001's *A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal*'s forceful guidance towards a greater need for community participation, community

engagement and active citizenship in the processes of neighbourhood renewal (Social Exclusion Unit 2001). These processes will be the subject of discussion through a presentation of my findings in Chapter Four and Four.

To tackle social exclusion the New Labour government sought to put momentum behind the idea of an 'empowered', responsible community which, through its own actions, created avenues for inclusion into wider society and the benefits that then provides. In essence, social exclusion was to be tackled through a more robust application of 'active' citizenship than before. The concept of active citizenship, particularly the notion of *activation for inclusion* will be used to examine the process of neighbourhood management in Ilfracombe during Chapter Five of this thesis.

The idea of active citizenship was not a new one. In part, the previous Conservative government became the starting line for a new concept of 'active citizenship', one which focused on the importance of the integration of individuals into a market-led society, chiefly through the encouragement of home ownership as a positive method of inclusion and financial independence from the state (Marinetto 2003). In conjunction with this, welfare provision was drawn inwards and individuals and families were widely encouraged to enrol in an active engagement with the employment market to support themselves and their families and to take pressure off the state.

New Labour's inflection of citizenship differed from this Conservative inflection somewhat, though it did valorise active citizenship through participation in the paid employment market. But in parallel to some of the ideas of the previous Conservative government, New Labour's concept of citizenship, which is prominently embedded within neighbourhood regeneration policy, focused quite importantly on the idea of 'community' at the heart of active citizenship as both a means and end to neighbourhood social and economic renewal. In keeping with Gidden's Third Way ideology, 'community' became the focus of New Labour's

citizenship rhetoric and emphasised the importance of responsibility and obligation in return for inclusion. The idea of “*rights with responsibilities*” goes to the very core of this ideology (Giddens 1998:64-65).

Hence, New Labour emphasised the importance of active citizenship as a means of inclusion into society. The Social Exclusion Unit and the associated policy it delivered on Neighbourhood Renewal were built on the Third Way ideology of the core concepts of community and active citizenship, each underlined by a differing nuance than that of the previous Conservative government, one in which the engagement of local community members to the *consultation* and *participation* process of local schemes would be deemed integral to the process of local urban regeneration. This will be discussed in relation to my empirical findings in Chapters Four and Five. Therefore in keeping with the ideas of the Third Way, notions of ‘community’ and ‘active citizenship’ were central to neighbourhood renewal. For example, a number of urban policies delivered by the SEU had these two concepts at their core, and emphasised the importance of the creation of an active participating local community in the renewal of neighbourhoods. Policies such as New Deal and Neighbourhood Management form the epitome of these ideas, and neighbourhood management will be discussed in detail during this thesis in an exploration of this.

Activating Communities

The urban policy processes outlined by the SEU were not only meant to consult and engage local residents in initiatives of local regeneration but also to involve and enrol them as *participants* in local projects to improve their own neighbourhoods. In essence, they were to be encouraged to become active citizens and take some responsibility for the outcomes of their neighbourhood. This participation was encouraged on a number of differing levels. First, certain individuals were encouraged to participate as experts in ‘local knowledge’. These, for example, would be local business people or prominent members of the community. This group were actively encouraged to share and manage

positions within the community which seek to include ‘excluded individuals’. Second, participation was encouraged of individuals or groups of individuals who may have been identified as ‘excluded’ to be enroled in community participation to ‘activate’ them through processes of citizenship, (in relation to the Third Ways particular inflection of citizenship, notably an obligation into paid work). The former and the latter are markedly different categorisations of the enrolment of local residents into the process of citizenship, but both hinge on the importance of self-responsibility and active inclusion as a vehicle to proceed to a fulfilling societal life, through participation in area-based schemes.

This section has discussed social exclusion in detail, and the importance of citizenship to the process of “inclusion” in New Labour’s regeneration project. These are ideas which will be drawn upon when presenting my empirical findings. The next section discusses the concept of ‘governmentality’ as a tool of post-structural political analysis.

1.4. Using Governmentality as a Micro-Level Tool for Analysis

1.3.i. Introduction

Throughout the empirical chapters, the concept of governmentality is used as a subtle methodological framework for political analysis of neighbourhood-led renewal. More specifically, the process of neighbourhood management will be examined using governmentality as a political framework for deconstruction.

Governmentality does not view government as a unified autonomous entity but rather as a myriad of governmental practices. It is therefore a concept which can be used to examine the operation of techniques and practices designed and implemented to guide an individual to an end associated with a particular rationality of rule. This is particularly useful when examining micro-level practices of governing as reflected in New Labour's programmes of neighbourhood-led renewal. In light of this, this section will briefly discuss Michael Foucault's notion of governmentality and this discussion will be drawn upon and explored further during the empirical chapters.

Governmentality

The notion of governmentality was coined by Foucault during his College de France lectures of 1978-1979 (Foucault 1991, Burchell et al 1991). The term 'governmentality' is concerned with the activity of governing instead of the activities of Government. It is a term that emanates from the exploration of the movement in early modern Europe from a central sovereign state of rule to a rationality of rule which prioritises, and is accomplished through, subtle re-shaping and guidance aimed at the creation of optimal population wellbeing (Elden 2007, Dean 1999).

During his lecture series, Foucault delivered a lecture entitled 'On Governmentality', explaining his notion of the concept in more detail. On a basic level, the term 'governmentality' can be understood to have two aspects:

1. It is a historical analysis of the logics of government by the State, and

2. It is an investigation of forms of governing the Other and the Self by way of institutions, organisations and regimes of self-care, widely discussed as the investigation of the ‘conduct of conduct’.

Taking these two aspects into account, using a governmentality perspective for the examination of neighbourhood-based policy allows a significant insight for the analysis of government in urban policy research. In this thesis it does this by bringing to light how rationalities of rule associated with New Labour were formed, internalized and translated in the technologies and practices which intended to guide and shape human conduct in the realm of *social renewal*: a discourse of urban social regeneration which was embedded throughout a plethora of neighbourhood regeneration policies. Hence, in this thesis, governmentality is used as a methodological framework to analyse New Labour’s policy of neighbourhood renewal, in particular, the initiative of Neighbourhood Management by examining its rationale and subsequent method of application at the neighbourhood level.

The word ‘governmentality’ itself lends an explanation to Foucault’s method of critique. The ‘govern’ is representative of the processes of governing, and the ‘mentality’ is representative of the modes of thought by and through which these acts of governing take place. Therefore Foucault links these two sides of governmentality to allow for a critique of the programmes, technologies and practices of governing as well as an examination of the overarching objectives, or rationality that such technologies and practices stem from. In this thesis, the rationalities from which the process of neighbourhood renewal stems will be examined in the second half of this literature review chapter. The technologies and practices of neighbourhood management will be examined and discussed through a presentation of the empirical research in subsequent chapters.

So ‘governmentality’ can be used as a method to examine the thoughts- which construct rationalities of government, and the technologies by and through which

these are exercised. This examination forms the foundation for policy analysis in this thesis. Central to this examination is the idea of a political rationality- an intellectual positioning of the problems and ideals behind the practices of governing. The rationalities of government are said to be “*discursive formations, intimately linked to structures of power that produce effects of truth*” (Merlingen and Ostrauskaitė 2006:22). In addition, Rose and Miller (1992:9) describe political rationalities as being “*morally coloured, grounded upon knowledge, and made thinkable through language*”. These rationalities exist and are framed within ‘regimes of truth’ and the complex assemblages of technologies and practices of government seek to shape and govern the behaviour of others, and work to cement the rationalities of government within society and make them operable (Dean 1999:9-40).

Rose and Miller (1992:24) suggest that these complex assemblages include:

“*mechanisms by which authorities seek to instantiate government: techniques of notation, computation and calculation; procedures of examination and assessment; the invention of devices such as surveys and presentational forms such as tables; the standardisation of systems for training and the inculcation of habits; the inauguration of professional specialisms and vocabularies; building designs and architectural forms*”.

All of these act as technologies which are deployed to sustain the rationalities of government in mentality and in process. This thesis uses Rose and Miller’s description (1992) to examine the ways in which complex assemblages are in process in New Labour’s objective of neighbourhood renewal, and more specifically during my research, to examine the processes of neighbourhood management.

1.3.ii Governing Ourselves and Our Community

Foucault discussed the concept of governmentality in another sense which concerns a form of government over oneself in a process Foucault terms “*the conduct of conduct*” which ranges from ‘governing self’ to ‘governing others’ (Foucault 1982: 220). Subsequently, this notion of governmentality has been further distinguished by Dean (1994:154-158) into three main categories which can be termed “*political subjectification*”, “*governmental self-formation*” and “*ethical self-formation*” (Huxley 2009:188). The first of these categories explore the technologies and rationalities that view individuals as political subjects. The second of these, “*governmental self-formation*”, is how certain organisations desire to act on individuals to mould their capacities and behaviours, and the latter, ‘*ethical self-formation*’ is how individuals seek to act on themselves and mould themselves. I will use these categories as a framework for analysis during my research, using them to help me unpick the structures and pathways of the process of governing. In this context, it will be the first two of these categories which become the most important in this thesis, as they will allow me to examine more closely, the rationale and technologies which act on individuals at the micro-level of ‘neighbourhood’. Consequently, these notions of governmentality will be used to examine how a particular rationality of rule is constructed, sustained and actualized through the practices and technologies of government. I do this using the template of governmentality as a basis for an examination of political discourse and the practical application of initiatives of neighbourhood reform. This will take into consideration how subjectivities of governmental target are shaped and guided by technologies of neighbourhood management, and will also explore in more detail in the fourth empirical chapter how subjects themselves are able to use technologies and practices of governing to guide and shape their own subjectivities- in ways which may not be in accordance with the leading rationality of rule. This is an important point for Foucault, as critical to the concept of governmentality is the freedom of subjects as individuals who have the capacity to change and to act in accordance with their own subjective state. This freedom makes them malleable to technologies of manipulation, but also allows them the choice to react, resist or re-shape governing technologies aimed

at them. This creates a positive role for power, not as an agent of suppression, but as a dynamic process which presupposes freedom and human agency (McKee 2011:468).

Vehicles of Governmentality: Community

The actualization of a rationality of government comes in the form of political rhetoric, policy documents but perhaps most importantly, in the long and short term operational practices of government. These are vital to the outcome of governmentality, as they are the vehicles through which government rationalities are realized. It has been noted among many commentator that 'community' has become one of the vehicles of government. Rose suggests that:

"new modes of neighbourhood participation, local empowerment and engagement of residents in decisions over their own lives will, it is thought, reactivate self motivation, self-responsibility and self-reliance" (Rose 1996: 335).

These modes above are central to the strategy of neighbourhood regeneration-which valorizes community enrolment and participation as vehicles for the social and moral re-structuring of neighbourhoods. Here, the concept of governmentality and the process of 'active citizenship' can become realized *through* community. Neighbourhood regeneration valorizes the role of 'the participant', 'the responsive' and 'the responsible' among local residents, and government rationale is realized through actions of local responsible citizens in a process of subtle guidance, or technologies of neighbourhood reform.

The importance of both *community* and *active citizenship* to New Labour's urban policy agenda, specifically their programme of neighbourhood renewal, is indicative of a wider neoliberal inflection of governmentality. Area-based initiatives which use 'community' as their vehicle of reform are encouraged whilst the role of the central state in the practical application of these policies is kept to a rolled-back practical minimum, where neighbourhoods are given responsibility

for evolution and change to some extent but funding for programmes of renewal are either bid for centrally or regionally.

Communities of Inclusion

Bringing this discussion back to the concept of social exclusion in neighbourhood regeneration policy, it has been presented earlier in this chapter that the SEU and associated NRU are concerned primarily with neighbourhoods. This brings forth the question of whether a distinction can be made in policy terms between 'neighbourhood' and 'community'. In New Labour's policy expressions, 'community' was a given positive distinction; as a space of engagement and collective morality. Consequently I argue that 'neighbourhood' was the territorially bound placing of 'community' within a much wider rationale which is indicative of a specific intonation of Third Way ideology. Therefore New Labour sought to use the term 'neighbourhood' as the territorial base for the identification of particular types of 'community' and through which, ideas of communitarianism and Third Way politics could be realised through local, area-based policy.

Through the use of the Index of Multiple Deprivation, many of the problems that New Labour's urban policy evolved to tackle are also embedded in places seen as conventionally less urban, i.e. coastal and rural areas. Indeed although Ilfracombe, my case study area, is set in an area of outstanding natural beauty (AONB), and is probably seen as a more coastal/rural area than traditionally a 'urban' place, it is faced with what some would see as traditionally urban problems- its central ward is in the most deprived 10% of the country- which is on a par with some of England's inner cities. Many of the modes of governance developed and put into place by New Labour since the mid-1990s- as ways of implementing their urban policy initiatives – are not restricted to use across the urban centres defined by the government census but are identified through measures of deprivation. Therefore it could be argued that using a measure of deprivation to identify areas deemed appropriate for intervention may have taken the 'urban' out of urban policy and allowed the New Labour government to target

areas of need beyond those of the inner city. Policies constructed around these identifications were then embedded within the rhetoric of “community” and social exclusion.

New Labour’s urban policy agenda pays particular reference to a mixture of Third Way ideology embedded within communitarianism. On a basic level, communitarianism can be seen as a process or social movement which promotes social obligation and moral responsibility for the collective good of the greater community. It is characterised particularly well by Etzioni (1995), who explains that the communitarian valorises the position of community and its members to work collectively and individually in obligation to the greater good of the community. The rights and benefits then afforded to individuals through community action, development and care, should only be taken in exchange for a moral obligation and responsibility to the community itself. In doing this, communities create a plethora of shared values which allow them to work together collectively at the local scale with as little as possible intervention from the State. Some of the core ideas of communitarianism are embedded within urban policy discourse, for example the responsibilisation of local communities through practices of participation and community engagement. Raco (2003) notes that New Labour’s concern with the social and moral restructuring of communities through policies of neighbourhood renewal position communities as an object to be defined, ‘activated’ and ‘empowered’. In this way, community is used both as a vehicle by New Labour and as an end (i.e. a deprived neighbourhood becomes a ‘community’ which incorporates communitarian values). These are themes which will be examined and drawn upon throughout the empirical chapters of this thesis.

As briefly noted above, the identification of ‘neighbourhoods’ as targets of reform through the notion of community and active citizenship was in large part aided by the Index of Multiple Deprivation. The use and construction of areas of deprivation through the government’s deprivation data will be discussed in more

detail in the second half of this chapter. However it should be noted here, as the basis for policies of neighbourhood regeneration, spatial neighbourhoods were depicted through a series of deprivation indicators which identified territorial communities which were deemed appropriate for intervention. Many of these intervention policies developed by the SEU and NRU as discussed previously and used ‘community’ as an object and vehicle of neighbourhood reform. This is particularly pertinent when using Foucault’s notion of governmentality to examine processes of neighbourhood renewal, which I will be using as a subtle examination framework for this thesis.

Community as a technology of government

New Labour view the notion of community both as a vehicle and objective end of neighbourhood policy. As a vehicle of neighbourhood-based reform it is used in practices of community participation and community engagement as an ‘inclusive technology’ of government. By this term I mean that the processes of community participation and associated practices are operated to activate and *include* individuals in a fulfilling societal role. The particular nuance of exclusion in reference to neighbourhood renewal and the process of neighbourhood management will be discussed in more detail in the concluding chapter. However here I briefly touch on the use of ‘community’ as a technology of exclusion and/or inclusion.

It is suggested by some writers that the concept of community by its very nature prioritises ideals of inclusion over the acceptance of difference between individuals (Young 1986). This prioritisation can work to exclude unsuitable individuals from the community framework. Thus, the ideal of community is an exclusive utopia from which individuals are deemed suitable or unsuitable. This echo of exclusion in the framework of community is fundamental to New Labour’s neighbourhood renewal through the inclusive governing activities of neighbourhood policy. But in addition to the ideal of ‘inclusion’ through community-led regeneration, excluded individuals, those which do not fit the

appropriate current community framework, are targeted for technologies of reform using the ideals of ‘community’ as vehicle for engagement, participation and the re-shaping of subjectivities. Therefore it could be argued that ‘community’ is itself used as a vehicle of exclusion and importantly, as an identifier of exclusion. This is reminiscent of Silver’s Monopoly paradigm of social exclusion described earlier in this chapter. In Silver’s model, hierarchy could be built on notions of class, status and the services and resources available to members of society. Thus using this framework, exclusion from the society can occur when individuals experience low levels of any/or all of the hierarchical notions of class, status, resources etc. Importantly, this particular model of social exclusion can use boundaries to continue to exclude people or it can encourage values of citizenship to ensure that individuals are ‘included’. This feels evocative of the process of neighbourhood renewal and will be discussed during in relation to my empirical findings later in the concluding chapter of this thesis.

It should be noted in this literature discussion that the importance of community and active citizenship to New Labour’s urban policy agenda, specifically their programme of neighbourhood renewal, is indicative of a wider neoliberal inflection of governmentality. Area-based initiatives which use ‘community’ as their vehicle of reform are actively developed and encouraged by central government whilst the role of the central state in the application of these policies is kept to a minimum. These processes surrounding neighbourhood renewal are modulations of the wider framework of neoliberalism within which the New Labour government was situated. This framework provides another basis for the use of governmentality as a method of analysis and critique of neighbourhood-based policies. Larner (2000:6) states that:

“Neo-liberalism is both a political discourse about the nature of rule and a set of practices that facilitate the governing of individuals from a distance. In this regard, understanding neo-liberalism as governmentality opens

useful avenues for the investigation of the restructuring of welfare state processes.”

Traditionally, neoliberalism is seen as a rolling back of the state in terms of welfare provision and public services, creating a gap which can then be filled by market-led provision of appropriately demanded goods and services and in turn, creating market-led jobs for individuals to enrol into the neoliberal framework. Urban policy under New Labour can be examined as part of a neoliberal process during which the state ‘rolls out’ *responsibility* to communities/neighbourhoods, and this process will be kept in mind during the empirical discussion in the thesis (Fuller and Geddes 2008).

Whilst neoliberalism itself can be viewed as a political rationality, one in which inclusion is achieved through processes of citizenship which underline an obligation and responsibility to act to include oneself in society. It can also be thought of as a technology of governing which co-exists with other political rationalities. It itself requires that individuals shape and adjust their own activity through a means of self-regulation relation to the neoliberal governmenality that inflected New Labour’s urban renaissance. These are notions that will also be explored during Chapter Five.

1.4. The Importance of Partnership

As discussed in the previous section, New Labour used ‘community’ as a vehicle for the activation of citizens in the participation and renewal of their own neighbourhoods. A key force in this ‘activation’ and engagement was the creation of working partnerships between communities and the state. This concept forms a key exploration and discussion point of the thesis and will be explored in greater detail in the empirical and concluding chapters. In these following chapters I will focus specifically on the enrolment of individuals and the depth of

'inclusivity' and participation to the partnership process during neighbourhood management in Ilfracombe.

Partnership working became a popular method of governance in response to urban policy issues during the Major government of the Conservatives. It underlined the importance of making regeneration policy more inclusive to local authorities which had been frozen out during the Thatcher era. In this new process of partnership working, local authorities and local actors were engaged in collaborative processes to pool financial resources which the collective objectives of economic and often physical regeneration of an area (Tiesdell and Allmendinger 2000). These partnerships encouraged collective financial working and were characterized by a culture of privatization, monitoring and central control by the government usually held by a process of competitive bidding for area-based regeneration funds.

The Blair government of 1997 continued this culture of partnership working but with its own twist. The partnership working emphasized by New Labour included the active engagement of local authorities and other local actors including the community sector, the voluntary sector as well as the private sector. Participation in joint working was seen as a vital practice in policies of urban regeneration and partnerships became central to the core of governance of local-area regeneration. They were used as tools of governance which sought to collaboratively organise and operate a variety of programmes with the intention of social, economic and physical regeneration of areas.

In academic studies, partnerships were seen a move away from government to a process of governance (Davies 2002). Partnership was a way to engage local communities from all sectors and enrol them into the processes of regeneration and change. In doing this, regeneration partnerships were positioned to work within New Labour's framework of neoliberalism as a distinct mode of governance (Davies 2002, Jessop 2003).

The SEU strategies for neighbourhood renewal lay high prominence on the importance of joint working at all levels- the SEU itself is a cross-departmental agency, and joint working and the creation and process of partnership working are highlighted as *the* means of neighbourhood-based regeneration. The process of neighbourhood management, which is examined in this thesis, is the latter of a series of neighbourhood-based initiatives to work through the creation and implementation of partnership and joint working with local authorities, private and third sector organisations. This thesis will focus on exploring neighbourhood management as a ‘community’-led partnership method of renewal. It will take particular focus, in Chapter’s Four and Five, on the engagement and enrolment of local residents into the partnership process, and continue, in the concluding chapter, to discuss these processes in relation to the concepts of ‘exclusion’ and ‘inclusion’.

This ends the presentation in this chapter, of the key concepts which will be drawn upon throughout this thesis. The next chapter will discuss in more detail the key policy initiatives covered in this thesis.

Chapter Two
Neighbourhood Renewal
Key Policy Initiatives

2.0 Housing- The core of empirical research

2.1.i. Introduction

As explained in the introduction to this thesis, the part sponsorship of this PhD by the Environmental Health and Housing Department of NDDC meant an initial emphasis was given to the theme of housing, and in particular, to the low-cost private rental sector. Consequently, in this thesis, I present and examine the 'resident experiences' of the low-cost private rental sector, and its associated services, in relation to the 'neighbourhood renewal' process in Ilfracombe.

However, as housing, and the tenants of the low cost private rental sector formed the initial basis of my practical empirical research, this next section will present a brief overview of the housing situation in Britain at the time of research, and will discuss in more detail, the connection between the low-cost private rental housing sector and the concept and experience of social exclusion. This section will draw from my own analysis, and from a discussion put forward in two journal papers by Arthuson 2004 and Hulse 2000. This discussion will be drawn from and used to explore the findings of my empirical research.

A Housing Shortage

There are not enough affordable homes for people living in Britain. This is an experienced truth. There is a drastic shortage of housing. According to the registered housing charity Shelter:

"One million children live in overcrowded conditions, families delay starting families because they can't afford a home, more and more people live in the sector with the highest rates of non-decency (the private rental sector) and over a third of us believe that our children will not be able to afford a decent home". Policy Briefing: Taking Stock (Shelter 2011:1)

For those who do own their own home, due to the current economic crisis many people are finding it harder to find enough money for their mortgage or rent repayments. Additionally, the lucky few who can afford second homes are pricing local people out of their rural or coastal area and it is becoming

increasingly difficult for some local people to buy houses within their own communities, if at all.

As I write this paragraph there are almost 1.7 million people waiting to be housed in social housing; these people are either currently homeless, in temporary accommodation or in (often) poor quality privately rented accommodation (Shelter 2011). Adding another layer to this dire situation is that many of these people become trapped in poor quality accommodation, this is especially true of the low-cost private rental sector, where tenants become ensnared in a cycle of high rent and low income, and cannot afford to move on to a higher quality property. It is estimated that over 2 million households spend over half of their income on housing costs, making it hard to save up to move up to the next level of housing.

Although the private rented sector had seen a decline up until the late 1980's and risen and steadied since then, with more and more people failing to make it onto the property market and the cost of living continuing to go up, more people will be ushered into the low-cost private rental sector than before, creating problems due to a lack of supply. Although the private rental sector in general is home to young professionals and students, the *low-cost* private rental sector houses a high number of vulnerable groups including pensioners, homeless individuals, asylum seekers and young adults who do not have priority to social housing. Reflecting the mismatch in priorities of fairness, the 2001 census shows that 17.4% of houses in the rented sector lacked any form of central heating, and student households were the least likely to suffer from this problem- with only 5.7% privately rented student houses having no central heating (Rhodes 2006). So although students make up a substantial proportion of the private rental sector- specifically the HMO sector- the level of decency found in student houses is significantly higher than those found in HMOs of the low-cost private rental sector.

An increasing number of low-income families may be resigned to moving into this later type of accommodation, particularly HMOs, and in doing this they often risk insecure short-term tenancy agreements in poor quality accommodation. Their problem with securing a decent house to live in could be argued as the basis of their problem and I will discuss now how the low-cost private rental sector and the concept and experiences of social exclusion become entwined.

2.1.ii. Social Exclusion and Housing: How does it fit?

As discussed in an earlier section of this chapter, the Poverty and Social Exclusion (PSE) Survey presented the dimensions of social exclusion in relation to private 'households' in Britain but not however, in relation to 'housing' itself. In the next section of this chapter I will present a discussion and argue that housing is a key factor in social exclusion, working to act as a cause and consequence of exclusion itself. Reasons to be presented include how housing can instigate the exclusion/inclusion of people from all four of the dimensions described previously, depending on the housing type, tenancy, location and safety of the building among many other factors. As well as these factors to do with the building itself, housing can have an effect on the social makeup of neighbourhoods and communities affecting the building of social relationships, networking and fear amongst residents. Consequently housing can have a large effect on the networks we build, the jobs we find as well as our health and happiness. I argue that housing therefore, can act as a cause and consequence of social exclusion. These are arguments which shall be drawn from and used in analysis and discussion during my empirical chapters.

The Low Cost Private Rental Sector and Social Exclusion

It is often the low-income earners, the vulnerable and unemployed who suffer the most when it comes to housing. This group of people are usually unable to afford to buy their own home and are either accommodated in social housing or in the low-cost private rental sector or else find it necessary to live homeless on the streets. This section will *only* discuss social housing and its effects on social

exclusion *briefly*, and will gage its main focus on the low-cost private rental sector (LCPRS), not only due to the objective brief provided by NDDC for this PhD, but also for the following reasons.

Much of the debate around social exclusion and housing has focused on the social housing sector. This sector is regarded as containing the majority of disadvantaged individuals, low earners or unemployed. However the privatization of council housing has led to a reduced availability of affordable and accountable rented housing that is governed by local authorities. Instead many once-council-owned homes have been bought by private, sometimes unscrupulous landlords. The transfer of these homes to such landlords has implications for the tenants, house and neighbourhood itself. Therefore it could be noted that in many neoliberal countries such as England, the dismantling of social housing and the increase of low cost private rented housing has created a set of disadvantaged households which suffer from different problems to those of social housing. The current economic climate could lead to an increase in tenants of the LCPRS, and with the level of decency found in many LCPRS homes, vulnerable people may be forced to live in houses without heating, appropriate electrics, damp and many other problems (see the Decent Homes Standard for the definition of a house meeting the criteria of a 'decent home' (DCLG 2006).

As mentioned above, the private rental sector can be divided into two halves, the low-cost private rental sector (LCPRS) which is the main alternative to social housing) and the main rental sector aimed at people with adequate incomes or above. Withdrawing social housing from the equation, the LCPRS is the place most likely to house vulnerable individuals, or those who would fit into the 'socially excluded' category instigated by New Labour. However, the process of exclusion in the LCPRS has yet to be looked at closely by academics or policy workers, an important step if the government truly wants to combat social exclusion and improve housing conditions and life chances for *all* people across

society. Here, I argue that the low-cost private rental sector can both heighten and cause social exclusion. This section will outline some of the ways in which it can do this.

The Inequalities of home-ownership and the LCPRS

The privatisation of council housing which became a policy during the Thatcher Government, meant that some tenants were able to buy their council house and become home-owners. This, it was thought, would ‘empower’ them within the neoliberal market. Some choose to do this, others did not. A large number of tenants were not given this choice.

Often those who choose not to, or were excluded from buying their council house, were the long-term unemployed, pensioners and individuals suffering from long-term illness. These people were often then ushered into housing stock from Registered Social Landlords (RSL) or to the LCPRS. It could be argued that the tenants who were unable to purchase their council house (for whatever reason, financial, personal or political?), faced an undercurrent of new inequalities, the creation of a larger segregation between the working class and a newly created ‘underclass’ of people who were excluded from the ‘advantages’ of home-ownership. The residents I interviewed in Ilfracombe all lived in low-cost privately rented accommodation and did not own their own home. In this sense, they are representative of this process.

Lack of Tenant Empowerment

The social housing stock is accountable to government and Housing Associations. Both are agencies which are seen to have a legal and moral obligation to keep their houses in good shape and their tenants ‘in order’. They are likely to carry out inspections, repairs and modernisations on the property and tenants may petition them to do so. They may also be involved in schemes of tenant partnership and empowerment; including tenants in the decision making processes that affect their rented homes (for an example of research see McKee

2008). Such schemes may unearth tenant complaints, problems and discrepancies, and may also provide an avenue for the development of a solution to these problems. This process could create an atmosphere of shared responsibilities, emphasising the duties and rights of tenants which may keep buildings well maintained and neighbourhoods respected by both the social tenants and landlords themselves.

In contrast to this, the LCPRS does not practice recognised forms of tenant management or empowerment, and when tenants sign a rental lease they often have few rights or decision making powers. As most of the private rental sector is owned by individual landlords as opposed to a single authority, it makes it difficult for tenants to air their problems through a designated group or assemble a large group of fellow tenants to which would be needed to voice a collective revolt against the landlords. Therefore, tenants in the LCPRS I argue, suffer from lack of 'empowerment', or from a 'safe' avenue of complaint for problems they may face. Due to this and accompanying the fact that private landlords are often motivated by the generation of profits and not welfare, private tenants have little say in the management of their properties. This may mean that some tenants suffer from inadequate heating, insulation, appliances and access to their homes. With no outlet to air their concerns about such problems tenant's lives could be left under the domination of their landlord (who decides when and where to fix these problems). Tenants of the LCPRS are able to complain to their local authorities about housing issues/repairs that need to be made but often these complaints can frustrate landlords and led to housing insecurity (see below). It is clear then, that lack of tenant empowerment is a major problem in the LCPRS. This is an idea that will be explored in Chapter Three when presented the resident experiences of housing in Ilfracombe.

Housing Insecurity

As opposed to council housing, private rented housing is often leased on a six month tenancy agreement. Low cost private rental housing operates to this effect, usually with a rolling monthly tenancy agreement thereafter making long term tenancy a difficulty. The tenure and rights of tenants are not the same in the LCPRS as in social housing and evictions can occur with little reason or care for the individual. Tenants of the LCPRS are therefore insecure about their tenancy, cautious of petitioning their landlords about problems with their accommodation and often worried about the landlord retaining their initial deposit without a just cause. This is a point which will be explored in relation to residents of Ilfracombe in Chapter Three. This cycle of events could lead to the people living in LCPRS to be in a state of insecurity, fear, anxiety and stress (of being evicted or not having their deposits returned). For these reasons, many tenants choose not to make complaints when the building, appliances or services to the house are not properly maintained by landlords. Evicted tenants will find it hard to secure another place to live without money to pay a deposit up front, falling back into the cycle of homelessness that characterises evictees from the LCPRS.

In relation to social exclusion, such housing insecurity could exacerbate unsatisfactory living standards in private rented houses (as tenants are less likely to complain about repairs that need to be done) as well as plunging people into financial turmoil (if deposits are not returned). Often people living in the LCPRS are among the most vulnerable groups in society and each of the consequences above could have severe effects on mental and physical health as well as their financial situation. In addition to this, one of the outcomes of housing insecurity is the forced mobility of tenants. If evicted tenants must move on, often with little notice. This is a regular occurrence in the LCPRS where tenancy rarely stretches longer than a year, particularly in Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMOs), which are regarded in coastal towns such as Ilfracombe as housing a 'transient' population (House of Commons Report 2006).

Financial Problems

As mentioned above, financial insecurity in the LCPRS is often pushed on tenants by the non-return of their deposits without justification from landlords. This may leave them in financial disarray when looking for somewhere else to live. As well as this, the LCPRS is not financially regulated by government agencies as social housing is, allowing landlords to change the amount of rent they charge according to market values. This could have an extreme knock on effect to tenants, especially if demand for low cost private rented accommodation increased, a real possibility in the current economic atmosphere. Reinforcement of financial insecurity could, in part, exacerbate and cause poverty and social exclusion. Individuals living in low-cost private rental accommodation are often low-income households who are on the verge of poverty. The level of rent and financial insecurity experienced by such individuals can often be rough enough for them to fall into the poverty trap.

Politically Transparency

Unlike social housing, the LCPRS is not regulated, controlled or governed by local authorities and is not accountable to them either. The individuals or groups of people in such accommodation cannot be managed by government but more importantly, they are have less power politically due to their distance from the local governance of social housing. This may cause them to become withdrawn from the political or civic engagement process itself. This is a point which will be explored during the empirical chapters of this thesis by considering the process of participation and engagement provided to 'vulnerable' residents of the low cost private rental sector in Ilfracombe.

The next four points relate to the spatial concentration of the disadvantaged within a built up area of LCRS housing in neighbourhoods.

Access to Services

Housing in the LPCRS tends to fall away from expensive city or town centres and is often situated furthest away from the main services and facilities of the town. This means that tenants of the LCPRS may experience higher levels of service exclusion than individuals in other accommodation. Their access to hospitals, libraries, sports parks and even doctors and dentists may be affected by this, preventing them from accessing facilities which are important in the creation of an ‘inclusive’ society (Gordon et al 2000). Although this point is noted in this section, this however, is not necessarily the case in Ilfracombe where many of the low cost housing is situated in the central ward of the town. An examination of access to services in relation to the neighbourhood management process will be discussed during the empirical chapters of this thesis. This will include a discussion of the physical or social barriers to access to services.

Neighbourhood Degeneration

The LCPRS may concentrate in particular areas (ex-council estates or areas of cheap/degenerated housing). This, combined with lack of building and tenant management, may cause neighbourhoods to degenerate and become undesirable places to live, stigmatizing the residents who do live there further and leading to discriminations of tenants from the LCPRS by others areas of society. This is acute in some coastal towns such as Ilfracombe which have an array of run down Georgian or Victorian houses which have been converted into flats for the LCPRS. This process will be put into context in relation to Ilfracombe in Chapter three, will explore the decline in the town’s social, physical and economic status, and in Chapter Five, which examines its identification as an area of deprivation.

Access to the Labour Market

Unemployment is often concentrated in areas of poor housing. This particularly applies to the LCPRS not only due to a shortage of local jobs, poor transport links, and lack of education and employment, but because of the type of tenants that the LCPRS caters to. Tenants of this sector are known to be pensioners, ex-

offenders and individuals suffering from long term mental health problems and as such they are often stigmatized, discriminated against and housed in areas where access to the labour market then becomes an impossible task. These processes of exclusion, in relation to employment, will be discussed throughout the empirical chapters of this thesis, but in particular, Chapter Three will present a set of resident 'experiences' demonstrated as excluding factors from the labour market in Ilfracombe.

Cultures of Poverty

Some have argued that concentration of the poor into particular areas of housing (council estates and LCPRS) can lead to the creation of 'cultures of poverty'. This argument is controversial in many senses. First it implies that poverty is a socially constructed process underpinned by morals, values and attitudes instead of measuring poverty as a measure of wealth alone. The discourse surrounding it is reminiscent of moral underclass discourse (MUD) discussed during the first section of this chapter which presents discourses of social exclusion, this is a discourse which is extremely judgmental of those living in poverty or poor conditions (Levitas 1998). This underlines the point that the concentration of disadvantaged individuals into the same housing stock (concentrating on the LCPRS) leads to housing inequality, discrimination, housing insecurity, financial problems, political transparency, lack of access to services and jobs and neighbourhood degeneration. Here, I argue that housing of this type (i.e. the LCPRS) does not lead to 'cultures of poverty' but to a 'culture of exclusion' of its tenants from society. Chapter Five and Six will present some of the views of 'elite' local actors and 'hard to reach' residents, and explore the identification of 'cultures' of poverty within local discourses.

2.2. A Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal

2.2.i. Introduction

This section of the literature chapter aims to help situate the objectives of this thesis within the wider context of Labour's urban renewal agenda. The first part of this chapter will examine New Labour's national neighbourhood renewal strategies within the context of social exclusion. It will then go on to present the policy of neighbourhood management in more detail. Consequently it will provide an examination of the moral inclinations of neighbourhood management and will examine the process, using the concept of governmentality. Subsequently I will argue that the IMD is a *statistical tool of political identification* used to distinguish areas for neighbourhood intervention, and to construct and reinforce the problematization of 'the neighbourhood' as an objective space, to be acted on and consequently (re)organized by policies of government.

(New) Labour Government and Urban Renewal

After election in 1997, Labour's plans to advance Britain towards a new social democracy held much emphasis on the renewal and regeneration of deprived neighbourhoods. A strategic framework of place-based regeneration was rapidly developed and implemented, not necessarily subtle in its intention to re-establish moral order across what were seen to be the 'problem' neighbourhoods of Britain (SEU 1998, SEU 2001). As argued in the first section of this chapter, vital to the discourse of neighbourhood renewal, and additionally vital to Labour's national regeneration agenda, was the concept of social exclusion. Consequently the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) was established immediately after Labour came into government and the SEU was initially responsible for developing the national strategy for neighbourhood renewal and regeneration.

As part of the grand rationale for progressive regeneration, prominence was given to the formulation of an *urban renaissance*, a notion which combined physical regeneration with the promotion of active citizenship within deprived neighbourhoods. The prominent place of "*urban renaissance*", a concept which embedded the heightened prioritisation to reconstruct Britain's neighbourhoods

through the economic and social regeneration of urban spaces, became paramount to Labour's national agenda (Imrie and Raco 2003). These 'renewed' urban spaces were to act as the building blocks of "*strong sustainable communities*", and in doing so, in the development of a strong and prosperous society as envisaged by the Labour government (DCLG 2006b). The development of this urban renaissance was accompanied by re-structuring the scale through which urban policy was developed and operated. In contrast to the previous Conservative government, Labour's policy for intervention emphasised the importance of regeneration at a regional and neighbourhood level; constructing regional offices to deliver the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal.

Consequently, at the regional scale, newly established Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) and in addition, the Government Offices for the Regions (GOR) were responsible for taking forward the economic and social agenda: with the RDAs charged with the creation and management of sustainable economic growth whilst *social renewal* was driven through the GOR's.

Sustainable economic growth, through the creation of a useful paid workforce, was a dominant feature of both RDAs and GORs, and the core objective of both regional agencies I argue, is embedded within Levitas's SID in both their rhetoric and policy documents. However it was the GOR's that were the regional agencies charged with the implementation of the national neighbourhood renewal strategy developed by the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) in 1998. Consequently, through the implementation of neighbourhood renewal policy, the GORS's were the offices which sought to re-establish the 'moral order' of communities across the country.

Failing neighbourhoods were identified as suffering from high levels of deprivation via the Index of Multiple Deprivation, which will be discussed in more detail shortly, and consequently, neighbourhood interventions were developed

and implemented to target these deprived communities- as was the case with the implementation of the Transform neighbourhood management pathfinder in Ilfracombe central ward. In relation to this, I argue in this section, that the rhetoric of neighbourhood renewal, embedded in the first *National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal* (SEU 1998) is embedded within SID and MUD, as the aim of many neighbourhood interventions, and in this case neighbourhood management, is to reshape the *social* characteristics of neighbourhoods and communities through guided reform, which is representative of the wider drive of Labour towards a morally responsible society. Tony Blair himself defined neighbourhoods suffering from high levels of deprivation as places characterised by high levels of unemployment, crime and benefit dependency, the undertones of which suggest identify a moral deficiency in deprived areas and their dependency on the State (SEU 1998:1-2).

In light of this, government funding and initiatives were targeted to these *problem areas* through policies of neighbourhood renewal and in the case of Ilfracombe, through the process of neighbourhood management. Much of this funding was provided to develop skills training, and education whilst also supporting social and economic development of deprived areas. Initially, the funding, research and policy development for neighbourhood renewal was deployed through the SEU. I argue that this relationship characterises the moral core of neighbourhood renewal: the SEU places the focus on ‘social renewal’ over the physical regeneration of neighbourhoods, and on the ‘inclusion’ of individuals into society through access to paid employment and the development of citizenship skills which emphasise individual responsibility. These are themes which will be presented in more detail in relation to my empirical findings in the following chapters.

New Labour, New neighbourhood

Whilst area-based initiatives had been around since the 1970s, and were developed by the John Major government in the 1990s, most notably through the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB), New Labour's urban policy initiatives advanced their area-based focus in a number of ways, with strategic practical action most notably carried out on a neighbourhood level. One of the fundamental notions of neighbourhood renewal which echoed Labour's broader ideology was that neighbourhood-based strategy was embedded within a discourse which emphasised community consultation and participation, civic engagement, social inclusion/exclusion and the responsibilities of regions and local communities for themselves (Giddens 1998). This discourse becomes particularly explicit in neighbourhood policy, and the initial responsibility of the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) for neighbourhood renewal set a particular moral tone to local regeneration projects. A key aspect of such discourse and its associated policies is the application of citizenship, underpinned by the valorised role of 'active' citizens in society and, in with close ties to the SEU, the concept of social exclusion. These concepts are highlighted through the process of neighbourhood management and will be used to examine my empirical findings in the following chapters.

Under New Labour more broadly, 'active' citizens were applauded, as the government continued to roll-out neoliberal strategies (Fuller and Geddes 2008). The valorisation of individuals at a neighbourhood level who were innovative, entrepreneurial and motivated 'active' members of the community, in part reflected the broader political ideology of New Labour during their first term in office. The importance of active, responsible citizens became embedded within regeneration policy, particularly at a neighbourhood level. Developments such as 'actions zones', the New Deal for Communities (NDC) and the case study of this thesis, Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders (NMPs), all target deprived neighbourhoods through a concoction of urban social welfare strategies, which, I argue, aim to reform the social and moral fabric of 'the neighbourhood' and those living within these defined targets. This reform then acted as a vehicle for

individuals and communities to reach Labour's brand of 'inclusion' into society. It is here, with a discussion of the process of neighbourhood renewal and social exclusion that I now begin my argument: that Labour's urban policy initiatives act as an explicit moral commentary and action on neighbourhood space.

2.2. ii. Identifying Neighbourhoods for Intervention

The evolution of urban policy at the neighbourhood level incorporated the development of programmes including the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF), New Deal for Communities (NDC) and Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders (NMP). These programmes were targeted at a spatially defined level of 'the neighbourhood'. Such neighbourhood-based policies intervene in specific areas-those which are identified as being the most in need of social and economic regeneration. In defining target neighbourhoods for intervention, the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) became a particularly important political tool of categorisation in the spatial identification of, and discourses of, Labours neighbourhood-based regeneration policy. Indeed, by using this type of categorisation, areas of high deprivation as evidenced by the IMD became *the* fundamental targets of the types of area-based urban policy intervention, regeneration and reform described above. As discussed by Whitehead (2004:64) by using this type of area-based statistic the New Labour government were identifying the spatial neighbourhood as the foundation for '*identifying*', '*addressing*' and intervening in '*urban deprivation and disadvantage*'.

Consequently, such use of statistical area-based data put 'the neighbourhood' in a core position during Labour's government, both as an arena of policy intervention and, due to the SEU's intimate relationship with neighbourhood renewal, as a space of social, cultural and moral importance.

An Embedded Morality?

In 1998, the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) published *Bringing People Together: A National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal* (SEU 1998). This was the first neighbourhood renewal strategy issued by New Labour's SEU. Following this in 2000, eighteen policy action teams (PATs) were launched to examine how the goals set out in the first National Strategy could be met. Each action team issued a report on the theme they were set and, in 2001, a second strategy: *A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal* (ANCNR) was released by the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit (NRU) which took into account the findings of these reports (SEU 2001).

