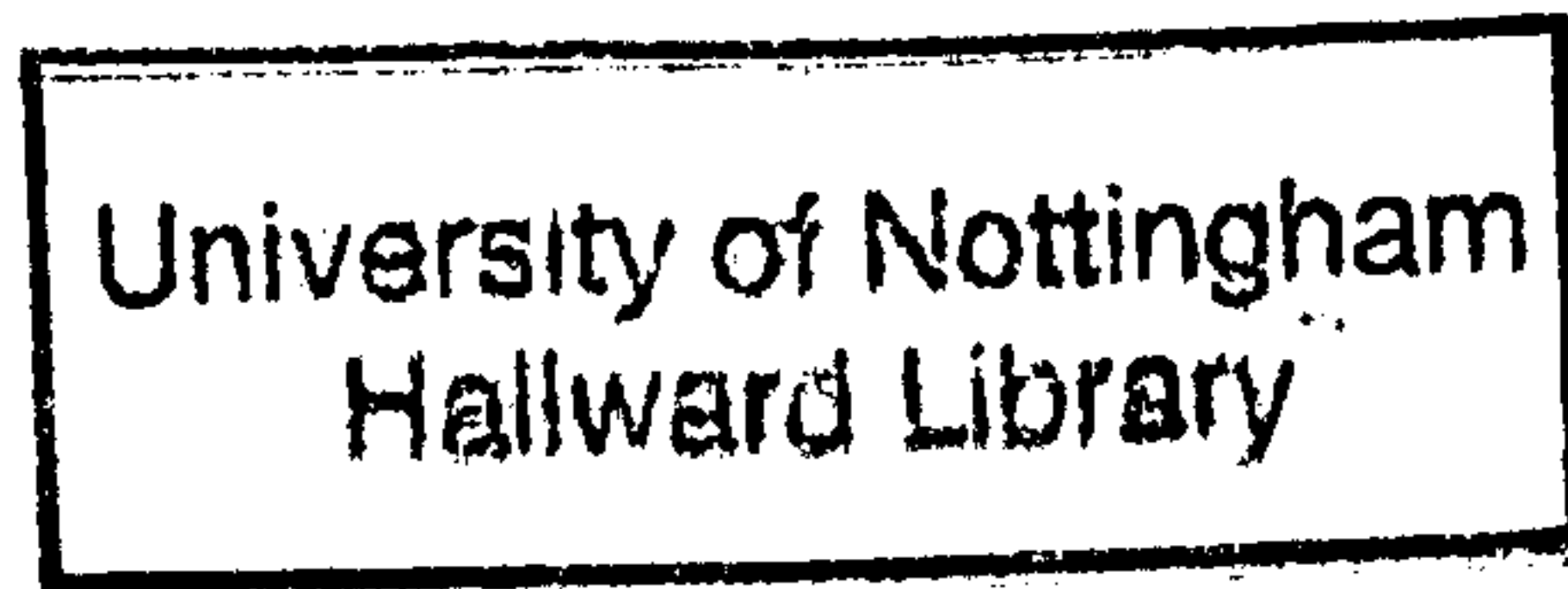


**Finding Value on a council estate:
Complex lives, motherhood, and exclusion**

Lisa Louise Mckenzie BA MA



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Abstract

This research focuses upon a group of women who are white and working class they live on the St Anns council estate in Nottingham and they are all mothers to mixed-race children. The focus of this study from the outset is to challenge the often negative and homogenous readings and namings of council estates in the UK and their residents. The problems that are within Britain's council estates are often complex and difficult to understand, therefore the research sets out to explain some of those complexities, whilst highlighting the disadvantages the women experience in their daily lives. The research explores the interaction between class, race and gender but also space, examining how poor neighbourhoods have become known in recent times as spaces of social exclusion and their residents have become known as 'the excluded'. The research explores how the women find value for themselves and their children when their social positions have been subject to stigma, and disrespect and their practices are misrecognised. Therefore the research examines the local value system and the local resources which are available and used by the residents of this council estate and asks in the absence of universal social and economic resources can people find value locally.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

It is an unfortunate truth that over recent years there has been an excessive amount of moral panic, fear, and political gesturing regarding and aimed at what is known to be the British 'underclass', and this moral outrage has been specific and vengeful in its tone towards council estates, and especially the mothers who live on them with their children. There have been two high profile cases which have given rise to much of this moral panic in recent years: the case of Karen Mathews, a single mother living on a West Yorkshire council estate who was convicted of neglect, cruelty and kidnapping her own child; and the Baby Peter case, another single mother living on benefits and allowing her child to be brutalised by other people living in her rented house in Tottenham, London, where the baby eventually died.

These are two extremely sad and high profile cases, and although both had devastating and appalling consequences for the children involved they were not representative of family life within poor neighbourhoods. Nevertheless they have been used by the media and politicians to make way for a barrage of accusations, suspicions, and stigmatisations regarding those who live on council estates, especially mothers: how they live, their practices, and their inadequacies. Newspapers, talk shows, and politicians have frequently told us of the outrages which happen on council estates, and amongst Britain's 'council estate

mothers'. Ed West (14th August 2009) recently wrote an article in The Telegraph titled 'How to create an underclass: stalk council estates handing out condoms'.

In this article he stated that he had 'pinpointed the five points of entry to the underclass – educational failure, substance abuse, debt, gambling and casual sex'. He writes that 'Labour has presided over the entrenchment of a benefit-addicted underclass, bereft of aspiration, trapped in dependency and unable or unwilling to escape' (The Telegraph 14th August 2009). These common discourses of a 'benefit-addicted underclass' are not only located within the British media. The Guardian reported on the Conservative Party councillor John Ward who wrote a reaction to the Mathews case in 2008:

'There is an increasingly strong case for compulsory sterilisation of all those who have had a second child – or third, or whatever – while living off state benefits'. (Botton, The Guardian 06 /12/08)

This type of angry media and political rhetoric regarding those who live on council estates, unfortunately in recent years have not been exclusive to the right wing section of the British press or politicians. In December 2008 the New Labour Government introduced the welfare reform White Paper. Within it there are sanctions for lone mothers claiming state benefits if they refuse to 'prepare for work' once their youngest child has reached one year of age. Those mothers whose youngest child is seven years old will be taken off income support and put on Jobseekers Allowance with the expectation that they will be actively seeking work (DWP 2008a). Regrettably this type of moral

outrage followed by welfare policy, particularly relating to mothers living on benefits on council estates, has become mainstream, and politicians from all political parties have used the fear and outrage regarding welfare dependency, unemployment, and lone mothers as ways of showing the electorate their 'toughness'.

Aim of the thesis

This research, set on a Nottingham council estate, aims to challenge the homogenous reading of council estates and their residents by focusing upon white mothers to mixed-race children. The research challenges those readings of council estates described in the opening paragraph of this thesis, and those negative views from newspapers, both broad sheets and red tops, which appear to have come to a consensus that 'council estates spawn a new underclass' (Hill A. The Observer Nov. 30th 2007). The aim of this research is simple: to challenge the view that the political classes from all parties seem to agree upon, which is that our British council estates are severe social problems or, as the Conservative Party constantly remind us, that Britain is broken and council estates 'are broken ghettos' (Duncan-Smith I. The Telegraph 30th Nov. 2008). Whilst the New Labour Government since 1997 has used the Social Exclusion Task Force to explain how social exclusion is very often a 'spatial problem', a 'neighbourhood problem', where disadvantage becomes 'generational', like the colour of your hair or the size of your feet, these traits, along

with being unemployed or becoming excluded, are understood now as being passed on through families.

This thesis is set in contemporary Britain, amongst a very contemporary British group of women, and is situated within the context of the problems that the people on this council estate St Anns in Nottingham understand, experience, and have to deal with. Therefore, it only seems right that when challenging those negative readings of council estates we must do so by looking at how those estates are known today, and that is through the 'social exclusion' agenda. The thesis looks at the social exclusion concept, and asks whether this concept can tell us anything about the women and their families' lives in Nottingham.

However, this term 'social exclusion' not only applies to neighbourhoods but also to people; they become 'the excluded'. Therefore, the research asks: what have been the consequences for those on this estate who have now been known as socially excluded over 12 years. Does it matter to the women on this estate that they are known as benefit claimants, single mums, council estate residents and socially excluded to boot? Do they know that they are socially excluded; are they aware of the stigmatising readings about council estate lives? These are some of the questions the research has asked of itself, but have also been posed to the women on the estate.

The estate and its residents appear from the outside to be unruly, and chaotic, and often in line with some of the comments made about them

in the press, and by politicians. There are real social problems on this estate, linked to crime, drug dealing and drug using, anti-social behaviour, and the lack of employment, education and skills held by the resident population.

However, there are both philosophical and political elements to this thesis which are locked into the unruly appearance of this council estate. The thesis does not shy away from some of the problematic areas of council estate life but engages with them, taking what it is thought to be known about those living in social housing, claiming benefits, engaging in criminal and anti-social practices and then challenging those perceptions, and analysing the findings using social theory. However, the ultimate aim is to use this research to challenge those negative namings more widely, as Marx says 'the philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways: the point is to change it' (Marx 1998 p.49).

In the next section some of the common terms used about the women featured in this research will be defined, and an explanation given as to why the women in this research are best placed to tell us what is happening within some of our inner city council estates. As noted earlier in the chapter, this is a research about contemporary Britain, with contemporary issues, through the experiences of contemporary women, which is how the women see themselves. Some of the more contradictory aspects of their lives, for example their lone parent status,

will also be defined. As already noted, there are practices within council estate life that often appear obvious; however, many of those practices are often misinterpreted, and should not be taken at face value.

Definitions

The main focus of this research has been a group of white working-class women who live within this estate; and they are all mothers to mixed-race children. Although this research focuses upon council estate life, inequalities and disadvantages within the estate, it looks at the dimensions of those inequalities, through gender, class, race and ethnicity. In the later chapters the representation of 'class and welfare' are analysed; however, there is also a cultural dimension to those representations. Chris Haylett (2001) raises questions about how the white working class have been represented through 'social exclusion discourse' as lacking, 'un-modern' and 'dirty white' (2001 p.353). Meanwhile, Bev Skeggs (1997, 2004) argues that when working class is added to woman there becomes a distorted representation of a sexualised, unrespectable and unworthy position, which working-class women struggle to identify with. As noted at the beginning of this chapter, it seems that when 'welfare', 'council estate' and 'mother' are put together in any sentence for public consumption the outcome is a fierce moral outrage. Therefore, the women who live on this estate know only too well how difficult it is to live with unfair representations of who you are, how you live your life, and the serious and negative

impacts those representations can have. However, it is the aim of this research to find out how those representations can disable but also what happens to a neighbourhood that lives with those representations.

When meeting with most of the women for the first time, they were usually asked how they would describe their own ethnic identity, what box they might tick on the back of an application form in the 'Equal Opportunities' section. They described themselves in this context as one of the white categories, 'white Irish', 'white English', 'white other'. The women were also asked about their families and their upbringing, where had their parents been employed, had they always lived on the estate, or had they lived on other estates. They were asked about their educational attainment, and their own employment status. This background information was collected on all of the women spoken to. Thirty-four out of the thirty-five women spoken to had lived on this council estate or another council estate as children; only one woman had not and this was because she had grown up in France. None of the women had attained any formal qualification beyond GCSE; two of the women were undertaking undergraduate degrees, in nursing and in youth services, which they had secured through local Access courses. Only one woman was employed full time and she was a director of a voluntary sector service. Forty per cent of the women were solely reliant on state benefits for their income; however, at least half of these women were engaging in unpaid and voluntary work within the community. All of the women lived on the estate and only two of the women were

buying their council houses. The other thirty-three women either rented their homes from the council or a housing association, and three of the women rented their ex-council houses from private landlords. As a consequence of this background data, and also with the women's acknowledgment of their official ethnic status, the women in this research are known as white and working class.

The women were asked how they described their children's ethnic identity. They all without exception said mixed race; some of the older women with grown-up children said 'it used to be half-caste' but now they preferred mixed race. The women with younger children still at school also chose mixed race even though the local schools preferred the terms 'dual heritage' or 'biracial', which the mothers did not like: one said she thought it 'sounded American', another thought it sounded 'too Catholic'. None of the women said that their children were 'black' as they thought that by calling their children black it removed their families and themselves out of the children's lives. However, none of the women would call their children white and again thought that this was offensive to their children even when they knew that some of their children might 'pass' as white. Therefore, throughout this thesis the term 'mixed race' will be used when describing a person who has parents from differing racial backgrounds.

There is another term which also needs defining, and that is how the term 'single mum', or 'lone parent', is used. When the women were

asked about their relationship status, most of them classified themselves as single mums. This might imply that the women are single and are not in a personal relationship either with the children's fathers or another person. However, what this usually meant is that their official status according to the Benefits Agency is one of lone parent.