Its initial association with the SEU meant that New Labour's Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy paid particular attention to what I term *social renewal*: the application of morally constructed technologies which aimed to sculpt individuals towards particular acceptable social subjectivities. In the case of neighbourhood renewal, these morally constructed technologies operated on a place-based basis. Providing a strong basis for succeeding policies, the foreword by Tony Blair in the initial strategy of 1998, firmly positions the neighbourhood as a space for moral transformation, and underscores the importance of *social renewal* over physical regeneration:

"Over the last two decades the gap between the worst estates and the rest of the country had grown. It has left us with a situation that no civilised society should tolerate ... it shames us as a nation, it wastes lives and we all have to pay the costs of dependency and social division" (Tony Blair, SEU 1998:1).

In the foreword, Blair's morally loaded statement emphasises 'shame', 'dependency' and 'wasted lives': words that conjure up the image of a workless underclass and emphasise the importance of 'a civilised society' to manage and change such shameful places for the morality of the nation. These 'worst

'estates' are constructed through statistics (such as the IMD discussed above) and sustained through the political discourses that shape neighbourhood space.

By advancing the notions of shame and dependency it could be argued that Blair's forward, and New Labour's strategy to follow, is embedded within what Levitas termed a moral underclass discourse (MUD) (Levitas 1998). It is a discourse deep-seated in neo-conservatism rhetoric and policy embedded by MUD supposes that the inclusion of such immoral individuals into- as Blair suggests- 'a civilised society', can only occur through a change in *their* attitude, behaviour and values, to meet those held by the wider society at large. This was discussed in more detail in the first half of this chapter.

After analysing the use and embeddedness of MUD within both of the national strategies for neighbourhood renewal (BBT and ANCNR) it becomes apparent that both seek to problematise and elicit neighbourhood space as a spatial target for *social* intervention, aiming to drive these places and the individuals living within them, towards a morally acceptable position- a 'neighbourhood' acceptable to both individuals of the 'worst estates' and the rest of civilised society. Hence both *Bringing Britain Together* and *A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal* set out key fields for intervention which included improvements to unemployment levels, crime, poor education attainment, poor health levels and the quality of physical environment, with *Bringing Britain Together* strategy identifying 88 of the most deprived neighbourhoods in England as its initial target. Crucially, both strategies emphasised the importance of local action and *participation* by neighbourhoods and communities, with the strategy of 2001 stressing that interventions should be realised through "*effective drivers of change at local and community level*" (SEU 2001:25). This is an emphasis will shall be explored in relation to my empirical findings in Chapter's Four, Five and Six.

Bringing Britain Together provided the basis for a number of neighbourhood-based policies, whose aim it was to target the most deprived communities across England. Each of these policies had a distinct moral underpinning. First, in late 1998, in what has become one of the most widespread and widely discussed of these policies, *A New Deal for Communities* (NDC) was established across England, followed in 1999 by another twenty-two NDC initiatives. The NDC was launched under the Department for Environment, Transport and Regions (DETR) with close consultation from the SEU. The core objectives for this new regeneration scheme were to tackle the fields identified as key problems in poor neighbourhoods and included crime, education, health, worklessness, housing and the physical environment. NDC consisted of a ten year strategy which would utilize partnership working with the aim to “*reduce the gaps between some of the poorest neighbourhoods and the rest of the country*” (DCLG 2001:6).

Again, in keeping with Third Way aspirations, and underpinning Labour’s moral commentary on neighbourhood space, the valorisation of the ‘active’ citizen, the importance of community participation and, perhaps most importantly, the positioning of deprived neighbourhoods as spaces of collective deviance and reform, were embedded within the National Strategy and ensuing programmes of reform such as the NDC. The importance of engaging and consulting local communities and residents in local regeneration is accentuated in both strategies as one of the solutions to problems of deprivation, though the magnitude of individual and collective opportunities for community participation is uncertain (MacLeavy 2009).

Another prominent regeneration initiative to follow NDC was the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF), itself informed by the eighteen PATs instigated after *Bringing People Together* and developed more explicitly in *A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal* (SEU 2001). The NRF was established as a non ring-fenced grant, which could be accessed by 86 of the most deprived local authorities across England. Local authorities would be able to access and make

use of this money in collaboration with their Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) with the over arching aim of improving the services that were provided and used in deprived local areas. In co-ordination with the SEU's initial remit, the NRF was part of a wider strategy to 'narrow the gap' between, what Tony Blair described infamously as "*the worst estates*" and the rest of the country. The NRF was subsequently replaced by the Working Neighbourhoods Fund (WNF) in 2007, which was advertised as

'part of a concerted drive to get people off welfare and into training and work the Government has decided to establish a new Working Neighbourhoods Fund which will focus on the most deprived areas and which will support local authorities and communities in their efforts to tackle worklessness and the other elements of deprivation.' (DCLG 2007:4)

The Working Neighbourhoods Fund, which claims to target '*worklessness*' by devolving power to and empowering communities, underlined New Labour's growing impetus on the regeneration and renewal of deprived neighbourhoods through 'inclusion' of individuals through paid work- a policy deeply embedded within what Levitas terms a social integrationist discourse (SID).

These are two brief examples of New Labour's more prominent neighbourhood-based urban policy initiatives; which have been provided in this opening section to give examples of New Labour's approach and the ideology upon which neighbourhood renewal is hung. In each case, much emphasis was placed on the importance of community empowerment, community engagement and active participation by local residents and businesses. These objectives were fundamental to the development of neighbourhood-based policy and were of critical importance to New Labour's emphasis on the creation of the strong and prosperous society that they envisaged (Giddens 1998). The extent to which such processes of 'engagement' and 'participation' were truly embedded in the practical operation of neighbourhood management policies will be explored in this thesis.

In the policies outlined above, the creation of “*revived economies and safer communities*” through neighbourhood-based policy, positions responsibility at the hands of local authorities and perhaps most importantly, of neighbourhoods themselves for positive outcomes and social renewal of neighbourhood spaces, rather than have responsibility at the hands of central government (Tony Blair, SEU 2001:5). This rolling out of responsibility to the communities themselves has been a key tool in the governance of neighbourhoods which had been identified as areas of deprivation, and the ensuing urban policies that developed. Through programmes like the NDC, NFR and the WNF, communities arguably become ‘empowered’, enabling people to make real changes for themselves and for their neighbourhoods. However, after New Labour’s first term these policies, although deemed a success in some ways, were not thought to be delivering enough effective local change. So, following the NFR and in response to the PAT reports in 2000, the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder Programme (NMP) was established in 2000/2001, which aimed to devolve power more directly to the neighbourhood level. Each pathfinder was overseen by a neighbourhood manager, with whom the ultimate responsibility for the direction and progress of neighbourhood-lead intervention. The development, establishment and organisation of the NMP programme will now be examined in more detail.

2.3. Neighbourhood Management

2.3.i. Introduction

The process of neighbourhood management as a policy will be used throughout this thesis to demonstrate how Labour’s urban policy initiatives have shaped and operated an explicit moral commentary on neighbourhood space. First, the

discussion will conclude this half of the chapter by using governmentality as a framework for analysis to argue that Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders are developed and sustained by a set(s) of statistics, which construct and implement a particular moral rationality regarding [deprived] neighbourhood space. During this discussion it will be argued further that particular ‘codes of conduct’ and social responsibilities have been (re)shaped around neighbourhood space” since New Labour’s election in 1997. By using NMPs as a tool for examination, the section will demonstrate neighbourhood management as a technology of government that is used to (re)organise neighbourhood space, target a specific type of individual, and to (re)engage and regenerate local communities, steering in a particular direction towards ‘inclusion’ (‘inclusion’ of course being a key objective in the development of neighbourhood renewal). Then this discussion will reward the empirical chapters of this thesis which explores the discussion and questions put forward here to present a material case study of neighbourhood management.

2.3.ii. Unpacking the Case Study: The Process of Neighbourhood Management

From the discussion above it is apparent that from 1997 onwards, a focus on the ‘neighbourhood’ and community-led renewal quickly became the driver of initiatives to tackle social exclusion and related problems- with a number of high profile policies, including New Deal for Communities and the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF), implemented to confront the problems identified by the SEU in 1998. Then, in 2000 the neighbourhood-based approach to social renewal developed again when the fourth policy action team (PAT4) report for the SEU explicitly identified the potential of neighbourhood management as a valuable instrument of intervention for the (social and economic) renewal of deprived neighbourhoods (SEU 2000). PAT4 presented an account on Neighbourhood Management, describing it as:

“the key vehicle, at local level, that could provide the focus for neighbourhood renewal... to help deprived communities and local services

improve local outcomes, by improving and joining up local services, and making them more responsive to local needs” (SEU 2000:7)

Addressing this identification made by PAT4, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister established the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder (NMP) Programme, which then went on to work under the Department of Communities and Local Government (CLG). In two rounds, the programme funded the development of thirty-five NMPs with the aim of testing and developing neighbourhood management pathfinders in deprived areas across England- in a bid to address and tackle social exclusion and regenerate poor neighbourhoods. These pathfinders were, in turn, supported through the Government Offices for the Regions (GORs). Such programmes proliferated, with the National Association for Neighbourhood Management supporting over 350 across the country at the end of New Labour’s term.

The PAT4 report stresses that neighbourhood management should be viewed as a process not a project, i.e. it is a *means* to creating the right structure, connections and atmosphere, which can then be used as the tools of neighbourhood renewal. This itself has implications for the way that NMPs have been developed and operated. According to the PAT4 report, neighbourhood management pathfinders are a testing ground for new neighbourhood structures, ideas and initiatives.

One key outcome of neighbourhood management is that NMPs should have the ability and resources to mainstream initiatives which have been deemed to be successful during the neighbourhood management process- so that they become embedded within the community when the funding for the NMP has elapsed. This process of mainstreaming successful initiatives should provide communities with the long term support they need to develop and thrive. The idea that NMP is a process is a vital aspect of the programme, emphasising the idea that it is a vehicle through which local communities have to act, and giving these actions a specific timescale to work with. The ‘actors’ of neighbourhood management will

be the subject of examination in the following chapters, as will the temporal timescales through which the neighbourhood management process is delivered. The latter point will be particularly important when discussing partnership working in Chapter's Four and Six.

The PAT4 report offers five key principles which are imperative to the success of neighbourhood management in local areas which shall be briefly detailed. The first of these is the importance of having a neighbourhood manager. This is the person with overall responsibility and accountability for the pathfinder at the neighbourhood level. The addition of a Neighbourhood Manager responsible for the delivery of neighbourhood renewal adds a new element into the previous policies of neighbourhood renewal such as NDC and NRF. This person is charged with directing the overall management programme, overseeing delivery and being accountable for the delivery of neighbourhood management. This is a departure from previous neighbourhood-based initiatives for which accountability and responsibility is placed through local strategic partnerships (LSP's) or local authorities. This key principle of NMP immediately changes the structure of neighbourhood governance within which the NMP is entering. In neighbourhoods previously governed by the local authority, this creates a new structure into which local authorities, town councils and community organisations must fit. This re(structuring) and (re)organisation of neighbourhood governance after entering into a NMP is an important turn in neighbourhood renewal policy and will be examined in the empirical chapters when discussing the 'reconstitution' of a set of local 'elite' actors through the neighbourhood management process. However the role of the Neighbourhood Manager will not be considered in detail in this thesis.

Other key principles offered by the PAT4 report for the application of successful neighbourhood management include '*community involvement and leadership*', the appropriate '*tools to get things done*' (including a plethora of community apparatus), '*a systematic, planned approach to tackling local problems*' and

'effective delivery mechanisms' (SEU 2000:8-9). These are principles which will be returned to when exploring the process of neighbourhood management in the concluding sections of Chapters Four and Five.

From a geographical perspective, neighbourhood management pathfinders require the identification of a relatively fixed neighbourhood boundary- to have a clear geographical neighbourhood upon and across which they may work. Principally, according to the PAT4 report this area could be made up of 1000-5000 households or a number of town wards, but they have generally been developed at the lower end of this scale across England. The underlying aim of neighbourhood management is to devolve social urban policy initiatives to a local, neighbourhood level, beyond those already reached in area-based policy. In theory, this will allow the local authorities and the local community to *participate* in a decentralised approach to neighbourhood renewal where more power is wielded at a micro level to solve problems characteristic to their own neighbourhoods. Yet despite the claim of decentralisation in the programme of neighbourhood management, the pathfinder joins, works with and was constricted by central and local government on a number of levels, particularly in relation to statutory housing services, as is the case in Ilfracombe.

Of particular importance to NMP's was the participation of local individuals and community members, who were to be consulted and engaged in the development, strategy and operation of the neighbourhood management process. The depth of this consultation and engagement with *whole* communities is a point that will be unravelled in relation to Ilfracombe in the following chapters. In addition to the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal, in 2006 the Local Government White Paper, called for a space for the transformation of local councillors in the rebuilding of their neighbourhoods (DCLG 2006b). The role of local residents and town councillors offered a new way to decentralise neighbourhood governance structures to really involve communities in the development and implementation of neighbourhood renewal. By encouraging the

participation of town and parish councils, NMPs offer an opportunity for local residents- and town councillors in particular- to ‘get stuck in’. Whether this opportunity is extended beyond the role of a set of local ‘elite’ actors is discussed in greater detail in Chapters Four and Five in relation to the empirical findings of this research. One approach to encourage community engagement and participation is through a neighbourhood management board. Which, as it is outlined in PAT4, should “*represent the community voice effectively*” (SEU 2000:20). However, the extent to which the Transform board, and other avenues of neighbourhood participation, represent *whole* communities is something that will be explored in Chapter’s Four and Five.

Rationale Underpinning Neighbourhood Management

Through the process of neighbourhood management, government is able to (re)organise, govern and support local services, and allow communities to evolve their own strategic approaches to local problems, working closely with local community and voluntary agencies to get things done. However, in keeping with Third Way politics, this opportunity for renewal is offered in conjunction with community-based responsibility and the imperative of community-based action (Cochrane 2003).

As stated above, this chapter intends to begin the argument that NMPs are part of a broader rationality of government which extends an explicit moral commentary of urban space, an argument which will be broadly extended throughout the following chapters of this thesis.

Dean (1999:211) describes a rationality of government as

“any systematic way of thinking about government... which can include the form of representation of the field to be governed, the techniques to be employed, and the ends to be achieved”.

This next section will begin by examining the form of representation of the field to be governed. By taking a Foucauldian approach, this section will ask: what are the rationality(s) that construct and sustain neighbourhood renewal and its subsequent policy of neighbourhood management? Furthermore this section will discuss why and how NMPs have been developed as a critical space of intervention in our most disadvantaged communities, drawing on empirical research findings from my case study and from the PAT4 report on neighbourhood management.

Identifying the Neighbourhood: Neighbourhood Management

The opening quote to the PAT4 begins with a summary of the problems found in deprived neighbourhoods quoting among others, crime and joblessness, as social problems embedded within disadvantaged neighbourhoods across the country:

"Virtually every social problem- crime, joblessness, poor health, and underachievement- is substantially worse in deprived areas. There is growing evidence that these problems can reinforce one another to create a downward spiral of deprivation and decline." (SEU 2000:7)

From the beginning of the report, it becomes clear from the language used, that 'the social' is identified as a fundamental element in this '*downward spiral of... decline*'. The inference of 'joblessness' as a social problem (and not an economic one), as illustrated by neighbourhood renewal's association with the SEU, is tied to the broader rationality of New Labour's government. Such social ailments are representative of the way deprived areas and the individuals that live within them are identified as being 'excluded' from prosperity. I argue that there is a moral tinge to such identifications. Whilst economic, political and physical problems are often associated with the responsibility of central and local authorities, the 'social' problems identified by PAT4 as existing on a high level in deprived neighbourhoods, have individual connotations, indicating that NMPs are

developed and situated within advanced liberal (govern)mentalites Dean (1999:173-174).

Such a focus on the ‘social’ aspects of deprivation fits closely with the SEU’s objectives and research of what could be described as the moral underpinnings of the most deprived segments of society. The identification that these areas are high in levels of deprivation, with high unemployment rates, low exam grades and higher levels of crime often becomes the basis for the moral examination of these neighbourhoods. I argue that this is evidenced in the notions of individual and community ‘responsibility’ and ‘personal reform’, which is embedded within neighbourhood renewal policy, including neighbourhood management pathfinders. This subtext valorises community participation in the development and implementation of technologies of agency, accentuates the responsibilities of the individuals and more specifically- those of their deprived communities. In fitting with this critique, a key form of agency of advanced liberalism is the ‘community’ and this is a vital aspect of neighbourhood management. Like other neighbourhood renewal polices implemented by New Labour, “community” is stated throughout PAT4 as being a central driver of change in disadvantaged neighbourhoods hence “community”, is central to the discourse and rationality of neighbourhood management in two ways. The first is the importance of enrolment and participation in the NMP by members of ‘the community’. The second is the targeting of ‘the community’ by technologies of neighbourhood management:

“Neighbourhood renewal will not work in the long term without the involvement of local people who know their area best and, given the right help, are best placed to help to turn it around. Locally initiated solutions offer the most scope for sustaining long term community involvement, commitment and leadership.” (SEU 2000:17)

It is made clear in PAT4 that the enrolment of community members is at the heart of the neighbourhood management process and, as discussed by a senior of

North Devon District Council in Chapter Four of this thesis, the ‘community’ were vital to the development of neighbourhood management in Ilfracombe.

Here, a decentralisation of urban policy to neighbourhood level is tied to the broader rationale of central government. The *enrolment* of communities, by assisting the development of locally initiated solutions, advocates neighbourhood-level change through the responsibilisation of target communities. Such responsibilisation of local communities for local neighbourhoods is a technology of agency, which, as Dean (1999:173) states: “*seek to enhance and improve our capacities for participation, agreement and action*” which underlines much of New Labour’s (govern)mentality. This transference of agency to local communities, which also, arguably, comes with greater rights over the operation of technologies of reform over their spatial territory, rescales (and decentralises) the process of neighbourhood management to a defined local level. Yet, such communities then become bound to a wider contract of accountability and responsibility which is situated within the central government rationale, and in turn, the explicit moral commentary on neighbourhood space. Such an approach allows central government to ‘govern at a distance’ whilst passing responsibility to local actors. However the extent to which neighbourhood management truly enrolls *whole* communities will be discussed throughout the proceeding chapters of this thesis.

Another aspect that is fundamental to neighbourhood management is the identification of ‘local problems’ which, as PAT4 report states, “*can only be understood by gathering softer ‘local intelligence’, the tacit knowledge only available from residents and those working in the locality*” (SEU 2000:17).

Such thinking reflects the idea that local communities hold a unique set of place-based knowledges, which are crucial to the construction of successful place-based initiatives such as neighbourhood management. This highlights, as Raco and Imrie state during a discussion of the SRB, that:

"the local is given an ontological status as the locus in and through which effective forms of government can be established, regulated, and implemented." (Raco and Imrie 2000:2194).

So whilst neighbourhood management is established with the presence of an overarching (govern)mentality, the vehicle which drives the construction, establishment and regulation of NMP is underpinned by neighbourhood-based knowledge and 'the community' itself. As mused by Raco and Imrie concerning the SRB, but similarly applied to the process of neighbourhood management, 'the neighbourhood' is given the 'ontological status' as the loci of reform. So how are such neighbourhood knowledges collected and enroled in the process of neighbourhood management? The PAT4 report suggests that this should be through the practice of neighbourhood forums, a neighbourhood board, a customer led approach, through agreements with local service providers as well as other ways of actively encouraging community-based involvement which will in turn reveal and embed local knowledges within the process of neighbourhood management (SEU 2000:20). For this reason each NMP will be unique in its development and approach and my case study can only be put forward as one example of this process. In the case study, the neighbourhood management board is a *community* based partnership made up of residents, local service providers, community agencies and Town Council members. However the extent and prioritisation of a particular type of 'local intelligence' in the development and application of neighbourhood management will be explored in Chapter Four and Six.

The PAT4 report does not outwardly acknowledge the dominant participation of an 'elite' group of community members who form the core of the initiative, often to the exclusion other less experienced (or appropriate) neighbourhood residents which, some board members have felt is the case in Ilfracombe. However, the development of community forums and one stop shops- as is the case with The Ilfracombe Centre to be discussed in the Chapter Five and Six- have evolved

from previous research to address wider issues of participation. However the part that particular forms of local knowledges play, particularly the Index of Multiple Deprivation as discussed previously, in the construction of societal norms and deviations, is of paramount importance to the production of spaces of moral reform under New Labour's urban policy restructuring and to the identification of Ilfracombe as a target for neighbourhood management.

2.3.iii. Producing Neighbourhood Space: A Governmentality Analysis

Identifying Areas of Deprivation

Rationalities of government are not only made operable by particular techniques of government, such as NMPs, but they are also developed and sustained by them. By dissecting the techniques which construct and underpin the rationality behind neighbourhood renewal and consequently policies of neighbourhood management, such rationalities can be made visible. Like other neighbourhood renewal policies- (some of which have been briefly outlined in this chapter such as the NRF, NDC and NMPs), local areas are often subject to strategic intervention after the identification of high levels of deprivation within a defined neighbourhood-based area. The most prominent method of identifying and categorising such representations during New Labour's term were the Index of Multiple Deprivation. Typically, for a technique of neighbourhood renewal to be implemented, target areas must fall within the top 10% of areas high in deprivation. This is the governmental representation of the field to be governed.

As can be imagined, the measurement of deprivation is a complex one, subject to indicators at different scalar levels. The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) is a complex measure of deprivation, and comprises of a number of key social, economic and housing related indicators, which are used collectively to create the IMD. Spatially, these indicators are combined into a single measure of deprivation at the small area (super output area) level. The measurement of deprivation is a complex process. The IMD takes into account a number of

indicators which include income deprivation, employment deprivation, health deprivation and disability, education skills and training deprivation, barriers to housing and services, the living environment and crime. Basic aspects of an individual's life, outlined by the IMD identifiers, are then used to establish and support a particular *rational* of government. These identifiers become embedded within the rationality itself and facilitate the construction and sustainability of the overarching rationality. When used to verify and support urban/welfare policy initiatives, they become an indicator of geographical deprivation on a micro-level basis and support a programme of geographical intervention (via neighbourhood-based policies) which works in conjunction with the broader rationales of government. This rationale(s) include the moral valorisation of 'community', which encompasses notions of participation, and an 'active' citizenship and highlights the importance of collective community engagement and moral values.

Consequently, the IMD is used as a form of local 'expert' knowledge(s) to identify and embed deprivation as a moral indicator in government rationale and discourse. Such knowledge(s), created through statistics, are then examined and utilized to target and reform certain individuals or areas (place-based populations) of people, in the case examined in this thesis, by a programme of neighbourhood management. The Index of Multiple Deprivation and other situated knowledge's collected and utilized by New Labour are specific in their identification of individual circumstance to create a wider pot of knowledge from which to develop and support existing moral and political (govern)mentalities over spatial locations.

The development and establishment of programmes of urban policy are invested in statistical counts of individuals and populations such as the IMD. Using the Index of Multiple Deprivation as an example in this thesis due to its use in identifying locations for neighbourhood management interventions, such statistical counts focus on a range of indicators which essentially differentiate

populations into categories of compliance or deviance from the expected socio-economic norm. This is not to say that such identifications are necessarily a bad thing, indeed such differentiations can be used to make visible the discrepancies in income, health and services to between all members of our society. Yet it could be argued that they do take on a moral tone, and used to target particularly deprived populations for moral reform more in fitting with Labour's particular code of conduct. In the example of neighbourhood renewal, the collection and use of specific knowledges, in the form of deprivation data, influence the neighbourhoods which are targeted by NMP, which is predominantly a technique of socio-economic reform. In the economic sense, NMP policy and action is embedded by social integrationist discourse (SID) and individuals gain inclusion into valued society through a variety of work-based/welfare-work initiatives. In a social sense, I argue that the knowledge(s) used to construct NMPs have been used by New Labour as a representation of deficient socio-moral values in areas identified as suffering from high levels of deprivation. This is evidenced by the variety of techniques which aim to guide and reform social and moral characteristics of individuals: from mentoring schemes (which aim to enhance aspirations), parenting/cooking lessons (which teach parents the correct way to feed/raise their children), and exercise classes (which aim to improve self-esteem and confidence), all of which intend to influence and direct the everyday actions and intentions of individuals towards those deemed appropriate by the government. Accordingly, this numerical technique of population management shapes "*the realities of our society*" into an appropriate set of statistics: manageable for the assessment of our deviant population(s) by central government (Rose 2001:675). Hence, the Index of Multiple Deprivation was used to render 'problem' neighbourhoods, characterised by Third Way ideology, into 'visible' and consequently governable, entities. The initial problematisation of such neighbourhoods is, of course, tied to the broader rationality(s) which characterise New Labour. As outlined in this half of the chapter, these rationalities sustain and underpin an explicit moral commentary on urban space, and more specifically, neighbourhood space. This commentary is fuelled by

specific notions of citizenship, responsibility and dependency, which reflect rationality(s) of government outlined previously in this chapter.

The identification and use of ‘the neighbourhood’ as the vehicle for social intervention forms the basis of neighbourhood renewal in Ilfracombe. Thus it shall be used as a framework to examine New Labour’s broader political ideology in reference to the spatial processing of ‘neighbourhood’ and social exclusion in the next section.

Identifying the Socially Excluded

The emphasis on areas of deprivation as spatial vehicles through which social, moral and physical reform are realised indicates, as MacLeavy suggests that deprived urban neighbourhoods are being used by the government as a means of locating socially excluded people (MacLeavy 2009). This interpretation of space is underpinned by the local knowledge(s) collected to inform the wider project of neighbourhood renewal, which then informs and sustains discourse from which the process of neighbourhood management is developed and established. MacLeavy also suggests that it is this discourse through which “*individual situations of disadvantage*” can be situated and underpinned, in the case of NMP, within a geographically bound neighbourhood (*ibid*: 863).

Using deprivation as an indicator to locate socially excluded people and attaching this to an area-based discourse of disadvantage has a number of effects. First, it categorises deprivation as a geographically bound concept- evidenced by the Index of Multiple Deprivation. Second, the discourse of disadvantage becomes enmeshed within these spatial boundaries (through their identification as strategic loci of intervention), consequently embedding specific spatial areas/neighbourhoods of deprivation with the moral commentary that underpins neighbourhood renewal. Thirdly, I argue that by using the IMD to locate socially excluded people, social exclusion then becomes a spatially bound concept under the New Labour government.

In previous academic discussions, theoretically, social exclusion is not spatially bound; it becomes embedded as a discourse, the types of which are excellently theorized by Levitas (1996, 1996), within a particular regime of government, from which, and upon which, programmes of reform are built. Silver (1994) too describes social exclusion as occurring when individuals experience social difference, barriers, or deviate from the correct social order set out in each of the models. Although in practice, both such explanations play out in terms of the spatial (in connection with a nation etc) neither discusses how the construction and operation of the concept has been used politically on many levels, (i.e. the EU, UK) in a specifically area-based way. New Labour's neighbourhood-based urban policy initiatives, including NMP, use 'the neighbourhood' or small, spatially bound pockets of deprivation to locate socially excluded individuals. Hence, I argue, positioning social exclusion as a spatially bound concept under the New Labour government.

2.3.iv. Summary of Neighbourhood Management

This section has discussed the rationale and techniques used to develop, construct and sustain neighbourhood renewal, and more specifically Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders such as that in deployed in Ilfracombe. I have argued that, in England, statistical technologies are used as social and moral indicators to form the foundation of area-based action. The social indicators, outlined by the Index of Multiple Deprivation, attempt to assess and identify the human population, working, as Silver describes, to illustrate deviation from the correct social order. I argue that this deprivation data are essentially used to spatially construct areas of deprivation and in doing so, locate socially excluded people en masse, within geographically defined areas. They are enroled bio politically, to assess and identify at an individual level, whilst being used collectively to depict spatial neighbourhoods for intervention and reform. This process will be explored in relation to Ilfracombe in Chapter Three.

2.4. Summary of Chapter One and Two

These chapters set out the key literatures and concepts which will be used during a presentation and discussion of the empirical findings of this thesis. The key themes presented here were the concept, use and measurement of social

exclusion, and an exploration of urban policy specifically focusing on a discussion of New Labour's neighbourhood renewal project, with particular reference to neighbourhood management. The concept of governmentality was also discussed, demonstrating its use as an appropriate framework for analysis of micro-level urban policies.

These literatures and arguments form the basis of my empirical investigations and will be drawn upon during the following empirical chapters. They give a wider context to the research which I will be presenting in the following chapters, placing what appear to be micro-level issues, into the context of wider political and social society. In this way, the key themes to come out of this research can be situated in policy and the wider rationale of government. Yet at their heart, these issues are micro-level, they are experienced in different places in a myriad of different ways by a variety of differing people across areas of deprivation and poor housing conditions across the country. They are micro-level: but they form part of the wider picture which allows ideas, suggestions and conclusions to be drawn from the processes of neighbourhood renewal and its wider academic affiliations with concepts such as community, social exclusion and partnership. It is important that such places/communities/neighbourhoods are viewed with some sense of separate identity, not just as places of deprivation targeted by government interventions of reform but as real places where people are working with, operating initiatives, enroling into, and resisting practices of neighbourhood reform in differing dynamic ways. These ideas form the basis of my research. Taking these two chapters as a foundation, the next chapter will put forward the objectives of this thesis, and discuss my methodological approach to this research.

Chapter Three

Research Questions and Methodology

3.1. Introduction

The literature review and discussion presented in the first chapter of this thesis aimed to provide a contextual base for the exploration of my main research questions. First, I discussed the impetus of social exclusion to New Labour's neighbourhood renewal policies including the evolution and ambiguity surrounding this concept. The chapter also provided a discussion of housing in the low-cost private rental sector (LCPRS) which was examined within the context of social exclusion. This will be useful when considering the context of the resident experiences presented in Chapter Three. In the following part of the chapter I presented Michael Foucault's concept of governmentality to be used as a framework to examine the process of neighbourhood renewal through an analysis of neighbourhood management. Then I explored the emphasis of 'active' citizenship and the consequences that this had for urban policy in relation to discourses of community engagement and participation. The importance of 'partnership' was also touched upon during this section, but this concept will be discussed and examined in more detail during the empirical chapters of this thesis in relation to the enrolment and participation processes of partnership.

The aim of this next chapter is three-fold. First, it will use the literature examination discussed in the previous chapter to frame and present the four main research objectives of this thesis. Second, the chapter will put forward the methodology for research which will include a discussion of the methods employed and the purpose behind them. Finally, the chapter will discuss the practical context of this research which will include a short discussion of my experiences and my positionality as a researcher during this PhD.

3.2. Research Objectives

In this section I set out the main research objectives followed by a short discussion of each in turn. The thesis aims to execute these objectives by closely exploring the construction, development and operation of the neighbourhood management pathfinder “Transform” in Ilfracombe, Devon.

There are four main objectives which will be considered during this thesis. These four objectives are

1. Explore the process of neighbourhood management as a community-led partnership for the promotion of neighbourhood renewal.
2. Examine the process of neighbourhood management in relation to the key themes of (1) Social Exclusion and (2) ‘Active’ Inclusion.
3. Present and examine resident experiences of the LCPRS in Ilfracombe in relation to notions of social exclusion and citizenship.
4. Analyse the governing technologies of neighbourhood management using Foucault’s concept of governmentality as a framework.

Each objective will now be discussed in more detail.

1. Explore the process of neighbourhood management as a community-led partnership for neighbourhood renewal.

The importance of community as a vehicle for neighbourhood-led renewal was discussed in the opening chapter of this thesis. I argued that its importance was constructed through the communitarian weight of New Labour’s ideology and discussed the use of “community” as a vehicle of neighbourhood governance. This research objective aims to explore the extent of the use of “community” as a vehicle of neighbourhood-led renewal. I aim to examine the process of neighbourhood management as a case study of this exploration.

2. Examine the process of neighbourhood management in relation to the key themes of (1) Social Exclusion and (2) 'Active' Inclusion.

Both the concept of 'active', inclusive citizenship and social exclusion were integral to the initial development of New Labour's strategy for neighbourhood renewal as discussed in the literature chapter. This thesis seeks to examine the relevance of these concepts to the neighbourhood management process.

3. Present and examine resident experiences of the Low Cost Private Rental Sector (LCPRS) in Ilfracombe in relation to notions of social exclusion and 'active' inclusion.

The literature chapter presents and examines the LCPRS, specifically in relation to the concept of social exclusion. This is particularly important to the application of this thesis due to the nature of the specification of North Devon District Council. This thesis will use interview, focus group and ethnographic-based findings to present and examine the experiences of residents living in the LCPRS in the deprived wards of Ilfracombe. I aim to present their experience and opinions in regard to the LCPRS, the services related to it and to the neighbourhood management process, and explore these experiences in relation to the concepts of social exclusion and 'active' citizenship. This will provide a practical, experience-based presentation of the LCPRS and associated services (including neighbourhood management), which significantly highlights the experience of individuals often labelled 'hard to reach'. This is particularly important when examining the effects targeted neighbourhood-led reform has of the daily lives of actual target individuals in this area.

4. Analyse the governing technologies of neighbourhood management using Foucault's concept of governmentality as a framework.

The literature chapter presents a discussion of Foucault's concept of governmentality as a notion which views government as a myriad of practices designed to guide individuals towards a particular end, arguing therefore that it can therefore be used as a framework to examine micro-level practices of governing (such as neighbourhood-based renewal). I set out to use governmentality in this way, as a subtle framework which will allow the rationale, practices and technologies aligned with neighbourhood management to be uncovered and discussed in the empirical chapters of this thesis.

These four research questions form the basis of my empirical analysis and discussion in the following empirical chapters. The next section will discuss my research methodology.

3.3. Methodology

In this section I present the methodologies I used during the PhD research and discuss my reasoning behind these choices in the later part of this section. The research methodologies I chose to use to implement during this research were:

- Semi-structured interviews
- Focus groups
- Ethnographic/conversations
- Policy documentation

The use of these methodologies will now be discussed in turn.

Semi Structured Interviews

Semi structured interviews were the main source of methodology used during this research. This qualitative methodology allows the views and experiences of participants to be obtained. Sixty-one interviews were carried out over an

extended research period between March 2008 and July 2009. The interviews were divided into three categories:

- North Devon District Council (NDDC) officers
- Transform and community/voluntary group workers in Ilfracombe (including Town Councillors)
- HMO tenants and residents of Ilfracombe central ward

Officers from NDDC were chosen for one of two reasons. First, I interviewed officers who were directly related to housing in Ilfracombe (either through their day-to-day operation or role in strategy development). Second, I chose to interview officers whose role was in some way connected to the neighbourhood management pathfinder Transform. The identification of this latter group occurred through conversations with Transform members or other individuals in the town of Ilfracombe. A full list of interviewees has been kept anonymous, however some of the main officers who were interviewed included:

Head of Environmental Health and Housing

Head of Housing

Housing Officers

Housing Strategy Development Officer

Head of Community and Leisure

Chief Executive of NDDC

A variety of Transform-associated officers and individuals from community and voluntary groups across the town of Ilfracombe were interviewed. These interviews represented a wide scope across Ilfracombe and a number of the interviewees had dual roles as community/voluntary workers, Town Councillors or members of the Transform Board. It also included an interview with the project coordinator from the Freedom Centre (a halfway house for the homeless), the manager of the Housing Advice Centre (HAC), employees/volunteers from a

number of Ilfracombe based community action groups, and the lead officer from North Devon Fire Service. Again, a full list of interviewees in this category have been kept anonymous, however some of the main individuals who were interviewed included:

Transform

Neighbourhood Manager
Social Inclusion Worker
WCEA/Healthier Homes Officers
Community Officer

Non-Transform (not direct employees)

Town Councillors
Local MP
Community/voluntary workers for Scribes, Transend, IPAG, church community workers

Twenty-nine in-depth interviews with HMO tenants and/or Ilfracombe central ward residents took place. This was further embellished by regular conversations, meets and discussion over tea (unrecorded and non-structured) with residents, which also took place on numerous occasions over the course of the research.

The interview schedule for the semi structured interviews with NDDC and Transform and community/voluntary groups were specific to each interviewee but focused around themes of partnership and joint working, community engagement and the daily practices, including their aims and roles, within the community. Also discussed was the town of Ilfracombe itself, and the problems and issues associated with it.

The semi structured interviews with HMO tenants and residents of Ilfracombe central ward differed markedly from the NDDC or Transform interviews. The first point to make is that it was a difficult task in itself to enrol willing tenants and residents into the interview process. Additionally, with 206 HMO properties in Ilfracombe, each of these composed of three-to-ten dwellings (i.e. self-contained flats or bed sits), 29 interviews will give significantly small level of coverage of the targeted HMO tenants in the area. Yet presenting the views and experiences of this small minority plays a significant role in the practical application of this thesis. The nature of these experiences impact on the outcomes and validity of neighbourhood management itself.

This part of the data collection aimed to collect resident experience of the LCPRS and neighbourhood management in Ilfracombe, examine the way that social, economic and environmental factors combine to promote or undermine social exclusion in Ilfracombe and provide an evidence base for best practice, policy formulation and delivery by agencies responsible for creating ‘inclusive’ communities in Ilfracombe.

The process of enrolling tenants into interviews was difficult. To begin with, achieving a sample of HMO tenants from all HMO addresses listed by NDDC was carried out using a mixture of letter dropping and snowballing tactics. The letter drop method consisted of a letter inviting tenants to speak with the interviewer about housing in the Ilfracombe area. Letter drops to all 206 HMOs (and each of the flats within these HMOs) were followed up by an informal house call in an attempt to enrol people onto the interview process. In retrospect, with only two written responses to the letter drop this was an inappropriate way to engage with residents in the LCPRS due to its reliance on tenant’s ability to invest their time and money (postage, text/phone) in a response. It may also have been an inappropriate method of engagement with tenants who are targeted by literacy charities in the community. However, during the door knocking process some tenants *had* read the letter and were more open to a

conversation with me on the doorstep: though not necessarily a recorded interview. Due to the uncertainty and ineffectiveness of the letter dropping method, some of the HMO tenant sample was gained using snowballing as a tactic, using the researcher's personal contacts within the community. These contacts were built up over a period of time through community visits/days and council-related workshops (involving HMO tenants).

One of the other ways I was able to engage with and enrol residents into the interview process was through a series of housing inspection visits with NDDC housing officers. These were property inspections carried out by the Environmental Health and Housing department to examine the standard of HMO housing provided to tenants. This proved a great way to meet and engage with tenants however it also made my role as a researcher hazy as they often saw me as working for the council in some capacity. This will be discussed in the latter section of this chapter in regard to my positionality as a researcher.

For interviews relating to HMO tenant and Ilfracombe residents, a less formal structure was used but key themes of housing, access to and knowledge of services, life stories were used to structure conversations, using a mixture of open and closed question. Closed standardized questions were used to gather initial personal data relating to their current personal, economic and family situation after which a lengthier period of open questions then ensued regarding housing, neighbourhood and environment, access to services, social relationships, reasons for moving to/living in Ilfracombe, and leaving room in the process to explore other factors which affect the interviewees quality of life. Interviews were carried out in a friendly conversational manner and the interviewee often spoke more openly after the tape recorder had been switched off.

All of the officer/community/voluntary worker interviews were recorded on tape and transcribed manually. Of the tenant interviews, 18 were recorded on tape

and 11 were either partially recorded or not recorded at all. In either case, detailed notes were made both during and after the interviews. Many tenants felt uncomfortable being recorded, and asked not to have their voices or names on tape. In other situations, for example whilst interviewing residents inside a church (where there is an open tea drop in), I felt it would be inappropriate to use my tape recorder as I was sitting with a resident in a church pew. There were many situations where I felt uncomfortable welding my tape recorded in front of residents and acted accordingly, making detailed notes instead.

I also spoke to many tenants/residents in addition to these 29 interviews: during lengthy conversations at community groups, at their door or over tea. In-depth notes were not taken during these liaisons and are for that reason not included in this section. However notes made after these encounters have assisted in the examination of the key themes affecting residents.

Focus Groups

Focus groups were only used during one section of this research. As part of the Transform 4 Work programme, an exercise class had been introduced to women as an activity to promote confidence and self esteem with the aim of encouraging and supporting women back into the jobs market. This exercise class was named “Transform Yourself”. I conducted two focus groups, one in the fitness studio with participants of a recently finished class, and a second in a neutral setting with TY participants willing to be a part of the second focus group. I set out to facilitate discussion in each focus group around key themes of: confidence, employment, participation and housing. The focus groups were recorded and transcribed by hand. The focus groups were conducted on two separate occasions and were made up by female participants.

Ethnographic methods

Whilst the bulk of the empirical findings in this thesis have been drawn from the interviews conducted with residents and officials during the research process,

much of the local context, housing observations, snowballing and recruitment of participants into the research, was carried out through a method of ethnographic meanderings. I view these ethnographic meanderings as a research method for creating part of my own context and history of Ilfracombe as well as a method of meeting, networking and enrolling conventionally ‘hard to reach’ individuals into the interview process. These thoughts and processes were recorded in a research diary throughout my PhD. However I have chosen not to present this ethnographic material in this thesis as I intend to present, as much is possible, the interview data from the actual individuals involved in the process of neighbourhood management, as I hope to remove my own reflexivity from this presentation as much as is possible. In this section however, I will briefly discuss how these ethnographic methods were deployed and how the research diary was used.

I began my research diary from the very beginning of the research process, noting down thoughts after visits to the local authority offices or when speaking with residents or visiting HMOs during council inspections. This allowed me to gradually build a base of information (names, places, local initiatives, landlords to watch out for) from which I was able to direct my interviews more directly. The diary was also particularly helpful upon visiting HMOs. During visits where I would meet residents, or when I was able to interview residents inside their homes, the research diary became a key site for writings on the problems associated with houses, rising damp, broken boilers etc. In particular this was useful when speaking with residents who would not readily air their views or complain too loudly about their housing issues and it was useful in this sense for me to refer to the diary in a formal way in my analysis and writing up process when connecting residents to particular houses and particular physical problems associated with them. These observations are occasionally presented subtly, and often cautiously, in Chapter Three of this thesis.

Ethnographic methods such as participant observation were also used during the research process but are not presented boldly in this thesis due to my desire to present residents experiences and views where often I could -rather than my own experiences of these places, people and houses. However these methods were an integral part of my research process. For example, I participated in resident 'Street Clean' days and was allowed to join in the flower planting and tidying at the community garden- all places where I was able to meet 'hard to reach' residents. Without these spaces for participation I would have found it very difficult to build a base of contacts of HMO residents outside of my visits with local authority officers. These methods allowed me the space to meet residents, not necessarily on their own terms, but at least not under a local authority inspection and consequently I was able to have conversations and build contacts in an environment which was more open and willing to discuss housing and neighbourhood problems. These would then occasionally lead on to interviews and I was able to build-up my base of interviewees using these ethnographic methods.

Documentation

Documentary resources such as policy documents on a national level and posters and leaflets on a micro-level were used as part of this research. In the case of the former, *The National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal* (SEU 1998) and *A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal* (SEU 2001) were examined using content analysis to unpick the moral representations of deprived neighbourhoods and examine the moral and cultural inflections of social exclusion embedded within them. In the case of the latter, leaflets, websites, posters and other documentary evidence was used to examine the importance and representations of citizenship and participation to neighbourhood-led regeneration in Ilfracombe. Using content analysis allowed me to examine the formation of distinctive language and draw key themes from the documentation: which form the basis for my discussions of the role of social exclusion and the use of 'active' citizenship in neighbourhood-led policy throughout this thesis.

Research Analysis

The semi structured interviews and focus group recordings were transcribed into Word. Interview data was analysed using the computer package NVivo. I decided to use NVivo due to the high number of interviews that resulted from the research process as it would allow me to access and view extracts relating to particular themes throughout all of my interview data (once coded). Hence once transcribed, each interview was uploaded into NVivo and coded at a series of 'nodes'. These nodes included

- Partnership working
- Housing problems
- Resident experience of work/employment
- Officer experience of work/employment
- Avenues/methods of resident engagement
- Moral underclass discourse
- Social integrationist discourse
- Active citizenship
- Inclusion/exclusion
- Scales of knowledge

By coding the interview data at these nodes I was able to draw out key extracts from the entire interview data which related to one of these themes. Additionally, through a process of cross referencing on NVivo, I was able to view the connections between nodes, for example, extracts which had been coded at both the 'values and attitudes' and the 'partnership working' nodes. This allowed me to draw connections between themes and create a wider picture of the neighbourhood management process through the use of NVivo to sort, code and analyse my interview data.

I also used NVivo to analyse policy documents *Bringing Britain Together* 1998 and *A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal* 2001. Whilst the nodes for coding the interview data focused on the practical and the local, the nodes applied to examine these documents were more widely based on the conceptual categories presented in Chapter One of this thesis. These nodes included:

- Moral underclass discourse
- Social integrationist discourse
- Active citizenship
- Inclusion/exclusion
- Scales of knowledge

Whilst acting as a broader framework for the analysis of New Labour's agenda of neighbourhood renewal, allowing me to extract coded material to be presented in this thesis as New Labour's moral and political agenda for Neighbourhood change, these themes also allowed me to draw a comparison between national policy of neighbourhood renewal with the practical application of neighbourhood management at a micro-level using the previously described coded interview data.

3.4. Governmentality as a Framework for Analysis

Taking the explanations of governmentality provided during Chapter One into account, this research aims to use a Foucauldian governmentality framework to analyse the assemblages of technologies and practices used by central and local government, to govern deprived neighbourhoods, with a particular focus on the rationality of government over concentrated areas of HMOs in the seaside town of Ilfracombe. It explores the ways in which rationalities are made thinkable through language and analyses the discursive formations that create this 'truth' at an individual (HMO tenants, individual community workers) and organisational

level (local authority and associated partners). In my empirical discussion I explore the notion of ‘governmental self-formation’ to examine how Transform and its various partners (community groups, fire service ... etc), seek to shape the capacities and desires of particular individuals, in this case, central ward residents, towards particular ends.

In this section I have outlined the practicalities of my research and have given a basic outline of my methodological activities. Yet much of my empirical work was conducted with ‘vulnerable’ people and therefore as well as addressing this practical framework I also faced a set of ethical issues which will now be discussed.

3.5. Ethics and Context of Research

Power, positionality, ethics and representation are just some issues that I faced as a researcher (Cloke et al 2000). Power, the effect of the power relationship between the interviewee and interviewer, particularly the effect that this relationship will have on how knowledge’s will be presented, acknowledged and interpreted during the analysis and writing up stage of my thesis represents an area of ethical uncertainty. The relationship of power in research on/with marginalized groups is a particular concern during interviews with tenants from HMOs who are often described as being a “*vulnerable*” group of people (House of Commons Report 2006). In some circumstances, I, as the interviewer, would be seen to be in a position of authority over the participants, in a position to control the direction of questions, flow of the interview and interpret and present the data collected from the interview as I wish (MacLaffery 1995). In order to achieve a balance of power between both myself and the participant, I aimed to use methods which are consistent with the values and aims of feminist research. However, during my empirical research and writing up, it was important to consider

"the role of the (multiple) 'self', showing how my positionality as a researcher may influence the data collected and thus the information that becomes coded as knowledge" (Madge 1993:296).

And in the following section I aim to provide some examples of how I sought to do this.

Before and during the interviews with HMO tenants (I spoke to them in their homes, took them to a nearby café for tea or met them at local community groups), I was sensitive, listened sympathetically and built up a relationship of reciprocity, following the values of the feminist research I aspire to (McDowell 1992). One problem I had found was the participants hope that by voicing their views to me, I was in a position of power to make positive changes for them and their community- despite a clear line from me that this would not be the case. This was a problem that occurred throughout my research. On a functional level, the semi-structured interview method I used has been acknowledged by feminists as a way to form a "*collaborative and non-exploitative relationship with the participants*" (MacDowell 1992:406). By using this method I tried to create a balanced, egalitarian relationship with participants during which they are seen as a valid part of the research process itself, instead of subjects of the methodological process.

During the empirical fieldwork I took part in volunteer days (of which some HMO tenants also take part), dropped in on the community centre most weeks (where, on Friday mornings, some tenants go for free tea and a social engagement) and spent much of my time walking, sitting, chatting and being in the neighbourhoods that make up these '*seaside slums*' (House of Commons Report 2006). I did not however, live in a HMO, nor in Ilfracombe itself, and although I may undertake detailed interviews and collect some ethnographic data, I am not able to erase the barrier between myself and the participants completely, and I accept that there will be some degree of power which is swayed in my favor which might be

of concern when trying to create a non-exploitative research dynamic. There was no obvious way for me to solve these problems, short of living in a HMO, in Ilfracombe, which itself raised a number of ethical, financial and personal questions which I was unable to overcome.

I was able to interview a number of women and conducted two focus groups with female participants of the “Transform Yourself” exercise initiative. During this process I felt it important to question both my positionality and subjectivity as a researcher (Rose 1997). In terms of the former, there is abundant feminist literature on the dynamics of female-female interviews and the creation of mutual understanding and *gender-bound assumptive connections* when discussing stereotypically gendered issues such as childcare, men, home and work life which I explored during this research process (MacDowell 1992, Rose 1997). This perhaps, has made my position more acceptable to female HMO tenants who were willing to share their views and time with me on a assumption of (perhaps false) mutually connected views and common culture of ‘womanhood’. In this case, I was an insider, listening to and reciprocating their voice with nods, smiles and body language. Yet in another sense, I was an outsider, an academic, a researcher, someone in a position of power who may be able to take their views and do something with them. I use these examples show the fluidity of my positionality during the methodological process.

The construction of my positionality during the interview process with men was extremely varied, but I often felt regarded as an ‘outsider’ on a larger scale due to my gender and position as a ‘researcher’. Subjectivity could also be playing a role in this frustrating situation, and I shall elaborate on this concern briefly.

In some circumstances it may be difficult for men who are participating in this research to make sense of their power and position whilst they are participating in qualitative research conducted by a young woman. In addition to this, both my subjectivity, as a young woman, and the participant’s subjectivity as

men, may be affecting my objective ability to conduct research with men living in HMOs in Ilfracombe. Although I carried out the interviews in a non-exploitative, egalitarian framework, the shift in traditional gender power relations may have caused some men to become wary or anxious of my role as a researcher and try to ‘place’ me back into a gendered role. An example of such placing could be taken from a visit to a HMO after which I left the building to a number of whistles and calls from men sitting on the steps outside of the building I was just visiting, or another example being invited to conduct an interview in a HMO flat with a man whose walls were covered in his own carefully hung paintings of nude women. Sometimes these situations proved difficult and unnerving, but on the most part the interviews I conducted with men were genuinely engaging and very useful.

This PhD also conducts semi-structured interviews with what could be described as ‘elite’ members of the neighbourhood management process: who are for example, local authority or community workers or Town Councilors. Therefore in this thesis, interviewees labeled as a local ‘elite’ were those who were seen to play a central role in the social, economic or community development of the town of Ilfracombe. Their knowledge can be privileged in studies of community development and interpreted as an authoritative form of reference during the analysis process. In an insightful paper by Crang (2002:3), it is emphasised that even these elite set of actors “*do not have perfect access to information, even should they wish to share it*”. In this vein, I endeavour to use a critical examination of these elite stories, in conjunction with those of ‘hard to reach’ residents, with the objective of presenting a more holistic discussion of analysis of the process of neighbourhood management in Ilfracombe.

In a paper by Sabot (1999), the author describes a situation where there are two kinds of ‘elite’ to be contended with during an academic research process. He describes these as first, a “conventional elite” who influence local development, but also discovers that

"there are also "defensive elites" or "counter elites" (also dubbed "threatened elites") who are "reluctant to cooperate". Even more surprising, it appeared that these two kinds of elites, Dr Jekyl and Mr H(i)de, could be the same person manifesting a different persona to either a foreign researcher or a local researcher." (Sabot 1999:2).

This situation was to become a cause of concern during my research. For example, as I was closely associated the District Council, I was gladly given access to information that could have been inaccessible without my connection, these included interviews with the Chief Executive of North Devon District Council (NDDC) and various Head of Departments within the council, and I was also allowed to sit in on a boardroom meeting (which was chaired by the CE) concerning the Audit Commissions' recommendations to the council during the Audit process. Hence, I was given access to an array of information at the local authority which set the basis for the thesis. These were empirical explorations found through the "conventional elite" route.

However, my apparent relationship with NDDC seemed to make some members of the Ilfracombe 'elite'/Transform defensive in their interactions with me. This occasionally created an atmosphere of uncooperativeness, which had some effect on the access I was able to gain to the opinions and experiences of some 'elite' actors working within the community and I often had to re-negotiate my position as a researcher in these situations to explain I was very open to all experiences and opinions in quest of maintaining an independent position within the partnering agencies.

3.6. Summary

This section aims to present the framework for the collection and analysis of my empirical research and provide an explanation upon which to present my empirical discussion. The next chapter introduces this micro-level- the level where these things are physically put into practice. It is important for the context

of this thesis that this particular target of neighbourhood intervention and reform is presented in its own way. The next short chapter is an introduction to the context of coastal towns in today's socio-economic climate, followed by an introduction to Ilfracombe, North Devon.

Chapter Four:
Introduction to Ilfracombe

4.1. Ilfracombe, Devon

Ilfracombe is a coastal town in the North of Devon, England. It was chosen as the case study area for the empirical research of this PhD for a number of reasons. The first, and most obvious reason, is that Ilfracombe is found within the district of North Devon, which is itself governed on a district level by North Devon District Council (NDDC). As NDDC are part sponsors of this PhD, it is perhaps an obvious and imperative measure that my research should be conducted within this bounded district. As already discussed, the PhD has been more specifically sponsored by the Environmental Health and Housing Department of NDDC, who led me towards the low-cost privately rented housing sector as an area of examination. The statistic that 30% of households in the Ilfracombe central ward are classified as privately rented accommodation then led me to narrow my research from a North Devon-wide analysis to one which was able to take an in-depth examination of a built up neighbourhood characteristic of the LCPRS. The implementation and operation of the neighbourhood management pathfinder Transform also proved as a factor when choosing Ilfracombe as a case study, as this would allow me to examine one of the last of New Labour's neighbourhood renewal initiatives. In summary, the reasons presented above would allow me to conduct research which would both satisfy NDDC's objectives as well as engaging with, and adding to, academic studies of community, governance and processes of neighbourhood renewal, hence Ilfracombe was chosen as the case study area for my empirical research.

The first section of this short chapter aims to provide some socio-economic context for Ilfracombe as a coastal town in England, which as a grouping, have been overlooked by policy-makers. There are no specific government policies for

coastal towns- although many feature the same characteristic problems. This will now be discussed in more detail to provide the significance of this thesis as part of a broader argument for the development of a much needed coastal strategy for neighbourhood renewal. The latter section will then present Ilfracombe in context of this discussion.

4.2. Coastal Towns

4.2.i. An Introduction

Coastal towns are particularly important to both the environmental and cultural heritage of this country yet many often suffer from a number of characteristic problems; physical and social isolation, high proportions of older people together with higher levels of outward migration among young people, low-wage, low-skill economies and seasonality of employment, frequent dependency on a single industry, and a high incidence of poor housing conditions (House of Commons 2006). On top of this it has been documented that coastal towns are now among some of the most deprived communities in the country but in contrast, are probably the least understood of such communities (House of Commons Report 2006, Beatty and Fothergill 2004). In recent years under the New Labour government, coastal towns had become of particular interest to the Regional Development Agencies (RDA) and the Market and Coastal Town initiative (MCTi) was set up in 2000 to encourage economic and environmental regeneration of communities across the regions. However, was is also imperative that social sustainability was addressed in line with the governments focus on social exclusion, in order to foster stronger, fairer coastal communities. However, the idea of *social renewal* was not at the heart of MCTi.

Although it has been noted over recent years that Britain's coastal towns have become a 'problem area', little research into the depth, causes, and consequences of these 'problems' has taken place. So, in spite of the numerous research reports which have analysed problems of deprivation, social exclusion

and urban regeneration in inner cities and large towns, the academic literature reviewing coastal towns has largely been narrowed down to an analysis of tourism (for examples see: Hall and Page 2006, and Richards and Hall 2000).

One of the few papers tackling these 'problem areas' is by Beatty and Fothergill which explores the economic changes that have happened in coastal towns over a thirty year period from 1971-2001 (Beatty and Fothergill 2004). This paper looks at changes in the seaside economy and the labour market: particularly the rise in the amount of unemployment benefit claimants who live in coastal towns (despite apparent employment growth in coastal towns). The paper states that aggregate trends in coastal towns place their problems in a different category to those of the coal fields or inner cities. The aggregate trends Beatty and Fothergill present include a continuing reliance on seasonal tourism (as central to supporting their economy), a trend of inward migration of older working-age adults, in their late 30's, 40's and 50's and a movement of retiree's into the area. On top of this, younger people of working age tend to migrate out of the area. The authors suggest that the increase in in-migration is outweighing the lack of economic growth as the most likely explanation for higher levels of unemployment in coastal towns. However they also offer another explanation as to why increased in-migration of adults of working age is coupled with high unemployment levels. In this suggested scenario, in-migration to coastal towns is driven by the availability housing and benefits, as unemployed people may be more likely to find suitable, cheap accommodation to rent. This suggestion has also been put forward by other academics. A study of Thanet in Kent in the late 1980's argues that the in-migration of working age people into the area occurred due to a number of reasons including the availability if cheap hotels, flats or bed sits where landlords might welcome tenants on Housing Benefits (Buck et al 1989). In fact, in many coastal towns today, which have had a previously rich Victorian and Edwardian heritage, large hotels and houses have become vacant after economic decline and have been converted to social security supported bed and breakfast accommodation. Although these two papers analyse the reasons

for higher levels of unemployment in coastal towns, despite in-ward migration of older adults of working age, they do not examine wider concerns regarding the social and economic make-up of coastal towns. Nor do they examine the effect of local or national strategies which act across these areas to create such characteristics. Specifically, they do not explore any further the idea that inward migration of working-age adults and high levels of welfare claimants in some coastal areas is linked to the availability to cheap but poor quality housing. The second half of this chapter aims to explore this idea further.

4.2.ii. The House of Commons Coastal Town Report

In 2006 the government produced a report concerning coastal towns in England. This report set out to analyse the effects of government policy on coastal towns and identify key problems affecting these areas. This report outlined a range of government policies and initiatives which effect coastal towns but which are not specifically designed to manage these areas. These included the Housing Act 2004, Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy and the Local Enterprise Growth Initiative (Department of Communities and Local Government), tourism and heritage polices (Department for Culture, Media and Sport) as well as policies across other departments such as the Department of Trade and Industry, Department of Health, Department of Education and Skills and the Department for work and Pensions. The government however, had no specific policy or a national strategy for so called 'coastal communities'.

With no overriding national strategy to bring the work of these departments together in coastal towns, focused, 'joined' up working was often difficult to put into practice. Although, as the report acknowledges, coastal towns across England are varied in their social, economic and environmental composition - making it difficult to generalise about coastal communities- the report highlights a number of common features found in coastal communities. Four have already been referenced to (the physical and social isolation that living in a coastal community might bring seasonal employment/low wage /skilled jobs,

dependence on a single industry and outward migration of young people compared to an in-ward migration of older people). The fifth common feature to be highlighted in these reports was the '*high incidence of poor housing conditions and a high proportion of private rented home's*' (House of Commons Report 2006:9).

The report made particular reference to Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMOs) in coastal towns, which are often fashioned from old worn down hotels or large Victorian houses or hotels - a high percentage of which are in poor condition. The report draws on evidence collected to suggests that the built up areas of HMOs found here can make coastal towns unattractive, deprived places to live, turning many areas into seaside '*slums*' (*ibid*:18).

The report makes a connection between 'vulnerable transient populations' and HMOs in coastal towns. Such vulnerable populations are defined as people:

"who are unable to meet their own everyday needs owing to a physical or mental health condition or who are vulnerable because of their situation, such as homelessness" (House of Commons 2006:8).

These individuals can in some cases, move to coastal towns, looking for cheap, easily obtainable accommodation.

The report recognises that the in-migration of this vulnerable transient population itself may bring problems and challenges to coastal communities. Also, the HMOs lived in by such populations are often in poor condition and may add to bad health and low spirit of already vulnerable residents.

In order to combat these poor conditions, since 2006, all HMOs have been required to be licensed by their local authority and must meet a physical standard of living. The aim is to improve the quality of the housing stock and dispose of some of the most unscrupulous of landlords who have been acting to take

advantage of these vulnerable people. Yet, as I have already witnessed in Ilfracombe, implementing this HMO licensing is hard to put into practice by local authorities on the ground due to bureaucratic time restraints and sheer lack of man power. Together with the lack of social science research focused on coastal communities in general (setting aside the abundant literature on tourism), research into people living in the low-cost private rented sector in coastal communities, particularly HMOs, is scarce. During the empirical chapters of this thesis, I present an examination of HMO ‘communities’ by exploring HMO tenant life stories, experiences and opinions around the issues of housing, knowledge and access to services and ideas/experiences of community. This provides a small but significant insight into the lives and experiences of residents within coastal HMOs. This is discussed in the second section of this chapter and is exceptionally important when trying to acknowledge and present views from such ‘hard to reach’ groups who are most affected by poor housing conditions and interventions of government reform. The next part of this chapter introduces Ilfracombe as a place and will be presented in relation to the context of coastal towns in England examined in this first section.

4.2.iii. Ilfracombe, North Devon in the Context of Coastal Towns

Ilfracombe is a coastal town in North Devon surrounding by the sea of one side and edged by Exmoor national park on the other. The area itself has a population of roughly 16,000, with almost 11,000 of these living within Ilfracombe itself. Ilfracombe has a natural harbor and a hilly topography which takes in part of the South West Coast Path, which are both popular with tourists and walkers alike. Consequently the town is still predominantly dependent on tourism during the seasonal holiday period. However during the height of British seaside holidays in the Edwardian era it was a vastly popular place to visit with tourism in the grand Victorian hotels booming. This was aided by the development of a railway which accelerated development of the tourist industry, making the town more accessible to holiday-makers. Unfortunately, like a number of seaside resorts across England, its popularity began to wane and in the 1970s and the railway

line that had created easy access for tourists to enter the town closed. With the popularity of holidaying abroad starting to emerge, Ilfracombe saw a decline in tourists and the economy they brought with them. This had a snowball effect in a number of ways. First, the town's dependence on tourism meant that the Ilfracombe slowly receded into economic decline. Second, many of the grand Victorian era hotels began to deteriorate as owners could not pay for the high maintenance costs and such houses across the town fell into disrepair. In this sense, Ilfracombe can be put forward as a case study to support the House of Commons Report (2006) which identifies economic decline through a dependency on a decreased tourist industry and the deterioration of Victorian hotels/houses, then converted into cheap flats and bed sits, as elements at the core of coastal town problems.

In Ilfracombe, when the grand hotels and houses fell into decline, many were bought and converted into flats and bed sits which were cheap to manage and to let out. This is now reflected in the statistic that in Ilfracombe central ward, 30% of the housing stock is in the LCPRS in comparison to a national average of 13%. The Ilfracombe and District Market and Coastal Towns Initiative describe this housing stock:

"Much of this housing stock, owned by absent landlords, is in poor condition. Ilfracombe is seen as a place in need of a facelift, with many buildings suffering from neglect or dereliction" (Ilfracombe and District Community Alliance 2004:7)

The grand hotels and houses in Ilfracombe were largely converted into accommodation for the LCPRS, many of these becoming HMOs. According the NDDC's Private Sector Renewal Strategy 44.7% of the private rental sector in North Devon has been classified as non-decent in comparison to a national average of 36.7%. In addition, in Ilfracombe, 53.2% of households identified as being 'vulnerable', live in non-decent dwellings (NDDC 2008).

These converted flats which became part of the LCPRS housing stock have a popular historic story which was told to me a number of times during my fieldwork. When the tourism industry began to decline, hoteliers and landlords advertised for tenants to come to Ilfracombe for seasonal work and the availability of cheap accommodation. These adverts were placed in newspapers in urban areas around the country, but more specifically in northern England. Consequently migrants from the north of the England are well known to have come to Ilfracombe, often staying here for the long term, in cheap accommodation during the 1980s. A transient migrant population still exists today borne out of cheap LCPRS accommodation and a willingness of landlords to accept tenants in receipt of Housing Benefit.

The bullet points below illustrate some of the key statistics (for the context of this research) in relation to the housing and residents of Ilfracombe central ward.

Key Statistics for Ilfracombe

- Ilfracombe central ward has a high level of properties in the private rental sector at 30.3% of all housing stock
- In Ilfracombe, 53.2% of households identified as being ‘vulnerable’, live in non-decent dwellings in the private rental sector
- Ilfracombe Central ward is in the top 10% of deprived areas in the country (IMD 2000, 2004).
- Ilfracombe central ward has an average household income of 13.5% less than the average for Devon County as a whole.
- Ilfracombe central ward contains 45.5% of households with no working adults.

Taking the above statistics into consideration, Ilfracombe, and Ilfracombe central ward in particular, is a prime area for examination of the concept of social exclusion (NDDC 2008). This will be explored during the empirical chapters of this thesis. The next half of this chapter moves forward to present a set of key

issues for Ilfracombe which have been identified through an analysis of resident interviews.

4.3. Ilfracombe: The Lived Reality

"Dominant focus on governmental rationalities ignores the lived experiences and material realities, failing to give a voice to those on the receiving end of governmental interventions"

McKee 2011 :4

4.3.i. Introduction

The purpose of this section of the chapter is to present a series of *key issues* which emerged during analysis of 29 interviews and numerous conversations with 'hard to reach' residents from the central ward of Ilfracombe. Also included, where appropriate, are extracts from interviews with volunteers/community workers: who also happen to be residents in the central ward and whose opinions add another layer to the key issues of residents which emerged during the PhD research. This section of the chapter aims to present an illustration, a picture which gives some context, of *who* the targets of neighbourhood reform are aimed at in Ilfracombe, but perhaps more importantly; aims to present in a small way, the real issues that HMO tenants/residents in the central ward of Ilfracombe face in their everyday lives. The presentation of these issues aims to present a resident 'voice', whilst also providing a lived-context to the issues faced by Transform and its associated partners in relation to the process of neighbourhood renewal in Ilfracombe.

The purpose of this section therefore is to begin the first of the empirical discussion chapters with a presentation of the everyday experiences of residents and HMO tenants in the central ward of Ilfracombe. The key issues derived from this analysis will then be presented as part of a wider examination in the following empirical chapters- concerning the themes of housing, social exclusion,

neighbourhood renewal, partnership working, community and the notion of governmentality outlined previously in the literature exploration of Chapter One.

It was my intention during the research process to make sure residents were interviewed and consulted so as this thesis did not evolve as an explicitly top-down examination of neighbourhood management, and I open this empirical chapter with this in mind, endeavouring to present some of the voices of HMO tenants. I acknowledge that these are only a select group of experiences and can in no way be representative of all HMO tenants living in Ilfracombe. However, they do provide a significant insight into the lives and experiences of residents and HMO tenants in the central ward of Ilfracombe. The key themes to emerge from the resident interviews will now be presented.

4.3.ii. Ilfracombe central ward: Key Issues

Ilfracombe central ward was identified as being among the top 10% of deprived wards in the country, as evidenced by the IMD 2004 (ODPM 2004). Subsequently, a neighbourhood management pathfinder was developed and deployed to tackle the key issues of employment and business development, housing, community safety, education and health, in Ilfracombe and two surrounding areas. These key issues were developed from a series of government deprivation statistics which identified Ilfracombe central and east wards as spatial vehicles through which social, moral and physical reform could be realised, in this particular example, through the process of neighbourhood management. The process of Transform's conception and subsequent development will be presented in Chapter Four. However, as stated, the aim of this chapter is to present the key issues raised during interviews/conversations with residents of the central ward, who have found their neighbourhood, and often themselves, to be a target of this process of neighbourhood intervention.

By presenting resident themes that have been drawn out of my empirical findings, I put forward a set of key *practical* issues in relation to their experiences:

which focus on the themes housing and access to employment. These findings are used to demonstrate the extent of problems that residents face in a qualitative manner which supplements and extends notions of deprivation evidenced by the IMD. I argue that, as the fundamental targets of government programmes of neighbourhood intervention, it is the qualitative views and experiences of these ‘hard to reach’ residents that will allow the material realities of neighbourhood intervention to be identified, and as such, the presentation of their views and experiences is vital to the process of identifying best practice and gaps in neighbourhood-led policy. The first key issue to be presented is “Housing”.

4.3.iii. Housing in Ilfracombe

The majority of my empirical research was carried out in the central ward of Ilfracombe. Housing is a key area for concern here, where a disproportionately large percentage (30.3%) of households are found in privately rented accommodation. A high amount of these households are found in flats in a House of Multiple Occupancy (HMO), and in addition to these points, NDDC’s *Private Rented Sector Survey* (NDDC 2008) states that a large majority of these are in a non-decent condition. To provide some contextual evidence to this section I draw on the NDCC’s Housing Strategy (NDDC 2004:18-30), which characterises some distinctive features of housing in the town of Ilfracombe more generally. The bullets below present these features.

Ilfracombe: Key Housing Issues

- Relatively high numbers of properties in the private rented sector
- Concentration of housing condition problems found in the private rented sector
- Relatively low standards of affordable warmth in this sector
- Relative predominance of terrace houses and flats/maisonettes in this sector
- Relatively high transient HMO tenant population

Taking the evidence of the overwhelmingly poor conditions found in the private rented sector into account, I felt it important to propose the basic question in the openings to this research which might seem rather naïve to the reader- *what brings a tenant to live in this low standard accommodation?* I hope by asking this question it will help to unravel the processes of exclusion experienced by tenants.

Perhaps, it could be argued, there is an obvious reason for living here- it is due to the cheap price of the rental accommodation which, of course, does play a very large role here. However I argue that this is an important question to ask, as the vulnerable populations identified as living in seaside HMOs by the House of Commons Report are regarded as 'hard-to reach' by policy groups, and their stories, beyond the assumption of demand of cheap housing, are rarely found among policy or academic literature regarding these questions. The empirical findings of this chapter aim to present a 'lived-evidence' behind the concentration of vulnerable individuals in the central ward of Ilfracombe. Taking into account that it is these individuals who are enrolled into its wider classification as an area of deprivation, accordingly, they form part of the conception and creation of the neighbourhood management pathfinder Transform.

Consequently, this section introduces to the thesis six central ward residents with whom conversations and interviews were carried out, and followed up, concerning stories and experiences of their lives, as lived in the low cost private rental sector in the central ward of Ilfracombe. Almost all of the interview extracts in this chapter come from residents living in a House of Multiple Occupancy (HMO), but it will be indicated where this is not the case.

In relation to my opening question, a number of reasons were directly drawn out after conversations with residents for their reasons behind living in the poor quality, low cost private rented sector in Ilfracombe. My empirical findings

demonstrate that that these reasons focused on two key practical rationales. First, and perhaps an obvious point, HMO accommodation was relatively cheap.

Second, and perhaps more importantly, landlords were willing to take on tenants who were claiming Housing Benefit and/or Disability Allowance. For some residents, the willingness of landlords to accept Housing Benefit so readily in central Ilfracombe, as opposed to in other areas across north Devon, made living in poor quality housing in Ilfracombe an easier option, and sometimes, this was the only available option to them at the time. However, the resident's stories are not homogenous, and the life journeys behind their living arrangements vary widely, if not the key *practical* reasons behind them.

The next six extracts intend to demonstrate, using my empirical findings, six resident stories including their reasons for living in poor quality housing, in their own words. The subsequent empirical chapters of the thesis will draw from all twenty-nine tenant interviews, but Tenants A-F will be used in this chapter to explore the connections between central ward residents, and the housing and neighbourhood services available to them in Ilfracombe. These six are used specifically because each of these residents was interviewed on more than one occasion over a 12 month period. These stories intend to give the reader a sense of *who these people are* and *what the problems are* that they face in relation to the key objectives of this thesis. In short, they intend to demonstrate the practical context behind the deployment of neighbourhood management.

The process of neighbourhood management targets 'deprived' areas, and in doing this, targets specific populations of people within such areas. Much of the rhetoric available, either through policy documents, academic literature and policy literature (such as leaflets etc) is of a top-down nature which often does not give the voice or opinions of the targets/residents of these neighbourhoods themselves. This thesis does not claim to be representative of all residents experience regarding neighbourhood management, but it does aim to provide an

important insight into the issues that many residents face on the ground. In the next section I present a series of resident stories.

4.4. Resident Stories

4.4.i. Living in Ilfracombe

As stated above, one of the first topics of conversation I opened to residents and tenants was that of Ilfracombe itself and their reasons for moving and living here. I found this to be a well received conversation starter and it provided me with much insight into the movement and living reasons behind the vulnerable population who, noted in the House of Commons Report (2006), are a feature of many coastal towns suffering from areas of deprivation. This section presents some of the stories and reasons given by six HMO tenants for moving and living in Ilfracombe. None of these tenants were born or brought up in the north Devon area. The stories begin with Tenant A.

Tenant A

I happened to be walking along the Quayside in Ilfracombe, a street which contains a number of HMOs standing next to each other as they face the water, when I struck up conversation with a small man about the lovely weather, who was a tenant as it turned out, from the HMO right in front of me. We began a conversation and I asked him if he would mind being interviewed as part of this research, to which he agreed. I opened with a question on Ilfracombe:

Interviewer: 'So have you always lived in Ilfracombe then?'

"No, no. I just needed somewhere to live really. I had no fixed abode before. I left work. Well, I got made redundant, in Newton Abbot, they laid off 90 staff so the place I was renting, they didn't take Housing Benefit so I had to go somewhere. I stayed with my brother for a couple of weeks and then British Legion, because I used to be in TAs, so I could get help off the British Legion, so they paid the rent one month in advance and they give any white goods and stuff like that. So I found this place. Also it comes in

housing money as well so if you want a two bedroom and its more than they can pay then you got to pay the rest of it.”

Interviewer: ‘Did you find it hard to find accommodation in Newton Abbot or the Exeter area then?’

“Barnstaple, that’s where I wanted to be for work. I mean I found a lot of places around in Ilfracombe, but in Barnstaple, impossible, nothing in my price range. So I thought I’d look further afield and then this place came up.”

This small extract was the first chance meeting and impromptu interview which became part of a wider series of three interviews with this particular tenant (Tenant A). During this first interview, the tenant spoke openly of his difficulty in finding a cheaper more suitable place to live after losing his job. During this first meeting two themes emerged from his interview. First, relatively cheap flats with a landlord who would accept tenants in receipt of benefits were thought to be more widely available in Ilfracombe than elsewhere across north Devon. Second, Tenant A was anxious that living in Ilfracombe would isolate him in the employment market.

The Tenant felt although he was in a frustrating situation, as the only place he could find to live was in Ilfracombe, but this made finding and travelling to a paid job more difficult. Hence, unemployed individuals such as Tenant A may be unable to find accommodation appropriate to their price range in a larger town. However, living in a town such as Ilfracombe, which is arguably isolated due to poor transportation links and its position on the edge of Exmoor and the coast, consequently makes it more difficult for these individuals to find methods of ‘inclusion’ into the labour market. Consequently, demonstrated here, the availability of cheap housing in Ilfracombe, an isolated area with little employment available, was part of the processes excluding him from the labour market.

In relation to the PSE Survey outlined in Chapter One, exclusion from the labour market is one identifier of social exclusion. According to this tenant, the availability of cheap housing in Ilfracombe, was enrolled as part of this process.

The availability of cheap, low cost rental accommodation, with the ready acceptance of Housing Benefit by landlords, was often cited by tenants as the biggest factor drawing individuals to Ilfracombe central ward. The next tenant I present here, Tenant B, also found herself moving to Ilfracombe for that reason.

Tenant B

I spoke to a second resident (Tenant B) as I was ‘door knocking’ one day, a process I was told, which was the best method of engagement with ‘hard to reach’ residents. This method of engagement will be revisited in Chapter Five in a discussion of Transforms own engagement with residents.

Her flat was on one of the hilly roads running up from the Quayside into the town centre, and she opened the door and, after a small conversation, agreed to an interview. I began again with a question on Ilfracombe:

Interviewer: ‘So are you from Ilfracombe?’

“*No no, I’ve lived all over the place.*”

Interviewer: So what brought you to Ilfracombe?

“*Well, it seemed like a good place to move to (laughs)*”

Interviewer: So where were you living before?

“*The Isle of White (laughs). Yeah. It’s a bit random. I’ve only been here three weeks on Thursday. I’ve got a disability so I’m not able to work.*”

Interviewer: So I hope you’re not on the top floor?

“*Middle one. I find the stairs tricky, but it was a first move from a long distance so I had to take whatever would accept me in the condition I’m in with Housing Benefit, because some landlords don’t like that and so I had*

to look at that, and price as well. With my budget, with the amount of money that I get. But as a first move it's a great place, because at least once I get up the stairs, I'm on the level."

This tenant had a disability and was in receipt of Incapacity Benefit and Housing Benefit. Her disability meant that she found it difficult to walk. During our interview it emerged that she had only just moved to Ilfracombe after searching the internet and finding out that a number of estate agents that accepted tenants in receipt of Housing and Incapacity Benefit- something she found difficult to find elsewhere.

Incapacity Benefit claimants like Tenant B form a significant group of claimants in coastal towns across the country (Fothergill 2008). These are not a well understood group of individuals and data relating to their lives and movement is scarce in policy and academic circles. Tenant B therefore provided me with a small insight into reasons for moving to a coastal area such as Ilfracombe. One report concerning the seaside economy puts forward a common theory for disabled residents such as Tenant B moving to coastal areas:

"incapacity claimants in coastal towns are not a well-understood group. They were included in the Seaside Economy survey of non-employed residents and the findings suggested that only around a quarter say they 'can't do any work' and approaching half would like a job. One theory is that seaside incapacity numbers are inflated by those who move into the area to be on benefit – because of available housing perhaps, but more generally because claimants think it is nicer to be on benefits by the sea than anywhere else. There is scant reliable evidence on this point." (Fothergill 2008:11)

but the authors conclude in their report that there is scant evidence of this. This suggestion has a moral undertone which resonates subtly with the moral underclass discourse embedded within neighbourhood renewal policy. In relation to this, Tenant B did not suggest in any way that she had moved to Ilfracombe to live a nicer, better quality of life by the sea, but instead, because of the cheap accommodation and ready acceptance of Incapacity and Housing Benefit by her

landlord. Additionally, the topography of Ilfracombe itself and the street she lived on- which was very hilly- would not have made this an ideal choice for her to live. Moreover, being on the 1st floor of the HMO (with a flight of stairs to climb) was not ideal for someone who had trouble walking. Yet she felt pleased that the estate agent had found this place for her, and talked to me about the difficulty it is for people with physical disabilities to find appropriate rented accommodation.

Consequently, I demonstrate that Tenant B had moved to Ilfracombe for the availability of cheap accommodation and the willingness of landlords to accept a tenant in receipt of benefits. In many ways, this place or accommodation was not ideal for the tenant. Her flat was not on the ground floor and Ilfracombe itself has a unique topography where housing in the central ward is condensed along the roads of undulating hills, not ideal for someone with a disability. Indeed her flat was at the bottom of one of these hills, where walking to the town centre would be an uphill struggle. This was not necessarily acknowledged by the estate agent and, surprisingly, did not emerge as a sore point for concern of the resident in any of the interviews.

Another Tenant I spoke to, Tenant C, also agreed that living in his HMO flat was due to the cheap price and willingness of his landlord to accept Housing Benefit and his four dogs.

Tenant C

I spoke to Tenant C after a house call/house inspection with housing officers from NDDC. He lived in a basement studio flat of a large HMO. For context, I would like to note that the landlord was not present during the interview but he *had* been at the flat during the council inspection for the previous half an hour, and his presence had been felt by myself and the tenant. I opened with a question on how he came to live in this property:

Interviewer: 'So what brought you to live here?

"Er, I've actually got a small holding in ... and rented a four bedroom bungalow there, and we bought all the land around it, cus the old lady that lived there said that one day, she didn't live there, she owned it, said that one day, we could buy the bungalow, it was an asbestos bungalow you know, erm so we bought all the land around it, built on the land on all that and er, we got kicked out about three years ago now. She left it to her two sons and they kicked us out, and we'd been there ten years, so erm, we bought a caravan to put on the land and we were there for 18 months, and the residents kicked up, and we got kicked off there, although it was a registered smallholding but not allowed to be there and all that blah blah blah, that's how we came here."

Interviewer: 'So how long have you been here?'

"Just two years I think. Mike is brilliant. Excellent landlord. Leaves us alone. Rent is fairly fair, I got four dogs, I shouldn't think I'd get anywhere else on Housing Benefit and having four dogs."

The tenant made it clear during this first interview that he was *very* happy with the landlord and that he would *not* be able to find anywhere else that would accept a tenant with Housing Benefits and four dogs in the flat. The tone of the interview suggested that he felt indebted to the landlord for allowing him to keep his dogs in his flat, and he was overly praising of his landlord. This may have been due to the fact that his landlord had been present at the house during the housing inspection earlier that day. Despite this 'happiness' with his landlord, it could be suggested that there was an underlining fear to voice a complaint. The opportunities for tenants to engage in processes of complaint are formal in structure and they could result in an eviction- if the local authority has to serve notice on a landlord to rectify the problem of complaint. This problem will be touched upon again in Chapter Five when presenting empirical findings from NDDC housing officers. This experience begins to raise questions about the spaces of engagement and participation provided for tenants to be 'heard' in an appropriate, safe environment. These will be discussed in Chapter Five.

Again, this tenant had moved to Ilfracombe and was living in this HMO flat due to its cheap availability, readiness to accept Housing Benefit and additionally, because the landlord would accept his four dogs.

Tenant D

This extract has been taken from the first of two interviews with Tenant D, which was recorded shortly after I went on a house visit to her flat with a housing officer from the Healthier Homes (HH) initiative (working with Transform). The HH initiative will be discussed in more detail in the next two chapters of the thesis. The HH housing officer was not present during the interview but had been in the flat with me for the previous half an hour. I opened by asking her why she had moved to Ilfracombe and how she came to live in her HMO flat:

Interviewer: 'So you've been here 8 years yeah?'

"It will be 8 years, next April"

Interview: 'What was it like when you first moved in?'

"(Laughs) Horrible."

Interviewer: 'Why did you move here?'

"What is was, I was living down the pier, in a pub with my brother in law, and my sister, and when they sold it, they moved away, so I needed to move into a flat. And this was owned by Skinners [Estate Agents] at the time, not Thompsons, and it was reasonable rent, it was down by the key where I wanted to be. Cus I still wanted to, because I worked down there, so I wanted to live locally. Erm it needed a lot of cleaning and stuff. Lots and lots of bleach. Because when we moved in, Skinners didn't do anything to it"

Interviewer: Nothing at all?

"Nope. I mean when we moved in there was even a commode in the kitchen. (laughs), lucky us. No. I took a good few days cleaning. But, I mean, it's a good size flat."

Originally from Manchester, this tenant moved into her flat eight years ago as she wanted somewhere close to the Quay that accepted tenant in receipt of Housing Benefit. She told of the dirty and cold state her flat was in when she first moved in but stated that this was “*part and parcel*” of finding a cheap place to live which would accept Housing Benefit.

The cheapness of the private rental sector in central Ilfracombe, and the willingness of landlords to accept Housing Benefit is well known amongst the local community and quickly discovered by those looking a cheap accommodation and acceptance of benefits as rent. Another example is given below.

Tenant E

These are extracts from another HMO tenant whom I interviewed twice. The first time I met her was during a NDDC housing inspection, and I conducted the first interview in her flat as the inspection was still taking place around the HMO. Again, I asked her how she came to live in Ilfracombe and in her HMO flat:

Interviewer: So how did you come to live here?

“Because we are working, last year, and my partner come here last year, from Poland also. Then I looking for accommodation, then I go to this agency and then I find it. And we are happy here. For us, it is enough.”

The tenants were also in receipt of Housing Benefit. This couple, originally from Czech Republic, lived in a spotless, but very cold and damp flat. The tenant had gone to an estate agency in the centre of Ilfracombe whilst living with her daughter, and they had offered them a ‘cheap’ flat in a HMO and were told that the landlord would accept Housing Benefit. During my visits to this resident it became clear that she was not able to read English well, and would ask me to read letters from the council to her. This will be presented more in a following section which raises questions about a tenant’s ability to access appropriate local knowledge and services.

In all of the examples above, tenants moved to HMOs in Ilfracombe because of the availability of cheap accommodation and the readiness of landlords to accept Housing Benefit. This thesis presents little evidence which highlight the reason non-employed working age adults move to coastal towns to be in a ‘nicer environment’, discussed by Fothergill (2008). The report by Fothergill also suggests that although the low cost private rental sector acts as the point of entry for seaside accommodation that the majority of individuals do *not* move to coastal towns purely for housing reasons. However, my small sample of tenants suggests otherwise, with the first five tenants presented above stating their reasons for moving to the coastal town of Ilfracombe were due to the availability of cheap accommodation and the readiness of landlords to accept Housing Benefit.

Tenant F however, did have an additional reason for moving to Ilfracombe. His story is presented below.

Tenant F

Tenant F was somewhat of a well-known character among both the local authority and HH (Transform) housing officers. I made a house call to see him one afternoon to ask if would like to converse with me about his current living situation and he general views on Ilfracombe – as it was suggested by the officers at NDDC that he was very talkative on such issues. I interviewed him on another occasion four months after this first interview.

Interviewer: How long have you lived in this flat?

“Five years, or four years.”

Interviewer: And how did you come to live here?

“Well I knew, I knew that it was coming. I walked out of a council house in Birmingham- central heating, beautiful place, to come here to this bedsit, because I was retiring, because I was ill, I got me boat in the harbour,

that's all that I wanted. They just don't do anything. This council is rubbish."

Interviewer: How did you find this flat though?

"I found it because my friend lived in the top flat. And the girl that lived here, I heard she was going and I put in for it. I was a mug really. I shouldn't have done really. I should've just stopped where I was. Because they haven't got a clue this council they are rubbish. They don't do nothing for me!"

During this interview the tenant became very aggravated. His original intention was to move to Ilfracombe so he could be near his boat, which was moored in Ilfracombe Quay. Consequently he was able to find a flat overlooking the Quay in a HMO which accepted tenants in receipt of Housing Benefit and Incapacity Benefit. The most important thing for this tenant's move to Ilfracombe was his ability to be near his boat. This is in some ways representative of the suggestion that Incapacity Benefit claimants move into coastal towns to live in receipt of benefits in a 'nicer' environment. However, this is not necessarily true in any of the cases above, but Tenant F did want to be near his boat in a coastal town, which was difficult for him previously in Birmingham.

Summary

These tenant case studies aim to present the stories of residents living in poor quality housing in Ilfracombe. In addition to these six interviews, I managed to interview twenty-three tenants, each with differing stories, serving to illustrate the heterogeneity of tenant's reasons and stories for living in a HMO in Ilfracombe. However, I demonstrate through the empirical findings above, that their story usually funnelled in to two *practical* reasons for their HMO residence: the availability of low-cost privately rented accommodation, and the willingness of landlords to accept tenants who were in receipt of benefits. This section begins to tease out some points that provide the underlining local context to the rest of the thesis. The next section aims to provide subsequent findings in regard to tenant's

experiences with landlords, highlighting in particular, the lack of access to knowledge, or avenues of representation, when experiencing housing problems.