Sometimes the women had casual relationships with their partners, or their partners did not live with them full time. Often the men in their lives had their own flats in the neighbourhood and stayed at the women's homes on some nights of the week. On more than one occasion the women said they were single parents even when they were living with their partners. This might have been because their partners were not their children's father, or they did not see themselves as being in a solid relationship, and sometimes it was for the benefit of the tape. One of the women, 'Zena', who was in a relationship with her youngest child's father, hoped that one day she would be able to get a job, and claim tax credits so she could afford to live with her partner full time, and officially. It was often noted that the women thought that becoming a 'proper couple' was an aspiration for the future. Other women identified as single mums, because they ultimately held full responsibility for their children, even though there were often men in their lives. One woman was married, and another woman stated she was living and raising her children with her partner.

Motivations

There is a philosophical and political aim to this research, and this particularly relates to the motivations regarding the subject, the questions, and the research participants. The project has developed through an interest to explore the experiences of white working-class women and was motivated by my own personal experiences of living on council estates rather than a purely academic curiosity or about gaps in literature. I was born onto a council estate in a mining town in Nottingham, and I have lived on the St Anns estate in the inner city of Nottingham since 1989. The life and experiences of being a daughter, mother and resident, living in poor neighbourhoods, belonging to poor families, and suffering from all the effects that those positions bring, have informed this research; and the knowledge which has come from my own experiences of how poor neighbourhoods and people can be exploited and represented has been my moral compass. Three years as an undergraduate student, and five years as a postgraduate student at the University of Nottingham have led me to think about my own personal journey. When I am asked by friends and relatives what all this learning has done for me, or what I have possibly gained by studying for this long, the answer has always been immediate and easy. I have learned that being a working-class woman does not determine me to be my mother, or my grandmother; and that being a working-class woman means the hurdles that life puts in front of you are high but not impossible.

This has always been the motivation for this research: to highlight, and show how difficult life can be for people living on council estates, but also to show the strength, humour and resistance that can also make up council estate life.

Unfair representations

The beginning of this chapter illustrated some of the media and political rhetoric which has been used unfairly in representing poor working-class people and the social housing estates they live on. Steph Lawler (2008) and Les Back (2002) have both argued that working-class people and poor working-class neighbourhoods are rarely taken seriously. However, it is often assumed that they are easily 'readable' to middle-class observers. Yet it is rarely considered by those who observe working-class people and neighbourhoods that working-class people, and especially the poor working class, can know or understand themselves or the neighbourhoods they live in, and can articulate their understandings, perceptions, and feelings extremely well (Lawler 2008 p.133, Back 2002 p.40). The ways in which working-class people and neighbourhoods are represented is important within this thesis, as it is often through those negative, stereotypical and patronising representations that the women on this estate unfairly see themselves, and their families; they know they are ridiculed, and 'looked down on', and 'made to feel small' because of those representations.

Unfair and mean representations of poor working-class people, and the places where they live are everywhere in the UK and have been documented in the work of Skeggs (1997, 2004, 2009), Nayak (2009), Lawler (2002, 2008), Reay (2000, 2002, 2004), Haylett (2000, 2001, 2003), Munt (2000) and Sibley (1995). Lawler (2008 p.133) argues that working-class people are rarely named as class subjects but are often known and reproduced as 'disgusting subjects', usually through targeting descriptions of bodies and clothing, shell suits and large gold earrings, which are often used as shorthand descriptions in recognising working-class people. Skeggs (2004) shows in her work that working-class women in particular are subjects of ridicule and prurient fascination, often sexualised, and associated with dirt and disease. She cites a passage written in a newspaper by Germaine Greer, who describes 'Essex girls' as having 'big bottoms which are barely covered by their denim mini skirts' (Greer 2001 in Skeggs 2004 p.112). It seems that there are always new ways in reproducing these unfair and mean representations. On the social networking site Facebook there is a facility where you can send 'Council estate gifts' to your friends. The most popular council estate gift is an image of a group of young people in sportswear titled 'Mob of chav scum': 824,000 people have sent this 'gift' to their friends on the site; this is followed by images titled 'a piss stained phone box', and 'run down community centre'. There are other 'Council estate gifts' such as 'Over the top Christmas lights', and 'Balcony draped with washing'. Lawler (2008 p.137) argues that cultural references can invoke signifiers, which do a great deal of work in coding

a way of life which has been deemed valueless, and repulsive. Bodies, their appearance, their bearing and their adornment, are also central to coding working-class people, and when those codes are joined up with living space and in particular the term 'council estate' it leaves the reader or the viewer to 'join up the dots of pathologisation' in order to see and understand the picture: that certain ways of dressing, speaking and also where you live indicate a despised 'class position but also an underlying pathology' (Lawler 2008 p.133; Skeggs 2004 p.37). This underlying pathology that Lawler (2008) and Skeggs (2004) uncover is also about taste, or the lack of it. They use the work of Pierre Bourdieu to argue that those with the most power get to decide what cultural resources are tasteful regarding ways of dressing, personal styling, music, art, speaking, and social pursuits. However, what Bourdieu (1986 pp.14-19) argues is that, whilst the culture of the middle class is deemed legitimate and tasteful, it is the culture of the working class which is lacking in 'taste' and illegitimate. Lawler (2008) and Skeggs (2004) transport this argument further by exclaiming that the cultural practices of the working class are not only 'tasteless', but are also pathologised, coded as immoral, wrong and criminal or, to take the official meaning of the word, 'a disease'.

There are three key elements to this research, themes which weave in, out and through the complexity of the lives of the women on this estate. These three themes underpin many of the daily struggles the women undertake. The first is the *process of identification*: the women's

constant battle to protect their own profile against unfair representation of council estate mothers. The next is *location*: the centre point in the women's lives, i.e. where they live. Their physical location becomes ever more important to them as they struggle to hold on to who they are and how they wish to be known, but so does their social location: where they are positioned in social space; they are always aware of 'being looked down on', and situated 'at the bottom'. Lastly, there is the notion and understanding of value: how the women value themselves, and what they value in return, what is important to them.

The process of identification

The *process of identification* is how the women see themselves, and understand their own positions within the local neighbourhood, and also within wider Nottingham. The women in St Anns that have been part of this research are white, and have children who are mixed race; their process of identification is complex and includes the interconnectedness of the dimensions of class and gender, but also of race, because of their immediate multi-racial families, and the wider multi-racial neighbourhood. The following chapters show how the women have a particular attachment to the West Indian community in St Anns, and more specifically the Jamaican families, and the culture which is associated with them. By understanding and by mapping the process of identification the research shows the processes that a group or individuals might engage in, in order to protect and have some

control over who they are, rather than handing over their profile to the state, and the wider British public. This shows that there are resiliencies and resistances within this community, even though they are often misunderstood and misrecognised as further examples of lacking in taste and judgement.

Location

Location is important throughout the thesis and becomes the lynch pin in the centre of the other two central themes. It is the physical, the actual location of St Anns as the women's home and neighbourhood, and their social locations of being a woman, white, working class, mother to mixed-race children, lone parent, and benefit claimant, which show when these locations are interconnected and how they move through social and actual space but also how and where they are restricted. The mobility of the women and their families in this research, which is both actual and social, is also an important theme. Throughout the later chapters, mobility and restriction are often spoken of, and understood in complex ways within the estate. It becomes clear that location becomes ever more important to those who live here.

Value

How do the women find value, not only for themselves, but also their children and community? Diane Reay (2007) has argued that value is at

the heart of the middle-class identity: being a person of value with good taste, and having access to the legitimate cultural resources within a society, which in turn means that your practices are also legitimate, enabling a group or individual to have a social identity which is respected, valued and legitimate.

However, value is also important to working-class people: even though they are rarely represented in this way, value is a measurement of success; how we are judged and valued is important. Bourdieu (1986) argues that what is even more important is how value and respect are given to some as if 'natural', making some social identities naturally valued, whilst others have to work at it with no assurance that their goal can be met. It is easy to understand that, if value is difficult or in some respects impossible to attain for some groups within a society, they may create their own endogenously-constructed systems of attaining value for themselves; these can then be exchanged for local resources, which have a use-value for that community, and an exchange-value within the local system. The thesis goes on to question: to what extent do the endogenously-constructed and exchanged forms of value both enable and constrain those who take part.

These three central themes weave in and out of the whole thesis. They are important in understanding the processes and meanings behind the complexities of this neighbourhood. They will help in looking beyond the one-dimensional representations of council estates and their residents.

The research has a unique perspective on life in modern and multi-cultural Britain. It throws up interesting debates about how class and gender interact; also, notions of race, particularly how being white and working class, may be understood by those whose class positions have been devalued and whose physical locations, i.e. where they live, are subject to the process of exclusion and their practices are subject to public scrutiny. The women who have taken part in this study have a specific understanding of life in contemporary Britain, which they believe is unique but extremely important. Their stories tell of life on a council estate: they tell of past working-class histories, the stories of their childhoods, and their parents' lives represent important histories of being white and working class. However, their stories today are modern and contemporary, about life in multi-cultural Britain.

Outline of chapters

Chapter 2 will examine the significance of space, the social and symbolic and also the reality of living in spaces which have been subject to poverty, disadvantage and named as excluded. The concept of 'social exclusion' will be examined, as it is within this framework that the neighbourhood and its residents have been classified; they are both excluded, and 'the excluded'. Within this chapter the relevance of the notion of 'social exclusion' will also be examined: what does this concept mean, and under what conditions are you deemed to be excluded. The idea and relevance that poverty and disadvantage can

be perpetuated by the behaviour of the poor will also be looked at through the work of Oscar Lewis and the notion of 'the culture of poverty'. It is important to address the behaviour of those who are considered poor, excluded, or disadvantaged; these issues cannot be ignored as if they do not matter. However, there is a more serious point to addressing the behaviour of those who live on council estates: by understanding their everyday practices, and the processes within the estate, it shows us what is important to them, and also how they might compensate for things they have no or little access to.

The next chapter, Chapter 3, moves on to the debate centred around the 'social exclusion concept' by examining how the underlying disadvantages connected to the notion of class is a dynamic and a shifting process allowing people to be named and known. Within this chapter it is argued that the poorest working class have now been named as un-modern, a part of Britain which no longer exists, outdated, and on the outside needing inclusion. It has become increasingly difficult for sections of the community to engage with a class identity, and it has been argued by Walkerdine, Lucey and Melody (2001) that there has been a 'remaking process' which is especially utilised by women in order to develop a resistance from the disadvantages which occur when class and gender intersect. This chapter also examines the literature that asks how people find value for themselves, particularly in the absence of adequate education and decent jobs. Therefore, it is important to debate alternative value systems: the ways that people find

value for themselves and their community within their neighbourhood, and from the resources which are available to them.

Chapter 4 sets out the processes of doing the research, and producing the thesis. It engages in wider methodological and epistemological arguments about the meaning of experience, where knowledge comes from and the responsibility of informing knowledge without further fixing a group's social positioning. As 'researcher' my own position within the research will be examined. I debate researcher reflexivity as both 'researcher and resident', and the journey that was taken from council estate to PhD.

Chapter 5 puts this research in a wider context, the context of history. St Anns has been a living space for the poor working class of Nottingham for over 150 years. It has an interesting and rich history within each generation of the families who have been born, lived, migrated, worked, and died there. This chapter also puts the neighbourhood in the wider context of being a part of Nottingham City, where it is placed within the city geographically and symbolically. The chapter also explains, through the local and national statistics that have been gathered about this neighbourhood, how the realities of living within poor and socially-excluded neighbourhoods impact upon its population, their educational attainment, the levels of unemployment, and the difficulties that the local schools face in trying to ensure that the children on this estate receive a fair education.

Chapter 6 is the first of four chapters which present and analyse the research findings. This chapter focuses upon the relationship the women have with the estate: how do they recognise themselves and also how do they think 'others' recognise them. This chapter shows the consequences of being stigmatised and known as 'lacking' and how the concept social exclusion is understood, or accepted, or not, by those who live with the label. The consequences of being stigmatised can have seemingly unrelated issues for the women on the estate; mobility is one of those issues. Towards the end of this chapter mobility will be discussed, and the difficulties that the women and their families have of becoming mobile, moving out of the estate physically, and also moving out emotionally, and socially.

Chapter 7 looks at community networks through the official services such as the Sure Start initiative. The women in St Anns understand these services from a certain perspective. They are aware that they have been 'put here' because they are considered 'not good enough' as mothers, or they do not have the resources to look after their own children. The women who live there are often hesitant about the services set up in the neighbourhood to help them. They explain some of the difficulties they encounter with the local services such as schools, the police and the probation service.

Chapter 8 examines the resources within the estate, what is available locally to the women and their families, and how are they used. In this chapter the resources that the women have identified will be introduced such as the importance of belonging and 'being St Anns'.

The next chapter, Chapter 9, the last of the analysis, examines value and argues that value is central to the women's lives: how they are valued and how they value others. This chapter looks at how the women view value, but also how they find it within the estate, through the local value system.