4.4.ii. Dealings with Landlords and Opportunities for Engagement

After spending time in Ilfracombe, either through way of talking to NDDC, Ilfracombe Town Council, Transform or local community workers, it became a well drawn out theme in my findings that many landlords in Ilfracombe, and the central ward in particular, had a bad reputation for being unscrupulous and absentee in nature. This is something I would come to hear on a regular basis from these local sources. However, in this opening empirical chapter I feel it is important to open out the discussion from the tenant's perspective, and in this vein I aim to present Tenants A-F description of their own landlord/estate agent relations. I will endeavour to add my own context to these descriptions, through ethnographic observation which has been noted during interviews, conversations and visits.

Tenant A

Interviewer: So did you go through an agent?

"Thompsons. They did all that for me. They do all of these [HMOs]."

Interviewer: So you haven't met the landlord?

"No."

Interviewer: So how have you found Thompsons?

"Thompsons are great, anything what goes wrong, I just ring them up, and the fire alarm was going off at 2 o clock in the morning and I didn't no if it was electric or whatever or if it was the battery, so I rang Thompsons up and they said alright, we'll get on to the fire people, so they are going to come out on Wednesday to check it. Noone else's alarm is going off, it is just mine. It's gone off twice now, it's gone off at half past eight in the evening, and 2 o clock in the morning! There's nothing cooking! There's nothing on! So, and I thought do I have to reprogramme it or something, so Thompsons rang the fire people up, its only been fitted two years, so

they are going to come and have a look at it on Wednesday. I mean, I don't have the landlord's address, so I don't know where he lives."

Interviewer: Do you know the landlords name?

"No, I don't know that. Whether its on a piece of paper I don't know. It might be."

Interviewer: Would it give you more piece of mind if you knew who the landlord was?

"Erm, no I think I can get things done through Thompsons. I think its just a case of they've got to go through the landlord and the landlords got to price it up and see what its going to cost him."

At the time of this first interview, Tenant A had only been in this flat for two weeks. He seemed fairly optimistic that the estate agents Thompsons would be able to sort any problems out that he faced. This interview took place on a Friday morning, and he would have to wait five more days before Thompsons had arranged for the Fire Service to come out and check the flat. I did not see inside his flat on this occasion. The second time I spoke to him was approximately three months later. On this second occasion he had a number of problems with the flat which he had put forward to Thompsons (these will be discussed in more detail in the next section). He seemed a little more frustrated with the estate agents and the landlord than on the previous occasion:

"The end of the day is, what's he [landlord] wanna do? Does he want it left empty? Because that one, on the middle floor, they've moved out, they moved out so, they've gone, and some of the back ones are empty so, it must be costing him money to have them empty so. You know. He's got to sort it out really."

The frustration felt on the part of the tenant was clear during this second interview. After three months in the flat he had noted a number of problems which he had passed on to Thompson's Estate Agency. These were often met by a slow response. This frustration demonstrates the narrow opportunities deemed available by tenants for complaints, and the lack of engagement provided

through estate agents or landlords in the town. When asked if he would make a complaint to the local authority, the tenant said that he would not.

Tenant B

Tenant B, although not wanting to voice any loud complaints to me, also had trouble with her housing conditions and was met by a slow response from the estate agent. Again, in conjunction with the tenant above, she states that knowing her landlord is not a major concern:

Interviewer: Did you go through an agent or a landlord?

"Agent."

Interviewer: And that's Thompsons I take it?

"Yes."

Interviewer: So how have you found the agent so far? You've been here three weeks?

"Fine, great".

Interviewer: Do you know who your landlord is?

"No. Erm, I don't know. It might be on my tenancy agreement I don't know because everything goes through the agent. I'm not bothered about that."

Tenant B had only been in her flat for three weeks at the time of the first interview. We spoke on her doorstep for about 25 minutes and I did not go inside the flat. Approximately four months later I spoke to her again and she offered to make me a cup of tea in her flat whilst we spoke. I climbed the stairs to the middle floor with her in front of me. The stairs were fairly steep and she took a slow and steady climb whilst we were chatting. It was apparent that the middle floor flat, which she had initially taken due to its cheap price and willingness to accept tenants on Housing and Incapacity Benefit, was quite inappropriate to her level of disability (the tenant suffered from a physical disability which made it difficult for her to walk). Though she still did not think this was a problem during

the second interview. She had some issues with the flat though, which she was trying to resolve through the estate agency:

"Sorry, it's very cold in here. I have to keep put on (electric fire) sometimes but it is so expensive. It the windows. Sometimes you can see the wind blowing through the curtains!"

Interviewer: Have you spoken to the landlord about this?

"I've spoken to Thompsons (the estate agents)"

Interviewer: And what did they say?

"They are just talking to the landlord now. Hopefully we might be able to get it fixed. I've got some really thick curtains now though (laughs)."

Although frustrated, this tenant still presented an optimistic outlook in regard to rectifying these housing problems. However, this findings draw out some questions. Firstly, this raises questions regarding the lack of empowerment felt by tenants in regard to their housing conditions. After complaining to estate agents, and not knowing landlord information, the tenants could only sit and wait for repairs to be made. Second, it raises questions of methods of tenant engagement in relation to housing problems by the local authority and the neighbourhood management pathfinder Transform. These are questions which will be explored in the following chapters of this thesis.

Tenant C

Tenant C knew his landlord in person. I managed to speak to Tenant C twice with a three month break between each interview. During the first interview the landlord had been at the HMO for the previous half an hour during a council housing inspection. I did feel from this visit onwards the tenant associated me with the local authority and consequently would not say anything he perceived to be negative about his landlord. However, he did speak quite openly about his landlord on both occasions and these are extracts which help to unravel their relationship.

Interview One

"He is brilliant. Excellent landlord. Leaves us alone. Rent is fairly fair, I got four dogs, I shouldn't think I'd get anywhere else having four dogs"

Interviewer: So he's okay?

"Oh yes. I mean I know he wants to knock this through to a bedroom at one point. Which it be gutted anyway. So as soon as I leave, if I leave, then erm, erm. Then he will go through and gut the place. But he's not too worried about the dogs."

Interview Two

Interviewer: So, have you got any problems here?

"Erm, the heating. We've only got the gas fire. That's why we've got the bed in here basically [the bed is in the front room in front of the fire], that's it really, there is no central heating or anything. It's quiet, its ideal really, I'm very lucky."

Interviewer: So would you ask your landlord about the heating?

"Nah"

Interviewer: Because? (long pause) you wouldn't want to bother him?

"Yeah. I'm fine with it. I mean there's no point him spending any money on it because you know. But very happy. No complaints. Y'know once, the boiler went, and we had no hot water, so he came around and gave me keys to another flat so I could go around there and have a bath and everything- because we had no hot water or heating- you know, brilliant."

Interviewer: So how long was that for?

"Oh, just a few weeks. But it was fine. No problem."

The tenant was obviously cold in his flat- he was wearing a thick coat and he had moved the bed into the main living room in front of the fire. But he stated throughout both interviews that he had a good relationship with his landlord, something that I felt may have been due to my first visit to the flat during a housing inspection with officers from NDDC and his consequent view of me as

aligned to the council in some way. Again, these findings demonstrate some areas for concern regarding processes of tenant engagement and avenues for a tenant 'voice' in relation to the local authority and Transform. These are agencies charged with providing opportunities to engage and represent 'hard to reach' tenants and residents in ways which might provide a platform for them to make real complaints and changes to their housing conditions. The thesis aims to present some of the avenues developed in Chapter Five.

Tenant D

Tenant D also described a similar frustration with the estate agents, but again, kept a positive outlook on the situation.

Interviewer: So would you feel okay if you had a problem to tell Thompsons?

"Oh Yeah. No I went up the other day. Because we've now got a crack in the ceiling in the hall, above the front door..... And he (Thompsons) came round yesterday, well I wasn't here, so he probably did, and they'll come and do it. But no, if I have anything I will go and tell them. Because when I came in here there was a cooker, and Thompsons are responsible for replacing that. They've always been good with that. I think I'm on my fifth one."

Interviewer: Fifth one, wow, what are you cooking in that?

"They just keep sending me shit cookers. A couple of years ago me oven blew up on Christmas day."

Interviewer: Really?

"Yeah, I was halfway through cooking my turkey. So everything else worked apart from my oven. So my boss let me use his cooker to cook my turkey! But no Thompsons have always been fine if I've had any problems. Because there was one stage when Housing Benefit buggered up on my rent and stopped paying my rent, and I was still going in paying just £20 a week top up, and it got to £1200 in arrears before they told me that Housing Benefit hadn't been paying my rent, and I got a letter for a notice to quit. So I gone in to speak to Marge, and she said 'they've stopped paying your rent' and I thought 'did nobody think it strange not to tell me?' you know you think after a couple of weeks someone would say

something? but I got about £1200 in arrears and so we just come to an agreement and I was just paying off an extra however much a week, once it had been sorted out. And it took a couple of years for me to get it down, I mean I was paying an extra so much every week, but I never got any hassle from them [Thompsons].”

During the interview, the tenant just laughed off the fact that the estate agents had not told her that she had got into £1200 worth of arrear payments. She was obviously annoyed with them but as they had helped her make an arrangement to pay it off gradually she had accepted what had happened with optimism. She did state that this had made a difference to her income level (as she made weekly payments to reduce the debt), and was glad once she had paid it off. However this mistake by the estate agents severely affected her income level for almost two years.

Again, the resident did not make a complaint to the estate agents or to an official local body such as NDDC, demonstrating that these processes often occurred without the knowledge, avenues or willingness of tenants to make complaints through official procedures.

Tenant E

Interviewer: How is your landlord?

“You know we are going every month and pay the rent, and that’s all. We are happy.”

Interviewer: Would you let him know if you needed any improvement?

“Erm...”

Interviewer: If you needed anything in the flat fixing?

“Oh yes. There is a lot of things that need fixing.”

Interviewer: And do you tell the landlord this?

“... Yes.”

The Czech Republic couple were also careful not to complain about their landlord, whom they knew personally. They did state however, that things needed fixing but in conjunction with previous demonstrations, they did not elaborate further or make complain too loudly.

Tenant F

"(lists a number of complaints about the flat)"

Interviewer: So have you told your landlord about this?

"They don't want to know, they are not interested. They got no money."

Interviewer: Have you told the agents? The estate agents?

"They've got no money. They just put you in promise land all the time. Promises promises. Whenever anybody coming round, they [estate agents] will send a letter saying, 'oh, we're coming to have a look at this', but its only because someone is coming around, they are trying to pull the wool over your eyes, and the council are not much better."

Interviewer: So do you know your landlord?

"No. It's them, the [estate] agents!"

There was a sense of desperation on all occasions when I interviewed Tenant F. He genuinely believed that the estate agents representing his landlord were 'pulling the wool over his eyes' and any compliant he had to them would often be met with what he describes above as being empty promises. He also stated that the local authority are "*not much better*", implying that they would listen to his complaints and not carry out any repairs. Consequently he felt completely powerless and thought that complaints or engagement with any local agencies would not rectify the situation.

Summary

In the case of the six tenants above, some knew two knew their landlords personally and four went through the estate agency for everything. In the former cases, tenants were tentative about making complaints about their standard of accommodation and I found it difficult to draw out many complaints. In the latter case of tenants who went through agents, all had complained to their estate agents (excluding Tenant B) but when interviewing them a second time they often said the process of repair/renewal was very slow, and sometimes non-existent.

These experiences bring to the forefront the methods of engagement employed by NDDC and Transform to offer tenants advice, services and avenues for compliant and participation in the neighbourhood renewal process. From the empirical findings above, it appears that these methods are not reaching the 'hard to reach' tenants described in this section, whose voices and experiences could provide beneficial knowledge to the development of appropriate neighbourhood services and avenues of participation for other 'vulnerable' residents. These methods of engagement, and the prioritising of certain forms of 'local intelligence' (as outlined in PAT4, SEU 2000) which excludes individuals such as these tenants from the participatory process, will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Four and Chapter Five.

4.4.iii. Housing Standards

This section will present extracts from the six case study tenant interviews relating to the *actual* physical problems concerning their accommodation. I feel that it is important to include this section to give the reader some context as to the levels of poor housing conditions that some residents face.

Tenant A

Interview 1

Interviewer: So you've only been in [the flat] two weeks, so that's not really that long to find problems with it?

"Well there is problems with it, I mean I've already found problems with it."

Interviewer: What problems?

"Well the windows won't shut properly, that bathroom window up there, the top one, there's about that much gap on one side, I can't shut it. The bath tap, the guy who lived here before, must have taken the fitting on it, so the guy came out yesterday, because the only way I could have a bath was by sticking my finger in the hole, in the bath, and filling it with hot water. Of course that gets a bit hot after a while."

Interview 2

Interviewer: So how is it now in wintertime?

"Cold. I mean these windows still letting a lot of heat out. These windows here are rotten. It's very cold in here. You can't really heat it."

Interviewer: Yes, it's freezing.

I had to agree during this visit with Tenant A that his flat was indeed, very cold in the winter time. This was by no means the only HMO flat that suffered from rotten or poorly fitting windows, and many of the HMOs that I visited during the winter were so cold that I could see my breath hang in the air as I conducted interviews inside the flats. This was a problem also felt by Tenant B.

Tenant B

The only problem that Tenant B would vocalise about the flat on each occasion on I spoke to her was the windows let out a lot of heat, consequently making the flat very cold. This was particularly apparent during the winter months which were when our second interviews took place. However on both occasions it still struck me that living on a middle floor flat, where she had to climb a flight of stairs was not appropriate to her disability and was causing her some level of discomfort which she did not talk about with me.

Tenant C

Tenant C opened up a little more to me during our second interview:

Interview Two

Interviewer: So how are things?

"Fine. Yep good."

Interviewer: So you still relatively happy with the flat?

"Yeah. Well I wouldn't want to be here the whole time. Because it's a very dull cold basement flat. No problem with the landlord. But I've got four dogs, so I've got a heck of a problem finding another place really. But it does get very cold. I got to put this [gas heater] on full, and it's costing me £5 a day. Yeah, £5 a day."

Interviewer: So would you want central heating?

"Oh yeah. Of course."

Though Tenant C did not want to complain too loudly about the flat, his bed was in the living room, in front of the gas fire because it was too cold to sleep in the bedroom. Additionally, during my first visit with the NDDC Housing officer, I was later told that the gas fire was in a terrible condition and must be fixed as soon as possible to prevent anything from "*going wrong*".

Tenant D

Tenant D had been living in her flat for almost 8 years at the time of the first interview. Over these eight years she had experienced a number of problems with the standard of housing

Interviewer: What was it like when you first moved in?

"Horrible."

She discussed at length the state of the flat when she and her family moved in which she described as “*disgusting*”. And, as already extracted above, the problems she has had with her cooker- which she had replaced by Thompsons a number of times. There had also been other serious problems, including the ceiling caving in on them:-

Interviewer: So what were the windows and heating like when you first moved in?

“Well, that’s not the original fire, that was a gas fire and the windows weren’t as bad as they were, but they just got worse and worse. Thompsons did come in and bodge them up. You know, over time, I’ve had a lot of trouble with the flat, we’ve had really bad storms, 2001 we had a really bad winter, and the ceiling caved in in the first bedroom, it rained on the inside of our bedroom, the only room that was dry was the middle room”

Interviewer: Is that they play room?

“Yeah, but at the time it was full of stuff because I was pregnant. So a lot of stuff got ruined..... so we were all sleeping in here [the front room]. November it happened, and the ceilings got fixed at the end of February.”

Again, these extracts from my empirical findings aim to demonstrate to the reading, the extremely poor housing conditions that many residents in the central ward of Ilfracombe are faced with.

Tenant E

Interview One

“We have another room in here, but it is like spare room because it is very cold, and we can’t use it because it is not any heating.”

Interviewer: So is the heating a problem here?

“No no no. Just this room yes. I mean, yes, some people downstairs use electric for this room because they have the same problem.”

(We hear the NDDC inspection officer talking to the landlord outside)

Interviewer: Do you know why they are here?

"Er, no. Why?"

(At this point during the interview, the landlord came into the flat and interrupted our conversation.)

Interview Two

During a second interview Tenant E opened up a little bit more about any housing problems they had but was still certain to tell me that they were "happy" living there.

"I think everything is okay you know. Problem is toilet, because it is not in here. It is in the corridor and at night I must go running to toilet. Sometimes there problem with shower, because when it is cold there inside is cold because it's not heated because this ... but we are happy."

Tenant F

The next quotes are taken from each of the interviews conducted with Tenant D and have been put together to show the extent of the housing problems which is felt faced with.

"I give up. I've been seriously ill for 3 months. Caused through damp, swell coming up from this café, made me ill, everything about it is wrong this place. That's the only fire I got [points to a little electric fire], I got a fridge thermometer in my salad drawer at the bottom of the fridge, and it's colder in the bathroom than it is in the fridge."

"Look at this, [Tenant F takes me to the kitchen area], I told them the smell and the cold air is coming from down there, look at it, it's disgusting [shows me a lot of damp]. They just say 'got no money, got no money', well they should get some bloody money."

"It's leaking in here [living room]. I got a grant for £2000, disabled grant... where is it? They sent me bloody light bulbs. How can I keep warm? But I've got bloody light bulbs all over the place."

These extracts demonstrate the level of frustration, desperation and the extremely poor housing conditions that Tenant D was living in.

Summary

These extracts serve to demonstrate to the reader the extent of the housing problems residents are faced with. The findings presented here are not on the extreme end of the scale, but are representative of the experiences of the majority of central ward residents that I spoke to.

Although the low standard of affordable warmth/heating in their houses was a key issue in each of their flats, the housing problems presented were variable and much more complex with this. They included broken boilers, broken cookers, excessive damp, exposed wires, uncertified gas fires, a caved in ceiling, and stairway access (for two tenants with a disability). In addition to this, the points raised in the above sections demonstrate some of the social, economic and political barriers to resident's participation in the neighbourhood renewal process. For example, I suggest that the availability of cheap housing in Ilfracombe, and unavailability in the larger town of Barnstaple, plays some role in the exclusion of residents from access to the labour market. Residents also displayed a lack of empowerment in regard to making complaints, whilst also feeling unable to trust and engage with the local authorities. This is a process which suggests there are also social and political barriers to engagement. These are issues which shall be explored in the following chapters of this thesis.

The sections above present tenant views and experience regarding housing and its associated problems. It aimed to provide some context to the lives and experience of real people living in neighbourhoods of deprivation. The next section continues this theme by presenting another key issue which was drawn out of my empirical findings- access to employment.

4.4.iv. Employment and Opportunities

Ilfracombe suffers from a higher than the national average level of unemployment. This next section aims to present tenant's views and experiences regarding the labour market with the aim of identifying a series of questions which can be explored in the following empirical chapters in relation to the operation and outcomes of NDDC and Transform.

The quotes used in this section have been extracted from a number of resident interviews beyond those of Tenants A-F, one interviewee was in full time employment, one was employed as a seasonal worker, two were registered with a disability and unable to work, and two were currently seeking work and were in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance. All tenants were in receipt of Housing Benefit at the time of interviews. When tenants A-F quotes are used the will be labelled, all other quotes will be noted as Ilfracombe resident.

The seasonal nature of work in Ilfracombe, combined with its lack of non-seasonal business and industry meant that residents thought employment opportunities in Ilfracombe were limited. It was often stated in interviews with residents that Ilfracombe lacked opportunities for paid work. This is a sentiment echoed by Tenants A and D, who were actively seeking work at the time I interviewed them. For example:

Interviewer: So you haven't managed to find any work in Ilfracombe?

"No."

Interviewer: and have you looked here?

"Yeah, I've been up to pathfinders today, gone through the job search and all them. Nothing. I mean I've applied for work; you just don't get any replies."

This view, that work was too seasonal in Ilfracombe which led to reduced employment opportunities, was also expressed by Tenant D:

"I'm not saying I want to be here for the rest of my life. There's no work here. It is too seasonal."

Other residents I spoke to similarly voiced similar concerns about the amount of work available in Ilfracombe and the surrounding areas.

"I mean I originally came here for work. Used to work on the windmill."

Interviewer: Windmill?! Where's that?

"Oh that's gone now, closed ten years ago."

Interviewer: So you don't work there now then,

"No. no. There's not much work around here. Not at all now. It's all seasonal"

Resident, Ilfracombe

The view that Ilfracombe offers little opportunity for work was again, echoed by many residents I spoke to. I give one more example below to emphasis this point:

"Work in Ilfracombe? Well that would be nice wouldn't it (laughs)"

Interviewer: What do you mean?

"Well there's nothing round here."

Seasonal employment and lack of year round jobs was a concern of most actively job-seeking residents I spoke to. However, despite the low-spirits among the (actively job seeking) residents I interviewed, a number of them were in low-wage part-time or (more rarely) full time jobs which provided them with a small level of income. For example, Tenant C worked the night shift packing shelves at the slightly controversial Tesco store, which had recently opened on the outskirts of Ilfracombe. Another tenant I interviewed had also recently gained a part time job at Tesco which she was very pleased about. However the availability of year-

round accessible jobs emerged as a key issue when I spoke to actively-job seeking residents.

As discussed in Chapter One, one of the underlining rationales of New Labour's neighbourhood renewal strategy was 'inclusion' of 'hard to reach' individuals through paid employment. Yet, as these empirical findings demonstrate, the opportunities for employment perceived to be available by residents in Ilfracombe, were very limited. However one of the main objectives of the national strategy was to tackle identified problems of long term worklessness in deprived areas, and the role of Transform in delivering this objective will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Five.

Signing on'

Following on from the issue of limited or no employment opportunities in Ilfracombe, throughout almost all of the interviews I conducted with actively-job seeking residents one theme appeared constantly- the isolation of Ilfracombe from Barnstaple. This isolation was mentioned in reference to either one or both of the key reasons presented below:

1. "Signing on"

Ilfracombe residents must travel to Barnstaple to sign on for Job Seekers Allowance. This process costs them money- for bus fare/petrol, and time- half a day's journey, each time they went.

2. Isolation

The isolation from Barnstaple made it difficult to travel and work there if a job opportunity arose. It could sometimes take over an hour to travel there by bus.

Both Tenants A and D mentioned this as a problem during their interviews. As presented in the first section, Tenant A originally wanted to live in Barnstaple for

access to work, but was unable to due to the lack of affordable rented housing. He was extremely angry that he had to pay to travel to Barnstaple every two weeks to sign on for Job Seekers allowance. He told me:

Interviewer: So you have to go to Barnstaple to sign on?

"Yep. Costs me £3.90 every time! Terrible"

Another resident discussion the same problem with me:

Interviewer: So you have to travel to Barnstaple to sign on?

"It costs me the bus fare, what's that, about £4 every time. That basically taking that off my Job Seekers Allowance which isn't much anyway. It takes it off just because I live here."

Resident, Ilfracombe

As this resident argues, by paying a bus fare of £3.80 each time he goes to sign on, his job seekers allowance payment is always minus £3.80, which gives him less money to live on each week. This was a common complaint among residents who have travel to Barnstaple to sign on at the Job Centre. And, as this resident and Tenant A both explained in their interviews, they were unable to find cheap low-cost rental accommodation in Barnstaple at the time that they needed housing, so this was a process that was out of their hands. This frustrated sentiment was echoed more fiercely by two different Town Councillors. The first stated:

We have no job centre here. £4.20 on the bus. £3.90 is you get an all day on the first bus but not if you get the second. So if you go and sign on, which you have to every fortnight, or every week some of them now, have to go and sign on every week, then you are essentially living below the poverty line"

Transform Board Member, Ilfracombe "

And the second, who stated that she believed that it was an extremely dangerous situation to have to ask 'hard to reach' residents to face. She told me

"I think drug dealing is encouraged by the very reduced rate of benefit and these sanctions by the Job Centre because if you go down to the pub and someone says 'oh I'll give you fifty quid for running this up' what are you going to do if you have had your benefits stopped by the job centre if you can't sign on?"

Transform Board Member, Ilfracombe

This matter of having to travel to Barnstaple to sign on emerged through my empirical findings as a key issue for some actively-job seeking residents as well as local councillors and community workers. Hence, this process meant that some residents were actively excluded from access to the labour market and from an appropriate level of income. These two factors are identified by the PSE Survey, discussed in Chapter One, as identifiers of the process of social exclusion, raising questions around the consequences of these empirical findings in Ilfracombe. These findings will be drawn upon in Chapter Six.

The second concern which arose as an issue was the inability for residents to travel to Barnstaple for work, if offered employment in the town by the job centre. This emerged as a specific concern for female residents, and usually centred on the issue of childcare, or being able to pick their children up from school at finishing time. These concerns are presented in the next section.

During our second interview Tenant D was concerned about the lack of public transport to and from Barnstaple if she was to gain work there through the Job Centre. With two young children to look after she did not, understandably, want to be travelling back on an unreliable bus very late at night. She told me:

"the public transport service to Barnstaple is just not reliable enough [to get a job there]. I don't drive. Because I always work in pubs, I've worked in pubs for the past 15 years."

Another resident I spoke to was equally concerned about travelling to and working in Barnstaple due to her responsibility for childcare.

"The job centre got me a job there [in Barnstaple], in an office. And I was there for a few weeks but by the time I'd got the bus there and back I couldn't pick [son] up from school and it was just impossible. A really silly situation."

Resident, Ilfracombe

The empirical findings presented here demonstrate the gendered nature of New Labour's 'inclusion' policies, which do not necessarily take into account women's dual roles as carers and mothers. This is a point that will be explored in more detail in Chapter Five when exploring a 'back to work' initiative developed by Transform which was specifically aimed at 'hard to reach' women.

From these empirical presentations I was able to identify and demonstrate two key issues in relation to employment that residents experienced. Both difficulties stemmed from the difficulty in travelling to Barnstaple to participate in paid work, and the difficulty in travelling to Barnstaple to sign on for Job Seekers Allowance. There was a general feeling among central ward residents that there was not enough paid jobs for people in Ilfracombe itself, and the difficulty of travelling outside the town, particularly for residents without their own car or with child care responsibilities, made job-seeking especially difficult. So in spite of New Labour's overarching rationale of neighbourhood renewal, which emphasizes 'inclusion' through paid work, the opportunities for this inclusion were not being provided for residents and, it could be suggested, the lack of presence of Job Centre Plus in Ilfracombe was exacerbating their exclusion. These are findings which will be drawn from in Chapter Five and Six.

4.5. Discussion of Resident Stories

This chapter acts as a platform for the following chapters of the thesis. It does this by presenting key *resident* issues which emerged from analysis of all 29 interviews and numerous other conversations with central ward residents in Ilfracombe. The aim was to use my empirical findings to provide the reader with some context of the lived-experiences of ‘hard to reach’ residents. These residents live in the area which the neighbourhood management pathfinder Transform was deployed, and statistics surrounding their lives, evidenced through the IMD 2004, were used as part of the identification and deployment of Transform to this neighbourhood. Therefore, I argue, that the experiences and opinions of these residents is well placed to help understand and examine the process of neighbourhood management on the ground. Consequently the themes raised in this chapter will form the underlining narrative of the following chapters.

This discussion section will now examine these views and experiences in relation to the literature explored in the Chapter One, specifically looking at the relationship between housing in the low-cost private rental sector (LCPRS) and social exclusion. This section draws upon the PSE Survey discussion provided previously to examine resident lived-experience of ‘identifiers’ of social exclusion. In addition to this, the section will discuss in more detail how certain experiences of social exclusion, outlined in Chapter One, affect the lives of HMO residents.

The majority of residents I interviewed living in the LPRS in Ilfracombe, presented here in the experiences of six tenants above, had moved to Ilfracombe due to the availability of cheap accommodation and the willingness of landlords to accept Housing Benefit as payment of rent. An analysis of their experiences could be used to argue that exclusion from a reasonable level of income, and their reliance on small benefit payments, had excluded them from other housing options. Taking this into consideration, in addition to the lack of council housing

in north Devon and the shortage of social housing in Devon and across the rest of the country, they had therefore, been pushed into the LCPRS as one of the only options of housing available to them. The willingness of landlords to accept tenants in receipt of Housing Benefit, as was the case in all tenant interviews, is the significant factor in tenants moving into HMOs in Ilfracombe. This raised a number of issues, the most prominent of which emerged during this presentation of my empirical findings which included accountability and lack of tenant empowerment, access to the labour market and the gradual process of neighbourhood degeneration through the build up of HMOs in a state of disrepair. These will now be discussed in turn.

Accountability and Tenant Empowerment

Unlike council or social housing, the LCPRS and the HMOs found within it in Ilfracombe are characterised by landlords who are less accountable than councils or registered social landlords (RSL) to their tenants. Of the tenants interviewed, most did not know the name of their landlord, or did not have reachable contact details for them. On the most part, correspondence was made by tenants through estate agencies who had offices in the central ward of Ilfracombe. Standards of poor housing conditions, using guidance from the Decent Homes Standard (DCLG 2006), was found in all six tenants examples cited above.

Both local authorities and Registered Social Landlords (RLS) are under moral obligation to keep their accommodation up to a decent standard as not-for profit organisations which provide housing for vulnerable individuals and families. The Tenant Services Authority (TSA) from 2007 onwards is the official regulation body of RSL and has powers of intervention to challenge RSLs who do not meet the acquired standard. According to *Every Tenant Matters: A Review of Social Housing Regulation*, particular care must be taken to work in a mutual partnership of accountable between RSL and tenant and tenants will be empowered to in the process of RSL intervention and regulation (DCLG

2007b:16-17). However in contrast to this, the private rented housing sector has no regulatory or accountable body and landlords only have to sign up to accreditation schemes on a voluntary basis. In addition to this, and outside the timeframe of this thesis, the new Coalition Housing Minister has said that he has no intention of introducing a regulative body for the private sector and stated that a new national register for landlords, proposed at the end of New Labour's term, would unnecessarily introduce "*burdensome red tape and bureaucracy*" (Shapps 2010).

In this context I argue that tenants, such as those presented above, are left with much less power than those in council or social housing, and often feel unable to challenge their landlords or demand higher standards of housing conditions. The lack of regulative body for the private rented sector therefore, leaves local authorities with responsibility for tackling rogue landlords in a political climate where local authority spending and staff cuts and were already squeezing resources in the housing department to a minimum. Yet Transform, as a policy of New Labour's neighbourhood renewal strategy, which emphasizes the importance of community engagement and the empowerment of residents, offers the opportunity for the development of spaces of engagement and participation for residents experiencing these problems. The following chapters of this thesis aim to explore these opportunities in more detail.

However on a national level, New Labour had sought to resolve this issue somewhat by the proposal of a regulative body for private landlords. Conversely, during the writing up stage of this thesis, Grant Shapps, Coalition Minister for Housing stated that the decision to disregard a regulatory body for private landlords was in part due to the decision that:

"With the vast majority of England's three million private tenants happy with the service they receive, I am satisfied that the current system strikes the right balance between the rights and responsibilities of tenants and landlords" (Shapps 2010).

Although the Coalition government is outside the realms of this thesis I argue that this is an important point to uncover. As demonstrated in this chapter, two of the tenants I presented continually reiterated how “happy” they were with their current living situation despite poor housing conditions found during NDDC housing inspections in their flat and neither was willing to complain to me about their landlord. Consequently, the ‘happiness’ Shapps speaks of, particularly in relation to the LCPRS, cannot be quantified in any significant way when speaking with tenants of this sector- as many are just “happy” to find a cheap place to live with a landlord willing to accept Housing Benefit as demonstrated in the empirical findings of this chapter.

With no regulatory body to complain to beyond that of the council, tenants in this housing sector have been left disempowered, unable to undertake individual or collective action supported by a regulatory agency- as is the case with tenants in social housing. Here, I identify lack of tenant empowerment or a lack of engagement and participation, as one factor of social exclusion of tenants living in HMOs in the private rental sector of Ilfracombe. This is a theme which will be explored in the proceeding chapters.

Access to the Labour Market

As presented in Chapter One, lack of access to the labour market is identified by the PSE Survey as one of the identifiers of social exclusion (Gorden et al 2000). Unemployment is often concentrated in areas of poor housing such as those found in Ilfracombe central ward- where the majority of my 29 resident interviewees lived. As was subsequently demonstrated by the series of resident experiences in this chapter, access to the labour market posed a big issue to job-seeking individuals in Ilfracombe.

Through a presentation of my empirical findings, this issue emerged as far more complex than just a lack of jobs available, and included themes of seasonal

employment (which traditionally characterizes coastal towns), isolation from urban centres of employment, lack of access to Job Centre Plus and the vicious circle affecting some job-seeking residents- where the only cheap, available housing to them was in neighbourhoods already suffering from high levels of deprivation and lack of job opportunities- further excluding them from the labour market itself.

One theme to arise during a presentation of these findings was that isolation caused by living in Ilfracombe can work to exclude vulnerable groups of people. This process includes exclusion from the labour market, from their ability to visit the Job Centre in Barnstaple (to sign on and look for work) and the consequential difficulty some residents found travelling to and from jobs outside of Ilfracombe. The latter was particularly an issue for female interviewees and I argue that this gendered misunderstanding of home and work life plays a fundamental role in their exclusion from the labour market.

In addition to this latter point, many of the women I interviewed during my research were in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance, for which they travelled bi-weekly to Barnstaple to sign on. Many were also mothers, and accompanied their children to and from school. This meant that jobs outside of Ilfracombe were often inappropriate for them and compounded them to the small jobs market in Ilfracombe and its surrounding areas. Yet the importance of encouraging this group into paid work was an important factor in neighbourhood renewal. Schemes specifically designed to target this types of woman were put into action and shall be discussed further in Chapter Five when I examine an exercise class aimed to boost women's levels of self-confidence to guide them into paid employment. However, the problems to emerge from the women interviewed during the research in some ways unravel the gendered nature of Levitas's social integrationist discourse (SID) in relation to social exclusion (Levitas 1996). Policies embedded with SID favour paid employment as the acceptable method of active inclusion. Consequently, it could be argued that viewed in this context,

and taking into account the isolation, travel and childcare issues raised by the women I interviewed, SID is a discourse which actively excludes women in their position due to their position as mothers with a responsibility towards their children.

Housing and Neighbourhood Degeneration

Neighbourhood degeneration and renewal was not discussed directly with the six tenants whose stories are presented above. Instead these themes emerged during the examination of their interviews. These tenants, and many others I engaged with during the research process, told and showed me the problems and repairs which needed to be made to their HMO flats in order for them to become decent. In addition, the empirical findings presented in this chapter demonstrate that relationship between housing and neighbourhood degeneration is a deeply entwined one and I will use these findings, in conjunction with some local statistics, to present the depth of their complex relationship.

The views and experiences of the six tenants above, and many others interviewed during this PhD, are also evidenced by NDDC's *Private Sector Housing Condition Survey* finding that Ilfracombe has the highest percentage of vulnerable households living in non-decent conditions in the whole of North Devon at 66.5% when surveyed in 2009 (NDDC 1998). According to the *Private Sector Housing Condition Survey*, of the 450 HMOs found in North Devon, 206 are located in Ilfracombe. Of these properties, only 12 are actually in appropriate condition to be licensable by the local authority, and 62% of these HMOs are officially classified as being non-decent to live in. Here, 'non-decent' is a term used to identify homes which do not meet the required levels of a decent home set out in *A Decent Home* (DCLG 2006). This was the technical standard of housing conditions that were to be met, set out by the New Labour government in 2000.

To meet the standards of a decent home, houses must meet four criteria, which NDDC admit “*it is a relatively low standard and in failure to meet the standard should be a trigger for action*” (NDDC 2008:39). However, NDDC also note that: “*it may not be practical to make a dwelling decent, and it may also not be in the interest of the occupiers to do so*” (ibid:39), highlighting the underlining fear that in some cases, intervention through repair work may be the trigger that causes vulnerable residents to be evicted from their homes. This fear, and the role and experiences of NDDC housing officers on this subject, will be discussed in Chapter Five, but is presented to some extent in the subtle undertones of the tenant experiences in this chapter.

The problems the residents present on an individual housing basis during each interview is part of a wider problem of dilapidation and disrepair in the LCPRS as evidenced by the statistic that 62% of HMOs in Ilfracombe are officially classed as non-decent (NDDC 2008). It could be argued then, that these housing problems develop more widely into a neighbourhood suffering from severe levels of neighbourhood degeneration and deprivation, as evidenced by the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004 which placed Ilfracombe Central ward in the top 10% of deprived neighbourhoods in the country. Many of the residents, as presented in the stories above, live within these deprived boundaries, and in non-decent HMOs and, it could be argued, could be viewed as socially excluded due to the following entwined factors that are developed through neighbourhood degeneration: lack of tenant empowerment, lack of access to the engagement and participatory mechanisms, housing insecurity (which includes fear of raising housing complaints) and exposure to high levels of physical degeneration (through poorly managed, dilapidated HMOs). By demonstrating these factors this chapter aims to highlight the underlining issues identified through *resident experience*. The following chapters will explore the role of Transform and its associated partners in relation to some of these factors.

In conclusion, this chapter aims to present a sample of resident stories and experiences of living in the deprived ward of central Ilfracombe. It does this to provide the reader with some form of “bottom-up” context to the discussion of neighbourhood management found in the following empirical chapters.

Chapter Four will not address these issues directly, but will first examine the statistical construction Ilfracombe as an area of deprivation. Consequently it will provide a detailed examination of the conception and development Transform and unravel the practices of ‘community’ engagement, participation and partnership working through the neighbourhood management process.

Chapter Five:
The Construction of Neighbourhood Management

5.1. Introduction

The previous chapter identified a set of *key issues* that emerged during the research process and during analysis of interviews and conversations with residents in the central ward of Ilfracombe. This next chapter forms the first half of an empirical examination which explores how the process(s) of *neighbourhood management* has been constructed and implemented in Ilfracombe. It is the residents of Ilfracombe who form the fundamental core of this thesis, but it is the aim of this chapter, and the next, to explore the workings and process of neighbourhood management: as I argue the reason, validation and operation of neighbourhood management in Ilfracombe form an essential component to the resident's stories and experiences.

The chapter will consequently examine the development of the neighbourhood management pathfinder in Ilfracombe. This chapter is broadly split into four sections which launch the beginnings to an empirical exploration of neighbourhood management using my empirical research findings; an exploration which will continue throughout the thesis. This will be executed in part with use of the case study in Ilfracombe, North Devon. This case study will provide the basis for a detailed examination of neighbourhood management in the following chapters. It is worth noting here, in reference to this thesis, that the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder 'Transform' is used to illustrate one unique process in the development and operation of neighbourhood management- and is examined as a specific case study which may not be representative of other neighbourhood management pathfinders deployed across the country. This case study does however provide an insight into the internalisation and the translation of neighbourhood management policy by its targeted neighbourhood and community, and consequently, will be drawn from in

the concluding chapter to discuss the empirical findings in relation to the objectives of this thesis.

The first section of the chapter examines the initial development of the neighbourhood management pathfinder in Ilfracombe. This begins with a short discussion of the statistical identification of Ilfracombe as an area ripe for neighbourhood-intervention and is followed by an examination of the initial ‘idea’ and development of Transform by leading individuals. The second section of this chapter explores the development of partnership and joint working practices between Transform and its associated agencies. As my studentship was partly sponsored by the Department of Housing and Environmental Health, this exploration will take a particular focus on the partnership relationship between Transform and North Devon District Council (NDDC). Here, the aim is to demonstrate the development of a working partnership between the two agencies, and examine the tensions, difficulties and solutions brought to the surface during the partnership process. The third section presents a set of experiences which examine the notion of ‘inclusion’ in relation to partnership, and will discuss in detail the role of local elites in this development process. In a fourth section, the thesis will provide a more specific examination of the process(s) of partnership and joint working between NDDC and Transform. This section will present these experiences in relation to private-sector housing in Ilfracombe. However, the next section begins with a short examination of the statistical construction of neighbourhood management in Ilfracombe.

5.2. Statistical Construction of Neighbourhood Management in Ilfracombe

5.2.i. Identifying Ilfracombe

In Chapter One I argued that the urban policy initiatives, such as Transform, were established and invested through statistical counts of individuals and

populations, often evidenced through the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004. This section aims to unravel this process further in relation to Transform.

Ilfracombe is an ordinary coastal town in many ways. It is a town which is set on the North Devon coast, boasts beautiful beaches and cliff tops and has a quaint quay that is scattered with ice cream shops, cafes and restaurants, one (I was told repeatedly, and rather proudly, by Town Councillors,) owned by Damian Hirst, the famous artist.

It is also typical in other respects. Like many coastal communities, it has suffered from economic decline since the 1970s, as people began to holiday abroad in large numbers. Consequently, it has suffered a deepening sense of isolation and has witnessed a decline in investment which saw many of the grand Edwardian and Victorian seaside hotels converted into cheap flats and bed sits. This has left an ingrained legacy of poverty and deprivation in some areas of Ilfracombe, as also found in some other coastal towns across the country (Beatty and Fothergill 2004).

As stated in Chapter One, the central ward of the town was, according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004, among one of the 10% most deprived places in England, and still has one of the highest levels of non-decent housing in Devon. The central ward also has an above average level of residents in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance, Incapacity and Housing Benefit in comparison with the national average. In 2004, partly using the government's deprivation data, the Government Office for the South West (GOSW), in collaboration with North Devon District Council (NDDC) and Devon County Council (DCC), developed and deployed a Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder called 'Transform'. The development of this process shall now be examined in more detail.

The central ward of Ilfracombe was constructed as a 'problem area', as evidenced by the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004. A working rationale of

neighbourhood renewal was used to support, identify, delineate and act on this particular segment of the town. Here, central government statistics collected via local agents supported the problematisation of this space, underpinning the rationality of neighbourhood renewal and its moral foundations. It is the collection and production of these types of knowledges- relating to income, employment, health, education, housing, crime levels and environmental deprivation- that allowed the rationale behind neighbourhood renewal to be conceptualized and supported: and assisted the implementation of a programme of neighbourhood management within Ilfracombe Central ward. The collection and production of such knowledges are assembled within this specific rationale, supporting a moral direction upon which consequently, programs of reform are developed and implemented to explicitly target this neighbourhood- rather than any other in the town. In reference to a similar point in other research, Uitermark (2005:13) notes that:

“disadvantaged neighbourhoods, or rather the set of entwined institutions that identify and observe them, generate knowledge with respect to poverty, social exclusion and the management of public space”

and we can see this at work in Ilfracombe as official statistics identify and circumscribe a suitable space for intervention and management at neighbourhood level based on pre-circumscribed notions of poverty and social exclusion evidenced through the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004.

Uitermark goes on to argue that specific discourses, surrounding for example, high unemployment and poverty, will emerge from neighbourhoods that have been identified and conceptualized as suffering from these problematisations (Uitermark 2005). These discourses in turn characterise and support the representation of the ‘problem neighbourhood’ at a national level, and frame a series of programmes of action at a local level, in this case, within Ilfracombe central ward.

This representation is morally coloured and constructs a series of (in)appropriate identities around neighbourhood space, or more specifically, around residents of particular buildings and streets. Indeed, areas constituting “neighbourhoods” of deprivation, such as Ilfracombe central ward, are being constructed by a discourse which identifies their populations as economically and even morally deviant, and it could be argued that the discourse surrounding neighbourhood management is deeply embedded within moral underclass discourse and social integrationist discourse (SID), a discourse which valorizes employment and paid work as avenues to societal inclusion (Levitas 1996, 1998). Therefore, target individuals are amenable to techniques of neighbourhood management that seek to guide their users towards acceptable forms of moral and economic behavior.

Justification for Technologies of Neighbourhood Reform?

For Ilfracombe Central ward, and other neighbourhoods suffering from high levels of deprivation and poverty, the statistical knowledge collected via local agents is used as an explicit moral justification for the readjustment of neighbourhood-based behavior. Such a rationale uses technologies of citizenship to (re)engage target populations and guide them through programs of moral reform. This notion of an active citizenship has played a prominent role in neighbourhood management in Ilfracombe, where community engagement and participation is not just deemed good professional practice in political circles but is also seen as an ethical imperative for the development of ‘good’ community members, or citizens. To be a good citizen is to be an ‘active’ citizen, one who is responsible, accountable and conforms to the appropriate codes of conduct. Transform places particular emphasis on the importance of active citizenship within the communities it supports.

In reference to this concern with active citizenship, Transform, in some instances, relies firstly on the goodwill and organisation of various voluntary groups throughout the community and the active citizenship of local residents and volunteers. In the second instant, Transform aims to actively enrol community

members deemed to be ‘vulnerable’ into initiatives which are embedded with the Third Way’s notion of citizenship. Here, the rationality is assembled through neighbourhood management and deployed through a variety of technologies which help make social regulation operable in relation to the ‘Third Way’s particular infliction of citizenship. This shall be discussed in more detail in the fifth and sixth chapters of this thesis. However it is the aim of this short section to present the identification of Ilfracombe, as a neighbourhood ripe for intervention through the use of statistics which, I argue can be morally coded and used by the government to address a certain set of “moral” problems which can then be acted on through technologies of citizenship. Consequently, it was this identification of Ilfracombe, as an area of deprivation, which instigated the development of the neighbourhood management pathfinder Transform. Therefore this opening discussion provides the contextual basis to an examination of the practical initiation of Transform.

5.3. Political Construction of Neighbourhood Management in Ilfracombe

5.3.i. Introduction

There are formal government avenues through which neighbourhood management pathfinders are developed and implemented: simply put, regional offices are allocated money based on their level of deprivation, which is then bid for competitively by local government offices that have identified neighbourhoods of deprivation as evidenced by the IMD. These formal avenues were examined during the research process in north Devon and it is the aim of this section to use a presentation of my empirical findings, to unpack how the process of neighbourhood management was actually developed and implemented in Ilfracombe.

I interviewed key officers within NDDC to explore how the process of installing Transform was initiated. In the case of North Devon District Council, through a method of networking and negotiation, things were ‘started’ through a more

personal method of communication than a formal one: a telephone conversation between a senior officer at NDDC and a GOSW representative. During the interview with a senior officer of NDDC, the initial process was unfolded to me more clearly:

"Five years ago, I got a phone call from someone in GOSW in Plymouth, saying 'we have this neighbourhood management programme, that we are about to launch, we are looking for a handful of good contenders, have you thought of making a bid for Ilfracombe'. Nudge Nudge"

Senior Officer, NDDC

This senior officer had already developed a professional relationship with an officer at GOSW during previous communications. Their relationship was as such, that they both felt comfortable with this seemingly informal exchange over a relatively important pot of funding for neighbourhood renewal.

In continuation of this point, during my interview with the senior officer from NDDC, it transpired that the proposition for Transform funding took place during a telephone conversation; an associate for the GOSW had telephoned him in the office, told him about money available for 'deprived areas' within the region. At which point he:

"paused for a nanosecond, being very grateful for the phone call, spoke to one or two people here (NDDC) and spoke to the County (DCC) and said 'I think we should do this'."

This was also confirmed during an interview with another Head of Department at NDDC, who was one of the people the senior officer spoke to after the initial telephone conversation. It was this second senior officer was then to become co-author of the subsequent submission to GOSW for neighbourhood management funding. In the interview he discusses how Transform was initially developed.

Interviewer: Maybe you could tell me a bit about how Transform got off the ground?

"Well I was co-author of the original submission, the other person was George [from DCC] and we had an approach made to us by the GOSW, who said that they had identified, three areas I think at the time which clearly had a link to deprivation, where they wanted to put a neighbourhood management programme in.

Senior Officer 2, NDDC

So from this initial phone call from the GOSW to the CE of NDDC, the idea of installing a neighbourhood management pathfinder in North Devon was planted by the Government Office for South West, and then drawn up by two senior officers at NDDC and another senior officer from Devon County Council.

This process poses questions reflecting on the top-down mediation involved in neighbourhood management development. The initial development stage of Transform only encompassed three senior council officers, demonstrating presence of traditional hierarchical structures during the seemingly 'local' and 'participatory' process of neighbourhood management development.

At this beginning stage, the Housing and Environmental Health team, part sponsors of the studentship, were not a part of the development framework. However subsequently, in a move which paralleled the importance of the community engagement prerogative which underlines the process of neighbourhood management set out in the report by PAT4, members of Ilfracombe Town Council, Ilfracombe Alliance, and other 'elite' community representatives were then quickly drawn into the NMP development process and were spoken of in interviews with NDDC as active members of the funding bid (SEU 2000). The enrolment of local 'elite' individuals into this process will be presented in more detail in the following sections.

5.3.ii. Using "Community" as a Vehicle of Reform

According to the Transform website, neighbourhood management is:

"a programme that aims to improve quality of life by ensuring that local residents are a part of the decision making process in partnership with the service providers; helping to find tailored solutions to meet the particular needs of the three communities." (Transform 2010)

However, the extent to which local residents are enrolled into the decision making process is demonstrated in this section which presents the prioritisation of a set of 'elite' local actors over other, more 'vulnerable' residents of the central ward.

To illustrate this point, once the initial funding and framework was set up by the lead partners described above (GOSW, DCC and NDDC), members of Ilfracombe community (most notably members of Ilfracombe Town council) became quite a driving force behind NMP implementation, and were not only part of the consultation process, but very much led the consultation and direction in the formation of Transform. For example, prominent Ilfracombe residents played an important role as members of the interview panel for the appointment of a Transform Neighbourhood Manager. In this act, they were acknowledged as having the specialist local knowledge needed to identify a Neighbourhood Manager with the correct skills and the correct mentality (suited to the area) to run the neighbourhood management pathfinder. This process of enrolment of a set of local 'elite' individuals was described by one senior officer involving:

"several elements from members of the community, who were involved with some of the consultation events with each of the candidates, and two or three actually sat on the board of the appointment panel, who are clear people that have, who are residents in those deprived areas"
Head of Department, NDDC

A Town councillor and Transform Board member also agreed with the process, stating that:

"It was important that we [Ilfracombe residents] were central to the appointment process, as this person would be coming into our town and helping to change and manage our community. We are the ones who

have to work with them and we wanted to appoint someone capable and ready to lead from the front."

Ilfracombe Town Councillor

Here, it is demonstrated that specialist local knowledge was privileged as an important component to the neighbourhood management process from the very beginning when appointing a neighbourhood manager. However, I argue that these empirical findings suggest that it was a particular kind of specialist knowledge, via a set of local 'elite' that were deemed appropriate to the developmental process of Transform. In evidence of this, the central ward residents who formed part of the interview panel for the Neighbourhood Manager were either Town Councillors or already established prominent members of the community. Many of these 'elite' residents then went on to become members of the Transform board. This demonstrates that the opportunities for community participation in the development of Transform, was restricted to a narrow engagement with a set of 'elite' local residents. This point shall now be presented further in relation to the Transform Board.

5.3.iii. Creating an Inclusive Development Process?

Transform operates over an area which included the villages of Coombe Martin, Bratton Fleming as well as the town of Ilfracombe, and it was the amalgamation of these three areas of deprivation was used as a successful geographical location for the NM pathfinder Transform. Consequently, the Transform Board was made up of several representatives from each of these local communities, originally encompassing 28 members including DCD, NDDC, Ilfracombe Town Council, Bratton Fleming and Coombe Martin Parish Councils, North Devon Homes, Police and Fire Services, NHS Devon as well as local residents, setting the tone for a locally focused management structure. An emphasis on the broad spectrum of Transform Board members was discussed by a Town Councillor who said:

"That's the one thing about the Transform Board, although it's a big board, and it is with 28 members, you could see how many people wanted to be involved, and people have stayed with it."

Ilfracombe Town Councillor

The notion, made by some board members, that it represented the community voice effectively , was underlined by the modelling of the Transform Board on the process as discussed in the PAT4 report (SEU 2000:20).

However, many of the local 'resident' members of the board are often prominent community individuals (not the 'hard to reach' residents who form the main target of neighbourhood management initiatives). The experiences outlined in this chapter and the next, argue that participation in the development of neighbourhood management, is prioritised to a small number of prominent community members. This is an opinion shared by some people on the board itself, one who stated:

"It needs to have more people on the board who live in the deprived wards, and if you look at the current make up of the board members, they are very few members who live in those deprived ward areas. That actually live in the type of housing that we are trying to make a difference with."

Transform Board Member, NDDC.

This was a sentiment echoed by an Ilfracombe Town Councillor:

"I mean the problem is, the don't seem to actually realise that they need more people like this, who actually live in the Central ward, that these people need to be heard. They just don't get it some of them."

Transform Board Member, central ward resident

These sentiments reflect the findings presented throughout this thesis. That the prioritising of a set of local 'elite' knowledge, in conjunction with inappropriate methods of engagement and participatory routes for 'vulnerable' residents, undermines the participatory nature which is fundamental to the development of

neighbourhood management as a bottom-up process of neighbourhood governance.

However, I also found, from the interviews I conducted with senior council and Transform officials, that there *did* seem to be some consensus that more needed to be done, practically, to engage with central ward residents, not only as targets for intervention, but as residents with a valuable insight into the problems facing them and their community. This was outlined by a senior Transform officer who was trying to work through a neighbourhood-led solution to this issue. He states:

"That's why I set up the sub groups, for very good reason, so they (residents) can have their voice through those, and filter their ideas and suggestions up through it."

Senior Officer, Transform

This filtering 'up' of ideas was discussed in a number of other conversations with community workers, and reflects the aspirations of bottom-up approaches to community regeneration, underlined in the both national neighbourhood renewal strategies. However, the development of partnership outlined in this chapter, and the participatory mechanisms for 'other' residents outlined in the following chapter, does not serve to evidence this filtering 'up' ideas in practice.

In summary, during the research process, I found that the initial development of the Transform was underlined by a traditionally top-down approach to partnership development. This process was presented empirically, highlighting the initial mobilisation of Transform through four key individuals. This process became evident through the initial top-down approach to Transform's development which evolved through traditional scalar narratives, working from a regional to district level of initiation. Consequently, this traditional approach to Transform's development was reiterated when the district council went on to enroll and engage a particularly prominent circle of 'elite' residents in the development of the pathfinder. I argue that in prioritising this participation, the development of

Transform prioritised a narrow set of community knowledges deemed to be appropriate and useful to service delivery. Subsequently, the Transform board was fashioned from the ‘elite’ set of residents in a process that represents the exclusivity of partnership development. This sentiment was raised by a number of Transform Board members, a few presented above, who recognised the shortcomings attributed to an ‘elite’ Transform Board.

This section above has described the political development of neighbourhood management in Ilfracombe, specifically exploring the initial development of Transform: from the development of a funding bid, to the appointment of the Transform board and the appointment of a Neighbourhood Manager. The next section follows from this, presenting empirical findings in relation to the development of ‘partnership’ and ‘joint working’ between Transform and its leading partners.

5.4. Partnership and Joint Working in Ilfracombe

5.4.i. Introduction

This section of the chapter presents the development of partnership and joint-working on a neighbourhood level. This is a presentation of the empirical findings of this research which aim to provide the basis for an examination of the process of partnership working in the context of neighbourhood management as outlined in the Methodology Chapter. This discussion will be explored in relation to Transform, particularly in relation to the development of a progressive relationship between Transform and its associated partners, focusing on the partnership between Transform and North Devon District Council. The aim is two-fold. First, it serves to outline the barriers and tensions experienced in relation to the practical realities of partnership development. Second, it presents a description of how neighbourhood management has been developed through processes of joint working within the community in Ilfracombe. First however, the

context of these empirical findings will be briefly situated in the context of New Labour's valorisation of partnership working in a discussion that advances those presented in Chapter One. This will allow ground the empirical findings in the context of partnership and joint working to combat the 'problems' identified in Ilfracombe.

5.4.ii. The Context of Partnership in Ilfracombe

As outlined in Chapter One, central to Labour's urban policy development, and reflecting a broader shift in emphasis in the governments overall strategy, partnerships were developed and used prolifically across national, regional and local arenas. As discussed, the use of partnerships was heralded by the government as a more effective, and a more inclusive method of government, or by many academics as part of the a move away from government towards a process of governance.

The framework for neighbourhood management pathfinders was developed directly out of *Bringing Britain Together* and the Policy Action Teams which emphasised the ideals of a locally-led partnership, encompassing joint working by the community and local authorities, to combat problems of social exclusion and deprivation (SEU 1998). In this sense Transform has a dual role, as a neighbourhood 'partnership', and as a 'partnership facilitator' at a neighbourhood, district and county level.

Transform has a particular inflection because it works within the coastal town of Ilfracombe. It is important to note, in the context of the empirical findings presented in the next section, that when examining the poor housing conditions prevalent in the privately rented sector in Ilfracombe, in recent years, the amount of properties of this type of tenure which are in a non-decent condition has accelerated; as some private landlords have failed to address slipping standards and meet new national housing regulations. This was intensified by a district council who were slow to enforce penalties on landlords. Previously the Housing

and Environmental Health Department at NDDC had given less resources and support to these growing problems than were needed leading to a increase in the amount of non-decent, privately rented houses in North Devon, but with a particularly high concentration in Ilfracombe. However, after the deployment of a new manager to the housing department team at NDDC, and the establishment of Transform in Ilfracombe itself, the idea of a partnership between Transform and NDDC developed to tackle these problems head-on. However the initiation of this partnership was entrenched in the mistakes and neglect of the past. Specifically in relation to the points noted above. The next section presents the initial development of this partnership, and the problems and solutions identified with in its initial tentative days.

As described in the first section of this chapter, Transform was developed as a pathfinder programme by the GOSW, DCC and NDDC. These regional, local and district bodies were at the forefront of the NMP development. However, neighbourhood representatives, from the NMP areas of Ilfracombe, Bratton Fleming and Coombe Martin were also enrolled in the establishment and delivery of Transform from the outset, including local community workers, the PCT and the rather formidable Ilfracombe Town Council. Representatives from each became part of the NMP management board and in conjunction set about joint working with the collaborative goal of improving the quality of life of residents in Ilfracombe and surrounding areas. This section aims to examine how these partnerships began and evolved. Here, I start at the beginning, and use interview analysis collected from working partners of NDDC and Transform to inform a discussion about the initial development of partnership and joint working, and the problems and solutions that materialized as the partnership evolved

5.4.iii. Partnership in Ilfracombe: A Look at the Past

There is a history in north Devon of difficulties between the district council (NDDC), whose offices are situated in the large market town of Barnstaple, and the smaller coastal town of Ilfracombe and its associated villages situated around

fifteen miles of winding country road away. Such difficulties stem from a number of factors including: the physical isolation of Ilfracombe, restricted transport links from Barnstaple and the rest of Devon, and as discussed above, lack of financial and practical support to the local community, particularly in the area of housing.

This set a difficult precedent to the beginnings of a working relationship between the housing team at NDDC and the ‘community’ of Ilfracombe, distinguished in this discussion as a set of ‘elite’ local actors. During a number of interviews with residents and/or local partners of Transform a sense of bitterness over the town’s previous neglect by NDDC was apparent. It was a particularly sore issue for some, who saw the decline in quality of housing and felt that the local authority was largely to blame for the disintegration of the town’s Edwardian heritage and level of respect.

“Well, they did nothing didn’t they? [They] didn’t care at all. Just left it all [houses] to rot. It’s all cheap now, ruined.”

Ilfracombe resident and Transform board member

This tension due to a history of neglect was acknowledged by NDDC, and the quote below from a housing officer at NDDC shows that the general consensus by the NDDC was that at that time of this neglect, they were under resourced.

“Generally HMO inspections tended to.... well were under resourced, we tended to go in, rate, risk-rate the property, and not particularly follow it up”

Housing Officer, NDDC

The previous quote, by a resident of Ilfracombe (and Town councillor) sums up a feeling towards NDDC that was a consistent theme drawn out through a number of interviews with ‘elite’ residents. In particular, the interviews often told of a neglect of the built environment, particularly within the privately rented of the housing sector. It was often argued that due to very little social housing stock available for residents in Ilfracombe, low income individuals and families were

instead pushed into the private rented sector, where buildings were often non-decent to live in, with poor heating, damp and generally ill-looked after. Although the lack of social housing was in itself seen as abandonment by the district council, it was their unwillingness to take action against the landlords and/or support the physical changes needed, that had caused a lot of friction with residents and community workers in the past. The previous quote from a NDDC housing officer highlights a lack of resources and a previous unwillingness to go the extra mile to solve housing problems in the past which exacerbated the barriers to initial partnership development.

It should be noted that sitting fifteen miles away from the District offices in Barnstaple, and over sixty-five miles from the County headquarters in Exeter, both residents and community workers presented a feeling of isolation and tension towards the district council. For example, during the research process it became apparent that bitterness existed towards the district officers through their intonation and use of the term "*Barnstaple*" whenever discussing unpopular methods of neighbourhood governance. It is perhaps significant that NDDC is most often referred to as just "*Barnstaple*" by local agency workers when discussing problematic issues and this is presented as a subtle tension in interviews with some local 'elite' residents and community workers.

The loss in trust by the Ilfracombe community towards NDDC was acknowledged by a senior officer at NDDC who admits:

"We had to develop a relationship [with Transform] and no, it wasn't easy because a lot of trust had been lost previously. It has taken a lot of hard work on our part to establish a good working relationship and, give and take, we are starting to build that now."

Head of Department NDDC

So, with this tenuous relationship to build upon, local Transform partners did not always have faith in the district council at the beginning of the pathfinder process. Whereas Transform had the new 'neighbourhood powers' to hear and support

the housing-associated problems from residents of Ilfracombe, and went on to employ two of their own housing officers (the Healthier Homes Initiative), it was still the responsibility of the district council to take action, by conducting regular housing inspections and issuing penalty notices to poorly performing landlords.

It was felt in the Ilfracombe community that NDDC had previously not been sufficiently engaged, or placed enough emphasis on instigating housing inspections and most importantly, not following through with recommendations and/or penalty notices. In short, this was a partnership that had to be gradually built through trust and joint working.

5.4.iv. Developing a New Partnership

So, taking these beginnings into consideration, the partnership between the newly established Transform and the new Housing team at NDDC was initially fragile and tentative, a development caused in part by the lingering feelings of mistrust over their previous relationship (before each of these new teams from either agency were established).

However, these feelings of mistrust were not necessarily dispelled straight away. As the Transform pathfinder found its feet, with its independence and funding allowing initiatives to drive into action fairly quickly, the housing team at NDDC were much slower to ‘act’ practically given the framework of consultation and strategy development that had to be met. Practical implementation of some areas of housing policy by NDDC, which Transform saw as seemingly simple, such as penalising unscrupulous landlords, or improving housing conditions through grant or loan schemes, were at the beginning, difficult to undertake by NDDC who were unable to act swiftly as the strategic policy framework needed, was not in place.

Due to this, during the beginnings of the partnership NDDC were unable to support Transform in their goal to improve the quality of the private rental sector

as much as they would have liked, leading to a further strain on the relationship. The frustration felt on the part of Transform has also been acknowledged by a senior officer at NDDC:

"Things have to follow a different approach here, a more prescribed approach. We can't just jump in, even if we wanted to, so yes, it did take time to develop a strategy and I can understand why they [Transform] became frustrated."

Senior Officer, NDDC

Above, the senior officer discussed the differences and difficulties between the operations of the district council and the NMP in relation to their ability to take action straight away. For example, whereas the council had a series of procedures for strategy development which they had to adhere to, Transform, although spending time working on their delivery plan, were physically situated in the town of Ilfracombe from the outset which meant Transform was already dealing with inquiries, problems and formulating a series of appropriate practical actions whilst the council was still in the development stage of a strategy. This demonstrates the differing temporal horizons of the two partners, which presented itself here in the inconsistent coordination of strategic development which subsequently, had a negative impact on the initiation of partnership (Jessop 1998).

This discrepancy in temporal horizons, presented through the uncoordinated process of action between these two working partners highlights two practical points. The first is that Transform, once set up, acts as an agent which was able to swiftly put into operation the strategic framework for neighbourhood renewal that it had developed, working collectively with local service partners to address problems from the offset. The second point is that due to the nature of local government, such swiftness of action was hampered for NDDC, not through lack of enthusiasm on behalf of the housing team, but due to the nature of strategy development and implementation of a framework for action within local authorities. This was discussed by a senior officer at NDDC who said:

"Driving or facilitating change isn't always popular, and sometimes, it takes a while"

Interviewer: popular with the residents?

"Popular with the people who are running things, it takes a while for things to change, we have a saying 'you can work with, but you can't do to', you can't do to local communities, you have to work with them, but the downside of it is that things take a little longer, and take more effort. But that's not a problem because the outcomes are always more worthwhile, but sometimes you're caught between that inner tension between the people who want things to happen faster, and the people who feel left out of the process. And it's our job to hold those two tensions and achieve good outcomes."

Senior Officer, NDDC

However, once a strong team and a framework for action had been established at NDDC, NDDC was able to support and assist Transform in the delivery of their neighbourhood objectives. Consequently, at first, the relationship between NDDC and Transform was perhaps a little strained on both sides. However as part of the development of Transform at a neighbourhood level, a framework of joint working and goals were put in place in partnership with the housing department at NDDC. This was important because despite the development of Transform, North Devon District Council still held the statutory powers in Ilfracombe in relation to housing. Therefore it was important for both Transform and NDDC to work together to build a better working partnership to provide a better service for residents who were experiencing severe housing problems.

"The district council were hated. But we've moved on from that now. But when I first came here they were. And every right, because there was glaring holes in the delivery of service, but that is changing. That has been changing slowly. Now we are working with the district council, now that they've reorganised and got themselves together, I mean our key activity now, it probably wasn't before, is supporting delivery by the District council".

Senior Officer, Transform

So despite the initial problems, outlined above, Transform and its local and community partners, have built a closer relationship with the district council as NDDC committed more housing officers on the ground, building trust through the realisation of a greater amount of action and support in relation to housing, led by a new and invigorated team in the housing department. The operational of processes of joint working on a practical ground level by NDDC housing officers will now be discussed in the fourth section of this chapter. These experiences aim to underline the processes of joint working developed through neighbourhood management on the ground to address the issues set out by residents in Chapter Three.

5.4.v. Transform: Working together to ‘Fill the Gap’

Since assembling the new housing team at NDDC, the district council has put considerable resources into the physical improvement of low-cost, privately rented buildings (often HMOs). The neighbourhood management pathfinder Transform has been supporting this process both through the Healthier Homes (HH) initiative, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Five, and by signposting tenants to its own social inclusion officer, community agencies and other means of social and economic assistance.

The role Transform sees itself as playing is assisting and ‘filling in the gaps’ in support of NDDC on a neighbourhood level. This, according to a senior officer of Transform, is exactly what the process of neighbourhood management is all about.

“Now the council are doing their job properly, we are able to support and assist them, so now our job here at Transform is finding gaps and filling them”

Senior Officer, Transform

The “gaps” that the Neighbourhood Manager talks about during my interview often fall in the social arena and are quite considerable in number when

surveying the central ward as a space of moral and social reform. A number of initiatives seek to address these gaps, and I will go on to discuss a number of these in the next chapter. Such ‘social’ initiatives are often applauded by local authorities but can be pushed to the side due to the importance of floor targets and hard outcomes which are not always easily attainable through community-led social activity. However the partnership between NDDC (which works to fill the ‘hard’ gaps imposed by local authority targets) and Transform (which works to fill the ‘soft’ gaps through a strategic plan of action) is one way the neighbourhood management process has been able to work together to achieve its joint goals in relation to “gaps” in economic and social sustainability, which, as outlined in PAT4, underline the neighbourhood management approach (SEU 2000).

5.4.vi. Neighbourhood Power and Governance: Limits to Partnership?

Neighbourhood management pathfinders follow a neighbourhood approach to social, economic and physical renewal. This may seem to be an obvious point to make, but what I mean is that they [NMPs] are installed in their targeted neighbourhoods, and work closely with community agencies and local services to deliver neighbourhood-based techniques of reform at a variety of levels. Though they are bound through differing scales of governance to both district, county and regional agencies, on a strategic level the initiatives they operate are developed and implemented on a neighbourhood level. They are accountable at a neighbourhood level (to the Transform board) and, by analysing their literature, they are responsible for providing residents with opportunities for representation, engagement, participation and creating a better environment to live in at a local level. This is their neighbourhood responsibility.

Transform is able to fulfil these responsibilities to a certain extent. Neighbourhood management pathfinders have funding to act at a community level but still do not have the statutory power at the neighbourhood level to act, particularly in the area of housing. Whereas Transform can, and has, acted on

issues such as litter, vandalism and antisocial behaviour, considerably improving these problems within the central ward of Ilfracombe, its power and influence is limited in terms of housing (regulating the social or private rental sector) as these powers fall to the District and County authorities. This demonstrates the limitations in the devolution of power through neighbourhood management, particularly to neighbourhoods which are entrenched by poor housing conditions. However, whether or not Transform should have greater control over the strategic development and implementation of housing-related policy is a contested area of debate by both Transform Board Members and District and County Councillors. This is presented in this statement by a Town Councillor:

"I think no, it would put a lot of pressure on resources that we just won't have. At the minute we do a great job, supporting the district council and doing valuable work in the community."

Transform Board Member, Ilfracombe

The main consensus among Town councillors wasn't that they needed the powers to act in relation to housing, but that they needed more funding to implement and mainstream the Transform projects that had already proved successful in helping to "*fill the gap*". This presents an underlining notion regarding the devolution of governance and power to the neighbourhood level. Whilst Transform and community groups wanted to be supported by the local authority to implement their policy, they did not want the powers for housing devolved to them due "*pressures on resources we just don't have*". In a sense, this demonstrates the pressure on NDDC to tackle the problems of physical renewal in Ilfracombe, and highlights the overwhelming pressure on district level intervention and governance, to pursue these problems. In relation to Transform's actions in '*filling the gap*', the following chapter will present the Healthier Homes (HH) initiative as a supporting mechanism of district housing strategy which also plays a dual role in supporting '*vulnerable*' residents in aspects of social sustainability.

5.4.vii. Transforming Power? : Joint Working with Local Organisations

Transform also works in close partnership with a number of community and voluntary agencies in Ilfracombe and essentially, acts as a leading partner under which these groups are active. However, during this research I found that many of these groups were recognised and active in Ilfracombe before the establishment of Transform, for example Scribes and the Volunteer Centre, and consequently, and Transform had 'incorporated' them as partner agencies.

Significantly, the community/voluntary groups which work most closely to support, and are supported by Transform, were those which had a Transform Board Member providing a senior role their agency (these are also often Town Councillors). To present an example from the empirical findings, a Town Councillor who leads Scribes, an organisation which assists residents with form filling and other practical administrative tasks, is also a Transform Board Members. She talks of the partnership and benefits that Transform brings to Scribes:

"We really are doing much of the same thing as we were before, before Transform, but yes, it is useful to have that leading partner, I think it does help with creating a network of skills that you can tap into and point residents towards But it hasn't really changed what we are doing here"

Town Councillor, Ilfracombe

In reference to the statement above and in conjunction with other conversations with community workers in Ilfracombe, Transform has given 'already existing' local organisations a more structured framework and perhaps more importantly, an arena which links up various community agencies in a process of discussion and support. Essentially, it has allowed voluntary agencies to find out what each agency does and what assistance they can offer clients, creating a larger network of support linkages that is beneficial to both employees/volunteers and the clients of these agencies so that people can be signposted to the most appropriate agency more efficiently. This reflects the priorities outlined in PAT4, which describe neighbourhood management at its simplest, as bringing together

local community organisations and service providers in the joint goal of combating problems of social exclusion (SEU 2000:7).

This research seeks to demonstrate that most of the individuals who head up such organisations live locally and are well known members of a local 'elite' community, tending to know each other individually. Hence, I argue, that the development of Transform actually re-constitutes pre-established 'elite' individuals through their prioritisation within these new structures of neighbourhood governance. However these 'elite' linkages, and there subsequent lead by Transform, particularly through its partnership meetings and various gatherings, does allow these agencies to go beyond the personal link, finding out what each agency does and opening a line of communication for further assistance to support clients. Consequently, Transform has created a greater clarity of the information and support available to them.

In parallel to those presented above, there are also previously established community groups who do seem not to have benefitted as much as others from the establishment of Transform. In some cases, these are community groups (formed before the establishment of Transform) whose lead members (managers, chief officers) do not have strong ties with the Town Council or are not members of the Transform partnership board. This is illustrated by the example of a local community group who found themselves pushed to the sidelines in terms of support and funding. A volunteer for this group stated:

"Yes, well, we do what we can, food parcels, we have, look we do the food parcels for those who are in desperate need that day, yes, but, no, no, Transform don't, well Transform work more closely with the Volunteer Centre and BPAG (Barnstaple Poverty Action Group) than us."

Volunteer, Ilfracombe Central ward

The example given above, from a smaller community group, is representative of the experience of a few other voluntary agencies in Ilfracombe- as Transform seeks to streamline their support into a manageable and efficient portfolio of

partners. This divide in support for community-based services is particularly noticeable in the support and inclusion of church-based community groups and action. For example, a number of churches/church groups supply housing/welfare support for vulnerable residents in Ilfracombe, ranging from soup kitchens to shelter and low-cost rental property, and a number of churches are well known and well visited by residents of the central ward, as was outlined by many residents during our conversations. Transform itself supports a street pastor scheme run by a community church group in Ilfracombe yet community church schemes are not all equally supported, and it often depends on the church members standing in the community as to how much participation and assistance they have with Transform. One Church on the central High Street does not have strong connections to Transform, but over the year and a half I spent visiting Ilfracombe the church seemed to have a firm place in supporting residents in welfare related problems (for example they ran a daily tea and biscuit drop in, a twice weekly soup kitchen and provided some supported-accommodation for vulnerable residents. I spoke to many ‘hard to reach’ residents during my visits there). Again, this exclusion from the Transform process appears to be due to the lack of personal connections and inferior community status of the lead member.

So from the examples given above, the extent to which Transform has enabled greater joint working, and the widening accessibility of support and assistance, is often down to the connections and involvement of partnership board members with the associated community or voluntary agency. In these presentations I seek to demonstrate that the development Transform works to re-constitute pre-existing local ‘elite’ residents as prioritized subjects of partnership. In this sense, the development and operation of Transform is not a wholly ‘inclusive’ process.

5.4. viii. Summary

As demonstrated in the preceding sections, many members of the Transform board could be described as being somewhat of a local ‘elite’ in the town of

Ilfracombe and its surrounding areas. Some prominent members of the board, including Town Councilors, also manage, or are firmly embedded within local community or voluntary organisations in the town, or are perhaps well known business people. This re-establishment of a pre-existing local 'elite' is discussed by Edwards et al (2003) as long running problem in small town partnership working. The enrolment of this 'elite' set of actors into Transform could be a cause for concern, and this is taken into consideration throughout this chapter through the presentations of an 'elite' set of residents, which sought to outline the power and priority they were given in the delivery and development of neighbourhood management in Ilfracombe. Using these presentations, I demonstrate that power in the town, and the ability to partake into neighbourhood development, is concentrated in a small number of individuals. This is a particularly important point to make when considering the avenues of participation and power given to the 'vulnerable' residents outlined in Chapter Three during this neighbourhood management process.

Consequently, although the partnership board itself is made up of many 'community' members, there are many notable *key* individuals on the board who could be referred to as a set of local 'elite'. These linkages may come to be expected- as prominent members of the community can often be those who have the time and funding available to manage such groups. However it gives rise to questions of the nature of the 'local elite' who play such a vital role in the operation of Transform and whether this provides an inclusive atmosphere for the development of neighbourhood management on the ground. These elites are predominantly well educated and successful, and in retirement or nearing retirement age. This was acknowledged by a Town Councilor who concludes:

"Yes we do need to engage more actively with certain people, certainly we need to do more to incorporate a wider variety of residents as participants, as volunteers, and yes they would provide a valuable insight to the programme"

Transform Board Member, Ilfracombe

Consequently, it may be difficult for ‘outsiders’ to join and direct the developments and initiatives of the neighbourhood management process. The presence of a ‘local elite’ on the Transform Board, and their already established roles in the community does make it difficult for other individuals/groups to become apart of the partnership, and therefore can work as an exclusive process.

On the other hand it could be argued that the Transform pathfinder has been a chance for members of the Ilfracombe community, or perhaps more explicitly, Ilfracombe Town Council, to take charge of their own neighbourhood space. This is demonstrated in the following quote.

“We’ve [Ilfracombe Town Council] got two councilors who are directors of Transform, so we get regular updates of what’s happening. We [town councilors] are very supportive of what’s happening [with Transform]”
Town Councilor and local MP

In this case, the (re)organization of local governance through Transform was supported by DCC and NDDC but heavily driven by Ilfracombe Town Council. This reflects the well-known the tension between the impetus for active community participation and the reality of an overwhelming involvement from local ‘elites’ in area-based regeneration projects (Edwards et al 2001). Yet although these close connections between Transform and Ilfracombe Town Council have meant that it is just several key actors who have the greatest influence over the direction of the NMP, arguably negating its underlying role as an inclusive agency driven by local residents, this has a consequential effect in the operation of the technologies of government employed by the NMP. A number of the key voluntary and community agencies working with/beneath the Transform umbrella are managed by an Ilfracombe Town Councilor. This has had its effects in the (re)organization of the neighbourhood.

The establishment of these ‘preordained’ agencies can offer positive benefits to neighbourhood management pathfinders in a number of ways. By establishing a network of services, Transform is able to work as an umbrella for the operation of the local public sector, voluntary and business community. As demonstrated in this chapter, more often than not Transform was seen as a positive partner for community agencies, given its ability to provide interconnections between agencies.

Given this increased capability for communication and joint working, the technologies of government in Ilfracombe are being driven jointly by partner agencies working with Transform. However, this (re)organization has also meant that some agencies, especially those without a Council member, have found themselves pushed to the sidelines in terms of support and funding, as is the case presented at the end of this chapter. From this example it could be suggested that the (re)organization of neighbourhood space through the programme of neighbourhood management, supported and driven eagerly by Ilfracombe Town Council, can work to exclude individuals/agencies, perhaps unintentionally, through the establishment of defined techniques of management and inherited agencies of neighbourhood governance.

This section of the chapter has described the process of partnership as informed by the case study in North Devon. By presenting this description I argue that the development of partnership is a complex and tentative process which succeeds through the long-term commitment and action of partners involved. This section also demonstrated the dominant presence of a set of local ‘elite’ individuals prioritized in the neighbourhood management process.

5.5. Housing: Working Together

5.5.i. Introduction

This section will examine in more detail the role of NDDC and Transform housing officers and describe the practicalities of partnership working on the ground. As presented above, the relationship between Ilfracombe residents and the Housing and Environmental Health Department of NDDC was initially strained due to a perceived neglect of Ilfracombe during the previous decade. In addition to this tension, the appointment of a new manager for the housing team at the council, and the development of a new strategic framework for private sector housing, took time to establish. This was a particular issue for Transform as noted above, who became frustrated with what appeared to be lack of practical action- as the new housing team (at NDDC) were waiting for the strategic framework to be developed and implemented. So whilst Transform wanted to take action on the neighbourhood level, this action could not be supported by the District until an appropriate strategic plan had been developed. This section aims to set out NDDC's and Transforms objectives in relation to housing in Ilfracombe, and will examine the process of joint working developed between the two partners to tackle resident problems presented in Chapter Three.

Both NDDC and Transform employ Housing Officers to work in Ilfracombe and their surrounding areas, though the objectives and powers available to officers between the two organisations, is different. The council officers, working for the Housing and Environmental Health Department have a variety of roles around the service areas of empty homes, energy efficiency, private rented sector and Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMOs) which will be described initially. The Transform Housing Officers work for in partnership with NDDC and an organisation called Devon Energy Efficiency Advice Centre, which I turn to secondly. Having spent some time during my research process with officers from both teams, I was able to note the level of joint working, not only between themselves, but also in connection with other agencies that might have been

appropriate to residents. In particular I am interested in this section in the level of joint working in relation to vulnerable tenants. Below, I briefly describe the role of each housing team, and the network of agencies that they work with when tackling the ‘problems’ of what often concern ‘vulnerable’ tenants.

5.5.ii. Collaborative Practices of Partnership

The work of the Housing and Environmental Health department (HEH) at NDDC includes conducting routine housing inspections, issuing notices of improvement to landlords, assisting landlords by means of grants or loans to carry out needed improvements, and facilitating better dialogue between landlords and tenants. The main areas of consultation are in reference to empty homes, energy efficiency, financial assistance, HMO licensing and the regulation of private rented housing. Housing was a key priority for funding (by NDDC) and money was used to support the appointment of a highly qualified and experienced manager in the housing department, a new enthusiastic team of housing officers, and a series of house improvement strategies.

Housing officers from NDDC visit privately rented properties, making housing inspections in order to clarify if the landlord is providing an appropriate standard of living as set out in the Decent Homes Standard document (DCLG 2006). Due to the routine of housing inspections where officers from NDDC often visit properties without being invited to the house by the tenant/landlord, these officers may well be a tenant’s first point of contact for complaints or advice. Indeed, during the time I spent on housing inspections with these officers a number of housing *and* ‘social’ issues were raised by tenants. One example is of a tenant who could not speak good English. During one housing inspection, whilst I was observing, she asked me to read a local authority letter to her and asked me what it meant. On a follow up visit she also continued to ask me questions on the same subject about council tax. In other cases, it was apparent that some households were living in poverty and it would have perhaps been advisable to refer them on to appropriate organisations who could offer appropriate help and

advice. But after interviewing three housing officers from NDDC it was apparent that their focus was specifically on housing.

Participant observation during housing inspections and through the interview process with two NDDC housing officers it became clear that they saw the key element of their job as doing the best they could to improve housing conditions. Any other associated problems would be noted and passed on to appropriate NDDC/Transform workers, but in general, improvement to their physical living conditions was the main agenda. ‘Social’ issues were not usually referred on to departments at NDDC but usually to Transform.

“We’re there to inspect the houses, that’s our job, that’s our focus.”
Housing Officer, NDDC

Transform on the other hand, has no regulatory powers in relation to housing, but facilitates two Healthier Homes officers to work in Ilfracombe and surrounding villages. This facilitation includes giving (initially) both officers office space, offering a base and a network for community connections- and a support network of other professional, voluntary and community workers in Ilfracombe to draw upon. The Healthier Homes initiative is a joint partnership between NDDC, Transform and Devon Energy Efficiency Advice Centre and its objective to provide insulation and repairs to vulnerable households. However the facilitation of these housing officers by Transform offers them the opportunity to feed into community and housing networks within the neighbourhood of the central ward through partnering agencies of the NMP.

The two housing officers working within Transform were both initially installed in the Transform Office on the High Street in Ilfracombe, and worked as very much part of the Transform team. This process of partnership working under the lead partner of Transform was emphasised by a HH officer who stated:

“The role basically is, for Healthier Homes, is about increasing uptake of grants and discounts for the insulation schemes and that’s great, that has worked extremely well. However the other side is advice and being

permanently here with housing officers who can address poor housing conditions, but also can address other agencies to increase peoples prospect for work. So it's a whole community, a whole collaboration between all the different agencies "

Healthier Homes Officer

This demonstrates the ability of Transform to provide a collaborative approach to tackling problems of social exclusion through their collective approach to community development. This is demonstrated by HH, whose key role is undoubtedly concerned with the physical redevelopment of homes in order to make them more energy efficient. However, I found, that the Healthier Homes Initiative was also socially driven, offering the most vulnerable households advice and guidance to accessing grants which can make their houses/flats decent to live in. The standard of living, particularly the level of warmth in a home, can have a dramatic effect on the health and quality of life of residents. Health inequalities are often found in conjunction with areas of deprivation, where poor housing is the common factor among individuals. The Healthier Homes initiative may act on the physical problems of houses but one of its outcomes due to the collaborative networks within Transform, is to socially assist vulnerable households. Given that Transform employs their own Social Inclusion Officer, this reiterates the place of Transform as an important lead partner for the direction and information of residents to appropriate agencies. This presentation seeks to demonstrate that the collaborative approach by Transform and community agencies in Ilfracombe goes some way towards addressing both the physical and social aspects of deprivation.

As outlined above, in the case of both the NDDC department and the two HH officers supported by Transform, the key strategic objective is to improve the condition of the tenant's houses to a point where they are of a decent standard to live in and are as energy efficient as possible. Through the statutory powers invested in them, NDDC are able to do this more efficiently and have become focused in this task in order to achieve an increasing level of decent housing in Ilfracombe. In a complimentary role, the HH officers were also able to provide

information and support for tenants living in houses of poor condition. This role was considered by NDDC to be an important support to there own goals as noted by one NDDC housing officer:

"It's great to have Simon down there doing what he's doing. A great job you know. Really in there and speaking to people and it is making a difference".

Housing Officer NDDC

Consequently, it was noted by NDDC, that this role played by HH officers, supported by Transform had become important in supporting the role of NDDC to raise housing standards in the private rental sector. As the Neighbourhood Manager envisaged earlier in the chapter, HH was able to work collaboratively to "fill the gaps" through the creation of a working partnership with NDDC and Transform.

NDDC discussed their developing relationship with Transform and stated that they would feel comfortable making referrals to the Transform, now their partnership has progressed through the HH initiative. One housing officer said:

"Often I'll pop in and talk to Jane. .Refer someone to them. But often I will say to the tenants, 'go into Transform and have a talk with Simon' if I think that that would be appropriate, I mean I'm on a good working terms with them. I always pop in when I'm in Ilfracombe."

Housing Officer, NDDC

It is apparent therefore that housing officers at NDDC have a focused role which, in relation to this research, centres on inspecting and improving the housing conditions in Ilfracombe. The HH initiative, a partnership between Transform and NDDC, also supports this role and "fills the gaps" in two ways. First, by providing low-cost insulation and energy efficiency improvements to vulnerable homes, and second, by acting as a signposting agent and partner for other (social) initiatives working underneath the Transform Umbrella. In this way it can be said to be

connecting environmental and social sustainability at a local level in a way which may benefit tenants such as those presented in Chapter Three.

5.6. Summary and Discussion of Chapter

Whilst the previous chapter presented a series of key issues which concerned residents in the deprived central ward of Ilfracombe, this chapter focused on the development and operation of a neighbourhood management pathfinder which was deployed to the town in order to address some of these issues. In doing this, Chapter Four sought to explore the initiation of Transform, the process of its deployment, and the evolution and dynamics of partnership working in relation to some of the identified issues around ideas of engagement with residents, and joint working to improve housing standards and service delivery on the ground.

The first section explored the identification and scripting of Ilfracombe as an area of deprivation which was ripe for neighbourhood intervention through the use of IMD statistics. The second section considered the initial development of the neighbourhood management pathfinder. This section presented the top-down approach to neighbourhood governance as highlighted by the presence of four key individual in the initial decision making process. It then demonstrated the enrolment of ‘elite’ actors into this development process through a presentation of the empirical findings. The third section discussed at more length the valorization of a “local elite” in this development process and argued that although this valorization brings with it necessary specialist local knowledge to assist and support Transform’s development, it also excludes other ‘lesser known’ residents who may have been able to add valuable insight into the development process. The fourth section looked more closely of the role of housing officers from NDDC and Transform, and examined how their roles have and been able to complement each other in the collaborative approaches to neighbourhood management outlines in the national neighbourhood renewal

strategy and PAT4 in order to address poor housing conditions and their associated problems (SEU 2000, SEU 1998).