Chapter 2

Social and symbolic space: The exclusion, stigmatisation and management of the poor

Introduction

In the Introduction to this thesis the aims of this research project were laid out. It was stated that the main aim was simple: to challenge the negative representations of poor neighbourhoods and their residents. Although it might seem that this aim is simple, the processes involved in achieving this aim in actual fact are not. There are complex networks, and rationales behind even more complex practices, understandings, and behaviours on council estates in the UK, because of the many disadvantages which those who live on council estates experience. The later chapters will outline the disadvantages experienced by those living on council estates which have high incidences of drug use and dealing, anti-social behaviour, and high levels of unemployment, along with the problems which occur due to the thoughtless planning and building of estates, which have been well documented (Coates and Silburn 1970, 1984; Power 1997; Byrne 2001; Hanley 2007; Power and Houghton 2007).

Over several generations there have been some well-intentioned politicians, and some not so well-intentioned who have treated the disadvantages, and inequalities found within council estates as a matter of morality, blaming the practices of the poor for their poverty (Levitas

1997; Welshman 2000; Skeggs 2004; Gillies 2007; Tomlinson, Walker and Williams 2008). For generations in the UK there have been boundaries drawn around certain territories: places where the poor live, places one should avoid going if at all possible not because of the poverty in that particular place but because of the behaviour of those who live there (Coates and Silburn 1969; Orwell 1986, 1940; Welshman 2000; Collins 2004; Skeggs 2004; Hanley 2007; Morrison (1896) 2009). These territories have been known as 'unsafe', 'poor', 'slum districts', and in recent years 'sink' and socially-excluded council estates.

Pierre Bourdieu (1999) explains this process of the negative namings of the places where the poor live through his concept of 'reified social space'. Bourdieu argues that reified social space has been attributed different values, defined by the 'distribution of agents and the distribution of goods in social space' (Bourdieu 1999 p.125). The result of this reification of physical space means that there becomes a concentration of the 'rarest goods and their owners in certain sites of physical space' whilst in other physical spaces there becomes an over-representation of the poorest and disadvantaged groups, as it is in St Anns. This physical space becomes a reified social space; it has meanings for those who live in it and for those who do not. Bourdieu argues that both spaces, wealthy and poor, have positive or negative stigmatising properties, which attach themselves to the people who live, work, and occupy them (Bourdieu 1999 p.125). What this means, according to Bourdieu (1999), is that there becomes 'a silent call to

order' through which the 'appropriated or reified physical space' is one of the mediations in which social structures gradually convert into mental structures, and into systems of preference and meaning (Bourdieu 1999 p.126).

Therefore, it is important that this thesis has meaning to the people who have been involved in this research by being relevant to the issues they currently experience. It is noted that this research is about contemporary Britain, and contemporary problems that the women who have been involved experience. Therefore, this chapter will begin by discussing the concept of 'social exclusion', as it is through the Government's Social Exclusion strategy that poor neighbourhoods are now conceptualised. The relevance of introducing and examining this strategy is because it is through the concept of social exclusion that estates like St Anns in Nottingham have become measured and appraised. Therefore, this chapter will begin to ask whether this term is an appropriate concept when trying to understand council estates and their residents or, as argued in the introduction, is social exclusion simply a tool to measure the problems that the poor working class amass through their behaviour and practices? This leads into a discussion regarding the implementation of strategies used to combat the phenomena termed as social exclusion in the UK over the last 12 years by the New Labour Government.

These debates around social exclusion are important to this research, not because social exclusion in its current form is important to the people who live in this neighbourhood. In the later chapters it is argued that social exclusion as a concept is not understood as meaning anything to the people who live in St Anns. What is asked within this research is, rather than use a measurement like social exclusion to find out only what is lacking in poor neighbourhoods, through creating a boundary around the poor and as Skeggs (2004) argues 'the rest of us', there may be another way of understanding poor neighbourhoods. If we were to engage in the local value systems within poor neighbourhoods and find out what is already there and working, thereby understanding local value systems, we might see what is needed, but also how the community might compensate through their practices. It is argued that big, one-size-fits-all, rolled-out policy initiatives like social exclusion quite often miss the very people they are supposedly aimed at by assuming that everyone and everything within a poor community is lacking in every way.

What this means to this research is that it is not only important to examine the social exclusion concept but also how we think about social exclusion being situated in specific physical spaces. Those physical spaces are often regarded as lacking and those who reside in those spaces become 'the excluded'. This is always done in comparison to other physical spaces, and their residents. Therefore, it seems obvious that what is needed, rather than 'a new one size fits all

spaces policy' focused upon disadvantaged neighbourhoods, is a re-conceptualisation of how physical space is viewed and reified as spaces and the agents which are lacking (Bourdieu 1999 p.125).

Steph Lawler (2008) has recently asked whether the narrative of 'lack' when used in trying to explain anything about working-class life is often accompanied by a narrative of decline, in that there once was a respectable working class who held respectable working-class values: they knew who they were and to what purpose they were assigned (2008 pp.136-137). According to Lawler, this class has now 'allegedly' disappeared, part of it being absorbed into the middle class, whilst the other part has fallen into a workless and feckless underclass, living within a culture of poverty, and passing this deficient culture down to a new generation (2008 p.136).

Oscar Lewis's (1961, 1966) work on the culture of poverty may not be an obvious choice when explaining the complexity of local value systems within a poor neighbourhood. However Lewis's work highlighted how practices in poor communities became cultures of behaviour often passed down through generations. However, what he also noted was that a 'culture of poverty has to be examined within the circumstances in which it develops' (1961 p.151). All government-led policy implementation relating to poverty for generations has had behaviour and individualised fault built within them (Hill 2009).

Therefore, it is important to deal with the issues around the practices of those who live in poor neighbourhoods.

This chapter then asks whether the concept of social exclusion in the UK reifies and stigmatises specific physical space, as Bourdieu (1999) argues. Through its purpose of measurement, it identifies a contemporary British underclass, through highlighting a 'normal' set of behaviours on the one hand, whilst drawing boundaries around those who are somehow 'different', and therefore lacking, who then become 'the socially excluded' on the other.

Social exclusion

The conception and existence of the term 'social exclusion' was initially debated in France throughout the 1970s and into the 1980s. The combating of 'social exclusion' has since become a part of the wider European agenda. Hilary Silver's article in 1994 (pp.534-578) explored the origins of social exclusion in France from as far back as the 1960s. Silver argues that the term 'social exclusion' had a specific meaning: an extension of the French Republican tradition and 'exclusion' in France was understood as a breakdown of the structural, cultural, and moral ties which bind a society (pp. 534). This model then broadened out to consider groups who had become marginalised, economically, socially, or culturally. Loic Wacquant (2008) noted that it was in the late 1970s in France that the model of 'exclusion' was identified as the 'new poverty' (2008 p.163). It was focused specifically upon the long term and

recurrent unemployed but also those within specific neighbourhoods: 'Le banlieue', the outer suburbs of French cities where the poorest working class and immigrant citizens often resided. In the largest of those cities, 'Le banlieue' often became disconnected from the cities they sat on the margins of, and many of the residents found themselves physically and socially marginalised and excluded from the 'norms' of French life (Levitas 1998 pp.22-28).

In the UK, throughout the 1980s, Hillary Silver (1994) argues that the British Conservative Government struggled with the concept of the 'new poverty'. Silver argues that the concept of 'new poverty' did not fit with the Conservative Party and the government's neo-liberal ideology during the 1980s. This government, led by Margaret Thatcher from 1979-1990, according to Silver, was far more comfortable with the 'cycle of deprivation' and the underclass discourse. This was in contrast to what was happening in France during the same period because the French administration had a largely socialist ideology, particularly around poverty discourse and policy (1994 pp.560-564). Silver (1994) argues that in France there were concerns with relational issues to poverty, such as lack of social integration and lack of power. This, according to Silver, was a different approach to poverty than in Britain even when considering activists and academics who were opposed to the right wing policies of the British Government. Those activists and academics in the UK at the time tended to consider the notion of

poverty as issues of distribution, the lack of resources at the disposal of an individual or household (Silver 1994 p.540).

Welshman (2006 pp.186-189) maps in his work 'Underclass: History of the Excluded' that, towards the end of the 1970s and during the 1980s, social exclusion as a concept was taken up and used by lobby groups such as the Child Poverty Action Group in order to capture the multi-dimensional consequences of poverty, which were emerging in the UK out of the changing social and economic conditions of the time. It has been well documented that during the years of 1979 -1997 poverty and disadvantage in the UK was exacerbated by the ideology of the Conservative Government with Margaret Thatcher at the helm as Prime Minister, and her specific strand of neo-liberal policy which was carried on by her successor John Major until his election defeat by New Labour in 1997 (Room 1995; Lister 1996; Silver 1996; Townsend 1996; Levitas 1997, 2001; Haylett 2000; Power 2000; Harvey 2005; Welshman 2006). Ruth Levitas (2004) argues that at this stage poverty and social exclusion were inextricably linked, and linked within a framework which saw poverty as part of a wider pattern of social inequality including the exclusion of having any political power, or being excluded from having any control over your destiny.

During the 1980s in the UK individuals as well as pressure groups like 'The Child Poverty Action Group' began to rethink the way they had traditionally viewed poverty. An example that Welshman uses in his

account of exclusion in Britain is that of Peter Townsend, an academic who was at the forefront in raising awareness of UK poverty for decades (2006 pp.188-190). During the 1980s Peter Townsend, who had previously been suspicious of the social exclusion concept because of the debates within it around behaviour, however admitted he had been wrong in thinking that 'social exclusion' had been a diversion away from more crucial issues of poverty. According to Welshman (2006), Townsend conceded that social exclusion was in fact crucial in itself because of the way it focused attention on the denial of rights (p.185). Nevertheless, Townsend remained reluctant to engage in debates around behaviour and the underclass discourse (Welshman 2006 p.188). What Townsend was most concerned with was the processes of exclusion, and the processes involved in the defining of the 'excluded', and indeed the consequences of those processes for 'the excluded'. It seems that Townsend was right in his trepidation around the processes of 'making the underclass' through the social exclusion concept. Rather than focus upon how people become excluded, and how those multi-dimensional processes of being poor and excluded disadvantage groups and neighbourhoods, it is argued here that the British use of the social exclusion concept since 1997, either intentionally or unintentionally, has helped to identify and define excluded neighbourhoods by what they are lacking, morally, spiritually, physically, and economically (Haylett 2000 p.351; Welshman 2000 pp.198-204; Lister 2004; Skeggs 2004 p.97; Lawler 2008 p.132). At the root of this discourse of 'lack', behaviour of the poor is central, despite the many

efforts by researchers in arguing against the view that behaviour of the excluded might be relevant within the social exclusion discourse (Walker 1995 pp. 102-28; Levitas 2001; Lister 2004; Power 2007). However, recent findings taken from the British Household Panel Survey have clearly shown that poverty and social exclusion is multi-layered and far more complex than the Government's Social Exclusion Unit has planned for (Tomlinson et al 2008 p.598). That research shows that 'income is only weakly associated with other generally accepted manifestations of poverty' (2008 p.615), whilst shame and stigma, which are generally more difficult to measure, are inherent components of poverty and social exclusion, and feature highly in poor people's experience (2008 p. 598).

Social exclusion in the UK

The term 'social exclusion' as we understand it in the UK today is a term which is connected to New Labour, who became interested in the European concept in the early 1990s before their election landslide victory in 1997. The election of the New Labour Government inaugurated a new period of 'policy-making for Britain' (Haylett 2003) in which social exclusion became a central policy target. Within the first year of the New Labour Government, the 'Social Exclusion Unit' was launched in order to 'fight evil with a new name': 'social exclusion' (Blair T. 1997 in Levitas 1998 p.7).

New Labour defined social exclusion within the UK, according to Tony Blair in December 1997, when Blair outlined government plans to tackle social exclusion in the following way:

'Social exclusion is about income but it is about more. It is about prospects, networks and life-chances. It's a very modern problem, and one that is more harmful to the individual, more damaging to self-esteem, more corrosive for society as a whole, more likely to be passed from generation to generation than material poverty'. (Blair T. 1997 in Welshman 2006 p.183)

This definition laid out in 1997 clearly shows that New Labour's emphasis regarding poverty and disadvantage was on the structural causes of deprivation, but they also acknowledged the role of behavioural factors, and stressed the way that exclusion can be passed on through generations. It seems a much narrower understanding of exclusion than the early French model, which included exclusion from politics and citizenship, and the lack of personal and group power within neighbourhoods. The hallmark of New Labour's policy approach initially was 'connection', the aim of which is to establish worthy circles of social regeneration through worthy circles of policy connection: 'joined up policies for joined up problems' (Lister 2004). The purpose of forming these honourable connections between various welfare fields was that they would manifest strong 'opportunity effects' with special focus upon the kinds of opportunities necessary to enter and compete in the modern labour market. That formula of 'web-like opportunities' was meant to work for places and people (Haylett 2003 p.64). There is both a moral and a practical element to this. The moral element involves the adoption of the appropriate set of values and attitudes for inclusion,

notably the substitution of the 'work ethic' for 'poverty of aspiration' (Levitas 2004 p.49). The overall aim is that once there has been a moral conversion of poor neighbourhoods and poor people there will be increased skills and ability for those people and places in the employment market. However, what this concept lacks is the understanding of the complexity of disadvantaged places and disadvantaged people. It was argued earlier that there are real problems in how physical space is reified and becomes part of a doxic understanding of poor people and poor neighbourhoods; those understandings gradually become part of the mental structure of society, and make up systems of preference and meanings, where shame and stigma, and people and places which 'lack' become part of those systems (Bourdieu 1999 pp.125-126; Lawler 2008 p. 137; Tomlinson et al 2008 p.599).