This next section aims to provide a brief discussion of the points above in relation to PAT4. These will be explored in more detail in relation to previous research, during the concluding chapter of this thesis.

The first section demonstrated that Ilfracombe was initially identified as an appropriate area for the deployment of a neighbourhood management pathfinder through use of the government's deprivation data, chiefly the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004. Here, I described how local knowledge relating to employment, health, education, housing, crime levels and environmental deprivation, were used to conceptualize and support the circumscription of Ilfracombe as an appropriate space for reform in line with New Labour's inflection of the Third Way. This use of 'local' knowledge institutionalized the underlining rational of neighbourhood renewal by reconstructing spaces neighbourhood governance, and deploying power for some aspects of neighbourhood development, to the neighbourhood management pathfinder Transform. However in contrast to these prescribed 'truths' which produced Transform, PAT4 acknowledges that current quantitative information on deprived neighbourhoods is poor, and the collection of more accurate information could aid in the *objective* identification of deprived neighbourhoods appropriate for neighbourhood management (SEU 2000:30).

However this chapter raised questions in relation to the *objective* identification of Ilfracombe in this process. As presented in section two of this chapter, the initial identification of Ilfracombe and consequent conception of Transform began during a conversation between senior officers from NDDC and the GOSW. This was presented as a seemingly informal process which highlights the prioritising of personal connections and networks in the identification of 'appropriate' neighbourhoods. PAT4 suggests that the decision about which neighbourhood should be identified should be the job of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP).

Although the senior officers were members of the LSP, the initiation of this process was via the exclusive hands of these four individuals.

In addition, it could be argued that Transform was “imposed” on the town of Ilfracombe and its surrounding areas, by a elite group of senior council officers who felt this might be a useful way to fulfil their regional and local authority targets, demonstrated by the delight of the senior officer who “*paused for a nanosecond, being very grateful for the phone call*”, before gladly accepting the offer.

The second section of this chapter also details the enrolment of a set of local ‘elite’ actors into the Transform development stage. These ‘elite’ actors were prioritised in the consultation process and consequently became members of the Transform board. Although, I argue in Chapter Six, this creates an exclusive approach to Transform development, PAT4 does outline the importance of “local intelligence” (SEU 2000:17) and states that :

“the problems of poor neighbourhoods can only be understood by gathering softer ‘local intelligence’, the tacit knowledge only available to those working in the locality”.

However, this thesis demonstrates that the ‘local intelligence’ gathered to understand and develop Transform was of an exclusive nature, prioritising the knowledge of ‘elite’ actors in the development of Transform.

Consequently, the development of Transform in Ilfracombe can not be viewed as a bottom-up ‘inclusive’ process, which holds *whole* communities at the core of its development. So whilst PAT4 advertises the importance of community participation in the development and leadership of neighbourhood management, stating:

“what is more important than the precise mechanism is that local people are genuinely involved in renewal, and offered an option of leading it”,

on a practical level these “*local people*” are, in the majority, represented by an ‘elite’ set of local actors (SEU 2000:7). Hence, using a Foucauldian framework I argue that the concept and subsequent development of Transform was deployed in a traditionally top-down fashion, by an exclusive set of ‘elite’ actors from the regional, district and neighbourhood level.

The enrolment of a set of local elite into this development process serves to evidence the exclusivity and top-down workings of the development of neighbourhood management at a strategic level. The valorisation of their local knowledge and expertise works to reinforce their position of strategic power within the town. So although NMPs such as Transform may aspire to an inclusive, bottom-up process of partnership, this is not reflected in their actual development at a strategic level.

This chapter also presented the development of a working partnership between NDDC and Transform which embarked with tentative beginnings which were fraught with difficulties. First, as demonstrated through the empirical findings in this chapter, traditionally identified notions of trust building, formal routes of collaboration and communication which are central to the local partnership approach were tense at the initiation of partnership due to the history of neglect by NDDC and a perceived bitterness by local community actors towards “*Barnstaple*”. In addition, I identified another factor which communicated a practical barrier to successful joint working; the difference in the temporal horizons between partners in the development of an action strategy. In many cases, as evidenced above, although both agents were working through the same spatial frame, in reference to Ilfracombe, the empirical evidence suggests there was a broader problem in relation to the time horizons of governance. This lack of temporal coordination had a negative effect on the development of the partnership from the beginnings. In reference to this point, PAT4 (SEU 2000:21) suggests that the most important element to neighbourhood management would

be provided by the support of higher powers of government, i.e. LSP's and local authorities. However, as demonstrated in this chapter, the differences in temporal capacity did not allow the housing department of NDDC to fully support and assist Transform in the execution of the development. This led to initial tensions in the partnership. Over time however, as the chapter demonstrates, these processes of joint working were brought together spatially and temporally, at a local authority level and 'on the ground'.

This chapter thus presents a series of empirical findings which have explored the conception, initiation and deployment of Transform through the framework of 'partnership'. What emerged here was the prioritization of an 'elite' set of actors in the development of these processes which were not presented as being wholly inclusive to other 'vulnerable' members of the community; the residents whom are the targets of neighbourhood renewal. This leads to the next chapter which explores in more detail, notions of community participation and active citizenship embedded within the process of neighbourhood management.

*Chapter Six:
The Operation and Practice of Neighbourhood Management*

6.1. Introduction

The previous chapter examined the initial conception and development of Transform and presented the process and evolution of a working partnership between Transform and its associated partners. Here, it took a specific focus on Transform's relationship with North Devon District Council (NDDC). In Chapter Five I build on these findings by more widely considering the position of residents¹, particularly in their opportunities for participation and engagement, in the process of neighbourhood management.

This chapter is split into two distinct sections. The first section uses my empirical findings to present the process and depth of community engagement and participation in Ilfracombe. PAT4 identifies the importance placed on securing community commitment and participation, and presents a framework which aims to 'empower communities' through the process of neighbourhood management. This first section presents my set of empirical findings, which reflect the depth to which these aims are achieved by Transform (SEU 2000). In doing this, it takes into account how notions of inclusion and citizenship are deployed and in some cases, resisted.

This section of the chapter demonstrates that a sustained effort has been made by Transform and associated partners to provide avenues of participation and engagement for residents. Such methods of engagement and participation were demonstrated as being vital to the 'inclusion' process of 'hard to reach' residents in Chapter Three. However, my empirical findings demonstrate the inappropriate and inflexibility of these developed avenues for some 'hard to reach' residents. Consequently, these empirical findings suggest that many 'hard to reach'

¹ The term 'resident' is used here to describe local 'elite' actors *and* other residents of Ilfracombe central ward.

residents are being left out of the participatory process, particularly in regard to representation of their views and experiences. Thus, representative engagement and participation, outlined in Chapter Three as being vital to the renewal process, has not been developed sufficiently through the neighbourhood management process. Alternately, I argue, a key element to resident engagement and participation with Transform was restricted to initiatives which sought to identify and reshape their subjectivities to an ‘appropriate’ citizen in line with New Labour’s inflection of the Third Way.

This first half of the chapter, will thus be used to illustrate how, on a micro level, the process of neighbourhood management is operationalised within the target community of Ilfracombe, with an emphasis on exploring its objectives of community engagement, participation and citizenship. The examination and discussion over the section will draw on empirical interview, focus group and ethnographic work conducted over a period of two years. In conjunction with the previous chapter, the concept of governmentality will be used as a framework for theoretical analysis.

The second half of the chapter revisits the resident stories outlined in Chapter Three, and combines empirical findings from resident and officer interviews, to examine how the process of neighbourhood management has worked on a practical level in Ilfracombe. More detail will be provided in an introduction to this section.

6.2. Creating an ‘Inclusive’ Community

6.2.i. Introduction

*“The most powerful resource in turning around neighbourhoods should be the community itself”
(SEU 1998:64)*

This quote is representative of New Labour’s impetus on the ‘community’ as an agent of reform. As discussed in Chapter One, much was made of the importance of community participation in local regeneration schemes by central government: with democratic renewal and civic engagement lying at the heart of New Labour’s regeneration agenda. This emphasis was particularly noticeable in the first neighbourhood renewal strategy, which firmly positioned *the community* as the vehicle through which neighbourhood renewal should be executed (SEU 1998). Subsequently, one emphasis of New Labour’s neighbourhood renewal was on the role of participatory *active citizens* in local regeneration and decision making.

The process of neighbourhood management gives a particular stress to the active engagement and participation of local residents in the neighbourhood management process with the aim of ‘empowering’ communities and allowing individuals to make a real difference to their own neighbourhoods as outlined in PAT4. In relation to this approach, Transform claims that its aim is to:

*“Give people the power to make changes in how their neighbourhood is run”
Transform (2010a)*

Consequently, this first section aims to explore this claim in relation to the empirical findings, and will discuss neighbourhood management as a process which seeks to promote active community engagement and participation however whilst also working to valorise certain notions of ‘active’ citizenship.

6.2. ii. Creating Spaces of Participation and Inclusion

According to their official sources, Transform aims to:

"improve quality of life by ensuring that local residents are a part of the decision making process in partnership with the service providers".
(Transform 2010b)

This quote embodies the neighbourhood management approach, which provides an inclusive approach to local decision making processes. However, as uncovered during Chapter Four, the approach to Transforms development was not representative of this 'inclusive' objective. During the research, this objective was explored further. This presented a hybrid of results with avenues identifying opportunities for residents to participate and engage with the neighbourhood management process, whilst also providing evidence of the inflexibility and appropriateness of some of these opportunities, leading to resident exclusion from neighbourhood decision making. These will be discussed below.

The Transform neighbourhood management pathfinder itself states that one of its aims is to create a space for local residents to be included as part of the decision making process, as well as in the daily practices of renewal which are occurring in their own neighbourhood. The following quote, taken directly from Transforms website underlines the valorisation of community engagement and participation in the process of neighbourhood management:

"Neighbourhood Management is a new way of working that gives local people more say over the way their neighbourhood is run... then brings them together with service providers to find new ways to make our communities cleaner, safer and better managed."

(Transform 2010b)

One of the key objectives of Transform and its partners then is to provide a platform for residents to participate in some of the processes of neighbourhood renewal. One way it has sought to do this is by developing, assisting and supporting its service partners in an effort to establish a series of representative systems for local residents to use. These are often provided through community or voluntary schemes, which provide opportunities for residents to get information, voice opinions and concerns, and are part of a wider drive in the remit of neighbourhood management to encourage systems of participation and engagement.

One opportunity for community involvement outlined in PAT4 is the development of a neighbourhood board. However, as demonstrated in Chapter Four, the Transform Board is dominated by a set of local ‘elite’ individuals (as well as local service providers) thus, demonstrating the exclusive atmosphere embedded within this opportunity for participation. Consequently, although the Transform board itself is drawn from residents of Ilfracombe (and surrounding villages) its members only notionally represent the community.

However, during my empirical research it became apparent that one of the key spaces of resident engagement was the Transform office. Transform’s main headquarters on the High Street essentially served as a drop in centre for resident enquires. The physical placing of the Transform HQ on the main High Street was part of the physical re-structuring of the spaces of neighbourhood governance. In doing this it allowed residents of the central ward ready access to local information and services.

One other avenue for community engagement was the more recently established Ilfracombe Centre: a local one-stop shop which also provides a space for local authorities, and various other partners such as Shelter and the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) to work from. The Ilfracombe Centre is also located on the High Street. It is worth noting here, in relation to the resident experiences presented in

Chapter Three and the second section of this chapter, that Job Centre Plus has placed one electronic ‘job seekers’ machine within the centre for residents to search for job vacancies instead of travelling all the way to Barnstaple. They cannot, however, sign on for Job Seekers Allowance on this machine, and often have to make the 15 mile journey to Barnstaple using public transport.

Another space for resident participation and engagement is offered by Ilfracombe Town Council. The Town Council have a prominent presence on the Transform board and themselves hold regular monthly meetings which are open to the public. These meetings aim to be inclusive for the community, offering a chance for engagement and participation. The Town council also have a prominent web page and e-forum on the internet, on which residents can express their views and enter into discussion on key issues.

These three spaces are provided with close links and support by Transform and, on the surface, offer an avenue for active participation and engagement with central ward residents. However, their development and structure is dominated by the ‘local elite’ presented in the previous chapter. Their position as ‘inclusive’ participatory spaces will be discussed in the next section.

However it is important to note here, in reference to the resident experiences presented in Chapter Three, that there is no specific space of participation and engagement for tenants suffering from severe housing problems in the LCPRS. As demonstrated in Chapter Three, many residents felt disempowered and unable to connect with formal avenues of complaint and advice due to fear of eviction or a lack of trust in the local authority. Whilst a landlord-tenant support scheme, which may provide this necessary space of engagement, had been discussed by NDDC, this has not yet been developed practically.

6.2.iii. Inclusive Spaces?

The frameworks for participation and engagement described above provide an opportunity for ‘inclusion’ into the neighbourhood management process. Whether or not these ideas are realised and whether the systems truly provide a platform for community participation (particularly of the central ward residents) is a matter for debate. Certainly they provide a geographically convenient base for residents to physically access if they so wish. Yet although they may be generally accessible, they may not always be socially accessible to the very community members that are considered the most vulnerable, the actual targets of neighbourhood reform. Essentially, this is not a problem of geographical accessibility but is an issue of social and political inaccessibility.

Residents of the central ward, who could be vital to the consultation and participation process of neighbourhood management, are often excluded from the participation by numerous social and political barriers. This is a fact often acknowledged by local ‘elite’ residents. As one Town Councillor said:

“Yes it is a certain type of person who gets involved and for obvious reasons. Sometimes it is for self interest, but often because they have the position to be able to do that”

Transform Board Member, Ilfracombe

It was widely acknowledged by Town Councillors and community workers that it is often those who are the most articulate who are able to best use the representational systems to further their cause and have their voices heard. This was stated by the local MP who told me:

“Sometimes people come and present themselves, and usually it’s the most articulate who are able to explain there problems and you try and do something for them. It’s the ones that can’t explain the problem that you always end up failing really.”

Transform Board Member, Ilfracombe

Often, even with schemes supported by Transform or the development of the Ilfracombe Centre, it is the most vulnerable residents who are excluded through

lack of understanding and an inability to find an avenue of open communication. For example, another Town Councillor and Transform board member states:

"We're sending leaflets, leaflets through their doors! A lot of them [low-income central ward residents] can't read or write, of course they're not going to get involved."

Transform board member, Ilfracombe

If this is the case then it leads us to question the extent to which real community representation and/or participation is intended or realised by the established routes.

One reason cited by residents during interviews for not participating through these routes was that the participatory systems are all found in traditionally 'formal' spaces which some residents may have felt uncomfortable with. The quote below from a Town Councillor summarises the type of activity at these meetings which may add to the exclusive atmosphere felt by some residents.

"Yes anyone can come along, though it is mostly councillors and so on, fighting their arguments. Not as many arguments these days (laughs) its boring"

Town Councillor, Ilfracombe

The exclusive nature of such spaces, for example the monthly Town Council meeting, was continued in a number of resident interviews. These were seen as spaces they felt uncomfortable going to or airing their views within, and this feeling was widely held by the majority of 'hard to reach' central ward residents that I spoke to. Here is one example:

Interviewer: Would you ever go to a Town Council meeting? They are open to the public.

"No, wouldn't bother"

Interviewer: Why not though?

"Oh no, I couldn't stand up there anyway problem wouldn't be listened to anyway. I doubt it, Not me."

central ward resident, Ilfracombe

This thought was echoed by most, but not all central ward residents that I spoke to and it became particularly apparent that Town Council meetings were not thought to be inclusive, and that spaces such as The Ilfracombe Centre were used as information and problem solving points but were not sought out as spaces of 'active' community participation. In short, spaces provided by Ilfracombe Town council and supported by Transform were not being used by the residents in the process of participation, but instead, were being used as extremely useful and beneficial information points for resident's enquiries.

This leads to a questioning of the practical application of policies based around notions of inclusion, as demonstrated here, some 'spaces' of participation are *not* working as effective delivery mechanisms to reach *whole* communities. Therefore, although opportunities are extended to participate in decision making processes, the barriers that 'hard to reach' residents face, exclude them from acting as local political citizens. In this sense, I argue, engaging vulnerable residents in the 'political' citizenship process, as active stakeholders in neighbourhood management, is not realised through the spaces of participation provided in Ilfracombe. Instead, as demonstrated in Chapter Four, these spaces are developed and occupied by a set of 'elite' residents. This leaves residents, such as those presented in Chapter Three, with limited opportunities to engage and participate in the process of neighbourhood management. Subsequently, this also means their practical experiences in regards to issues such as housing and employment, are not represented or developed through formal avenues of engagement and participation.

The opportunities for participation in active citizenship, and the roles positioned by different actors, will be discussed in the following section.

6.3. Active Citizenship and Neighbourhood Responsibilities

6.3.i. Introduction

In Chapter One I discussed the rhetoric of the New Labour government as emphasising “the neighbourhood” as a key area for the enrolment of individuals into active citizenship. Here, I argued that the development and establishment of Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders sought to incorporate technologies of active citizenship into the processes of neighbourhood regeneration. When central government developed a programme of neighbourhood management to facilitate the renewal of deprived neighbourhoods, a framework of widening community participation and consultation was deemed key to this strategy, as well as improving joint working with service providers. These objectives were outlined in PAT4. A central element to this strategy was the ‘activation’ of residents, with an emphasis on the community to become involved, become actively engaged and to take responsibility for their own neighbourhood space(s).

On one level, a local ‘elite’ were enrolled as active citizens to develop and oversee the operation of Transform. In this instance, the engagement and activation of ‘elite’ actors as citizens, was underlined by an ethical and moral responsibility placed on them to reform their neighbourhood. Imbued by the connotations that these actors were ‘good’ citizens, this local ‘elite’ were able to participate and drive forward neighbourhood initiatives, developing strategy targeted at other, less ‘good’ residents of the community. Transform sought to enrol the ‘local intelligence’ of these ‘good’ citizens to utilize community alliances to reform the neighbourhood. Here, these actors were valorized as models of citizenship, constituted them as a dominant force in the neighbourhood governance structures of Ilfracombe.

However, in keeping with New Labour’s particular inflection of the Third Way, the valorization of the active citizen in Ilfracombe was particularly focused, with a different meaning, on the engagement and activation of ‘hard to reach’ residents.

Rather than using their 'local intelligence' and experiences of neighbourhood degeneration outlined in the resident experiences of Chapter Three, the neighbourhood management process seeks to enrol them as *subjects* for reform. This will be demonstrated in the next section. This form of citizenship focused on the 'empowerment' of individuals through enrolment into neighbourhood initiatives which seek to re-shape their subjectivities towards a more 'responsible' individual, in line with the rationale of neighbourhood renewal outlined in Chapter One. This process of engagement with residents is highlighted well in the views of Rose, who discusses the process of citizenship or community participation where:

"New modes of neighbourhood participation, local empowerment and engagement of residents in decisions over their own lives will, it is thought, reactivate self motivation, self-responsibility and self-reliance" (1996:9)

This emphasis on citizenship described by Rose, as a method of 'empowerment' which aims to produce active self-governing citizens, will be explored in the following section, through presentations of my empirical findings. Here, I demonstrate that Transform does deploy initiatives to specifically carry out this objective, but the outcomes of such initiatives are demonstrated to be uncertain and complex.

6.3.ii. Active Citizenship and Transform

The Transform literature (leaflets, posters, official reports...etc) was embedded within a discourse of 'active' citizenship and community 'empowerment'. This, perhaps, is a consequence of the top-down delivery, of the rationale upholding the national project of neighbourhood renewal, to a very local level.

For Transform, the importance of community 'empowerment' is communicated to the residents of Ilfracombe as a vital vehicle to their inclusion and participation in 'the community', which will allow them to shape the development and outcomes

of their neighbourhood(s). As the headline of the leaflet demonstrates, active citizenship is applauded and valorised:

“Be an Active citizen”

Headline, Transform Leaflet 2008

To be an “active citizen” as the leaflet suggests, residents are encouraged to participate in Transform-led initiatives such as ‘Street Clean’, the community garden, mentoring schemes, skills and jobs training, exercise classes, and many more which attempt to guide them in the appropriate direction whilst also enrolling technologies of the self into a process of self government.

One of the key objectives behind the valorisation of the ‘active’ responsible citizen through neighbourhood management is to encourage and support residents back into work in the local area. This guidance back into paid work was the ultimate goal of New Labour’s national neighbourhood renewal project. This objective will be presented further using Transform’s ‘Transform 4 Work’ initiative as an example of this specific inflection of active citizenship prioritised by Transform. This is a citizenship, as described by Rose (1996) which focuses on changing individual behaviour and values.

This next section raises a number of points. First it outlines how ‘appropriate’ residents are identified and categorised by ‘good’ elite citizens in the town. This demonstrates the moral undertones to the neighbourhood management project. Second, and in more detail, this section presents the Transform Yourself exercise class as a neighbourhood-led initiative of individual reform which aims to create ‘good’ citizens, creating ‘confident’ women who are able to participate in paid employment. This initiative has particular resonance with some of the empirical findings presented in Chapter Three which presented female exclusion from the labour market as embedded within a gendered discourse which did not account for women’s dual roles as carers and mothers.

6.3.iii.a. Transform 4 Work (T4W): Identifying Subjects for Reform

One of the key projects of the neighbourhood management pathfinder in Ilfracombe was the ‘Transform 4 Work’ programme (T4W). Chapter Three demonstrated through the presentation of resident experiences, that access to the labour market was a particularly fraught issue for many residents. Therefore this section aims to present one initiative developed by Transform which aimed to tackle the problem of ‘worklessness’, outlined in PAT4 as a key objective to be addressed through neighbourhood management.

The T4W programme itself is wide reaching and made up of partners including the lead partner Transform, as well as North Devon Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB), North Devon Volunteer Service, Scribes and Jobcentre Plus. Briefly, the T4W programme offers a variety of services which include helping with CV's and application forms, supplying skills and job training and has also designed some innovative schemes to increase the ‘confidence’ levels of unemployed residents. In the following section I focus on one of these initiatives- the Transform Yourself exercise class. The policy framework for T4W is embedded within what Levitas (1996,1998) describes as social integrationist discourse (SID); a discourse in which the ability, motivation and application of individuals to paid work is prioritised as the acceptable pathway for vulnerable residents into the active community, described in more detail in Chapter One.

Although the framework of T4W is embedded within SID, my empirical findings suggest that the views of a number of ‘elite’ actors, who have close ties to the development of inclusion strategy, are embedded within a subtle moral underclass discourse (MUD), a discourse which was also outlined in Chapter One. For example in an interview with a Town Councillor it was stated that:

“If they [residents] want to change the town then they have to get involved, we can't do it all for them, they do need a push sometimes, that's just the way it is.”

Transform Board Member, Ilfracombe

It would be wrong to say that this attitude was generally reflected by all council/Transform board members, but the majority did agree that residents must learn to help themselves, and as one Town Councillor pointed out, ‘certain’ residents must learn to:

“make the right choices instead of going to the shop to buy fags and booze”.

Transform Board Member, Ilfracombe

This highlights the view at a local level, that ‘certain’ residents in the deprived ward area must be altered into responsible, active citizens through a “push” by Transform. In conjunction with this, many of the initiatives supported by Transform are geared towards creating *opportunities* for residents to participate in *reforming* projects such as T4W, and to become self-motivated, activated citizens, which in itself, is a means of self-government over the population. So instead of the ‘empowerment’ outlined in PAT4 as an increased capacity for citizens to participate in decision making processes, which, taking into account the resident experiences demonstrated in Chapter Three would be a much needed tool of engagement, ‘empowerment’ is defined here by Transform as the ability to ‘empower’ the self to be a ‘good’ citizen in relation to New Labour’s particular inflection of the Third Way (Giddens 1998). Consequently Transform provides opportunities, such as the Transform Yourself exercise class which seek to mobilise and re-shape individuals into ‘empowered’ ‘good’ citizens; this initiative will now be discussed in more detail in the next section.

6.3.iii.b. Transform Yourself (TY) Exercise class

The T4W project incorporates a number of voluntary, community and public sector partners- with the joint goal of ‘empowering’ and assisting, long-term unemployed individuals (back) into employment in the local area. The idea for T4W was primarily developed in response to high levels of unemployment in the

town, particularly those found within Ilfracombe central ward. In addition to this, the Transform Yourself (TY) initiative, which is the technology of citizenship being discussed in this section, developed as one of the practical technologies of the project. The Transform Yourself (TY) exercise class targets individual fitness and capability to work. Its aim is to increase the confidence and self-esteem of participating women so that they might be able to find and sustain paid employment. This rationality can be situated in the wider policy changes outlined in A New Deal for Welfare: Empowering People to Work (DWP 2006).

TY is essentially an exercise class designed for women from low-income backgrounds many of whom are single parents, young mums or women in receipt of Incapacity Benefit. They are, essentially, women in a similar position to those presented in the resident experiences section of Chapter Three. The TY initiative entails an hour long exercise class each week, for a series of ten weeks, and is provided to users for free of charge. Childcare is also available free of charge at the exercise studio whilst the class is taking place. The aim of TY is to increase the confidence and self-esteem of participating women so that they might be able to find and sustain paid employment. The next section will use an analysis of the initiative to consider how one technique of citizenship was deployed through Transform in practice. It also aims to provide some evidence to show how the concept of governmentality can be applied practically within policy analysis.

TY acts as a technology of government, a fundamental aspect of which is the active engagement of, and participation by, a specifically targeted group of individuals. The enrolment/guidance of these targeted groups by TY occurs by offering the service free of charge (with free childcare included) to users, and advertisement for the class takes place at the local Sure Start² centre, local school and medical centre. Participants have also been steered into the initiative

² Sure Start is a government programme which aims to provide all families, with children under the age of five, education, health and family support services as part of the drive to tackle child poverty and social exclusion.

through other community agencies or through a social inclusion worker. These individuals are targeted as having unsuitable characteristics for 'active' citizens, such as low self esteem which, as presented by in this local newspaper article, leads to their own active isolation.

"Some people, women in particular, have very low self-esteem and low self-confidence and one of the hardest things for them to cope with is the isolation factor"

Social Inclusion Officer (This is North Devon 2008)

This demonstrates the identification and targeting of the moral fabric of individuals as being unbalanced. This places personal responsibility at the individual- in their inability to find a job- rather than at the accountable hands of national or local governments. These views also demonstrate some lack of awareness of these women's other responsibilities as mothers and carers when finding suitable work, a process highlighted in Chapter Three.

However, the TY initiative is a technology of citizenship which seeks to 'empower' these women, building their confidence and self-esteem through physical exercise and notions of team building. It acts as an agent of reform, to guide techniques of self-government and direct participants towards their civilized role as self-activating, self-including citizens, characteristics distinguished as central traits within New Labour's morally defined 'Third Way' of citizenship.

The TY exercise class specifically targets women, whom, I was told, suffer from low self-esteem and depression, and more specifically, do not have the confidence to find or hold down paid employment. For example, one officer stated:

"Some people were finding that first step on the roll to volunteering or employment or all of those developments as the most onerous step. Really difficult to overcome those initial problems because of confidence and self esteem and that sort of thing"

TY Officer, Ilfracombe

Accordingly, under the initial remit of T4W, Transform Yourself works as a mechanism of government which intends to shape, activate and direct women into paid employment by acting on, and increasing their self confidence. Here the women are subject to a technology of reform which aims to transform their ability for social and economic empowerment through personal restructuring³. Again in conjunction with the questions raised in the first section of this chapter, by highlighting this particular notion of ‘empowerment’, this initiative does not aim to increase participant’s empowerment of political inclusion- as part of the decision making processes of Transform- but instead, by a process of economic inclusion.

Upon visiting TY, I found that the exercise class was geared towards a basic, fun and friendly exercise class which provided a safe inclusive method of engagement. This was emphasized by the fitness instructor who stated:

“We keep the routine basic, so everyone can do it, the first week everyone comes and you can see such a difference in some of the girls as we go on”.

Fitness Instructor

The “difference” the fitness instructor spoke of here was not a difference in the fitness levels or body shape of the women as the programme advanced, but a difference in the amount of self-confidence that they possessed. During interviews, the fitness instructor, the TY officer and the manager of the Empowering Communities Programme (part of the wider project under which TY runs), all emphasized the benefit and genuine effect that the exercise class had on the confidence levels of many of the women participating. It is this reshaping of women, via techniques that seek to build confidence and self-esteem, which is the vital component to (re)shaping moral subjectivities. Here, and embedded within policy concerning neighbourhood renewal, individuals are targeted and

³ A more comprehensive study of empowerment can be found in the work of Cruikshank (1999) who notes that subjects of democratic reform, reflected in this paper by the female participants of TY, can become “isolated as a target of government intervention and their capabilities calculated and inscribed into a policy for their empowerment” (1999:75).

'shaped' to reform personal characteristics, such as low confidence and low self-esteem: traits which are disapprovingly deemed unsuitable for an inclusive, active life in the community and in the world of paid work.

The TY initiative does not seek to engage with the wider matters concerning the participant's unemployment- their status and responsibility as parents, or careers, or the lack of appropriately paid work in the area- although other initiatives run jointly by Transform do seek to address these issues to some extent. Consequently, I argue, the exercise class intends to mould the subjectivities of female participants towards an advanced personal morality more fitting with Third Way notion of citizenship envisaged by Giddens (1998). This exercise class promotes the reshaping of moral constitutions towards confident, happy women. This process can be understood by Rose's comments in the re-constitution of subjects through:

"the ethical formation and self management of individuals to promote their engagement in their collective destiny, in the interest of economic advancement, social stability and even justice and happiness" Rose (1999: 475)

This, I argue has been a core principle in the transformation of Britain during New Labour's time in government and this is reflected in the nature of TY, which positions confidence and self esteem as objects of government, and guides users towards their collective destiny as responsible, active, perhaps even happier, citizens.

Accordingly, the technology aims to mould personal characteristics of the participants, such as self-confidence, with one main aim: to guide the female users of the service back into paid employment. This type of 'guidance' back into paid employment was also central to many of New Labour's welfare programmes and supporting people back into work has been a fundamental element to policies such as the New Deal program.

Practicalities of Neighbourhood Reform

The practices of subjectification utilized to manage individuals within the neighbourhood(s) of Ilfracombe are physically operated -acted out- on a neighbourhood level and in the case of TY, on a bodily level. As noted, these practices, such as the TY exercise program, are aimed specifically at managing and manipulating individuals from the central ward of the town- the target population-, into appropriate forms of socio-economic behaviour, and specifically, under the banner of T4W, into paid employment.

Yet despite the rationale and programme of government through which TY functions, the technique is not without practical divisions in its operation. For example, both the Transform Yourself officer and Empowering Communities Manager, both questioned the extent to which gaining paid employment was important or even possible for the participants. Here, the practical operation of the initiative by Transform officers still strives to reform personal characteristics of participants, such as self-confidence and self esteem: without necessarily accentuating the end goal of gaining paid employment.

Instead, officers were keen to stress the health benefits of TY, which, one officer stated, was particularly important to young women and single mothers living in poor housing. Stress on personal health, the TY Officer added, was in part to do with the end of funding of TY by the T4W project and the commencement of new series of funding applications, to be made to various health and sporting bodies. In addition to this point he stated:

"Well our funding is coming to an end now unless I can ring anything more out of our budget here [Transform Pathfinder], and I won't know that until September. That's why a couple of our bids we're putting in, one to Sport England and one to the Lottery are crucial, I'm hoping, as I heard from Sport England"

TY Officer, Ilfracombe

This example points to the ongoing cycle of funding applications, that many public and third sector agencies find themselves caught in, perhaps molding their own subjective frameworks/outcomes to meet the criteria of a particular programme of government available to them at that time. Therefore although TY was instigated as a technology of citizenship, aimed at reforming and re-shaping the characteristics needed by participants for inclusion in the labour market, these findings demonstrate that the tension caused by funding opportunities can, in some instances, change the underlining rationale of a neighbourhood-led project on the ground level.

Transform Yourself: Participant Views

Alongside this formal disjunctive between the prescribed and material operation of the programme, when conducting the focus groups, none of the participants of TY made strong connections between the TY initiative and an increased desire or ability to find paid employment. In fact, six of the eight participants had young children and said that they would have been unable to take on a job due to lack of childcare and the lack of appropriately paid and accessible jobs available in the area. These are points reflected in the female resident experiences of access to employment demonstrated in Chapter Three of this thesis. When asked of their intentions behind joining the program, participants cited, “*something to do*”, “*to get fit*”, “*loosing weight*” and “*getting out of the house*” as the key factors. None of the participants cited gaining employment as a motivating factor, and only one of the participants of the two focus groups had gained a job as direct result of the TY program. However, the participants all enjoyed the programme and agreed that the program had increased their self-confidence. For example:

Participant One: “*I’m more positive after I’ve been here...*”

Participant Two: “*It gives you a laugh, and you just look forward to it, I can’t wait until the next week*”

Participant Three “*If you’re feeling down, it really gives you a boost*”

Unquestionably, all participants of the focus group were extremely positive about the TY initiative and the effects it had had on their confidence and self-esteem, with all the women feeling that it was an extremely valuable initiative. So although the rationality of the programme is underpinned within a social intergrationist discourse (SID), this may not always be realized in material outcomes. However, the action of moral reform, through the manipulation of personal traits such as self-confidence and self-esteem, was realized to some extent through the TY initiative.

From an institutional viewpoint then, TY seeks to guide individuals towards acceptable social subjectivities, regulating the socio-economic behavior of poor women by molding personal characteristics. Yet the presupposed outcome of such techniques on individual subjectivity is questionable, and the production of such subjectivities cannot by themselves guide individuals to the desired outcome of paid employment and appropriate 'active' citizenship. The female participants may have acquired more confidence but they were still not able to access, find or want to opt into paid employment for a variety of reasons. Here, human agency can work to contest, change and contradict the presupposed outcomes of the technique either through an act of resistance or an impediment to pursuing paid employment. Participants are still subject however to the broader attempt of moral reform. Perhaps the flaw in the technology is a lack of consideration for the women's responsibility as mother and careers, which, exacerbated by a labor market deficit of appropriately paid, accessible jobs, makes holding down paid employment difficult in the extreme. These views were put forward by a number of participants of the focus groups as well as previously by female residents in Chapter Three.

Transform Yourself: Acts of Resistance?

So far, this thesis has presented neighbourhood management as a process dominated by top-down networks of power. However there were some acts of subversion noted during these empirical findings which suggest that some level

of bottom-up power, however small, is able to ‘filter up’ through the process of neighbourhood management. For example, more overt acts of resistance—additional to the general ‘resistance’ to the desired material outcome (i.e. paid employment), took place by participants during the TY initiative.

For instance, all of the women from the focus groups thoroughly enjoyed the programme and saw the benefit it was having on their fitness and their self esteem. Nonetheless, when a £1 fee was introduced to the class, numbers dwindled so dramatically that the instructor could not be paid and the classes were cancelled. Some participants of the focus groups cited low-income as a reason that they or others, might not continue to engage with the programme after the introduction of the fee. Perhaps it was also an act of political resistance, as a number of participants stated that the exercise class should be fully subsidized, as the Transform programme, viewed as the local government body, had a moral obligation to individuals such as themselves to provide initiatives for free.

Could this be seen as an act of resistance? It was certainly an act of economic resistance and a transition of power into the hands of ‘hard to reach’ residents. In these cases, opposing forms of power, structured around a separate, socio-economic code of conduct, were put into operation by TY participants to resist this additional fee. Here, from a participant level, the collective group was able to refuse, resist and manipulate the technique of government from the bottom-upwards.

Consequently, the resistance to the £1 charge for TY led to the withdrawal of the policy by Transform. Ironically, without such a resistance, if the had been kept, it would have led to the end of the programme, another closed avenue for *social renewal* and importantly, one less positive outcome to report and help sustain the future funding of the TY initiative. Through the material practice of resistance, participants were able to guide and manipulate at least part of this technology of

government, though notably not its moral direction. The participants did not pre-arrange this 'act' of group resistance, but did this on an individual basis citing their own economic restrictions as grounds for withdrawing from the initiative when the fee was introduced. In this case, a collective act of defiance cannot be labeled as a united act of resistance but should be seen as an individual act, which, in this case, worked collectively, in to an area dominated by high levels of deprivation, unemployment and low levels of income. Thus, the resistance of participants took place within the underlining regime of government.

6.4. Summary

This first section has addressed the position of 'participation' and 'active' citizenship within Transform's management and delivery processes. As outlined in A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal and PAT4, effective neighbourhood management hinges on the engagement and participation of community members (SEU 2000, SEU 2001). This section outlined some of the opportunities provided for resident participation in the decision making processes of neighbourhood management. In doing this, it demonstrated the exclusive nature of these spaces as experienced by residents and acknowledged by some local 'elite' actors. In presenting these opportunities, this section demonstrated that such 'spaces' worked to re-produce elitist involvement in neighbourhood development examined in the previous chapter, through a process which valorised the participation of a set of local 'elite' actors. This demonstration was presented in two ways. First, empirical accounts of resident's experiences showed these opportunities for engagement were unwelcoming and intimidating for anything beyond the simple accessing of information. Second, the empirical accounts of those who were involved acknowledged the often elitist nature of these spaces of engagement. So whilst Transform and its associated partners reflect the rhetoric of New Labour's notions of 'inclusion', often these spaces of engagement and democratic participation, in this case developed through Transform and its associated partners, actually work to re-constitute an already

existing ‘elite’ within a newly established framework of neighbourhood management. In presenting these findings I demonstrated that Transform did not lend itself to a wholly inclusive project of political citizenship. Subsequently I outlined the notions of citizenship prescribed to certain residents and identified the prioritisation of ‘elite’ actors as ‘good’ citizens. This however, led to an identification and labelling of ‘hard to reach’ residents, as subjects in need of moral reform through technologies of citizenship._The T4W initiative was presented in this section of the chapter as one technology of neighbourhood reform which targeted and enrolled ‘hard to reach’ residents as a part of a process to reconstitute those individuals into self-governing subjects. Following from this, I explored in detail the Transform Yourself exercise class as a technology of government which aimed to re-shape the subjectivities of participating women through notions of confidence building and self esteem towards an economically ‘active’ citizen capable of finding paid employment.

The TY initiative aimed to deliver a dual re-constitution of self, first through the development of “self esteem” leading to the creation of a “morally fit” subject, which would then lead to their second reconstitution as a citizen willing and able to take up a position in paid employment. I argued that whilst this initiative played a role in re-shaping the moral subjectivities of participants (as evidenced by the participating women’s discussion of the benefits TY has had on their self esteem), this initiative has actually had little effect on their status within the paid job market. I argued that the absence of this re-constitution of individuals as subjects committed to and participating in paid employment, was due to the complexity of participant’s lives as carers and mothers, and the inflexibility and availability of appropriately paid jobs, which is not taken into account by the underlining rationale of neighbourhood renewal. This resonates with the claim that social inclusion via regeneration is a which valorises the importance of participation in paid work as the key inclusive mechanisms into society and does not account for the complexity of ‘hard to reach’ women’s lives within neighbourhoods of deprivation. This story however was complex, and

demonstrated the contradictions, tensions and realities of technologies of government at a ground level. It finished with the participants experiences of the programme and uncovered small acts of resistance.

Throughout this part of the chapter, Foucault's concept of governmentality has been used as a form of post-structural political study to examine the rationale and technologies which form the foundation of New Labour's neighbourhood renaissance in relation to the case study of Transform Yourself.

Accordingly, the next half of this chapter will now return back to the residents of Ilfracombe, and present their experiences in relation to the process of neighbourhood management. The aim of this section is not to explore notions of citizenship, but, in leading on from the experiences presented in this first half of this chapter, to unpack in more detail, the practical realities of neighbourhood management of the ground.

6.5. Resident Views Revisited

6.5.i Introduction

This second half of the chapter aims to examine the practical perspectives of the neighbourhood management process on the ground in Ilfracombe. It will revisit the three key themes which emerged through analysis of resident interviews and present them in relation to the empirical findings of this research. The aim of this section then is to examine and discuss the lived experiences of neighbourhood management on the ground as this, as outlined by McKee (2010), is often a process undermined by traditionally top-down approaches to urban policy analysis.

In Chapter Four, I presented the stories and views of residents of Ilfracombe central ward: with the aim of identifying key issues. It was by analysing these initial resident interviews that enabled me to draw out the key themes for exploration in this thesis, *housing, employment and access/knowledge of local services*, and this chapter will now return to the residents and officers themselves to identify and explore how the neighbourhood management pathfinder Transform (in conjunction with North Devon District Council) has impacted on their lives. In doing this, I will return at some points to Residents A-F, who opened up the case study, but I build upon their experiences by further exploring experiences from the 23 additional resident interviews and two focus groups that were conducted. The aim here is not to present a homogenous resident experience concerning the key themes (as there is no such thing), but instead to present the experiences of typically labelled 'hard to reach' residents and the ground level officers who engage with them. These 'hard to reach' voices, of those who are actually the main targets of government interventions such as Transform, are notoriously hard to locate in most policy development and policy documents, and they are presented here, in this chapter, to further the account of their experiences with neighbourhood intervention.

Presenting their experience in this capacity is vital in identifying best practice and gaps in neighbourhood management in Ilfracombe. First however, I argue that by using a ‘bottom-up’ approach to governmentality which examines both officer and resident experience of the technologies of government, this part of thesis provides a valuable insight into the actual material realities of micro-level interventions such as Transform. Second, I will return to the key issues of housing, employment and access/knowledge of services, and explore the impact that Transform and NDDC has made to residents over the course of the research.

6.5.ii. ‘Bottom-up Governmentality’: Resident Realities

In traditional governmentality studies it is customary to view the policies of government as rational processes which operate through top-down interventions. The subjects and targets of such interventions are assumed to be acted upon and moulded in a subtle manipulation of their own will and agency. However it cannot- and should not- be taken for granted that such technologies always have the desired effect or outcome on their target subjects. This was demonstrated to some extent in the previous section concerning TY.

In the traditional view, the target of governmental interventions, individuals and populations of people, have their subjectivities realigned through indirect manipulation of their conduct of conduct (Dean 1999:10-16). This can be achieved through a variety of top-down governmental strategies and technologies which forge the subjectivities of their target in the appropriate way. As discussed previously in Chapter One, although this method of analysis is useful, it labels such processes of governance as totalizing practices of power, where the targets subjects are enrolled, and subjectivities are guided and shaped in line with the leading rationality of government.

In relation to the concerns of this thesis, as the hegemonic rationale of neighbourhood renewal was imposed by New Labour in an effort to direct and

shape the subjectivities of “*some of the worst estates and deprived neighbourhoods*”, the rationale itself was embedded within SID discourse which filtered downwards from the macro to the micro level (SEU 1998:1). Using a top-down governmentality approach, power is seen as being mobilised in a hierarchical fashion, and always having its desired outcome and effect on the subjectivities of those targeted. From this perspective, policies of neighbourhood renewal and the technologies that go with them can be examined to reveal a domineering process which targets a victimized ‘underclass’, re-shaping subjects into manageable, acceptable citizens in line with the rationalities of the New Labour project. Yet the empirical realities of such interventions are often much more complex, intertwined and messy than the determined rhetoric presupposes. In reality the subjectivities of target individuals are complicated, multifaceted and in flux: constantly guided and re-shaped by a multiplicity of external and internal factors.

Using the experiences and views of residents and officers from Ilfracombe central ward as foundation for my findings, this next section will examine how governable subjects -as the targets of government interventions- experience the process of neighbourhood management on the ground.

6.5.iii.a . Engaging Residents: Officer Experiences

One of the main resident issues demonstrated in Chapter Three, was the standard and condition of some houses in the private rental sector, and additionally, the length of time it took for appropriate repairs to be made by landlords/letting agents. Within these complaints, warmth and damp were the two biggest issues. During Chapter Four it was noted that service delivery in regard to these issues via the Environmental Health and Housing team at the District council had progressed under new invigorated direction. This was supported by the HH initiative which assisted in ‘filling the gap’ in relation to NDDC’s housing objectives. Chapter Four outlined how this partnership was progressing and working towards improved outcomes.