New Labour (Things can only get better, can't they?)

There were others during the late 1990s who wanted the social exclusion project to focus upon the lack of resources, especially within urban environments. Anne Power (2007) suggests that, by 1997 and after 18 years of Conservative policy, the New Labour Government was extremely worried, particularly about housing and urban policy and the effects that the neo-liberal Conservative policies had on communities and poverty. Power (2007) recognised to some extent the multi-dimensional issues of poverty and exclusion. As many areas with large

social housing stocks had been depleted and run down, many estates within the larger cities were in chronic disrepair. Their residents were suffering badly from poor housing and rising crime, especially crime relating to property such as burglaries and car theft, which made life on social housing estates horrendous for the residents.

Therefore, the Social Exclusion Unit, which was set up by New Labour in 1997 to tackle the UK's social problems, had a wide remit from homelessness, truancy, parenting, and child poverty. The major urban-social programmes that structured this vision included The Single Regeneration Budget, The New Deal programmes, The Employment Education and Health Action Zones, and the Sure Start Initiative for under-5s. These are all positioned as the ingredients for the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal, a strategy tackling the multi-dimensional aspects of poor neighbourhoods, worklessness, low skills, single parents, and early years' development, through stimulating local strategic developments, in addition to environmental improvement (Gough et al. 2006; Power 2007).

The large part of intellectual input into the Social Exclusion Unit has been provided by CASE, an ESRC research centre established in the London School of Economics in 1997. Anne Power has used the research centre to develop her understanding of what social exclusion is about:

'The tendency to push vulnerable and difficult individuals into the least popular places, furthest away from our common aspirations

... inner city areas and some large outlying housing estates have become a receptacle for problems'. (Power 2000 p.521)

Power argues that the British concept of social exclusion is about 'neighbourhood collapse', and the tendency for poorer neighbourhoods to form 'poverty clusters'. For Power, social exclusion is an urban issue (1997 p.372). One of the first reports to come out of the Social Exclusion Unit was the dramatic report 'Bringing Britain together', published in 1998. The report identified almost 3,000 seriously deprived urban communities, trapped in a vicious cycle of physical decay, social breakdown, high unemployment, low skill, high crime and abandonment.

The concepts of urban–social inequality and exclusion are important within this thesis because these concepts are industrious in themselves; they behave as signifying systems. As Bourdieu (1999) argues, they reify physical space, creating ways of thinking, and they carry their own definitions of success and failure; they stigmatise, and have negative effects for the people who are defined by those concepts. Chris Haylett (2003) and Ruth Levitas (2004) both argue that they represent a 'policy culture' through which urban–social inequality and exclusion are given both definition and solution. They also create 'ideas of culture', or types of culture and cultural groups; for example, 'sub-cultural' welfare groups living on socially excluded and deprived council estates, which these concepts have defined as 'sink estates' along with all the other symbolic and actual definitions which come with the term. David Sibley (1995)

argues that 'other' people and 'other' neighbourhoods are constructed out of the geographies of belonging and exclusion, which can be local or global (1995 p.69). The boundaries of society appear to have shifted, including more of the population, and class divide becomes more elusive. Then living space, combined with the class positioning of those who live on the margins of a society, are key indicators for the rest of the population to identify 'the imperfect people' (Sibley 1994 p.69). Those who are lacking, and live in spaces of 'lack' find themselves both excluded and 'the excluded', and class divide again becomes crystal clear through the use of reified physical space, and the stigmatising of the culture and practices of one group in opposition to 'the rest of us' (Skeggs 2004).

In turn, these concepts of exclusion and 'the excluded' produce cultural meaning and identities for the people and places they target. They become part of the cultural texture of people's lives. These concepts and definitions are absorbed into the language and understandings of the wider public but also those who they are aimed at. This is the process of how others identify the poor, but also the poor can identify themselves within the process.

Norman Fairclough, who has intensively studied New Labour speeches, also supports this view that this specific social exclusion discourse in the UK combines the moral underclass concept of a deficient culture shown through behaviour and culture within specific spaces (poor

communities). Therefore, Fairclough argues that New Labour has justified interventions into changing culture as a method of tackling social exclusion, the argument being that changing culture changes physical spaces (2000 p.57). The launch of The Social Exclusion Unit in 1997 is often given as an example of how the pathology of the working class is reproduced in the form of the underclass discourse (Haylett 2000 p.59; Skeggs 2004 p.88). Peter Mandelson, at the launch of The Social Exclusion Unit, heavily leaned upon the given definitions of the 'sub-cultural' welfare groups, with statements such as 'our culture is yob culture', and 'we are still having babies instead of careers' (see Mandelson 1997 in Haylett 2000, p.49). As Bourdieu (1999) argues, this immerses those definitions into society, and at the same time they are used to critique the inadequate and wrong solutions by which those defined groups and individuals react to social problems (1999 p. 127).

It should by now be clear that the term 'social exclusion' signifies much less, but indicates much more than is obviously apparent. Haylett (2003), Levitas (2004) and Skeggs (2004) strongly suggest that the dominant causal model of exclusion informing policy is both spatial and cultural, in which the poor (meaning the excluded) have the wrong values, the wrong attitudes, and are themselves simply wrong. They pass on their 'wrongness' to their children, who simultaneously fail in acquiring the necessary skills and qualifications to succeed. Chris Haylett (2001) has taken this argument one step further by adding that the excluded are not only poor, excluded and wrong, they are also un-

modern, belonging to a place and time in history before New Labour. They have no place in New Labour's vision of Britain; their exclusion then becomes spatial and temporal. This concept of the process of exclusion works on two levels: it obscures and legitimises wider social inequalities, and provides a magic lens onto the behaviour of the poor, and makes the rich almost invisible.

The modernising project

Writing in 2000, Chris Haylett follows the history of New Labour and their modernisation programme: initially a modernising of the Labour Party, then their constituents in the Labour heartlands, and later as she argues encompassing the whole of the UK in their programme. Levitas (2004) critiques the New Labour view on welfare policy as one which accepts that capitalism creates inequalities but, through its social democratic understanding of its morals and ideals, will address economic inequality because of a moral obligation to help those who are economically disadvantaged on 'a situational basis' (Haylett 2001 p.67). Haylett (2001) and Levitas (2004) argue that the government's discourse on urban–social renewal has a resonance with many of the reforming ideals of late 19th century liberalism and 20th century notions of justice as fairness (Rawls 1999). Nevertheless, the government leans heavily on the notion of individual responsibility, civic order and community feeling to counter the effects of a de-regulated free market, and places the interests of 'fairness' within a tight boundary of 'fairness'.

This seems only available to those who can be situated within the location of a modernising and cultural change and away from the sub-cultural welfare groups which have been identified and recognised in the popular media, but also through government initiatives which are fed through the Social Exclusion Unit. The effect is that the wrong must be righted before 'fairness' can operate. This is a notable departure from those more liberal ideals of 'fairness' to a more prescriptive and interventionist method of welfare policy which warrants coercion in order to secure the 'right outcome' (Lister 1998 p.12). Is it right then to assume that the Social Exclusion Unit's focus in 1997 was to solve the problems of the socially excluded through changing culture, and changing cultures within neighbourhoods, rather than through an interest in 'fairness'.

During New Labour's first two terms in government there was a mild but nonetheless clear redistribution through active welfare policies to the 'in-work poor', and in those first two terms there were definitive departures from the Conservative administration of 1979-1997, not least by New Labour in the level of spending and in engagement with poverty. However, the similarities were that both governments have committed to using the markets and the incentives to change citizen behaviour (Taylor-Gooby 2008 p.169; Watson 2009 p.203-204).

Consequently, there have been 30 years of free market individualism, and the behaviour of the poor has been seen as legitimate causes of poverty. This defines exclusion through a 'sub-culture', and in particular

locating exclusion within 'sub-cultural' welfare groups, their practices and their living spaces.

Over the last 12 years, the government's policies on welfare such as the New Deal for communities, claiming state benefits and local area programmes now include new benefit regimes and sanctions, curfews, parenting and anti-social behaviour orders, and compulsory participation in re-employment schemes. The Welfare Reform Bill 2009 (DWP 2009) has recently been published and focuses intensely upon getting people into work, reducing the numbers claiming incapacity benefit, and tackling lone parents and 'parental responsibility' through a number of measures, one being 'a requirement for both parents to register a child's birth' (DWP 2009b). It seems that the scope for individuals and communities to reform their behaviour has been greatly extended, and a more comprehensive understanding of what is 'lacking' in those communities rather than what is happening has become the focus.

The reification of working class 'bad' behaviour

When Lawler (2008) argues that poor working class people and neighbourhoods 'lack' what is needed to be of value, we might think of resources linked to the economy, such as employment, skills, and training. However, there is also an argument that 'lack' can be culturally pitched, and more finely distinct than the lack of 'cultural capital'

associated with education. Although this research would vehemently argue against the view that council estates should only be known as 'lacking', there are some areas which we can argue are lacking. There is a definite lack of positive namings and valuations of working-class practices and behaviours, particularly those situated within the unofficial community networks and the unofficial resources which are within poor communities and often go undetected and under the radar of government scrutiny. In the later chapters it will be shown how the mothers on this estate who depend upon state welfare benefits and live in council houses have an acute awareness of how they are often negatively valued. Nevertheless, they are extremely active and work voluntarily, officially and unofficially within their community, for the benefit of each other and the community. Haylett (2001), Skeggs (2004) and Lawler (2008) have all argued that within the politics of social justice there needs to be an urgent address of how working class neighbourhoods and communities are viewed, and that they should be represented in a more positive way and less as merely a Labour utility, in addition to the structural and distributional issues of inequality. Fraser (1997) and Bourdieu (1999) both argue that, in order for us to understand how inequality seeps through the skin and into the fabric of a community, there needs to be a social and theoretical reflection. In particular, questions should be asked about the relationship between class inequalities and class differences, and also regarding class practices and social exclusion as a concept. The significance of those questions is to persist in the idea that welfare policy needs to be more

than just a means to an end: policy needs to change its focus upon changing culture and changing neighbourhoods from what it sees as unproductive and problem places and people into economically productive and 'less troubled' communities. Instead, a different perspective is needed and that is a process through which the goals of any government wishing to tackle inequality have a cultural merit and value beyond the economic. Chris Haylett (2001) argues that what is needed is to rethink what 'policy means to working classness and what working classness means to policy' (2001 p.69).

Through the early work of Oscar Lewis (1961) we can see how the practices of the poor become named as 'deficient' when trying to cope with the everyday stresses that being poor can bring. Lewis noted that some of the poorest people in Mexico City at the time had regular work, but many survived from day to day through a miscellany of unskilled occupations, child labour, pawning personal goods and borrowing from local money lenders at exorbitant rates of interest. According to Lewis, first and foremost they survived because of their local social networks: family, neighbours and friends. Lewis described the social and psychological characteristics of what he calls the 'culture of poverty' (1961 pp. 26-27). He also described other characteristics of this poor neighbourhood, which includes being:

'... distrustful of the basic institutions of the dominant classes, hatred of the police, and they are aware of middle class values ... but do not live by them'. (Lewis 1961 in Coates and Silburn 1970 p.63)

Lewis understands the actual living conditions of the poor, along with their everyday practices as a 'culture of poverty'. He also noted that violence, and abandonment of women and children are common and, as a result, mother-centred families and communities which have greater knowledge and ties to maternal relatives become the 'norm'.

Lewis also argued that, within the 'culture of poverty', other traits develop:

'... a strong present time orientation with relatively little ability to defer gratification and plan for the future, a sense of resignation and fatalism based upon the realities of their difficult life situation, a belief in male superiority which reaches its crystallization in machismo or the cult of masculinity, a corresponding martyr complex among women, and finally, a high tolerance for psychological pathology of all sorts.' (Lewis 1961 p. 27-29)

These traits then become the everyday practices of the community and therefore the 'norm', and passed on to each generation. It is almost the theory of 'if nothing changes then nothing changes', a common phrase which is used within poor communities in Nottingham today.

The description that Oscar Lewis painted of this community in Mexico City is very harsh, but he also described a mutual solidarity among neighbours and the moral obligations among family members. What Lewis described is an alternative value system created within this poor neighbourhood in order for that community to survive the extremes of social inequalities at that particular time in that particular place.

However, Lewis's theory of the 'culture of poverty' was mis-used by the British Conservative Government and the American neo-liberal and

right wing social commentator Charles Murray in the 1980s in order to create their own theory of 'the cycle of deprivation', the supposed perverse effects of welfare dependency, in order to implement neo-liberal policies by rolling back welfare and state benefits and focusing upon the family rather than the causes of inequality. There is no doubt that Lewis's work described a harsh and ugly view of being poor, violence, criminality, and abandoned families. However, what is often omitted when studying Lewis's work is the strong, informal organisation of the society, their resilience for finding solutions to their problems that the institutions often ignore. In a later work by Oscar Lewis (1966), when he visited a slum district in Havana after the Cuban revolution, he noted that, even though conditions for the people were not dissimilar to the conditions he had witnessed before the revolution and poverty still remained in the area, 'the culture of poverty' did not. Lewis concluded that hope had come into the people's lives, and hopelessness that he had witnessed earlier had dissipated even before a change in organisation had proved itself. Lewis argued in this later work that:

'By creating basic structural changes in society, by redistributing wealth, by organizing the poor and giving them a sense of belonging, of power of leadership, revolutions frequently succeed in abolishing some of the basic characteristics of the culture of poverty, even when they do not succeed in curing poverty itself.'
(Lewis 1966 p.19)

Eames and Goode (1977) critiqued Lewis's theory of 'the culture of poverty', and criticised him for perpetuating the notions that the poor are responsible for their own poverty. Their main criticism was that Lewis was only interested in 'third world' poverty, which did not translate over

to Western democracies. Therefore, Lewis's theories which were taken up by the American administration and used in social policy in the 1960s, particularly related to African American and immigrant communities and were out of context in the USA and did not factor in racism. Eames and Good (1977) also levelled criticism at Lewis for the rise in the underclass theory, which they argued had come out of the 70 indicators that Lewis used to describe a community living with a 'culture of poverty'. The indicators according to Eames and Goode had been used to collect statistical data to correlate poverty and deviance, rather than as they argue 'make sense of the everyday actions of people in a context of extremely limited choices' (1977 p.287).

Thus, there has been a genuine misreading by some, and a deliberate cherry picking of Lewis's theory of the 'culture of poverty' by others. There has also been a major lack of understanding and a mis-valuing of practices within poor communities in order to blame the poor for their poverty, and also to disguise the problems of the poor by problematising their spaces and behaviours. Therefore this research argues what Lewis was attempting with the 'culture of poverty' discourse was to examine the value systems that the poorest live within, thus attempting to make sense and contextualising those everyday actions of people with limited choices because of the structure and the inequalities within their society, rather than purely examining the behaviour of the poor and blaming them for their situation as he is often accused. As Haylett (2001) argues, if all that being poor and

working class means to policy is about changing their practices and their culture into something else more acceptable and less troublesome, without any consideration that working class practices and culture have real value and worth in their own right. The negative valuing of working-class practices becomes reified, and negative meanings are attached to everything deemed to be working class; therefore, welfare policy becomes purely prescriptive, one dimensional and reduces poor neighbourhoods and their residents into one-dimensional subjects of lack, a position they can never really overcome.

Conclusion

Within this chapter the beginnings of an argument have been embarked upon, which will continue throughout this thesis: how the poor working class is named, understood, and recognised within public discourse, and how those namings inform policy, the wider British public, and the poor working class people themselves. The later chapters will show how these namings have produced stigmatised understandings of those who live on council estates and how they have impacted upon their process of identification. The building blocks of the argument within this chapter are a critique of the social exclusion discourse, which has been important in naming the poor and their neighbourhoods as 'the excluded', and then embarking upon a process of 'including them' into the modernised ideals of New Labour's Britain. It is easy to imagine the well-intentioned politicians, and policy writers' frustration, as they say 'why can't they just be like us'. It seems that working class culture,

practices, and their understandings have been placed in a time and location that is no longer relevant and as a consequence the social exclusion discourse in the UK has focused upon changing these practices, cultures and values, and righting the wrong through prescriptive measures of policy implementation.

It has been argued within this chapter that there is often a lack of positive namings and valuations of working class practices and behaviours, and the unofficial community networks and the resources which are used within poor communities to counter the inequalities they suffer are often misunderstood, ignored, or are simply not seen as they have gone under the radar of government scrutiny; this is particularly true within social exclusion discourse. The focus has shifted from understanding poverty and poor communities as a matter of resources (the lack of) for those who live within council estates, and instead as moved towards changing the inadequate cultural practices of those people and their neighbourhoods. Social exclusion then means changing culture within specific spaces and specific people. As Sibley might argue (1994), there is a spatial and cultural difference of who is excluded and who belongs, bringing clarity back into class division and identification.

There needs to be a different perspective when any government or interested party wishes to understand or tackle inequality, and that is by understanding that poor communities are not 'lacking' in everything;

they are not the epitome of 'wrongness' and their value systems and practices which have grown from within their poor communities have a cultural merit and value beyond the economic.

This thesis will not shy away from the issues that are often raised about poor neighbourhoods, i.e. the behaviour of the poor: they are often blamed for their own inequality, which has often meant that those who constantly fight for the rights of the poorest in our society are reluctant to engage in debates of 'the behaviour of the poor' (Eames and Goode 1977; Townsend 1985; Lister 1996; Welshman 2006). The work of Oscar Lewis has been examined, who attempted to address the 'behaviour problem' but places it within the adaptation and reaction of poor people's marginal position in a class-stratified, highly individualised capitalist society in which they fared badly on every level (1961 pp.150-160). It is not necessary to shy away from these difficult and often inflammatory discussions around the behaviour of the poor; rather, within this research, it is necessary to engage with the everyday social experiences of the poorest working class as it is they and only they who know the real impact of their positioning; as we say in Nottingham, 'them that feels it knows it'.

The next chapter will shed more light on this argument and discuss at greater length the complexity within poor neighbourhoods: the impact and complexity that class, gender, and racial inequality has on poor groups and neighbourhoods; how and why they might need and set up

alternative value systems; the processes which are necessary in order to live within a poor neighbourhood; and resisting those negative namings by creating positive identifications from within.

Chapter 3

The complexity of positioning the poor

Introduction

This chapter continues to challenge how poor neighbourhoods and their residents are often negatively conceptualised by mainstream policy development such as social exclusion, mainstream politics, and common understandings. This chapter begins to develop a framework so that we can understand what is wrong with these mainstream conceptualisations, but also to introduce concepts and ideas that will help us to see a place like St Anns in Nottingham without such disabling assumptions.

The poorest groups and neighbourhoods within the UK, as has already been established, have been conceptualised, and known through many modalities, and the definitions constantly shift (Young and Willmott 1957; Coates and Silburn 1970; Sibley 1995; Bourdieu et al 1999; Welshman 2000; Dench et al. 2006). Those definitions have led to specific and often negative understandings of poor working-class people, and it is through those negative namings that policies have been prescriptive regarding those who live in poor neighbourhoods. This chapter moves on from the previous arguments regarding how welfare policy and in particular the concept of social exclusion has attempted to 'manage the poor', and how this management system has presented the poor as 'lacking', and 'deficient'. It was argued that these

namings serve two purposes: they seep into the language and understandings of the general British public, allowing the poor to be named and identified, but they also allow those who have been identified to see themselves in a particular 'de-valued' way.

However, this argument as it stands alone is far too simplistic, even though it is true that the people who live in poor neighbourhoods have become the symbols of 'wrongness', and their practices, spaces, understandings and culture have been reified as immoral and wrong in order to simplify urban policy in righting them. This damning of working-class life is also about taste, or the lack of it, and later on in this chapter Bourdieu's approach to the 'symbolic economy' is introduced in which he argues that those with the most power get to decide what cultural resources are tasteful regarding ways of dressing, personal styling, music, art, speaking, and social pursuits. These debates are extremely important to this thesis because it is through the lens of culture that the poorest working class are often judged, and deemed as inadequate; but it is also through the process of developing local culture that the women in this research have found value for themselves and their children. It is argued that Bourdieu's approach to the 'symbolic economy' allows an understanding of how social relations are literally incorporated within the body through the habitus, which allows us to conceptualise how power through social relations can work; so it is not what you do, or what you have, that is marked as right or wrong, but 'who you are' (Lawler 2009 p.131).

The later chapters will show how the practices within poor neighbourhoods are immensely complicated, complex and rich, creating local processes and understandings and setting up local value systems, which are often misunderstood, demeaned, and ignored by those on the 'outside', thereby shaping those local value systems in particular ways in reacting to those particular namings. This chapter then explores the structures of those namings and identifications through examining the social divisions of class, race and gender, and how they might interrelate and produce new processes in how individuals and groups see themselves and each other. This chapter sets up the theoretical framework so we can examine those processes of identification, and examine the value systems which are alive in poor neighbourhoods, in order to find out what is valued and important within. At the same time, this chapter identifies what is missing within those neighbourhoods and how the residents adjust their practices to compensate for what they do not have. Consequently, there is recognition that poor neighbourhoods and their residents have social, political and cultural needs which are often not being met, but at the same time there are local practices and processes which are working.

Left out, the other 'other'

There has been recent debate and interest around the state of the white working class in the UK. In 2008, BBC 2 held a 'White season' in which they asked 'Is the white working class becoming invisible?' The BBC

explored these issues within documentaries, and drama asking 'what it means to be white and working class in contemporary Britain' (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/white/>). They highlighted the way that some white working-class communities felt overlooked by government. One of the documentaries, 'Last Orders', which was aired in March 2008, showed how Wibsey Working Men's Club in Bradford was under threat of closure, and its members – the remnants of the industrial white working class – felt they were the 'last of an endangered species'. There was also a drama which was based on a documentary aired a few years previously and part of the same season, which was called 'White Girl', a story of an 11-year old white working-class girl who becomes a minority in an all Asian neighbourhood in Bradford. Initially feeling vulnerable as a minority, she eventually finds solace from her difficult and disadvantaged family life through Islam. The BBC said that their aim was:

'... To question what's happening to Britain's white working class during a period of great economic and cultural change. We're trying to reflect how they are responding to that change, while portraying them in a sympathetic and unpatronising way'. (Klein R. 2008)

The Runnymede Trust in January 2009 published a report named 'Who cares about the white working-class', where they explore the possibilities that the white working class 'might be losing out in the conflict for scarce resources'. Kate Gavron (2009) notes that politicians have abandoned the description of 'working class' in favour of 'hard working families'. She believes that this is purposeful in order to

differentiate between the virtuous and the underclass (Gavron 2009 p.2).

It seems that there is a shifting process in how the white working class in the UK are being known and named, but also how they know themselves. Chris Haylett (2000), Bev Skeggs (2004, 2009), Diane Reay et al. (2007), Steph Lawler (2008) and Anoop Nayak (2009), have all raised arguments suggesting the white working class has become named and known as not only the economically impoverished but also the culturally impoverished, whilst simultaneously being represented as 'excess and nothing, in the sense of having and being of no value' (Reay et al. 2007 p.1049). Haylett (2000) has added a further element to this argument, in that the white working class have now become an embarrassing contradiction, they have lost their symbolic status that their colour and their class had awarded in the past and have become 'abject and white'. However, what Haylett misses within this argument is that the symbolic and nostalgic status of the 'white working class' only ever really applied to men (2000 p.352). Skeggs (1997, 2004, 2009) has consistently argued that white working-class women never held a positive symbolic position within the British psyche. This is an important point within this thesis, which will be returned to in the later chapters, when the women in St Anns discuss their anger regarding 'being looked down on by others' (Skeggs 1997 p. 81, 2004 p.91).

However, what Haylett does argue is that these negative representations of the white working class are political in the fact that there is a disparagement and a retreat from the people who are seen to embody what she argues as an 'unsettling mix of whiteness, working classness and poverty' (2000 p.353). In the last chapter it was argued that it has become a necessity in the UK for the poorest subjects to be classified as 'socially excluded' in order for them to be modernised into modern Britain. One of the key arguments by those trying to understand the immensely complex state of the white working class is that there has been 'a dumping process' of the poorest 'white working class', and both Nancy Fraser (1997) and Chris Haylett (2001), have pointed out that poststructuralist arguments around issues of cultural identity have had a part to play in 'the dumping process' (1997 p.353). Fraser (1997) and Haylett (2001, 2003) both suggest that over the last 12 years this new 'other', i.e. those who have been named the 'excluded' by the social exclusion discourse as noted earlier, appear to be lacking in the status of the working class and in particular the working-class male of previous academic, political, or media discourse. Paul Willis's (1977) 'The Lads' has been used as an example of such discourse, whilst Bev Skeggs's (1997) research on working-class women in the North West Of England, which was groundbreaking by highlighting the specific disadvantages regarding women and class, identified that there was an understanding and general acceptance by the women that 'being respectable' and adopting middle-class values were important in working-class life. The young women in Skeggs's study knew their

valueless social position, but were always trying to leave it by using culture, through dis-identifying with being a working-class woman, disengaging with what they thought was 'common', and engaging in the 'respectable' (1997 pp.81-94).