However, in relation to NDDC and HH regeneration initiatives, one of the main issues to arise from officer interviews on a ground level was the difficulty in raising awareness about the schemes to improve housing conditions, whether these were run by the council or Transform and associated agencies. This quote below in regard to housing was representative of a number of community workers that I spoke to in Ilfracombe who stated that it is sometimes difficult for them, due to time and budget constraints, to reach the more vulnerable members of the community in terms of access to knowledge of what is available to them.

"The truth of it is, people will not believe that it is free- which they generally are-and you really need to have that support, even door knocking or something. It's that personal contact that makes a difference but it's very time consuming"

Housing Officer, NDDC

The HH housing officers also stated that they faced similar problems of lack of awareness of the schemes that are on offer. They also invest time and money in promotional days and leafleting in a bid to spread information concerning the Healthier Homes initiative. To demonstrate this, a HH housing officer stated:

"We've spent a whole day outside of the new Tesco, handing out leaflets and talking to people about what is available to them. People just don't know about the things that are available and we have to get out there as much as possible to publicise what we are doing."

HH Housing Officer, Ilfracombe

When presented in parallel with the resident experiences in Chapter Three, where it was demonstrated that the lack of avenues of engagement and complaint for tenants in relation to their housing problems was a key issue, these findings suggest that there is a disjuncture between the development of a systematic engagement strategy and appropriate methods/avenues of engagement with residents on the ground.

In a similar point, a community worker for the initiative *Scribes* also discussed the importance of face to face engagement with residents, and despite its time consuming aspect, found door knocking to be an important device for engaging ‘hard to reach’ residents and presenting them with at least some of the initiatives on offer for them to use.

“We’ve been door knocking, it is very useful actually. Very useful. It really does take up an awful lot of time but it does mean that you talk to the residents who may otherwise not have come in to speak to us”
Scribes volunteer, Ilfracombe

So from the operational officers working across Ilfracombe, presenting ‘hard to reach’ residents with the information and services available to them, is a difficult task and face-to-face interaction was presented as a vital tool of engagement. This process, as stated by both of the individuals above, is time consuming and in the current climate, not a financially viable method of engagement. This raises questions concerning the methods of engagement put forward by Transform, as outlined in the opening section of this chapter. With ground-level officers finding it hard to engage residents, spaces of engagement more appropriate to residents needs must be developed by Transform if it is to be truly engaging to ‘hard to reach’ residents. The difficulty in engaging and enrolling residents presented in the empirical findings above, serves to highlight the difficulties in delivering PAT4’s aspirations for *whole* community development on the ground.

6.5.iii.b. Engaging Residents: Partnership Working

Resident experiences examined during this research found that they were often informed of Transform initiatives through associated Transform partners. Consequently, this thesis demonstrates that one of the benefits of a neighbourhood management program such as Transform is that it acts as a partner facilitator for the local authority, third sector and voluntary agencies working in the town. This process of ‘joined up’ working was identified as one of the key methods of methods of neighbourhood renewal on a national and local

level, as outlined in Chapter One. By encapsulating these agencies into its partnership, workers and volunteers have developed more information concerning the availability of other initiatives and are then able to pass this important information over to their clients.

Although some associated agencies did not think that Transform had changed the way they work or engage with clients, most believed that having Transform as a lead partner had been beneficial, and had improved their knowledge of other services available in the town, making them more able to sign post their clients to other agencies which would have been appropriate to individual residents. For example, one community worker told me:

"No I don't think Transform has changed the way we work at all. We still do the same thing we did before they were here and will do after they have gone. But it has made us more aware, we are beginning to actually communicate more freely, because sometimes you get a client who is seeing someone here, someone there, without either of us knowing, so yes, it has meant a lot more openness and referring between people".

Community worker, Ilfracombe

The importance and increasing ability of referring people across agencies through an increase of joint working was also echoed by a NDDC housing officer. Here, the housing officer emphasised the importance of regular referrals, which had begun to happen under the Transform pathfinder.

"I've worked quite closely with them [Transform], and bring it on, I hope they make more referrals. They know who I am and they know what I do. That's what they should be doing. It's important that people pass on to us."

Housing Officer, NDDC

Most agencies acknowledged that the implementation of Transform had created an umbrella which had been useful for its associated agencies. It had allowed them to develop a more detailed knowledge of the services available in Ilfracombe- which in addition has increased the likelihood of the referral or signposting of a client to an agency which may be appropriate to their needs.

6.5.iv. Engaging Residents: Resident Experiences

Leading on from the questions raised above, due to the difficulty in engaging residents on the ground I sought to explore how residents who had been enrolled in Transform initiatives had been engaged into these processes. During tenant interviews, focus groups and chance discussions with residents, I asked individuals about their knowledge of community schemes and initiatives, and if they had been participants, how they had got involved.

When speaking to residents who had participated in housing or neighbourhood-based schemes, most had heard about it through word of mouth, usually through one of two sources. (1) either through a referral from a local (Transform-associated) community worker, or (2) from other residents at various places. Examples include speaking to other residents at the school gate, at the local Sure Start programme and at the Transform Yourself exercise class. For example, one resident told how she heard about a Transform initiative through word of mouth from another parent at her daughter's school:

"Well I found out about it at the school. I spoke to someone about it who had had it done".

Resident, Ilfracombe

Another resident was recommended to a Transform-led initiative through an employee of the local Sure Start programme.

Interviewer: How did you get involved?

"Through Sure Start. She introduced us, and a couple of us, me and my friend who has just moved away, started doing it together".

Resident, Ilfracombe

And another resident from Ilfracombe central ward, Tenant B, found out about The Ilfracombe Centre and its facilities for processing Housing Benefit through a community worker and Transform Board Member. She told me:

Interviewer: and so how did you here about it?

"I was talking to the guy in the Transcend shop, and he told me a little bit about it".

Tenant B, Ilfracombe

These are just a few of the empirical presentations from my findings of many of the stories I heard from Ilfracombe workers and residents. In the majority of cases, residents would be guided in the direction of particular information and schemes which were deemed appropriate to them through contact/conversation/visits from community or voluntary workers in the Ilfracombe area. More often than not, these 'operational officers' were connected to the neighbourhood management pathfinder Transform in some way, either as employees, board members or through other affiliations. In addition, in terms of residents knowledge of the information and services available to them, most residents I interviewed did not know of the full range of housing-related available to them. Again, those who had been involved in a scheme had heard about it through word of mouth. This was usually either through an operational officer or through another resident of Ilfracombe.

Community agencies and NDDC acknowledged in the preceding section that sharing information of services with residents is a difficult process which has been best achieved so far through face to face activities such as door knocking or personal referral of to appropriate services. Therefore I argue that the process of engaging and enrolling participants into technologies of reform is incomplete and at times haphazard. As demonstrated above, these gaps in the delivery of information to residents, creates an unsystematic approach to neighbourhood renewal on the ground, with residents enrolled into initiatives either by previous engagements with Transform or through half-chances. This undermines the "*systematic, planned approach to tackling local problems*" highlighted by PAT4 as one of the five core principles of neighbourhood management (SEU 2000:19). However, these resident experiences *do* present the practical application of joint

working on the ground level by agencies working together to refer residents. This process was discussed in relation to the empirical findings in the preceding section.

6.4.v. *Engaging Residents: The HH Initiative*

This section focuses on one of the initiatives previously mentioned in this thesis: the Healthier Homes initiative. This presentation aims to demonstrate the development of an initiative which engages residents on two levels. First, it combats the physical aspects of renewal associated with poor housing conditions. Second, through a process of partnership and collaboration, it is a vehicle through which some aspects of social renewal can be realised. In some ways, it addresses a number of the resident issues highlighted in Chapter Three.

During the research process I was able to speak to three tenants who had been a part of the Healthier Homes Initiative. All three had found the process positive and had stated that it had improved their homes and their quality of life. Tenant D was one of these tenants. She told me:

"I mean it has taken a long time. They've done the windows and they've done the walls, we're just waiting for the heating and then that should be it."

Tenant D, Ilfracombe

In the context of the interview, Tenant D was very happy with the improvements that had been made to her flat, saying it was now "*much less cold*" and that the wall insulation had made vast improvements to the temperature of the flat that she occupied with her two children. Although she had been in the flat for almost 8 years at the time of interview, the process of improvement had been notably speeded up once she was introduced to an officer from the Healthier Homes initiative. She was introduced to him through the Loan Parents Advisor, who also worked closely within the Transform partnership:

"I actually met Simon when I was doing a course with the loan parent's advisor, and that's how I met Simon, and then he started on about the Warm Front (HH initiative). He's been really good, pushing it for me."

This was another example of the best practice of joint working between Transforms delivery partners. Both Simon and the Loan Parent Advisor work in the Transform office on the High Street. This has allowed them to build up a base of knowledge of each others work and refer clients when appropriate. Hence, the *physical* re-structuring of neighbourhood governance has, on a practical level, allowed for greater levels of joint working, and in this case, improved housing conditions for this tenant.

Another two tenants I was able to interview had both had a positive experience with the Healthier Homes initiative, praising both of the HH officers in the application of their work:

"We thought that the boiler was taking too much electricity and energy and the (HH officer) was trying to sort it out and everything, and then he found out how it was, how we could reduce our electricity bill in a two bedroom flat like this and he helped a lot"

Resident, Ilfracombe

And another resident:

"Yeah he [HH officer] put this in, well not him yeah but sorted it all out-great."

Interviewer: And has it made a difference?

"Oh yeah. I mean it really has, to everything."

As housing, particularly the warmth of housing was drawn out as a key issue in Chapter Three, the residents experiences presented here in relation to HH are important ones. All three residents who took part in the initiative found that it improved their housing standard and their quality of life. These resident voices may be unable to 'filter' up through formal routes of feedback, except perhaps, in

the form of positive statistical outcomes. The presentation of their voices here serves to demonstrate the ‘soft’ aspect of neighbourhood management and reflects the dual operation of HH as a physical and social initiative of sustainability.

In relation to the processes of joint working through Transform outlined above, each of the residents who had been a part of the Healthier Homes Initiative had either been referred to the scheme through an associated agency of Transform or through face-to-face engagement at a publicity drive. This underlines the two main points put forward in this section. First, that engagement with residents on a personal basis has become an important tool for the application of the HH initiative and second, that the joint working between agencies, in part aided by the facilitation of Transform, has led to an increased uptake of the HH scheme. These examples present HH as a positive imitative which can make a difference to those residents who are drawn into the scheme when *actually* engaged in them. This engagement process though, as outlined in the preceding section, is not *wholly* inclusive and relies on personal connections and word of mouth contact with residents. This process does not correlate with the neighbourhood management approach outlined in PAT4 and serves to demonstrate the difficulty of engaging and informing ‘hard to reach’ on the ground.

6.4.vi. Engaging with Residents: Fears of Eviction

In a consideration of resident’s views in relation to their participation in forms of neighbourhood management, it became apparent, particularly in regard to tenants of the privately rented sector, that fears of engagement with the process of renewal was widespread. During Chapter Three I discussed how I had felt that some tenants were frequently subdued in their discussion of the housing problems that they faced. This was, in part, due to my position with the council as I visited their houses. The most candid responses in relation to housing problems were usually from residents I met in alternative scenarios such as church meetings and community groups, where the people often felt more open to reveal

the depth of their housing problems and the consequence of this on their lives. This problem was acknowledged by housing officer working on the ground in Ilfracombe. For example, one housing officer told me:

"People don't like to complain to the council, it's when you're a tenant you know, and your tenancy would be at risk you know if you complain to us. We'll advise, and we won't always go for the landlord, but if there is a significant risk to your health we will take it on, we have to, it's policy. For instance a common one, go to a property where complaining about damp and they've got no heating, that will count as a number one hazard and we will have no alternative but to serve notice. And they could get evicted."

Interviewer: So people don't complain for that reason?

"Yes, there is a stigma there"
Housing Officer, NDDC

These findings demonstrate that the lack of trust presented by residents to the formal avenues of complaint and participation, which was highlighted in Chapter Three, is understood and acknowledged by neighbourhood agencies. It also demonstrates an integral problem to the strategic housing policy of the district council. By serving notice on a resident due to the identification of a hazard, that resident may be left homeless. Even though the officer states that "we won't always go to the landlord", the fear instilled in tenants at the thought of this process has impeded the nature of engagement with residents in relation to housing. Again, as demonstrated in the opening section to this chapter, spaces for resident engagement and 'voice' have not been well-developed enough on a ground level to combat this "stigma".

6.4.vii. Engaging Residents: Access and Knowledge of Services

Leading on from the above point, this section serves to provide a closer examination of The Ilfracombe Centre, one of the participatory spaces of resident engagement outlined in the first section of this chapter. This is provided because the centre, which had been newly opened on the High Street in April 2008, was mentioned during a significant number of resident interviews. This section serves

to demonstrate the centre's presence in resident's experiences of neighbourhood management policy.

The Ilfracombe Centre was planned and developed by Ilfracombe Town Council in conjunction with Transform, as a 'One-Stop-Shop', to act as a central focus for community, voluntary, councils and residents to "*access current, comprehensive and accurate advice under one roof*" (The Ilfracombe Centre 2011).

The building it is housed in is on the High Street, a central access point for residents but one which was previously underused by the district council and not in a great state of repair, as the manager stated:

"There were mushrooms growing on the walls and everything. It was used previously by the District Council, for housing and advice, but it was totally underused"

Manager, The Ilfracombe Centre

This quote is part of a wider demonstration in this thesis of a perceived history of neglect of Ilfracombe by the district council.

The centre is home to around ten agencies including Citizen Advice Bureau, the charity Shelter, business support services, both County and District council services, Exeter Drugs Project and town councilor's surgeries, and it also offers conference/meeting space for anyone to hire at relatively cheap cost. As I began conducting interviews at the start of this PhD process The Ilfracombe Centre was just opening its doors to the public and it had caused some level of interest among residents I had been talking with. One area that had been particularly useful was the information provided to residents, and processing of Housing Benefit at the centre. For example, Tenant B told me:

"Being near The Ilfracombe Centre is great. Because you can do all the council stuff and things from there"

Interviewer: That's a relatively new thing.

"Oh I am lucky then. Yeah it's been great. They are so friendly and helpful and everything"

Interviewer: What kind of services are you using there?

"Well I haven't used anything other than for Housing Benefit, because they did all of my original documents, phoning to change over my income support, and stuff like that."

I came across a number of similar stories from other residents who had used The Ilfracombe Centre as a main port of call for help and advice with processing benefit paperwork and payments. To give another example:-

"I've been down there to do my benefits. Because I can't understand them sometimes when they send me letters so I've been in there with them. And they looked at them and sorted it out with me."

Resident, Ilfracombe

A number of residents, including those presented above, had used and found The Ilfracombe Centre an important point of call for information regarding Housing Benefit and related services. However in contradiction to this, there was not however, at the time of the research, a full time representative from Housing Advice, under NDDC, stationed within the centre.

It may have been useful for NDDC to have a housing advice officer at the centre at the point of opening. This, in relation to the previous section, and the themes outlined in Chapter Three, may have created an avenue for engagement with residents who were suffering from poor housing conditions but did not have an established local avenue to voice these concerns outside of formal housing inspections.

When asked why a representative of housing advice had not yet acquired a full time presence at the centre, the manager thought that it had been down to paperwork and health and safety issues on behalf of NDDC. This is reflective of

the differing temporal horizons of partner agencies, outlined previously in Chapter Four when exploring the beginnings of partnership working between NDDC and Transform. Here, the The Ilfracombe Centre Manager notes:

"We have a representative on reception, from the District Council which cover Housing Benefits and inquiries."

Interviewer: Are they here all the time?

"Yes, full time presence. The Housing advice people aren't here full time but they are going to be here full time."

Interviewer: Do you know when that will be?

"I would have thought in the next few months. There has been issues with, various health and safety issues they had regarding interview rooms and size and that type of thing. But that has all been sorted now."

Manager, The Ilfracombe Centre

Consequently, these empirical findings re-demonstrate the differing temporal horizons of action between NDDC and, in this case, its partnership with the Ilfracombe Centre (Jessop 1998). This is a theme that will be revisited in the concluding chapter of this thesis. The centre did however house a representative from the housing charity Shelter who often consulted jointly with Transform. However, the face-face presence of a housing advisor with the local authority would have helped to delivery a more systematic and informative service to residents, particularly in relation to housing. For example, one resident complained of her experience in relation to housing. She told me:

"I was in there everyday."

Interviewer: Housing advice in Barnstaple?

"No in Ilfracombe Centre but speaking to them, housing advice told me I would get money for a three bedroom house, and I moved into a 3 bedroom house after 8 weeks of waiting for them to pay my deposit, and now I've been told I'll only get a two bedroom, so I have to top up £30 a week to live in my house. And I was really annoyed because they told me

they would give me the money for the deposit first and then they took eight weeks to sort it out when it could have been done within 2 days, and then after I'd move in a month they told me they weren't going to pay £100 in rent a month because my son doesn't qualify for an extra room because he is disabled. It got beyond a joke"

Resident, Ilfracombe

This lack of presence of a face-face housing advisor, the method of engagement outlined in the previous sections as the most effective way to engage with 'hard to reach' residents, had a detrimental effect on the ability of The Ilfracombe Centre to provide appropriate advice and services to vulnerable residents. This frustration is felt by the resident above who "*was in there everyday*" trying to resolve her housing problems through regular phone conversations, a service provided to her by the Ilfracombe Centre. NDDC's lack of capacity to provide this service at the time of open undermines what PAT4 describe as "*the tools to get things done*", which are broadly outlined in the report as developing services that are 'joined up' on a neighbourhood level and are fully supported through local authority delivery (SEU 2000:8).

6.4.vii. Engaging Residents: Employment and Job Seekers Allowance

In addition to resident experiences of inappropriate access to housing advice at the centre, during the research process there was one other key issue which was raised during many conversations with both residents and operational officers. This issue can be related back to the resident experiences presented in Chapter Three, where access to the labour market was identified as a key issue for residents. Here, the empirical findings demonstrated that residents were excluded from the labour market through lack of access to jobs and employment information in the town of Ilfracombe. It also presented the issues surrounding travelling to Barnstaple to 'sign on', which also presented itself as an exclusory mechanism in relation to income. Consequently, one of the key issues arising in resident discussions of The Ilfracombe Centre was that it did not provide a representative from Job Centre Plus.

Many residents felt that this service was needed to make two things easier: 1. to help them actively find work in the area, 2. to enable them to sign on for Job Seekers Allowance without travelling to Barnstaple. These tensions were outlined in Chapter Three of this thesis. This has created much confusion and frustration among many unemployed residents in the community. For example one resident told me:

"I just don't understand, you can do everything else there but not that."

Interviewer: But there is a machine, a job seekers machine you can use?

"Yeah but its crap. I might want to speak to someone. And you can't sign on on that though can you."

Resident, Ilfracombe

This was a common complaint, brought up by many residents. In light of this I sought to discuss the issue with the manager of the manager of the Ilfracombe centre told me who told me:

"Job Centre plus is a bit of a sore subject. They initially came out here two days a week, but they said they weren't getting enough people coming. But all of our customers, always always tell us that we should have job centre plus here. That they should be able to sign on and various things like that. But apparently Ilfracombe's major problem is not people on job seekers [allowance] but on incapacity [benefit] so that's why JCP are saying 'right, we don't need to be there'"

Interviewer: So what happens if someone wants an appointment with the JCP?

"What they say now is, 'if anybody needs an appointment in Ilfracombe, then they will make it', but that doesn't happen in practice."

These empirical findings demonstrate another service disjuncture between those provided at a neighbourhood level and those provided at a district level. Whereas PAT4 emphasizes the impetus on "*coherent structures and commitment to action at higher levels of governance*", this process of action by Job Centre Plus is

demonstrated in these empirical findings as not being fully supportive of this process (SEU 2000:8).

However despite these district level discrepancies, when I spoke to the Ilfracombe Centre manager, she advised me that the changes made to the physical re-structuring of Job Centre Plus within the district was due to decisions taken by central government offices. Reflecting on this point she told me:

"This was when JCP was removed from Ilfracombe, altogether, because we used to have a full time service, but it possibly wasn't full time at the end. That got closed just as we were about to open because I remember a lot of people thinking that was why they closed but it wasn't. So yeah, that came down from Caroline Flint I think, it was a much bigger decision than at our level. Yes so Job Centre Plus is a big gap."

Here, the manager describes the removal of Job Centre Plus from Ilfracombe, and a void in their physical presence in the Ilfracombe Centre as being a decision taken at the higher level of central government. These findings unravel contradictions in the government's national neighbourhood renewal strategy which is embedded within a discourse that valorizes 'inclusion' through access to the labour market. This contradiction, I argue, has serious consequences for the residents, as outlined in this section and in the resident experiences presented in Chapter Three, in their *active* exclusion by mediating institutions into paid employment. This point will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Six.

6.5. Summary

Transform was thus developed from a national and local rhetoric that emphasised assisting and developing the capacities of "the neighbourhood". It aimed to join up, and work with, local service providers and empower and mobilise local communities to take responsibilities for their own neighbourhoods. Whilst in many ways, the first half of the chapter presents neighbourhood management as a traditionally top-down examination of neighbourhood-led

regeneration, the second half aimed to present the voices of those individuals who experience the process of neighbourhood management on the ground. This includes the operational officers themselves and the residents/tenants who live and work in Ilfracombe. Here, a series of experiences were presented which aim to provide an examination of some of the processes associated with neighbourhood management on the ground in relation to some aspects of the key themes drawn out in Chapter Three.

It was argued in this section that many agencies felt Transform had not had a significant affect on the way that they worked on the ground, and in fact many continued in their activities of community engagement and reform as they had done previously. This suggests that in some ways, Transform works to reconstitute a series of pre-existing neighbourhood governance structures into a “newly established” framework under the guise of neighbourhood management, and seeks to assemble a programme of socio-economic reform into a convenient neighbourhood level framework.

The resident experiences in this half of the chapter show that the majority of residents who experience it, do have a positive notion of neighbourhood management. This was noted in particular regard to the Healthier Homes (HH) initiative which was given as an example. In these experiences, HH can be viewed as an example of the ability of neighbourhood management to forge a link between the physical and social aspects of sustainability. The HH initiative works as a non-statutory agent, targeting the physical regeneration of housing whilst also, in practice, providing support and appropriate sign posting to agencies within the Transform umbrella, which residents have found useful.

The development of neighbourhood management by PAT4 was a commitment by New Labour to the productive capacity of “the neighbourhood” as a site of reform. In particular, it was committed to the neighbourhood as a site of community mobilisation through the process of active citizenship. Yet, as the experiences

presented by operational officers show, it is extremely difficult to reach, mobilise and engage whole communities. It was particularly noticeable that the ‘hard to reach’ targets of neighbourhood reform in Ilfracombe were hard to engage and mobilise. Personal contact between officers and residents, or residents and residents, was the main method of useful engagement (with leaflet dropping not being significantly useful). This method of engagement and consequent mobilisation often occurred through chance meetings. This suggests that the overarching technologies of power, as envisaged through PAT4, rely heavily on personal connections within the community and are not generated through a directed process of extensive resident mobilisation by Transform. This uncovers one of the discrepancies with neighbourhood management and other neighbourhood-led regeneration schemes which are designed to target deprived areas which are characterised by ‘hard to reach’ residents. In order for technologies of reform embedded within the framework of neighbourhood management to work, such technologies first have to engage and enrol individuals in a more direct manner. This leads to the suggestion that on the ground, the process of neighbourhood management is not best viewed as one of an all encompassing hierarchical governmentality- instead, the ability to enrol, engage and mobilise subjects depends on addressing a number of practical realities on the ground, which include a pronounced difficulty in developing the technologies which are able to directly ‘reach’ the appropriate residents.

In addition to this, there are other tensions and contradictions in the programme delivery of neighbourhood management as evidenced by the data set out in this half of the chapter. The objectives of Transform derived through the overarching aim of the neighbourhood renewal project, is to create self-governing individuals through their targeting, enrolment and management into technologies of neighbourhood reform. However, the ‘hard to reach’ residents targeted by Transform are characterised by a set of complex needs, which are often experienced by resident living in areas of deprivation. Such needs can be outlined to some extent using the PSE Survey discussed Chapter One (Gordon

et al 2000). The complexity of residents and their needs, combined with unidirectional method of reform that highlights participation into paid work, makes it difficult for operational officers to develop and manage the needs of residents beyond those of New Labour's focus on responsible, self-governing citizens as embedded within a social integrationist discourse of exclusion (Levitas 1996). Consequently, I argue that neighbourhood management promotes a specific mode of micro-governance which addresses the overarching directive of New Labour's urban renaissance but finds it difficult to address the more complex needs of residents through a process of genuinely participatory development of local strategic policy making. These complex needs are however somewhat more addressed on the ground, as personal relationships emerge between operational officers and residents, as presented in this chapter, which allow for some sign posting and information passing to residents towards appropriate agencies. However, as noted above, these methods of engagement usually occur through the somewhat haphazard development of personal contacts over a lengthy period of time by operational officers, making it difficult to enrol and mobilise *whole* communities. This is not to say that neighbourhood management initiatives such as HH or TY do not produce valuable outcomes for the residents involved. However, I argue that their enrolment onto these technologies can be difficult and at times, fragmented on the ground.

Like the HH initiative, The Ilfracombe Centre was also found to be a positive of the development of access to information and services within the town of Ilfracombe. It was mentioned by a significant number of residents during interview and conversations as a site which provided them with useful information. However, two points for concern were raised by residents about The Ilfracombe Centre. First that at the time of research there was not a representative from NDDC housing advice at the centre and second, that representatives from Job Centre plus were not represented either. These points of concerns can be discussed along two lines. First, in relation to the lack of a housing advice representative in the centre, these links back to the concluding

discussion of the last chapter, which highlights a discrepancy in the temporal horizons of joint working. In this example, as was the case during the initial implementation of neighbourhood management, it could be argued that NDDC are not working to the same temporal time-frame as The Ilfracombe Centre. This discrepancy in the process of neighbourhood governance, made a significant enough impact for it to be strongly noted by both residents and operational officers in Ilfracombe.

Second, I argue that the lack of presence by Job Centre Plus at the Ilfracombe Centre has a profound effect on the process of neighbourhood management as envisaged within a social integrationist discourse of neighbourhood renewal. It was noted that this makes it much harder for residents to access the jobs market, sign on for Job Seekers Allowance or gain access to knowledge and information regarding employment available. I argue that this void contradicts the national rationale of neighbourhood renewal and actually perpetuates the process of social exclusion of unemployed residents in Ilfracombe through a process of active exclusion from the employment sector. This point will be discussed in more detail in the concluding chapter.

This chapter together with Chapter Four have provided the empirical basis for a discussion of the actual process of neighbourhood management in Ilfracombe in relation to the key themes set out in the Chapter One. The concluding chapter will now seek to bring together the literature and empirical methods presented in this thesis.

*Chapter Seven:
Concluding Chapter*

7.1. Introduction

In the thesis, I set out to explore the process of neighbourhood management in the central ward of Ilfracombe. This was not necessarily the original intention of the PhD, but after spending time in Ilfracombe at the beginning of the project, and after speaking to residents and officers about the neighbourhood-led developments which were occurring in the town, an exploration of the recently installed neighbourhood management pathfinder seemed to offer an important opportunity to examine one of the neighbourhood-based urban policy initiatives designed by the New Labour government to combat the problems of 'social exclusion' found in areas of deprivation.

Consequently, the purpose of this thesis then became to explore the construction, development and operation of neighbourhood management through an empirical study of Transform and its associated partners in Ilfracombe. I have argued in Chapter One, that this exploration must be placed within the context of social exclusion due to its key position as a central element of New Labour's neighbourhood renewal initiatives. I also argue in Chapter One and Two that exploring the processes of partnership and active citizenship will allow neighbourhood management to be exposed in more detail in relation to New Labour's Third Way ideology.

The purpose of this research has been to explore the process of neighbourhood management as a community-led partnership for neighbourhood renewal, and subsequently to provide an examination of the process of neighbourhood management in relation to the key themes of social exclusion and 'active' inclusion. This concluding chapter aims to discuss the main empirical findings of the previous chapters in the context of this purpose. In light of this purpose, the

main findings of the empirical chapters will be discussed to provide a platform from which to begin an exploration of these research questions in relation to my findings and to previous empirical research.

7.2. Summary of Research Findings

The thesis begins with an examination of the origins, development and political use of the concept of social exclusion. When New Labour came into government, this term was ubiquitously used when discussing urban renewal and formed a fundamental backbone of regeneration policy. However, as argued in Chapter One and Two, this initial emphasis was gradually replaced with a greater emphasis on the processes of “inclusion”. This opening section of this chapter examined the development of language of social exclusion with reference to Levitas’s discourses of exclusion. Here I argued that discourses of exclusion, embedded within New Labour’s national strategies for neighbourhood renewal, acted as a moral commentary on neighbourhood space. Chapter Two examined the development of New Labour’s urban policy initiatives in more detail, presenting the key concepts of “community” and “neighbourhood” as vital components of their renewal strategy which reflected their particular inflection of the Third Way and discussing the development of Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders from the PAT4 report.

Chapter Five aimed to provide an insight into the development of the neighbourhood management processes on an operational level. In this chapter, the initial development of Transform, through statistical identification was examined. Here I argued that Transform was assembled by, and consequently used to support *expert knowledge*: via the Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2004. Consequently, I argue that the IMD is a *statistical tool of political identification* used as such to distinguish areas for political intervention and to construct and reinforce the problematization of “the neighbourhood” as an objective space, to be acted on, and consequently (re)organized, by policies of government.

Next, the development of partnership working was examined. This provided an insight into the initiation of the pathfinder Transform which was initially developed by three senior officers of the GOSW, NDDC and DCC. The presentation of these experiences led me to argue that the development of Transform was unlined by the involvement of traditional hierarchies which did not enable an “inclusive” approach to neighbourhood strategy development. This chapter also presented the evolution of ‘partnership’ in Ilfracombe and highlighted the priority given to the enrolment and participation of a set of local ‘elite’ individuals.

Another theme to arise from the presentation of empirical data in his chapter was the underlining disparity in the temporal horizons of partners from NDDC and Transform (Jessop 1998). The chapter presented two partners who were initially unable to work to the same temporal framework in either strategic or practical developments in relation to housing. Jessop (1998:7) analyses this situation well by stating:

“For, in strategic-relational terms, social practices, organizations, institutions, and systems typically have specific structurally-inscribed temporal and spatial forms and are oriented to distinctive spatial and temporal horizons of action. Thus specific forms of economic and political system privilege some strategies over others, access by some forces over others, some interests over others, some spatial scales of action over others, some time horizons over others, some coalition possibilities over others.”

Jessop’s seemingly complex description of action can be illustrated on a practical level by the empirical findings I presented in Chapter Four and Five of this thesis.

The empirical presentations from Chapter Five will be drawn from in this concluding chapter to discuss the process of neighbourhood management as a community-led partnership for neighbourhood renewal in relation to the objectives of the thesis. This concluding chapter will also draw on Chapter Five to discuss the implications that working with a set of local ‘elite’ individuals had in

the context of Transform as a vehicle to combat social exclusion and deprivation at a local level.

Chapter Six began by examining the space developed for community engagement and participation through Transform. This section presented a series of spaces which were not fully inclusive to the whole community. Here, I argued, that an atmosphere of exclusivity was experienced by a number of residents. This was produced by the traditionally formal structures of local government and the significant presence of local ‘elite’ individuals participating in the wider arenas of governance. Consequently, the role of a “local elite” and a “resident population” became clearly defined in this fifth chapter, the former as a respected source of knowledge, responsibility and service delivery, and the later as a population of individuals who were targeted for enrolment into the neighbourhood management process in an undertaking to reform their social characteristics. Subsequently, the example of the Transform Yourself exercise class was presented as a technology of power specifically aimed at the vulnerable individuals and not towards the local ‘elite’ actors. These empirical findings were drawn on to discuss the position of active citizenship within the process of neighbourhood renewal. Here, the activation of citizens was executed through an exercise initiative designed to re-shape their individual subjectivities towards confident women, enabling them to ‘actively’ look for and participate in paid employment. The tensions and outcomes of this process were discussed in detail in this section using the concept of governmentality.

The second half of Chapter Six explored the operation and material realities of neighbourhood management on the ground, presenting the views and experiences of officers and residents through the themes of partnership working, inclusion, engagement, participation, and access to knowledge and services. From an examination of these experiences I argue the translation of the rationalities of neighbourhood management on the ground is complex, and at times haphazard in its approach to residents. This was underscored by the

fragmented and messy methods of engagement used to enroll residents into the various neighbourhood initiatives. This section of the chapter also presented the Healthier Homes (HH) initiative as example which made a positive benefit to those it reached, and presented an initiative which worked effectively within the Transform umbrella to interconnect the process of physical regeneration with the social aspects of deprivation. In a final section, The Ilfracombe Centre was presented as a space of engagement and participation. Yet this was not without difficulties, and the presentation of resident experiences evidenced two points. First, that again, the temporal horizons of NDDC and Transform were disjointed, with the Ilfracombe Centre opening and operating without a representative from housing advice (of NDDC). Second, the absence of Job Centre Plus accentuated the exclusion of individuals from the jobs market, and I argue, actively excluded them from such opportunities.

The experiences, analysis and discussion presented in these previous chapters will now be drawn upon in this final concluding chapter. The aim here is to provide a discussion of the previous chapters in relation to the four objectives outlined in the Methodology Chapter.

7.3. Social exclusion and Neighbourhood Management

7.3.i. Examining the Process of Social Exclusion Through Neighbourhood Management

In the opening to this thesis I explored the dynamic meaning of social exclusion, as both a concept and a measurement of disadvantage, and discussed its position as a key theme within New Labour's neighbourhood renewal programme. Consequently, I presented neighbourhood renewal, and its ensuing policy of neighbourhood management, as strategies developed under a government which prioritized "social exclusion" as a central concept when tackling the causes and consequences of deprivation within deprived

neighbourhoods. This argument was outlined in greater detail in the literature review, which discussed the political developments, and academic debates, surrounding the concept of social exclusion during New Labour's government. This next section aims to bring together a discussion concerning the research presented in the previous chapters of this thesis, with academic and policy-based research, outlined in the Chapter One. Here, I discuss the process of neighbourhood management as evidenced in this thesis, in relation to the concept and process of social exclusion.

Social Exclusion and "The Neighbourhood"

Although social exclusion itself was never explicitly presented as an area-based concept by New Labour, I argue that its pivotal position as the foundation of New Labour's neighbourhood-based policy from 1997-2010, fashioned the concept as a term used in a process of geographical identification for areas of neighbourhood reform. Consequently, in Chapter One and Three, I argued that due its close association with the SEU, the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) was used by the New Labour government, as an identifier of areas of *social exclusion*. Thus, neighbourhoods of deprivation such as Ilfracombe, were delineated as geographical areas of social exclusion and consequently, I argue here, constituted as spatial rationalities of government, in a manner noted by Huxley (2009: 194), who argues for the identification of space as a rationality of government in her statement that "*Spatial rationalities postulate causal qualities of 'spaces' and 'environments' as elements in the operative rationales of government*". Consequently, I argue that through the lens of social exclusion, the explicitly spatial concept of "the neighbourhood", became constituted as an object and rationale of government. This thesis presented this process through the identification of Ilfracombe by the GOSW, as a target of "neighbourhood" reform through the conception and deployment of Transform, a process which, through its operation, identified the specific parts of the town as an object of government.

Discourses of Exclusion

In Chapter Two, I examined the two national strategies for neighbourhood renewal. Here, I examined their link with the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU), presenting their objectives as those most closely aligned to *social renewal* over physical regeneration of neighbourhoods. I argued that the concept of social exclusion, as presented through the use of a moral underclass discourse and a social integrationist discourse, was deeply ingrained within neighbourhood policy at a national level. The empirical research of this thesis allows for an examination of the translation of this discourse, to the neighbourhood-level of policy development and its translation on the ground.

To discuss this further in relation to the case study, Chapter Six presents the Transform 4 Work Scheme (T4W), an initiative, I argue, that is embedded within a social integrationist discourse of exclusion at the neighbourhood-level of policy development. Here, through a top-down process of advancement, the valorization of paid employment, as determined by New Labour as the most valuable admittance to “inclusion”, is constituted in Transforms strategic framework. I argue that this translation- of the rationales underlining New Labour’s project of neighbourhood renewal- is structured through the use of PAT4 as a national framework from which to develop local neighbourhood management policy to combat identified problems such as ‘*long term worklessness*’ (SEU 2000:7)). However, in relation to the material realities of national and neighbourhood policy translation, I present a set of officer and residents experiences in the previous chapters, which dispute the ability of top-down objectives, embedded within a social integrationist discourse, to penetrate the practical operation of neighbourhood management on the ground.

To illustrate this point, whilst the T4W initiative emphasises the importance of participation and training as a stepping stone into paid employment, and in doing such, embeds the social integrationist discourse described above, the officer and resident experiences expose the Transform Yourself exercise class as a vehicle

to boost the confidence and self-esteem of participating women, in a process which does not directly relate to them gaining paid employment. I argue that this re-shaping of participants own self-worth is ingrained within a moral underclass discourse, as it is an initiative which, on the ground, aims to redirect the inherent emotional morality of the participants towards themselves. It could be argued that to change their own self-worth they must be developed, guided and re-directed into appropriately confident individuals, who may then be able to participate actively in society. However, on a very real operational level, the TY is spoken about by the Fitness Instructor, Community Worker and participants as a confidence booster for its own sake. Their everyday conversations are not deeply embedded within a discourse of exclusion or by an aspirational discourse of increasing achievement levels. Instead, on a basic operational neighbourhood level, the initiative was run to create a sense of 'inclusion' among women on low income, some of whom suffered from low self esteem. Therefore, I argue, when examining this initiative through the practical measurements of exclusion set out in the PSE Survey, which identifies non-participation in social activities as one identifier of exclusion, the TY initiative does aid the 'inclusion' of the participants into society (Gorden et al 2000:59). Where the PSE Survey identifies 'lack of money' as the most prominent reason of exclusion from 'social participation', this initiative, which was provided free of charge, extends 'inclusion' to these women on a practical level.

On many occasions, operational officers did not strictly conform to the direct or rational framework of neighbourhood management, but instead, often amended and re-directed their position dependent on funding opportunities and outlets for development and growth of the project. This will be examined in more detail below in relation to the concept of governmentality.

Transforming Neighbourhood Subjects?

The translation of neighbourhood management rationale, from a policy to a practical level, is presented in this thesis as a process which is complex and subject to a variety of practical interpretations on the ground. As pointed out by Stoker (1998), the rhetoric and rationale used to interpret and develop neighbourhood renewal policy, is fragmented as it becomes translated by the complex reality of decision making on the ground.

This is presented in this thesis through the daily experiences of operational officers in Ilfracombe. Evidence presented in Chapter Six, concerning the TY exercise class, is used to show how the overarching rationale of neighbourhood renewal, underlined within a social integrationist discourse, is not necessarily translated by officers on the ground as they battle with the complex realities of resourcing and available funding for neighbourhood management initiatives.

For example, during the interview process officers were keen to stress the health benefits of TY, which was particularly important to young women and single mothers living in poor housing. Stress on personal health, the TY Officer added, was in part to do with the end of funding of TY by the T4W project and the commencement of new series of funding applications made to various health and sporting bodies to support the exercise initiative. This example points to the ongoing cycle of funding applications, that many community and voluntary groups find themselves caught in. In light of this, I argue that local policy frameworks can be translated and re-shaped by partnering agents, reconfiguring their own subjective frameworks/outcomes to meet the criteria of a particular programme of government available to them at that time. In reference to this subversion on the ground, one officer told me:

"Well our funding is coming to an end now unless I can ring anything more out of our budget here [Transform Pathfinder], and I won't know that until September. That's why a couple of our bids we're putting in, one to Sport England and one to the Lottery are crucial, I'm hoping, as I heard from Sport England"
TY Officer.

Whilst Foucault emphasises the productive nature of power, and in doing so, the ability of subjects to adapt, modify and/or resist force, relatively little research has been conducted which identifies and examines the practices taking place, the very processes and operation of governmental interventions by individuals, groups and agencies who conduct them on the ground. Such an examination would take into account government, community or voluntary workers: the individuals who are often at the forefront of the technological operation of interventions at the micro-level. In contemporary research, academic and political attention has been focused on a top-down approach to policy translation but it is perhaps even more important to examine how the officers who are responsible for the day-to-day operation of programmes and technologies are themselves governed and translate government policy at a local level. In addition, it is also important to examine the struggles around ‘employee’ or ‘officer’ subjectivity and explore the translation of policies into target communities by shifting the focus of governmentality studies to an ethnography which explores ‘governmental officers’ as subversive subjects (McKee and Cooper 2008). Here I will briefly discuss the practices of ‘operational officers’ on a day-to-day basis. This will be taken forward through an examination of the struggles around subjectivity of the officer’s themselves- discussing how they are not necessarily just cogs in the neoliberal wheel but how they too can act as subversive subjects. Using this examination I briefly explore how neighbourhood welfare and regeneration policies can be translated, manipulated and changed by the very ‘officers’ who operate them on the ground.

Translating and Subverting Neighbourhood Management?

Rationalities of government, and the programmes and technologies which emanate from them are not only commonly assumed to be totalising frameworks for governance but also rigorous frameworks to which operational subjects are enrolled and adhere to. The flow of power through the framework, through the operational subjects themselves (as the practical vehicles of technologies of

government) is assumed to be a one-way process which does *not* take into account the fundamental agency of *real* people.

However during my field work in Ilfracombe and its surrounding area, it became apparent that neighbourhood and community workers often adapt policy at the micro level to meet local needs as they feel appropriate. Consequently, instead of operational subjects being thought of as unwittingly enrolled into the neoliberal [post-welfare] machine, as officers who unwaveringly facilitate the operation of technologies of the New Labour government, I want to argue for a more complex construction of ‘operational subjects’, as both compliant and subversive subjects in the messy process of governing at the micro-level.

Employees and volunteers are contracted to work within a rationale structure of government. Often, they have a specific remit which guides their employment, decisions, and actions at work. This remit could be supported by an official strategy or by a more flexible ethos which drives the work carried out through that particular agency. In either case, often this remit is structured by the rationale of government which sustains the funding for that particular programme- perhaps a central government department or funding body. With this being the case, employees and volunteers find themselves cast within the strategic framework of government. These operational subjects are themselves guided and emerge through this particular ‘regime of truth’ associated with the rationale of government at a strategic level. So whilst ‘governmental self-formation’ is commonly used to relate to the ways that assorted agencies seek to encourage and shape target individuals towards a particular end, it can also be applied to the myriad of fostered practices that are embedded within the role of ‘operational subjects’ at a practical level. Such ‘operational subject’s encompass, amongst others, voluntary and community workers, town councillors, council officials and local MPs.

In doing this, discourses of exclusion which embed within national neighbourhood renewal policy become less clear, as agencies seek to manipulate or extend their conversations in a direction which is deemed most appropriate for a specific funding initiative of that time. In this case, the funding partner then transforms the rhetorical direction of the project, for instance, securing of funding through Sport England would redefine the discursive framework of TY to one which emphasises improving health and fitness over a drive into paid work. However, on a micro level I was told, the initiative would continue to run in the same way: a fitness class each week available for free to low-income women.