The 'White backlash'

Roger Hewitt (1986, 2005) has written extensively on the interactions between the white working class and other ethnic groups within local neighbourhoods, but also how they appropriate value from local value systems. Recently he has drawn attention to what he calls the 'white backlash', the anger and resentment which comes from the white working class's loss of value and identity, specifically within inner city neighbourhoods. His book of the same name is focused on the area of Greenwich in South London, a neighbourhood which has seen the rise in support for the British National Party. Hewitt argues in his book that the 'white backlash' in certain neighbourhoods, especially those with high numbers of ethnic minority groups living side by side with the white working class of that neighbourhood, is the consequence of resentments. These resentments were, according to Hewitt, about the media's reporting of racial incidents, equal opportunities in local government, and about 'anti-racism' and multi-culturalism in schools. Hewitt describes this resentment by the 'white have nots' as the impact on them by the 'black have nots' – or rather about the development of representation for minorities who seemed to outflank them in everyday

struggles for small advantage. The struggle to disarm the accusation of racism, either by inverting its meaning or by denying the validity of its application to particular instances, became part of the expression of resentment some whites felt about the prominence that black and other minority ethnic causes were receiving (2005 pp.24-31). What Hewitt (2005) is arguing is that there has been an obvious change in the way that some white working-class people in South London are strongly identifying with a 'white overtly masculine identity', with a clear antagonism to other ethnic groups. Hewitt (2005) notes that, within those white working-class groups in South London, there are fierce reactions to a loss of power not only from their white British position but also their class position; it is difficult for the poor white working class to identify with this position as many say 'I'm not working'. As Hewitt (2005) says in the book, it was not unusual for white working-class children in South London to feel 'cultureless, and invisible' in comparison to their 'culture rich' school friends whose families came from all over the globe (2005 p.26).

What Hewitt (2004) argues throughout the 'White Backlash' is that the power held within the white identity in order to remain constant must be unseen, and normalised. Savage et al. (2003) also argue that, within class discourse, in order for middle-class advantage to continue it also needs to go unseen and become normalised. This is the same process within feminist discourse on gender oppression and inequality: patriarchy must be understood as part of the natural social order for it to

continue (Fraser 2000). However, because of the shifting definitions of what working classness means, particularly through welfare policy, it has been argued throughout, the contemporary discourse of working classness has come to mean excluded and lacking. Bourdieu would argue that these shifting and 'natural' processes are doxic, and are part of the symbolic violence inflicted upon those with least power, and least valued social positions (1977 p.164).

Complexity of class, gender, race and ethnicity

It is extremely difficult to theorise the relationships between class, gender, and race because of the shifting processes of those relationships, the changing processes of politics and history, and the context and perspective those relationships experience (Gilroy 2004 pp.45-58). However for this story, set in St Anns in Nottingham, there are many interlinked and complex relationships between these social positions. These interlinked processes might be described, as Bradley (1996 p.143) argues, as a 'new sociology' of ethnicities', which is heavily influenced by postmodern and poststructuralist accounts and focuses on identities, cultural practices, and racist discourses, enabling the incorporation of class as one of the social processes, through which racial and ethnic differences are produced and reproduced.

Walkerdine, Lucey, and Melody (2001) also debate the change in class relations and representations, particularly over the last 40 years,

through a debate regarding a neo-Marxist and the neo-Weberian understanding of class. They ask whether class is now about recognition and self-making, rather than a common experience related to exploitation (2001 p.21). However, what Walkerdine et al. also examine are the meanings within class constructs, both as ways to understand oneself, but also to classify others. They point out that, with the rise of postmodernism, there were serious challenges to the 'grand narratives' such as Marxism, which were viewed as unable to theorise the diversity and plurality of social experiences. It appears that the neo-Weberian models, which already contained the notion of fragmentation, have fared better in what Walkerdine asserts is the 'deconstructive onslaught of postmodern and post-structuralist enquiry' (2001 p.23). Some have taken the concept of fragmentation further; Beck (1992) argues that classes have been subject to change, but also disintegration. In particular, Beck maintains that individualism in later modernity is different from the rise of the bourgeoisie because it is the product of the labour market and 'manifests itself in the proffering and application of a variety of work skills' (Beck 1999 p.93). Beck is suggesting that, by loosening of the binds of class, sociality makes it possible for the production of individuals who can take their place in a differently defined polity. For Beck, by becoming independent from traditional ties of class and gender roles people can take on a more independent quality to their lives, making it possible for the first time to experience 'personal destiny' in the process of identifying themselves and creating a valued identity (Beck 1999 p.101). Beck's argument

rests upon individuals becoming 'hyper rational', recognising themselves as autonomous individuals in which progressive social change can be accomplished. However, within Beck's analysis of changing social relations, there appears to be no difficulty about the act of transformation, no sense of loss for the individual, and no groups or individuals left behind unable or unwilling to become autonomous individuals.

Within Valerie Walkerdine et al.'s (2001) research relating to class and gender they argue that the narrative of the present political conjuncture fails to engage with the complexity of self-invention and the especially difficult position of women. They argue that Beck's understanding of class is read only as an economic category, whilst Walkerdine et al. in their research understand it as deeply implicated in the production of subjectivity, as written on the body and mind. This understanding of class and who can and cannot reinvent their class identity is of particular interest to this research as the poorest white working class do not solely understand their class identity or social position through their economic position but also by the way they are viewed, represented and understood by those on the outside of their communities.

Walkerdine et al. (2001) bring to our attention that class is not simply an economic category, but has cultural meanings for groups in which they acknowledge and engage, but which also works to distinguish them from others (Bourdieu 1986). Harriet Bradley (1996) also examines in

the 'new sociology of ethnicities' how groups are made distinct through her use of the notion of hybridity developed by Homi Bhabha (1990). Bradley (1996) argues that the notion of 'hybridity' adds another dimension to the theories of fragmentation, providing us with a way to understand and explore the dynamic formation of contemporary ethnic identities in a post-colonial world (1996 pp.143-144). However, if we are to consider not only the shifting definitions of class but also how these interact with other social divisions as in gender and race, the notion of hybridity may also throw some light on white working-class identity. As Haylett (2003) argues, there is a distinction between white and 'dirty white', as all white groups are not equally white (2003). What Haylett means by this statement is that, through the use of class, political rhetoric and social policy as in the social exclusion discourse, the working class has been fragmented through the use of culture, distinguishing the aspirational and worthy from the valueless and, as Lawler (2008) argues, 'the lacking'.

Bridget Byrne (2006), in her recent research 'White Lives' investigates the concept of 'race' classification through the experiences of white mothers living in London. She focuses upon how 'whiteness' has been constructed as a non-racial term and continues to do so in the lives of her respondents. Byrne above all is interested in how the 'normalness' of 'whiteness' has been constructed in the UK, particularly for women; her respondents are white women who regard themselves as 'unproblematically white' (2006 p.45). What Byrne argues in this study

is that it is difficult to pin down what 'whiteness means' as it is difficult to contain within a single race. Therefore, 'whiteness' becomes an absence and transcends beyond the body and, as a consequence, has a complex relationship with the visible. She argues that in comparison 'black bodies' have been read as primitive and uncivilised, associated with 'darkness', which in turn constructs white bodies as 'pure, enlightened and civilised' (Byrne 2006 p.46). Nevertheless, Byrne does warn that white bodies are also produced through class and gender; therefore, white women's bodies are not all equally 'white' (2006 p.26). This is particularly important to the women in this study, as the later chapters show; the women have become simultaneously racialised and sexualised through their personal associations with black working-class men.

Therefore, what interests this research is what happens when these three discourses collide. What happens when women are poor, white, working class, and have husbands, partners, children, grandchildren, friends, family members and neighbours who are black, white and mixed race? Can the 'normalness of whiteness' still be performed? Is it easy and unproblematic for the women to identify with a white working-class identity?

It is doubtful that this is the case. What would be the point in identifying with an identity of no value? Skeggs (1997) found this to be the situation in her study in the 1990s: being a working-class woman held

little value and, in actual fact, by identifying and engaging in a working-class identity for the women in Skeggs's study meant being disrespected and de-valued. Then it is plausible, as in Skeggs's (1997) study, that the poor white working class may engage in a process of fragmentation or, as Walkerdine et al. (2001 p.26) argue, 'to remake themselves' with an identity of value, but not necessarily a valued identity which is universally understood such as the middle class, educated, and respectable identity, rather an identity that makes sense to them, reflecting the complexity of their lives and relationships. It will be interesting to find out how the women in this study manage the valueless position that their gender, ethnicity and class award them. This, according to Chris Haylett (2000), presents a new development as it is usually blackness, in particular 'black youth', that is rhetorically positioned in British political discourse as representing the uncivilised and instinctive, and has been subject for many years to a process of fragmentation in order to 'fit in' within British society (2000 p.366).

However, the concept of class inequality still overrides any process of fragmentation, and Bradley's (1996) work on class is important as it points to the deep contradictions that exist in the sociological literature. In particular, there is opposition between the concept of postmodern multiple identities and modern class identities which, according to Bradley, are played off against the ever present and real class inequalities in Britain, many of which are stark within the women's lives within this research: low pay, low educational achievement, health

inequalities, teenage pregnancies, poor housing, and crime (1996 p. 45). These types of inequalities, Bradley argues, are class indicators that people cannot overcome through attempting to remake or modernise an identity; as she argues, 'class is everywhere and it is nowhere' (1996 p.45). Bradley also argues that class has no physical signs or markers, which make it harder to observe. It seems that Bradley is severely mistaken within this argument. As Haylett (2000) and Skeggs (2004) argue, it is the fragmentation of the working class and the modernising project of New Labour which has named and identified the 'excluded' in order to recoup them back into mainstream society. It was Pierre Bourdieu (1984, 1990) who argued that there are class signs and markers we carry through the habitus; and we all, whatever class background we come from, learn to understand the obvious and subtle minutia of class difference.

What is at issue here, as Lawler (2009) argues, is that the cultural and symbolic understandings of class, which Pierre Bourdieu contextualised using metaphors as cultural and symbolic capital (1986 p. 80), show that these class markers, signs and differences have values attached to them and those values and differences are complex but ever present, giving some enormous advantages but for others, as Walkerdine et al. argue, 'are deadly' (2001 p.26). The question here is why some forms of capital are legitimate and valuable, whilst the cultures and practices of those from the working class are illegitimate and valueless, if in actual fact they have even been recognised at all.

Bourdieu's concept of habitus provides us with a way to explain how an individual becomes part of a recognised group, as in a class distinction, but also bridges the conceptual gap between what actions take place and the importance of the context in which a social group may find itself, whilst also allowing for diversity within that social group. Bourdieu alerts us to the space of everyday life in all its complexity and how it is lived. This space is full of bodies, experiences, and social relations. It is dynamic and moves from one possibility to another, adapting as it moves (1986 pp.170-178). The habitus is a system of dispositions, a system we might describe as a person's character, or even their temperament. This framework also has the ability to produce or originate a relational disposition; it is dynamic and it aligns embodied actions with social locations. However, Bourdieu warns us that life is not only about possibilities; it is also about predictability (1977 pp.110-111). Therefore, the system of habitus is also constrained, normalised and has a pattern. Bourdieu suggests the habitus is the internal organising mechanism entwined within social relations and expressed through the possession, accumulation and exchange of the different capitals, giving varying amounts of value to those in whom it is embodied (1986 p.171). Therefore, social differences and inequalities become observable, as the habitus is the product of those divisions as well as the space that reproduces those social divisions through power and the accumulation and exchange of the mechanism of the capitals. In order to understand class, and cultural relations of the many groups within society, the

concept of habitus allows us to consider language, ideas, and practices, in addition to power relations and resources (1977 p.112).

Bourdieu's concept of habitus is important in his analysis of social identity and also the process of which individuals and groups identify themselves. In order to understand the ways in which the social can be incorporated into the self through the habitus, we need to consider a number of theoretical effects. Haylett (2003) argues that the most important of these is to say 'that class cannot be reified as an actor but is a matter of the embodied social practice' as this varies, changes and unfolds as a cultural space (2003 p.62). This, argues Haylett (2003), is a very different understanding to class as the empiricist, aggregate-position approaches and the economic capitalist system approaches, which she argues tend to diminish consequences for working class people. Haylett (2003) defends this argument, especially when those methods of trying to understand the working class are not able to measure a distinct social or collective action, or because capitalism is taking on different forms, changing class practices (2003 p.62). What habitus allows us to do is examine the way that identities, cultures, practices and classes are constructed through wider and relational space. Bourdieu's aim primarily is to show the deep entrenchment of arbitrary social hierarchies upon the body, but praxis orientation does not necessarily rule out ideas of agency and change. It seems what is at stake then is not so much that the idea of habitus forecloses a dynamic account of agency, but rather how agency and change are

conceptualised. This is an important argument because, when individuals and groups – and especially those from poor neighbourhoods and low social class positions like the women involved in this research – engage in social practices, social networks, cultural practices and ideas that are not recognised and therefore misunderstood by the wider population, these practices are either invisible, or of no value, or are deemed as having negative connotations for those involved.

A conceptual framework of Bourdieu's symbolic economy

Bourdieu's theory of practice is extremely important to this thesis: it allows us to contextualise and examine new ways of investigating identity and behaviour. It has been argued throughout this thesis that, by identifying a 'welfare sub-culture' through the social exclusion discourse, the behaviour of the poor has become the aim of government prescriptive solutions, with a particular focus upon all that is lacking in poor neighbourhoods. Bourdieu's theory of practice can provide a way of thinking about the rich complexity of poor working-class life in the UK as opposed to the discourse of lack coming from mainstream, government and media dialogue. It allows us to engage in arguments that academics and lobbyists on the left of the political spectrum have found difficult to engage with, such as behaviour and ways of being, and recognising cultures within council estates and other poor communities. This 'theory of practice' offers us an opportunity to

engage and debate arguments relating to seemingly problematic behaviours which have often developed as ways of being and dealing with the harshness of daily lives on council estates, and belonging to neighbourhoods falling out of the bounds of taste, legitimacy and acceptable citizenship. It was noted earlier in the thesis that, within poor neighbourhoods, there are practices which work and are working but, at the same time, it should be accepted that there are absences within poor neighbourhoods which are often filled locally, sometimes positively but also negatively.

Bourdieu (1979, 1986, and 2000) suggests a model of class which is based on 'capital movements' through social space, and finds a bridge for what Fraser (1997 p.204) describes as the dialectical relationship of culture and the economy when examining class injustice. Bourdieu's understanding is that space is structured by the distribution of the various forms of capital, and what is held within these capitals is capable of giving strength, power and profit to the owner of the capital. The habitus is the internal organising mechanism and entwines social relations with the possession, accumulation and exchange of the different capitals. From this framework we can see how power and value are distributed within an abstract structure. It is also possible to use this framework to understand the agency of those whose positions are not valued because they lack access to the various forms of capital that Bourdieu suggests is required within a social field to be a person of value.

This framework may also show that class formation can be dynamic, as different capitals are acquired, negotiated and exchanged in different fields but also within different games (1986 pp.213-219). Within a social field there may be many different games being played, and therefore capital has different values within those games. Bourdieu might argue that a council estate or a poor neighbourhood is a game within a field, and therefore the values of the resources within that game cannot be known unless the value system which is at work within the game is decoded (1986 pp.211-214). Bourdieu (1998) uses the example of the economic field within traditional Algerian Kabyle societies, where he argues that there are two different games being played within this one particular field. Bourdieu (1998) discovered within his research that the economic economy as practised in a western democracy, in the Kabyle communities of Algeria is a 'women's economy' (1998 p.101). Women are allowed to tell the economic truth whilst men are held at a point of honour. A man cannot ask for a price or date when goods might be paid for; however, women among each other can ask what price something is, and when she is likely to be paid for her work or services (1998 pp.99-100). Bourdieu argues that this value system is based on a symbolic exchange of honour which excludes women, as they cannot become a person of honour, and thus allows them to act differently within the economic field (1998 p.99). Bourdieu's understanding of how practices translate into meanings initially may seem confusing; however, through those practices, we are able to analyse how different groups have different practices within the games and the fields. More

importantly for this research it is possible not only to examine agency within social structures, and value systems which grow within communities organically, whilst identifying what resources are valued and work well within their system, but also what is not attainable for a particular group in the way they act differently in order to compensate for what they do not have.

Capital legitimation and accumulation

Bourdieu in his work 'Distinction' (1986 pp.53-54, 99-101) identified four different types of capital and it is the accumulation of these capitals according to him which determines the inclusion or exclusion from society: cultural, economic, social and symbolic. Economic capital includes income, wealth, financial inheritance and monetary assets. Cultural capital can exist in three forms: in an embodied state that is in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body, for example 'masculinity' and 'femininity'; in the objectified state; in the form of cultural goods; and in the institutionalised state, resulting in such things as educational qualifications. Bourdieu defines cultural capital as high culture: that is, culture which has been legitimated through a middle-class acknowledgment (1986 p.51). Bourdieu also recognises symbolic capital, which is a value that is not recognised as such. Prestige and positive recognition for example operate as symbolic capital because they mean nothing in themselves, but depend upon people believing that someone possesses these qualities and values them. Finally there is

social capital: resources based on connections and group membership; this is capital which has value through relationships (Bourdieu 1986 pp.10-12).

Social capital and social exclusion

Bourdieu describes social capital as resources based upon connection, networks and group membership – who you know – and can you use them in pursuit of favour and advancement (1996 pp.361-368). Social capital has often been taken up as a measurement for social exclusion and inclusion, and community cohesion (Etzioni 1993; Levitas 2004; Macdonald et al. 2005). However, Levitas (1997) argues that the social in social exclusion is underdeveloped, especially in regard to networks and social capital.

Social capital refers to the quality of contacts that people have, the networks that they can attach to, the norms of trust, reciprocity and goodwill, a sense of a shared life across all classes, and capacities to organise that these ties afford; or, as Levitas says, 'those relationships which provide people with a sense of trust and community' (1997 p.168). However Levitas (1997) argues, in terms of social inclusion and exclusion, the potential fruitfulness of this is often ruined by the treatment that social networks are a means to an end, either through work or as social control. It may well be the 'norm' to explain neighbourhood decline when examining poorer neighbourhoods in

terms of the lack of social cohesion, community spirit and social capital (Etzioni, 1993; Putnam 2000). However, in the last chapter it was noted that Oscar Lewis (1961) had described a 'culture of poverty' in which he showed a harsh view of poor communities, where violence and criminality were part of everyday life, but he also noted that close family ties, mutual aid and voluntarism were strong features of poor areas and became the tools that helped people cope with poverty, unemployment, stigma and the lack of hope he witnessed (1961 pp.26-27). Therefore, it does not always follow that there is little or no what might be called social capital in poor neighbourhoods, which is perhaps what Ruth Levitas means when she says the social in social exclusion is underdeveloped (1998 p.168).

Diane Reay and Helen Lucey (2000) have also shown how children understand local networks. Their research, set on council estates in London, argues that the children living in these communities understand that to 'be known' on the estate means they are safe, but also 'being known' gave a sense of self and who they were, as well as where and to whom they belonged. This, argues Reay and Lucey, shows how a local value system is utilised in a poor neighbourhood, despite the real dangers that the children faced and recognised to be around them on the estate (2000 p.422). Therefore, it may be the case that poor neighbourhoods have extremely strong systems, resources, and social capital but these are not recognised or even known by those who measure such things. As Levitas argues, the fruitfulness of this is ruined

because those resources are only seen as a means to an end and not as resources within themselves (1997 p.168).

However, Gough et al. (2006) argue that, despite the local value systems being utilised in poor neighbourhoods to create a sense of community and identity, social capital, networks and relationships are being undervalued and diminished in poor neighbourhoods through 'a capitalist logic to locally supplied services' (p.118). What Gough et al. describe here is the closure over the last 20 years of many local services within poor neighbourhoods. Retailers have been forced out of poor neighbourhoods through profit-rate targets and have concentrated their business in wealthier neighbourhoods. In addition local banks and post offices have increasingly closed offices in poor neighbourhoods, and small independent shops have focused much more on selling alcohol, cigarettes and lottery tickets, rather than food or newspapers, in order to increase profits; at the same time local public houses are closing at an alarming rate, leaving little social space for residents to meet up. This is where the social exclusion discourse might be beneficial, showing how social capital is being undervalued and destroyed through the actions of the market, rather than the actions of the residents.

Gough et al. (2006) also argue that the way some social spaces are constructed can also diminish social capital. They use 'residential exclusion' through a concentration of one income type as an example to

show how the wealthy buy themselves a 'better area', whilst poorer families are left with little choice of where they can live. They also argue that many of the council estates in the UK have been badly built without consideration of the impact that environment has on residents.

Therefore, the built environment, such as the Thamesmead estate in South London, the Sighthill estate in Glasgow and St Anns in Nottingham, socially excludes the residents from each other and through inconsiderate planning these estates become easy for certain crimes to be committed. In addition, Gough et al. argue that, once estates become pathologized, the stigma also prevents residents from networking with anyone outside the estate and again limits the accumulation of the form of 'bridging' social networks on the outside of the estate (2006 pp.114-116).

Therefore, Gough et al. in one respect are correct when they argue that the accumulation and access to social capital can be diminished by segregating the poor within a council estate. However, against these disadvantages there is a set of potential advantages of a spatial concentration for the poor which are rarely recognised. It is already known that, within poor neighbourhoods where there are black and ethnic minority groups, this spatial concentration can become a buffer against racism (Drake and Cayton 1993; Wacquant 2008 p.115-117).

What is not widely discussed is how spatial concentration of poor groups within poor neighbourhoods also acts as a buffer against stigma for the whole community, and therefore boosts local social capital within

the neighbourhood. There are some who might argue that these things are not resources at all, rather methods of 'coping'. However, these resources are of use-value for the community, which should not be underestimated. The later chapters will explore and show clearly how important local resources are.

The argument here is that the resources within a council estate are only of use-value to those who live there and therefore can never be legitimated or capitalised upon because they have no exchange value outside of that specific location. It is the resources which become legitimate capital through their exchange value which can be traded up within the wider social field, and it is those resources that the poor communities do not have access to. They are restricted from appropriating them, which also restricts their social mobility and disadvantages them. Therefore, Bourdieu's model of capital exchange can expose the mechanisms of how power works to advantage some groups, whilst disadvantaging others. However, it is maintained here that a more flexible approach to capital accumulation is needed and that we can recognise a resource as legitimate not because it has profit through exchange, but because it has use to the holder. What Bourdieu's symbolic economy also shows us is that, by examining value systems which are on the outside of the dominant value system as Bourdieu did in Algeria, we can understand how and what is of value within those communities, and also what actions are necessary by individuals to become a person of value within that system.

Does symbolic and cultural capital equal value?

Bourdieu is inclined to understand the valued capital within a society as inherently belonging to the middle class, legitimated through middle-class values, and the economic sphere (1986 p.50). This is the process which happens when capitals can be exchanged and traded up into the open market. Bourdieu always uses education and, in particular, higher education as ways of demonstrating this (1986 p.55). For Bourdieu, it is only the cultural capital of the middle classes which is legitimised this way. Bourdieu is accurate in his assessment of this process, in particular when considering the economic field; it tends to always resign those who cannot take part in this process as of little or no value. Not to possess symbolic capital from your cultural and economic capital, as Lawler (2009) argues, is to fail in the games of judgement, aesthetics, knowledge, and cultural competence (2009 p.128). However, there is value within poor communities, and poor communities in the absence of the legitimated capital and value system create their own value systems, as Bourdieu acknowledges in his work 'Outline of a theory of practice' (1977) and 'Practical Reason' (1998). Alternative value systems can run alongside the legitimate system, or in opposition turning the social 'norms' of wider society on their head, but are often a hybrid version of all. Although alternative value systems are recognised by Bourdieu, he has been accused of leaving little room in his conceptual framework to consider the scope for recognising working class identities and cultures that exist as positive in spite of economic

inequality (Lawler 2004 p.120). Bourdieu argues this point in 'Distinction' (1986), through a discussion of 'taste' and class. He argues that 'taste' belongs to the middle class, as they are further away from necessity and therefore have choices. This doubles freedom, which the middle class uses to 'exhibit their objective distance from necessity' (1986 p.55). He goes on to argue that, as distance from necessity grows, lifestyle becomes the product of what Weber calls a 'stylization of life' (1986 p.55). Bourdieu then turns his attention to the legitimation of certain lifestyles and 'taste' which then becomes the inevitable difference of a practical affirmation (1986 p.56).

However, what Bourdieu is most concerned with is how those who regard themselves as the 'possessors of legitimate capital' fear above all else 'the sacrilegious reuniting of tastes which taste dictates shall be separated' (1986 p.56). It is not that Bourdieu believes that the poor have no or little value but instead he demonstrates how the symbolic economy works against granting recognition and value to the poor. This is an important argument, especially to Bourdieu's critics, who often accuse him of having 'a theory of reproduction' rather than practice; these accusations usually centre on determinism, and restriction (Giroux 1983 p.95). However, Bourdieu's concern is to uncover the logic of practices that perpetuate power relations and inequalities.

Walkerdine and Lucey (1989) find a way of demonstrating this through showing that working-class and middle-class cultural capitals are not

equal but different. They argue that the difference which working class people display is 'made into inequality' through symbolic violence. For example, in order to examine a particular 'cultural capital', it needs to be analysed in relation to other capitals within that field but also within the game. Bev Skeggs (1997) also demonstrates how Bourdieu's 'theory of practice' can be used to analyse 'femininity', which can be seen as a legitimate form of cultural capital. However, this is only so when it is analysed through a version of middle-class femininity which is associated with morality, and only then in comparison to working-class femininity and masculinity in general. What Skeggs (1997) is demonstrating is exactly what Bourdieu (1998) argues, that symbolic violence which is bestowed on those who do not have access to legitimate capital, then struggle for legitimate capital. However, Bourdieu also argues that:

'people are not fools; they are much less bizarre or deluded than we would spontaneously believe precisely because they have internalised, through a protracted and multisided process of conditioning, the objective choices they face'. (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992 p.130)

If the white working class in the UK have had their social positions denigrated, and their access to legitimate capital has been restricted, it is suggested here that there has been a 'resistance' to this positioning, even though it may not be understood or recognised. Stephanie Lawler (2005 pp.429-446) demonstrates this in her work on white working-class mothers in Paulsgrave, where she argues that their resistance 'does not count as it is not approved by the bourgeois observer' (2005 p.431).