This provides just one detailed example of the messy reality of operating neighbourhood management policies on the ground. The empirical research of this thesis suggests that operational officers are continually reassessing and renegotiating their roles within the frameworks of neighbourhood-based policy into forms which allow them to execute their own, more locally-led objectives based on their own experiences, and the experiences of residents.

7.4. Models of Exclusion

7.4.i. Introduction

This thesis is concerned with the concept of social exclusion and the next section concerns the processes of social exclusion in relation to Transform and its associated partners. Chapter One presented Silver's models of exclusion (1994) as a way of examining the processes of social exclusion within area-based policy. Silver noted that it is unreasonable to present one of her models as a singular paradigm for exclusion and I want to note here that exclusion is a complex process which can be examined only by regarding all three models of exclusion in relation to the empirical findings.

Exclusion from Partnership

Silver's paradigm of Monopoly is a model which has resonance with the empirical findings of this thesis. Here the social order is positioned through a framework of hierarchical relations such as class, status and resources. In some ways, the neighbourhood management pathfinder Transform facilitates this hierachic relational structure. Both chapters Five and Six discussed the position of a set of local 'elite' individuals as developers and operational officers in the implementation of Transforms strategic development. Chapter Six then examined the experiences of 'hard to reach' residents, and identified them as targets of Transform, rather than as partners. This targeting focused on their personal re-development as 'active' citizens as the vehicle for their inclusion into the neighbourhood management process. The importance of active citizenship, underlines that the process of inclusion of "heard to reach" groups is tied to acts of active participation and citizenship which are provided through initiatives developed by Transform. Consequently, Transform priorities a set of elite individuals in the development and operation of their programme and additionally, encourages and develop acts of citizenship by 'vulnerable' residents. Consequently, whilst presenting the creation of opportunities for residents to 'participate' in Transform initiatives through 'active' citizenship, this thesis also serves to demonstrate the way in which 'exclusive spaces' are not tackled, but are re-constituted through the process of neighbourhood management into hierarchical spaces of 'neighbourhood' governance. This reinforces hierarchical relationships traditionally viewed as a process of top-down governance and is reflected, in some ways, through the use of Silver's Monopoly paradigm.

Exclusion form the Labour Market

The Solidarity paradigm described in the Chapter One presents exclusion as a process that happens when bonds between individual and (morally) 'mediating institutions' are broken and the Specialization paradigm as exclusion as a consequence of social differentiation, particularly through the economic division of labour (Silver 1994:10-13). I argue in Chapter Six that this occurs in Ilfracombe, in a process of exclusion of residents from the labour market. Here, a

series of discussions were presented concerning the withdrawal of the Job Centre from the central ward of Ilfracombe. I argue that the Job Centre acts as an important moral and specialising ‘mediating institution’-as it is tied to the broader moral rationality of government and in a practical sense, it effects a resident’s ability to gain access to the paid employment market. Consequently, I argue that this withdrawal has the potential to significantly propel individuals into the process of exclusion. This will be discussed more in the following section, in relation to the literature from Chapter One concerning the PSE survey.

The PSE Survey

The PSE Survey produced four key identifiers of exclusion 1. Exclusion from income, 2. exclusion from the labour market, 3. exclusion from services and 4. exclusion from social relations (Gordon et al 2000). In this section I argue that the withdrawal of Job Centre Plus, as a mediating institution in Ilfracombe, had a profound effect on the measureable exclusion of unemployed residents for the following reasons. First, it works to exclude individuals from the labour market (one of the identifiers of the PSE Survey).

The physical removal of the job centre means, on a practical level, that individuals are not able to physically engage with the Job centre in Ilfracombe. Taking into consideration that methods of “*face to face*” communication with ‘hard to reach’ residents, some of whom face long term unemployment, were presented in Chapter Six as the best method of engagement with residents, this physical removal actively excludes individuals from engagement with this institution of government. Consequently, I argue that the removal of the Job Centre from Ilfracombe actually works as an excluding technology, which jeopardises the inclusion of ‘hard to reach’ residents into paid employment, and undermines New Labour’s underlying rationale of neighbourhood renewal which, it is argued in this thesis, is actually embedded within a social integrationist discourse which valorises the importance of *paid work* as a method of inclusion (Levitas 1996).

The second point in relation to the PSE Survey and the removal of the job centre is exclusion from income. As discussed in the previous chapter, job seekers have to travel to Barnstaple to “sign on” for Job Seekers Allowance, costing them £3.90 each time (bus prices in 2010). This point was underlined in the words of a Town Councillor, Transform board member and local community worker in Chapter Three who stated:

“So if you go and sign on, which you have to every fortnight, or every week some of them now, then you are essentially living below the poverty line”.

Hence, the removal of Job Centre Plus from Ilfracombe, and the consequent travelling to Barnstaple to sign on, actually operates to exclude individuals from a level of income appropriate to keep them above the poverty line.

The concepts of active and passive exclusion, outlined in Chapter One, can also be explored here. Active exclusion is a process which occurs when boundaries are re-enforced to keep people “out”. It could be argued, using the empirical evidence put forward in Chapter Six that the removal of the Job Centre Plus (JCP) from Ilfracombe works as a process of *active* exclusion. Hence, the removal of this institution *actively* excludes people from the labour market, *and* from an appropriate level of income via Job Seekers Allowance. It seems somewhat ironic that Job Centre Plus has been removed from the deprived ward of Ilfracombe given that JCP forms part of the institutional framework of the rationales of government which valorise paid work.

The PSE Survey also presents ‘social relations’ as an identifier of social exclusion. This includes non-participation in common social activities and civic disengagement as important aspects of exclusion (Gordon et al 2000:59-55). Using the empirical presentations in this thesis to explore the extent of engagement and participation provided to residents during the neighbourhood

management process, I argue here that residents still experience social exclusion through ‘civic disengagement’ because appropriate avenues of engagement and participation are not extended to them during the neighbourhood management process.

7.5. From Exclusion to “Inclusion”

7.5.i. Inclusion in Ilfracombe

Throughout this discussion I have focused on the concept of social exclusion as a framework for analysis and discussion due the SEU’s construction as the key state apparatus to combat “*the worst estates*” in Britain. However, the process of neighbourhood management presents an example of the changing impetus of the New Labour government- of one which initially focused on the concept of ‘social exclusion’ to one which increasing focused on the notion of ‘inclusion’. Nationally, this was reflected by the dissapation of the Social Exclusion Unit, and consequent movement of neighbourhood-based policy development to the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit (NRU), situated in the Department for Communities and Local Government in 2001.

This national evolution of the terms and direction of neighbourhood renewal from one of combating problems of “exclusion” to one which creates opportunities for “inclusion” was reflected practically on a micro-level in a number of ways. This thesis demonstrates that this shift in direction was evidenced locally by the Transform.

First, during an Audit Commission meeting attended by the acting Chief Executive of NDDC and Head of Departments at the District Council, when discussing one point on their check list which concerned offering practical solutions to social exclusion through their local directives, one Head of Department made the comment:

“Social exclusion doesn’t really matter anymore”
Head of Department, NDDC

And another officer said in reference to the objectives met by NDDC in relation to private rented sector housing.

“We are making a difference in terms of social inclusion”
Senior Officer, NDDC

This national shift in rhetoric was significantly represented through policy development and practical discussions on the ground. For example, when I discussed a number of the Transform initiatives with operational officers in Ilfracombe the importance of “inclusion” was often presented as the panacea to neighbourhood problems. When discussing one neighbourhood-led initiative a community worker states:

“this scheme has been very good at socially including people”
Community Worker, Ilfracombe

I noted that on a practical, operational level, the concept of social exclusion itself was rarely discussed. This changing emphasis on ‘inclusion’ was driven through the gradual importance of the concepts of citizenship and empowerment to the neighbourhood renewal process and subsequent initiatives such as the neighbourhood management pathfinders. I argue that that shift towards a greater emphasis on “inclusion” through acts of citizenship represents the increasing neoliberal focus on individual responsibility and action, highlighted through an increasing interest in libertarian paternalism (for a broader discussion see Jones et al 2011).

7.5.ii. Inclusion through Neighbourhood Management

In Chapter One I examined the idea of *community* as both a means and an end to ‘inclusion’. I discussed ‘community’ as a vehicle through which government

objectives of neighbourhood renewal are realised. Rose highlighted the ways in which modes of participation are thought to empower residents, transforming them into responsible citizens and I discussed how the processes of ‘active citizenship’ and ‘inclusion’ could become realized *through* community (Rose 1996). The thesis sought to uncover spaces of ‘community’ engagement and participation and examine them as spaces of inclusion. This raised questions around the methods of participation and inclusion through which neighbourhood management operated.

For example, in Chapter Six I presented the ‘community’ spaces of participation and ‘active’ engagement in the neighbourhood management process. However, in this thesis, I demonstrate the restricted opportunity for inclusion for residents through this type of ‘active’ citizenship. The ability or confidence of residents using spaces of participation and engagement is sometimes lacking, and as presented in the empirical chapters, opportunities for inclusion into the development of neighbourhood management in Ilfracombe were often experienced as unsettling for residents. In reference to marginalised individuals engagement with ‘active’ processes of citizenship Lister (2007:5) states that the

“key test of participatory initiatives and processes from the perspective of inclusive citizenship is whether they do challenge traditional power relations or simply reinforce them”.

However, the empirical findings presented in this thesis suggest that opportunities for participatory inclusion into the decision making processes of Transform is narrowed to a set of traditionally positioned local ‘elite’ actors.

Consequently, using “community” as a vehicle of exclusion can work to create a hierarchical system of exclusion, again best represented by Silver’s Monopoly paradigm of social exclusion (Silver 1994). For example, Transform, in its essence, does not allow ‘hard to reach’ residents to be part of the stated “community” unless certain terms of inclusion are met. They are targeted by

initiatives of reform, such as the T4W programme which allows them a path to inclusion into appropriate “community life”.

7.6. Subjects of Reform

Another key objective of this thesis was to present some of the experiences of residents living within the deprived wards of Ilfracombe in relation to notions of social exclusion and citizenship. What became clear from my research was that resident experiences were varied and often their own stories were fragmented due to my position as a researcher and the inevitable time restraints of research. However, the resident experiences presented in Chapters Four and Six do capture something of the complexity of resident lives. Whilst the majority of central ward residents discussed the positive effects certain schemes, such as Transform Yourself or the Healthier Homes initiative had on their daily lives, there was an underlining presence in conversations which began to tease out some notions of their experiences in relation to neighbourhood management. For example, one resident said to me that she thought that ‘vulnerable’ people were treated as targets of neighbourhood policy in a way which made them feel excluded from the processes of renewal. In fact, she told me that she felt as though ‘hard to reach’ residents were often treated as:

“Targets- [local and community agencies] shoot at them”.
Resident, Ilfracombe Central ward)

This targeting, felt by some residents is undoubtedly part of the neighbourhood management process which positions an elite “community” at the forefront of an inclusive neighbourhood. This was reflected in some of the elite comments made in the previous empirical chapter which identified a subtle deviance to ‘hard to reach’ resident’s behaviour in relation to opportunities available in Ilfracombe, for example one Town Councillor commented that certain residents needed to *“make the right choices instead of going to the shop to buy fags and booze”*. A subtle sub text in this vein ran through a number of the local ‘elite’ interviews and

provides evidence of how governmentality is put into practice on a local level. These type of opinions, delivered by developers and operators of the neighbourhood management process, serve to identify a moral basis for governmental intervention within a prescribed ideal of community values. These values feed back up into some of the communitarian values of the New Labour government. Consequently, a method of reform and guidance, evidenced here through Transform programmes such as T4W, seek to target and redirect individuals to a responsible, self confident member of the community.

In emphasise this point, another central ward resident, who was unemployed at the time of interview, told me that the development of a Street Warden scheme by Transform had made him think that:

"there is more emphasis on being policed than being assisted"
Resident, Ilfracombe Central ward

This “policing” was felt by the residents I interviewed, who, I would argue were at the more ‘extreme’ or ‘harder’ end of the spectrum of ‘hard to reach’. Neither residents who had made these comments had been directly involved in any Transform or neighbourhood-led initiative and both took a very negative view of the process of neighbourhood intervention. These views reflect back to the processes of exclusion outlined in Chapter One, which presented the ‘culture’ poverty as a morally tinged aspect of exclusion. Above, some residents experience the feeling of a subtext of moral underclass discourse which is embedded within a minority of ‘elite’ resident’s views and daily practises. This ‘culture’ of poverty, presented and experienced through the empirical findings implies that poverty and exclusion are socially constructed and underpinned by moral values. However, as demonstrated in this thesis, the process of exclusion is complex and is underlined by resident’s exclusion from methods of participation, access to the labour market and opportunities for engagement.

Summary of Exclusion

This section aimed to demonstrate and discuss the empirical findings of this research in relation to the objectives of this thesis, and in the context of previous research set out in Chapter One and Two. In doing this it focused on the concepts of social exclusion and active citizenship- as translated through neighbourhood renewal policy- in the town of Ilfracombe. Central to these themes is Transforms development and delivery of services through a process of partnership and joint working. This shall now be discussed in the next section.

7.7. Partnership and Joint Working

7.7.i. Introduction

One of the research objectives of this thesis was to explore the process of neighbourhood management as a ‘community’-led partnership for the promotion of neighbourhood renewal. In meeting this aim I explored the development and evolution of partnership working in Ilfracombe, presenting the viewpoints of the district authority, and the neighbourhood management pathfinder Transform and its associated partners. This research sets out to establish the process of partnership working between local authorities, neighbourhood agencies, and local communities. Chapter One outlined the importance of “partnership” to New Labour’s policy developed to tackle the problems associated with social exclusion. Here, I discussed the central importance placed on processes of joint working by the SEU, and the continuation of this emphasis in regard to neighbourhood management as outlined by PAT4. As a consequence, the thesis presents and develops empirical findings which are particularly concerned with the initiation, development and role of ‘community’-led partnership in neighbourhood management. In this section of the chapter, I present a series of discussions around these processes.

7.7.ii. The Initiation of Joint Working: A Fragmented Beginning

Chapter Five of this thesis presents partnership as a difficult process, fraught with a series of tensions. This research has shown that the development of partnership between local authorities during the restructuring of neighbourhood governance to Transform was marked by a historical lack of trust towards NDDC which were, in some cases, augmented by a fragmentation in their temporal horizons of joint working. This point hinges on a lack of temporal organisational capacity by NDDC to develop a strategic framework along the same timeframes as Transform. In relation to this point, Lawless (2004: 392) defines a key tension to the partnership process of NDC as “*a lack of organisational capacity within stakeholder agencies through which to provide a ‘bespoke’ and ‘flexible’ service*” The development of the partnership between NDDC and Transform in this thesis demonstrates this tension, showing that constraints to partnership development were limited by NDDC’s capacity to provide a ‘bespoke’ and ‘flexible’ support to neighbourhood management. In relation to this point, Edwards et al (2000) identify a series of external constraints, including the development of bureaucratic procedures, in the organisational problems of joint working. There was evidence in my research that that these bureaucratic constraints were felt by the local authority and this led to an initial tension and division between Transform and NDDC during the strategic development stage of neighbourhood policy. In light of this, I argue in relation to housing, that this discrepancy in organisational capacity restricted the development of joint working between partners. This discrepancy was built upon institutional distinctions between NDDC, as a traditional local authority constrained by bureaucratic approaches, in contrast to Transform who epitomised the swift action and risk taking approach defined in PAT4 as key aspects of neighbourhood management. In considering this partnership, this thesis demonstrates the distinction between local authorities and neighbourhood management pathfinder in their capacity to work to the same temporal framework and within the same administrative processes.

7.7.iii. Building Trust

Vital to the successful operation of partnership is the mutual trust and cooperation of all partners. The importance of trust-building has been explored in relation to neighbourhood leadership and community relations, with emphasis being placed on the trust relationships between neighbourhood leaders with the targeted community (Purdue 2001). In this thesis, the building of a trust was particularly important to Transform in reference to their relationship with North Devon District Council (NDDC). I noted in Chapter Five that this mutual relationship had been undermined from the very outset by, what was seen by Transform and Ilfracombe community members, as an ongoing process of neglect and inaction towards the town by NDDC. This research presents the evolution of support and trust as a slow and tentative process, built through the development of NDDC's legitimacy as an 'active' partner in regeneration over time. This was helped by NDDC's new strength in leadership and renewed involvement in local priorities.

7.7.iv. Partnership 'on the ground'

This research suggests that the idea of partnership and joint working was also emphasised on the ground by housing officers from NDDC and the HH initiative, as they sought to gain a more efficient process of neighbourhood renewal. I noted in the previous chapter, how one housing officer told of the importance of new referrals from Transform, and how he hoped that this practice would continue to develop even further. This demonstrates the gradual inter-connected working of housing officers in their practical application of joint working. In addition to this, the HH officers demonstrated a dynamic work process which involved referral and signposting to partnership members, and this was seen to have a positive impact on residents.

In relation to this practical application of partnership working, The Ilfracombe Centre was provided as a one-stop-shop, which housed key Transform partners. First, the Ilfracombe Centre was presented as an example of how a space could be transformed into an accessible space which provides information for residents

and an avenue for partnership working between its key agencies. It was also presented as an example of the practical experiences of joint working. Within the centre are ten organisations, many of whom have an overlap in clients and issues. Working in such close proximity to each other offers representatives from these organisations an opportunity to work in partnership to provide a better service for their clients and local residents. At the beginning of the centre though, this partnership was also tentative:

"I've got a feeling, I know that before we opened there was a big issue because the District Council space has got the kitchenette in it, and the CAB workers have to go through their space to get to the kitchenette. And there was a big thing about security and people saying 'actually we're on opposite sides'. And I remember thinking 'what?', sounds a bit rum, surely both of you are on the customers side? But we all know that quite often that not how it works, their perceived as one and CAB are the other side. So you know, its nothing that I could say actually happens, but it's definitely a feeling that I've had."

Manager, The Ilfracombe Centre

This quote represents the initial friction between the partners in The Ilfracombe Centre. However after a short period of time working together, as was discussed and presented throughout the empirical chapters, this partnership of joint working has evolved through a mutual building of trust and a joint space within which to communicate more efficiently in a more personable manner.

7.7.v. Goals of Partnership

This research has demonstrated that on some levels, the neighbourhood management process facilitates joint working and an increasing level of referral between partnering agents. The goal of partnership working on a neighbourhood level was established during New Labour's term. As I argue in Chapter One, the SEU which prioritised tackling social exclusion through processes of joint working between government, private, voluntary and community agencies, led the drive for 'joint working' at a neighbourhood level to combat these issues. Throughout Chapter Five and Six of this thesis I present a series of experiences

by which the process of joint working through neighbourhood management can be examined. A framework for partnership working, described by Geddes and Benington (2001:1-3), is used in this section to draw out the processing of joint working evidenced in the previous chapters. Geddes and Benington describe the necessary goals in the development of local partnership, three of which are presented in relation to this thesis:

- *A formal organisation structure for the implementation of policy*
- *The mobilisation of coalition interests and the commitment to a range of different partners*
- *A forum by which to combat social exclusion, poverty, unemployment and promote social inclusion*

As I have already discussed issues of social exclusion in the earlier section of this chapter the first two features of local partnership working will now be discussed in relation to Transform, and its associated partners.

A formal organisation structure for the implementation of policy

As presented in the empirical chapters, the development of a formal organisational structure, through a process of initial development by GOSW, DCC and NDDC, and subsequent enrolment of a set of elite residents, resulted in the organisation of Transform and the Transform board. I argue in Chapter Four that this process sought to physically reorganise the neighbourhood, through the repositioning of main centres of interaction (i.e. The Ilfracombe Centre, Transform HQ) on the High Street of the central ward. In a governance sense, this organisation restructured the framework for neighbourhood governance from one which was previously local-authority led, to one which was led by Transform and its associated 'elite' partners. This research demonstrates the transition of a district-led delivery of neighbourhood services to one which was local on a more 'neighbourhood' micro level, although still led through the hierarchical positioning a set of local elite.

The mobilisation of coalition interests and the commitment to a range of different partners

This is the combination of two points: the first concerns the mobilisation of coalition interests. This Chapter has already discussed the overwhelming impetus provided by a set of local 'elite' residents in the mobilisation of coalition interests. This section will briefly argue that interests of neighbourhood management are mobilised at a multitude of scalar levels.

Chapter Five covered the process of initial mobilisation of coalition interests. This process was initiated at the regional scale by the GOSW, developed by NDDC, who then mobilised an elite set of local elites. This multi-level mobilisation approach to the development of Transform, represents the distribution of power through traditional scalar narratives. The subsequent mobilisation of coalition interests then took place through a number of inter-partner relationships at a multitude of different scales. For example, residents are enrolled from the neighbourhood level, local authority officers on a county level, the HH initiative is supported by the regional agency West Country Energy Action, and the Transform Yourself exercise class was bidding for funding from Sports England at the time of research, a national source of funding. Hence, I argue that although Transform is deployed as a *neighbourhood* management pathfinder, its initiation and development is embedded within a multitude of scalar contexts. This, it is argued, is considered by government as a process of best practice, a point reflected by Geddes and Benington (2001) who postulate that partnership approaches to neighbourhood governance are particularly useful to policy makers because partnering agents, such as Transform, are seen to flexible and adaptable in multi scalar contexts. However, in addition to this I argued that the mobilisation of the more 'local' 'vulnerable' members of the community into the developmental process of partnership was somewhat lacking in the experience of Transform.

The second point is of a commitment to range of differing partners. I explored in this thesis the enrolment and development of agents into the partnership process. Although time constraints prevented an analysis of all the partnering agencies of Transform, on a neighbourhood level, the thesis did uncover a set of lead partners, members of the local set of social and political ‘elite’ who were previously established in Ilfracombe and then consequently re-constituted through Transforms ‘reorganisation’ of neighbourhood governance. This, I argue, can work to exclude some agencies from the partnership process. However in spite of this, Transform could be seen as a developing umbrella, for the exchange of information and resources by partnering agents, as part of move towards the coalition goal of working towards neighbourhood regeneration.

7.7.vi. Partnership: Re-constituting a set of local ‘elite’ individuals

Having considered the initiation and development of partnership in the context of neighbourhood management, I now discuss an underlining subtext running throughout Chapter Five and Six. This concerns the role of local ‘elite’ individuals. I aim to highlight the findings of previous chapters, which sought to demonstrate the kinds of ‘elite’ individuals and organisations prioritised and incorporated into the ‘new’ neighbourhood management process.

Before arguing however, that neighbourhood management serves to reconstitute an already existing set of ‘elite’ neighbourhood actors, I will provide a short section which provides some background to the elite actors identifies in this thesis, and discuss the different ways in which they have been constituted.

Many of the actors presented in the empirical chapters of this thesis whom have been labelled ‘elite’ are often formed, in Ilfracombe, by a particular range of people. All ‘elites’ presented in this thesis were white, and all were over the age of 50. More often than not, this also meant that they were retired or semi-retired members of the community. There backgrounds were varied, but all were educated articulate individuals and showed, I thought, strength of argument,

conviction or character in the interviews I conducted with them. Often, these elites were also members of Ilfracombe Town Council, though this was not always the case. They were a mixture of male and female actors, and most, if not all of the members of this ‘elite’ network, knew each other to some extent. Even before the deployment of a neighbourhood management pathfinder to Ilfracombe, this set of individuals had been constituted as a set of elite neighbourhood actors within the community. This can perhaps be presented somewhat using some ethnographic notes which are put together from extracts of stories told to me here and there by members of this elite network concerning how *the new Ilfracombe Town Council* was established.

Ilfracombe Town Council had previously been practically redundant, ‘*useless and dormant*’ as one new Town councillor told me. However, a small group of associates, retired businessmen and women, high status community volunteers, hatched a plan to change this. They decided to run for council- together to ‘*get the old lot out*’ and start a fresh in a direction in which they could take Ilfracombe. According to one Town Councillor this idea began in the local pub, with him and another friend and business associate, and the idea grew from there, with other local ‘elite’ actors stepping into the local town council elections and ousting the old officials. Hence, once elected to council, the majority of the new councillors already had a network of connections with one another. Here, they began to use their new roles as valourized sources of local knowledge and their network of connections to institute their own programme of reform across Ilfracombe: which would include the broad spheres of economic reform, managing and extending voluntary and community services and pushing for a greater improvement of local housing services. It is this set of local ‘elite’ actors, whose role as sources of local knowledge and networked actors had already been established, that this thesis argues that neighbourhood management actually works to re-constitute these pre-existing roles into new, but scarcely different, hierarchies for neighbourhood governance.

This research uncovered the dominant presence of a local ‘elite’ within Transform. Edwards et el (2003), point out that small towns and communities are often thought by policy makers to already be communities of ‘active partnership’, which lend themselves more easily to the process of joint working, thereby re-establishing pre-existing networks of neighbourhood governance by local individuals and organisations. This research found that in a number of ways, these pre-established neighbourhood actors were identified and re-constituted through the deployment of Transform. The importance placed on their position as sources of local knowledge, through their presence on consultation boards for regeneration, funding applications, and the neighbourhood management board itself to name a few, emphasises their re-constitution as ‘elite’ actors within Ilfracombe. It is their knowledge and experience, as ‘elite’ individuals within the community, which is valued in terms of neighbourhood reform and progression.

This research uncovered the dominant presence of a local ‘elite’ within Transform. Edwards et el (2003), point out that small towns and communities are often thought by policy makers to already be communities of ‘active partnership’, which lend themselves more easily to the process of joint working, thereby re-establishing pre-existing networks of neighbourhood governance by local individuals and organisations. This research found that in a number of ways, these pre-established neighbourhood actors were identified and re-constituted through the deployment of Transform. I argue that this reconstitution undermines the key rationale of neighbourhood management, which aims notionally to re-compose the process of power to the neighbourhood level, as part of a wider drive by the New Labour government to forge more influence, control and ownership by local people of local services (SEU 2000, SEU 2001).

However, as this research shows, although this national impetus was reflected by the official rhetoric of Transform:

"Give people the power to make changes in how their neighbourhood is run" (Transform 2010a).

The local actors enrolled into the development and operational process meant that Transform was constituted by representatives of an already existing set of local 'elites' such as Town Councillors, business people and prominent third-sector workers. Consequently, as presented in Chapters Four and Five of this thesis, in practice this devolution of power is opened up to, and consequently used by, a set of local 'elite' individuals. The results of the thesis suggest that the process of neighbourhood management in Ilfracombe prioritises already existing networks of elite knowledge and neighbourhood governance. This reality of the prioritisation of local elites in the development of local regeneration strategy has been uncovered by Edwards et al (2003), who state during their examination of partnership working in small market towns that a local elite, drawn from local politicians, businessmen and established third-sector leaders were re-constituted as a 'representative' elite during the process of partnership working. In a statement which reflects the processes discussed in Chapter Four of this thesis they note that:

"the partnership process was deliberately injected with professional expertise, rather than being allowed to engage a group of stakeholders typical of the residential, place-based community. Consequently, rather than opening doors to the community as a whole, it created opportunities for local and non-local experts to exert disproportionate influence" (Edwards et al 2003: 199).

Taking this presentation of research findings into consideration, the opportunity for *whole communities* to be granted enrolment into "*how their neighbourhood is run*" (as emphasised on website), is a problematic and unrealistic disclosure by Transform, which actually works to encourage participation, specifically in relation to local strategic development, by an 'elite' set of residents at the expense of other local residents. This process serves to reconstitute traditionally top-down hierarchies of neighbourhood governance through the programme of

neighbourhood management and legitimises the position of local ‘elites’ within their community.

7.7.vii. Transforming Governmentalities

Leading on from the discussion of joint working above, partnerships as developed through the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal have become vital to the construction of community-government relationships, and I argue, as a process which governmentalises the community.

Governmentality literature explores the mundane, day to day practices through which power is formalised and exercised and this concept has been employed during the previous chapters of this thesis to demonstrate how subjects of government are identified and mobilised within an overarching rationale of government. In reference to Foucault, Raco (2003: 76) explains how

“the governmentalisation of policy agendas seeks to make government possible so that governmental actions mean that things work out for the best”.

In relation to this point, Larner and Butler (2009: 5-6) state that

“local partnerships involve government strategies for cultivating and utilizing community allegiances, and, in doing so, these strategies constitute new spaces and subjects of social policy.”

Neighbourhood management, I argue, has become one route for the governmentalisation of the “the community”. In the case of Transform, “community” becomes constituted as a site of intervention via the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004, as demonstrated in Chapter One and Chapter Four. A process such as neighbourhood management governmentalises community through calculation and identification of local problems and the construction of a micro-level structure for intervention and reform through ‘the neighbourhood’. The enrolment of local elites into the development process as well as residents into initiatives of community engagement and reform are, as Larner and Butler

point out, vehicles used to “reconstitute individuals citizens as community subjects” (Larner and Butler 2009: 6). As the empirical exploration presented in the two previous chapters showed, this occurs on two hierarchical levels. The “local elite” are enrolled as important facilitators of local knowledge which is embedded within the operation of the neighbourhood management process as vital to the categorisation of an appropriate community. The ‘hard to reach’ residents are targeted and enrolled into neighbourhood programmes which re-constitute them as part of the ‘appropriate’ form of community.

7.7.viii. Partnership as a bottom-up process?

In general, the process of partnership working is examined in academic literature as a predominantly top-down process, which focuses on the structure of partnership presented through central government strategy, to implement a particular goal of government. In relationship to this research, the process of partnership was dominated first, by the rationale embedded within PAT4, and second by the dominance of ‘elite’ individuals at a local level. Consequently, this research presents some evidence to suggest that partnership is hegemonic project of government used to forge governing ties between central government and micro-level communities who enact and translate their polices through tradition top-down hierarchies on a local level. This research reiterates the conclusions made through governmentality literature, that partnership has become an institutional framework for the governance of micro level communities through central government led objectives in a top-down process of management.

Yet, in tension with this, the ethos of neighbourhood management, with its values embedded in community engagement and participation, aspires to work as a bottom-up technology of neighbourhood renewal, and the previous chapters demonstrate to some extent, the process of bottom-up strategies led by operational officers and residents. This demonstrates, what McKee (2009: 465) refers to as “*the messiness, complexity and unintended consequences involved*

in the struggles around subjectivity” situated around the art of governing communities.

Summary of Partnership and Joint Working

This section considered the process of partnership working in relation to the empirical findings presented in this thesis. I considered the complex and tentative process of partnership working from its beginnings and concluded that it is fraught with tensions, difficulties and contradictions when translated to a local level. Despite this though, the messy realities are most effectively played out on a practical level, with development of joint working and some processes of participation actively working through Transform.

7.8. Main Findings of Thesis

This thesis has explored the use and role of neighbourhood management as an initiative of neighbourhood renewal under the New Labour government in Ilfracombe. In doing this it explored the problematic associated with low-cost private rental housing, high levels of unemployment and the realities of living in an isolated community through resident and official experiences. It aims to present a picture of Ilfracombe as a community which experiences pockets of high levels of deprivation, and examine the deployment of a neighbourhood management pathfinder, in a bid to solve these associated problems. Whilst the thesis itself presents this picture, woven through the experiences and lives of many local individuals, using the discussion raised throughout this final chapter, I am able to present four key findings of the this research.

- The first key finding this research demonstrates and underpins, is the notion that there is no automatic translation of national neighbourhood renewal policy to the micro-level of operation. The national strategy, embedded within a predominantly social intergrationist discourse may be reflected in regional, district and neighbourhood policy documents, but the empirical findings of this research demonstrate that on a practical ‘ground’ level, the material realities of neighbourhoods and their systems of governance are complex, messy and subject to conformity and subversion (and everything in between) during the translation of ‘national’ neighbourhood policy. Neighbourhood management.
- The second key finding is a point which has already been described in detail in the preceeding section concerning the re-constitucion of local ‘elites’ as valourised actors within the community through the initiative of neighbourhood management. To be clear, although, as this thesis had shown, neighbourhood management does open up the possibilities for a variety of residents to be included in community initiatives, the

development and management of such initiatives through this process of neighbourhood management in Ilfracombe relies on a pre-existing set of local ‘elite’ actors, whose local knowledge and broad network of contacts and connections, was used by the local and regional authority to deem them to hold the superior form of knowledge, experience and capital needed in the initiation, development and management of neighbourhood management over many other residents, including the ‘hard to reach’ individuals that Transform is aimed at. Though this holds many benefits, including the creation of a ‘neighbourhood network’, a range of individuals and agencies who are able to connect, share and develop neighbourhood reform in a synchronised fashion, it does exclude the actual targets of intervention initiatives from meaningful engagement with the development and process of neighbourhood reform. Instead, these individuals are asked to reform, or given avenues for engagement and participation without providing them which an outlet to share and use their own local knowledges to find solutions to neighbourhood problems. Perhaps if wider outlets for the engagement and use of these knowledges in the development of neighbourhood solutions were utilised, practical solutions to micro-level problems of housing might be better realised.

- This research demonstrates that the application of neighbourhood management into ‘communities’ is not a wholly *inclusive* process and that methods of ‘engagement’ and ‘participation’ in the development and decision making processes of neighbourhood renewal are only notionally representative of the community. This leads on to the next key finding. That methods of engagement for enrolment of residents into neighbourhood initiatives is often inappropriate and haphazard in its approach. To explain further, officers found face to face door knocking as one of the most valuable methods of initial engagement of ‘hard to reach’ residents. This process is time consuming and relies largely on chance meetings and encounters. Due to local authority and neighbourhood

funding decreasing, this method of engagement is unfortunately an untangible method of community enrolment. In addition to this, in terms of housing, the lack of avenues of engagement and participation for private rental tenants is poor. Consequently, residents often felt helpless in their ability to solve housing problems. This leads me to two points. First, that a representative of Housing Advice from NDDC being installed at the Ilfracombe Centre would be a good progression for the local authority as a first-point of call for residents wanting to make a subtle/angry inquiry or complaint. Second, that this housing sector in Ilfracombe would greatly benefit from a Landlord-Tenant Scheme which would allow some space for engagement of residents and landlords, enabling the local authority greater clarity of information and communications between the two groups. I argue that if socially excluded individuals are to be truly 'included', then *practical and appropriate* avenues of engagement and participation, which give them a real opportunity to be part of the neighbourhood renewal process, must be developed and conceived through the engagement of policy makers with *resident experiences* of neighbourhood degeneration.

- The fourth key finding was the identification of a disjuncture in the temporal horizons of North Devon District Council (NDDC) and Transform. This disjuncture was identified on a number of separate occasions throughout the research process. Hence this thesis presents the argument that NDDC were unable to work to the same strategic or practical framework as Transform and this effected the delivery of local authority services within the programme of neighbourhood management. This finding was illustrated at various points in the thesis. For example, there was evidence in my research that bureaucratic constraints were felt by the local authority, leading to an initial tension and division between Transform and NDDC during the strategic development stage of neighbourhood policy. In relation to housing, this discrepancy in temporal organisational

capacity restricted the development of joint working between partners. To give another example from the thesis, the local authority was slow to install housing and advice officers within the Ilfracombe Centre, causing a disjunction between Transform housing officer and local authority officers, with the former often dealing with resident enquires. I argue that an increased synchronisation of strategy development and practical action of NDDC and Transform would allow for the smoother and more efficient operation of neighbourhood services.

PAT4 describes neighbourhood management, at its best, as:

"the key vehicle, at local level, that could provide the focus for neighbourhood renewal... to help deprived communities and local services improve local outcomes, by improving and joining up local services, and making them more responsive to local needs" (SEU 2000:7)

Other key principles offered by the PAT4 report for the application of successful neighbourhood management include '*community involvement and leadership*', the appropriate '*tools to get things done*' (including a plethora of community apparatus), '*a systematic, planned approach to tackling local problems*' and '*effective delivery mechanisms*' (SEU 2000:8-9).

In conclusion to this thesis, I would like to put forward my brief reflections of Transform as a policy initiative in relation to these key principles.

From my findings it is possible to conclude that neighbourhood management in Ilfracombe did include '*community involvement and leadership*': though this was often restricted on a strategic level to a set of local 'elite' actors. However, the initiative Transform *did* provide a '*key vehicle, that could provide focus*' for this set of elites and the consequent development of initiatives which did, when residents were efficiently enrolled, have a real effect on the quality of life of many

residents. However the '*systematic planned approach to tackling problems*' often fell at the hurdle of finding appropriate methods of engaging residents in initiatives in the wake of both time and financial constraints by Transform. One of the key achievements of Transform as a policy initiative however, which is woven throughout my empirical chapters, is the time, space and facilities it created for the application of joint working and information exchange and development by partner *neighbourhood* agencies under the Transform umbrella. It is in this facilitation that Transform genuinely increases the ability of neighbourhood officers and services to work together, and alone, more affectively for real, tangible, neighbourhood renewal.

"My story ends here. It is a fairy trivial story, and I can only hope it has been interesting in the same way that a travel diary is interesting. I can say at least, here is a world that awaits you if you are ever penniless. Some day I want to explore that world more thoroughly... at present I do not feel that I have seen more than the fringe of poverty"

George Orwell (1940:215), Down and Out in Paris and London

Prologue

This thesis frames a particular moment in time, when the New Labour government positioned ‘the neighbourhood’ as one of their key targets identified to regenerate areas suffering from high levels of deprivation. This was established through their national strategies for neighbourhood renewal (SEU 1998, SEU 2001).

The new Coalition came into government at the beginning of this writing process and as such, an examination of their attitude and policy development for neighbourhood renewal is not approached in this thesis. However watching the development of their housing *and* neighbourhood-based policies suggests that the examination and discussion provided in this thesis is still of vital importance to policy makers, at a national and local level, when considering ‘community’-led processes of local regeneration.

Firstly, the Coalition government have made, and continue to make, a number of changes which will have profound effects on tenants of the low cost private rental sector, such as those tenants represented in this thesis. To begin, plans for a national register of private landlords, developed by New Labour at the end of their last term in government, have been scrapped. This National Register of Landlords would have made statutory, the regulation of private landlords and estate agents, and would have made written tenancy agreements mandatory. This would have made absentee landlords; one major problem in Ilfracombe’s deprived central and east wards, traceable and accountable to local authorities. The scrapping of this proposal means the regulation of this sector will not be improved upon, and in some cases, unscrupulous landlords will continue to operate across the deprived neighbourhoods of our country.

Second, whereas New Labour focused their resources on “the neighbourhood” as the key target to socially and physically renew “*the worst estates*” across Britain, the Coalition government have presented their own key objective for which this thesis holds resonance. This is new the importance placed on *localism*. The Coalition’s objectives regarding this concept were detailed more explicitly in the *Localism Bill* introduced into parliament in December 2010, to which a number of amendments have been made since. The bill aims to include:

“new freedoms and flexibilities for local government; new rights and powers for communities and individuals; reform to make the planning system more democratic and more effective, and reform to ensure that decisions about housing are taken locally”.

DCLG (2011:4).

Essentially, the *Localism Bill* aims to decentralize power to local communities and has at its heart, what Rt Hon Gregg Clark MP views as, the essence of ‘Big Society’, the ubiquitous concept through which communities would be empowered “to do for themselves”.

Yet, as this thesis demonstrates, the decentralisation of power to ‘communities’ and ‘individuals’ also formed an integral backbone to New Labour’s neighbourhood renewal project. However the translation of this rhetoric into a *wholly inclusive*, community-led process of reform was *not* realised despite policy emphasis on community engagement and participation. Instead, neighbourhood governance was re-constituted through a set of pre-established ‘elite’ individuals and agencies at a neighbourhood level. It could be argued, that unless these issues are addressed, the new *Localism Bill* sets to repeat these processes.

This thesis offers the new project of ‘localism’ an examination of these ‘community’-led processes of regeneration and argues that *whole* community engagement and participation is vital to the development of a holistic approach, an approach which should be underlined by an impetus to support and assist the

real problems of residents and officers within these areas of deprivation as experienced 'on the ground'.

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Appendices

Appendix 1.

Transform Board Members

The Management Board includes representatives from:

- Local residents
- Ilfracombe Town Council
- North Devon District Council
- Devon County Council
- Police
- North Devon Voluntary Services
- NHS Devon
- North Devon Homes
- North Devon+
- Bratton Fleming Parish Council
- Combe Martin Parish Council

Appendix 2.

Transcribed Interview Extract.

Explanation and Background Information Regarding the Scope of the Research

Q. Maybe you can start by telling me when you first come into this post?

A. I would say I've been in business for four years

Q. Fours years?

A. Yes, four and a bit

Q. but you were at the council previously to that?

A. yeah yeah

Q. What kind of changes have you seen in environmental health since you've come in?

A. I think the changes that I've seen, of the service. And it's not only environmental health, it's environmental health and housing, are quite nice things really and it surrounds third part recognition for what we've been doing, most recently the strategic housing inspection, audit. the audit Gestapo. But also we've been awarded the Charter Mark, that sort of stuff. And also, sort of, general feedback that you get from the other partners. Which is good, so the organisation has changed, and there's um, there is really good models of partnership working that are up and running, and only recently. Some new models have just been approved.

Q. Ok?

A. ...that have been out in place.

Q. what are they?

A. They relate to, to a partnership with, um, Barnstaple poverty action group, who prevent youth homelessness. And a partnership with the same organisation and other partners to prevent rough sleeping.

Q. So how did they come about?

A. They have come about because of the council identifying a need, putting in place um, a game plan, a strategy to address that need and then officers having that drive to go out and chase things, um, so some really good examples of officers going out and chasing third party funding, Fred, chasing capital, Dawn, drawing down significant new sources of revenue. Which is great.

Q. Ok, so quite a big change really?

A. Yeah it's been quite a big change. Yeah I'm very lucky,

Q. Okay, so in terms of housing what do you think should be the top priority over the next few years, and what *is* the top priority?

A. In relation to environmental health housing, or wider housing...?

Q. In relation to North Devon in general.

A. But our wider housing service? Or our private sector housing work?

Q. The wider housing service. And then perhaps you could talk about the private sector housing service?

A. Yeah, in relation to private sector housing, we've still got major issues as regards standards, and, um, so it's ongoing work to improve private sector housing, especially focused around houses in multiple occupation, and there's a geographical focus then with Ilfracombe and the centre of Barnstaple with that work. Um, there is, um, a priority for us to work better with landlords, and to actually launch our landlord and tenant accreditation scheme, and stop talking about it and obviously put it in place.

Q. There has been discussion of the landlord tenant scheme which hasn't come about yet, why not?

A. It's competing priorities, um, when we were inspected by the Audit commission, I reckon we lost six months, because of the fact that um, your whole focus then is going back and reviewing what you've done and the inspection is amazingly resource hungry. Um, so that was unfortunate, the timing of that was unfortunate. And also, there are issues for us with regards to revenue funding for that scheme, and um, you know , we are tight on money so it's you, know, I've had to find use from our current resources to launch it and, we've done that.

Q. Do you think it would be helpful?

A. Yeah, in relation to private sector housing, if you look at the sweep of activity that goes on there it is, it is kind of the missing block, and it's also the block that links our private sector housing to our homelessness service. You know it has just been recognised by the Audit commission as something that we should do, that we need to do. And also as a consequence of that, there's kind of improved governance, so things like the landlord forum, you know, there's absolute benefit

Q. In terms of the Audit Commission. What were the outcomes of that for you? In what way were they beneficial to you?

A. It was to get a favourable report, because everybody likes, everyone knocks the process and, but if you get something nice said about you then it is quite a good positive experience, and quite good for building moral and as an organisation we came together very well to support the audit, so right across the organisation there was a concerted effort to really go for it, which is good. So that was, that was positive, there were no recommendations from the audit commissions study of us that were new, that were things that we're already working on really. And that would have been quite disappointing in a way if they turned up and said you've missed this big block of activity, we, it wouldn't have made us look very competent really. But there is now and increasing priority associated with some of their recommendations, because we have accepted their recommendations