Diane Reay (2004) makes the case that there have been resistances through using the symbolic economy. She argues that cultural capital out of the four legitimate capitals is most dynamic, as there are various forms of cultural capital which can be legitimate outside the dominant field. Reay (2004) makes the case for emotional capital, a form included within cultural capital that she discovered is used rather than accumulated by working-class parents to support their children through education. This contrasted to middle-class parents who did not consider emotional capital important within their child's education but relied upon the traditional forms of cultural capital such as learning to play the piano or singing lessons, with an aim to converting this into symbolic capital (2004 p.70). This accumulation of the dominant forms of cultural capital allows middle-class children to trade up within the educational field and profit the holder in the labour market, retaining the status quo (2004 p.77). Nevertheless, Reay (2004) argues that, even though emotional capital cannot be traded or accumulated and then exchanged in the same way as other forms of cultural capital, this does not mean that it is not a valid resource for the individual, group or community; it has a use-value. In Reay's research (2004) what she found was that, even though there is emotional distress in the educational markets for working class families, there are resources for the mothers of the working-class children to use as a buffer for the wellbeing of their children (2004 p.78). This, argues Reay, was in contrast to middle-class mothers who chose not to use an emotional support as a resource but rather a 'deferred gratification' leading to emotional distress of middle-class children. The

case for emotional capital being valued by a working-class habitus and ignored by the middle class is an example how, for the middle class, it is imperative to maintain their valued class positions and avoid engaging in practices of no or negative value, maintaining their middle class and valued habitus. Reay argues that, even though 'emotional capital' is not legitimated through its exchange value, it has a beneficial use-value for those who use it (2004 pp.75-79). However, the research believes that the resources which are not legitimate and are found within the value systems used by the poor cannot really be understood as capitals within themselves because they do not have a universal exchange-value; they are part of the local value system and may have a strong use-value within that system, and therefore they are valuable resources. The use-value of those resources within a local setting like a council estate are precious to that community and may be used to bring symbolic value to the holder, but they rarely have any exchangeable value on the outside.

Even though symbolic capital is a transient capital, it is the form that the different types of capital take once they are perceived and recognised as legitimate. Legitimation is the key mechanism according to Bourdieu in the conversion to power. However, Bourdieu argues within 'Practical Reason' (1998) that symbolic capital is any property (any form of capital whether physical, economic, cultural, or social) when it is perceived by social agents as:

'endowed with categories of perception which cause them to know it and recognise it, to give it value'. (p.47)

What Bourdieu is demonstrating with his concept of the symbolic economy is that cultural capital has to be legitimated before it can have symbolic power. However, the critical argument here is that capital has to be regarded as legitimate before it can be capitalised upon, before its value is attainable.

Class injustice: disrespect, misrecognition, and non-recognition

Legitimation, therefore, is the key: something becomes of value through becoming legitimate, and conversely practices, resources and people can be illegitimate. Misrecognition is the key to the classification of the legitimate and the illegitimate, and to what Bourdieu calls the function of 'symbolic violence', which he defines as the 'the violence which is exercised upon a social agent with his or her complicity' (1992 p.167). In other words, according to Bourdieu, people are subjected to forms of violence, which can include being treated as inferior, denied resources, and are limited in their social mobility and aspirations. But they do not perceive it in that way; rather, their situation seems to them to be 'the natural order of things'. Nancy Fraser argues that symbolic violence through misrecognition is a class injustice which can be cultural or symbolic and is rooted in social patterns of representation, interpretation, and communication. She includes within this argument three axes of injustice. The first is a cultural domination:

'being subjected to patterns of interpretation and communication that are associated with another culture and are alien and/or hostile to one's own'. (Fraser 1997 p. 204)

Skeggs's (1997) work in Manchester illustrates this type of injustice, as some of the women in her study go through life trying to accumulate middle-class culture as their only means of improving their working-class positions. This type of injustice is central within the politics of aspiration, when sections of society are being forced to dis-identify with their working classness, their culture, in order to 'self improve'. The women in Skeggs's study try to adopt middle-class culture through ways of dressing and speaking. However, they are always aware that they can never 'do middle class right' (Skeggs 1997 p.82). They are aware that they get it wrong, and they do not feel comfortable when they enter the space inhabited by the middle class; therefore, they feel 'shame' about their social position (Skeggs 1997 p.88).

Fraser argues that the second axis of cultural or symbolic injustice is linked to 'non-recognition'. She describes this as:

'being rendered invisible by means of the authoritative representational, communicative, and interpretative practices of one's culture'. (Fraser 1997 p. 204)

Again Skeggs's work on working-class women in Manchester also shows how the working class can be rendered invisible and this becomes especially relevant when examining class inequality within gender. The women in Skeggs's study often complained about 'feeling invisible', especially when they went shopping in Manchester and in particular in the upmarket department stores. The women in Skeggs's study were never sprayed with perfume as they noticed 'other' women were. They complained to Skeggs that they 'weren't scruffy or doing

anything wrong'; they knew they were being judged only on their class position, therefore being denied the 'norms' of the perfume department, a 'middle-class space' where they did not belong (1997 p.92). As argued earlier, Bourdieu's concept of habitus has particular force here in understanding how the young women in Skeggs's study were judged not on what they had done, but rather who they were. Skeggs's respondents also acknowledged their invisibility through their employment, as some of the women in the research went on to be employed as nannies to middle-class families. Again, the women were acutely aware of initially being scrutinised about their appearance, and then never being looked at as their employers spoke to them. One of the women in Skeggs's study recounted it was 'as if I wasn't there'. She also recounted how this practice of deeming her invisible was passed on to the middle-class children in her care, who eventually learned to position themselves in the social hierarchy above their nanny (1997 pp. 90-93).

This second axis of cultural or symbolic injustice 'invisibility' is closely linked to the third and final argument put forward by Fraser, and that is disrespect. She describes this as:

'being routinely maligned or disparaged in stereotypic public cultural representations and/or in everyday life interactions'.
(Fraser 1997 p.204)

Skeggs's work again shows how this works in practice. The women in her study often felt invisible whilst, at the same time, they were highly visible by their class position. This was especially true when the women

in Skeggs's study evaluated how they looked and dressed and how they spoke. As Skeggs says, 'they are either designated wrong or they feel they do not exist'. As Bourdieu (1984, 1997, 2000) argues, space is extremely important when looking at a cultural or symbolic injustice of class, as these injustices are only apparent in certain spaces, mainly 'middle-class space', or space where working-class culture is not legitimate, tolerated, and needs moderating. Skeggs argues that this is because of the way space is occupied, and who has entitlement to a specific space. This disrespect and disregard of working-class people by the middle class seems to be generational. We might call it 'the cycle of disrespect', and they pass their disrespect of working-class life, values and practices on to their children.

If we look again at Tony Blair's speech, where he explains to the British public what social exclusion means, and replace the words 'social exclusion' with disrespect and imagine that he is targeting the middle class, it seems the speech makes perfect sense and might have more relevance in tackling inequality.

'Social exclusion is about income but it is about more. It is about prospects, networks and life-chances. It's a very modern problem, and one that is more harmful to the individual, more damaging to self-esteem, more corrosive for society as a whole, more likely to be passed from generation to generation than material poverty.' (Blair T. 1997 in Welshman 2006 p.183)

Conclusion

This chapter maintains that the poorest sections of our society are often named and known as people of little value, and the neighbourhoods they live in have come to represent the chaos and lawlessness of Britain's underclass. The chapter has tried to unravel the complexity of the inequalities, particularly within poor inner city neighbourhoods in the UK, by examining closely the relationships between the class system and gender, but also asking questions about whiteness and working classness. It has been argued that, over time, the white working class have become devalued not just within political discourse but also within their own communities. They have been positioned as 'excluded', on the outside of a modern Britain, and therefore 'unmodern'. They have been perceived to have little value, and their communities are often referred to as 'sink estates', their deficient culture being passed on from one deficient generation to another. It has been argued that this devaluing may lead to shifts in how poor white working-class people want to represent themselves in order to protect their own profiles from further devaluing. The poorest white working class do not only understand their class identity or social position through their economic position but also by the way they are viewed, represented and understood by those on the outside of their communities. Within this chapter the question has been asked as to why anyone would want to be associated with an identity of little value. However, it is acknowledged that this might not mean a process of re-making an

identity into a universally understood valued identity. It might be reasonable to think that the process and any attempt to remake an identity would encompass the complexity of the working-class life. In Nottingham, the women in this research, as the later chapters show, have immensely complicated lives, networks, and processes, and it will be interesting to see how they find value in a place and position thought as valueless. Bourdieu's concept of habitus is important in this analysis of social identity and also the process of which individuals and groups identify themselves. Habitus allows us to examine the way that identities, cultures, practices and classes are constructed through wider and relational space. Habitus can be used in this instance as a way of conceptualising the dynamic nature of agency and change.

Bourdieu's metaphors of the symbolic economy also help us to understand and contextualise the behaviour of those who live in poor neighbourhoods. It is through the symbolic economy that we can understand how power works within social structures. It is Bourdieu's metaphors of capital which can provide not only a framework for understanding power but also exchange in the reproduction of inequality; metaphors of space have a similar explanatory value for understanding movement through social space and restrictions on it. The metaphors that Bourdieu provide us with of spaces and places such as location and positioning enable distribution and allocation of resources and, as Skeggs has argued, 'people to be framed' (1997 p.12). The contemporary reconstructing of social divisions, especially in

relation to the social exclusion discourse and the focus of the restructuring of those who need modernisation and 'including', acts as the source for the cultural and moral apparatus to inflict symbolic and material violence upon those who are deemed 'a blockage' to modernisation. The specific problem identified by Fraser (1997), Skeggs (1997, 2004, 2009), Haylett (2000, 2001) and Lawler (2009) is the negative valuing around working classness and more specifically when working classness is attached to whiteness. There is a real complexity around working-class identity in contemporary Britain with little understanding, especially the misunderstandings of working-class ways of life that may be simultaneously positive and negative for those who embody them.

Therefore, what this chapter has done is to explain how important it is to contextualise practices within poor working-class communities. By doing this we can see what the community values, and we are able to examine that particular value system against that of the dominant value system. Through this we can see not only what the community considers valuable but also what is not available within that community and therefore how the individuals within the neighbourhood, but also the neighbourhood as a collective, might compensate for what they have no access to.

Chapter 4

Methodology:

From Council Estate to PhD

Introduction

The motivation for this research, explained at the beginning of the thesis, was my own experiences of council estate life, rather than an academic interest or gaps in the literature, although they did come later. I was born and raised on a council estate, so was my son, and in actual fact so was everyone else who has been closely connected to my life. I have always known how difficult life can be for women, or rather poor women. Until I enrolled at university I had never really met any other type of person. My grandmother's life was very difficult: raising nine children in a three-bedroomed terraced house, which had been rented from the pit on my grandfather's wage as a miner. They both died in their early fifties, although they seemed very old to me as a small child being raised as their tenth. It saddens me now when I think how they were cheated out of many years because of the poverty, disadvantage and hardships they had endured for all of their short lives. My mother's life was very similar. She became pregnant with me at 17 years of age in the late 1960s. She was treated harshly by the other women on the estate because of my illegitimacy; from a very early age I learned the complexity within council estate value systems. Growing up on a council estate I experienced first hand the disadvantages which come from

living in relative poverty. By the end of the week food was always in short supply; having food in the fridge on Thursdays meant you were rich. Going to bed cold and waking up cold was every child's experience of winter on my estate; there was no central heating in any of the houses, and we all relied upon the mining industry to keep the one coal fire going in the living room heating the whole of the house, which it never did.

I left school before I was 16, there just did not seem any point in it. Also, the miners' strike started in March 1984, just before I left school, so I thought my time was better spent helping the other women out in the strike centre cooking breakfasts for the pickets. I started work at 16 at the Pretty Polly factory with my mum, aunties and cousins, making tights. I stayed there for nine years working on a large machine loading tights onto it by the dozen; the machine did the rest. In those nine years I never actually made a pair of tights. I was, as I now know, alienated from my own labour; again, this was one of those clever things I had always known but did not know how to express until I had a university education. I had my son at 19, and went to live in St Anns to be with my partner, now my husband. His family was Jamaican and I was introduced to a new culture, and different practices. Moving into St Anns was as much about moving out of the mining town I had grown up in; I knew that I needed to move to a multi-cultural neighbourhood for my son. My estate had been in a poor and run down mining town and, by the 1980s, had become devastated with unemployment with no

reinvestment in the place or the people. It was 'typically' white working class with very little tolerance to any differences from the way things had always been.

I came to the University from a local college where I studied on an Access course. Diane Reay (2003) has written about 'the risky business' of mature working-class women trying to get into higher education. She writes of the penalties they may suffer through 'never feeling comfortable' in such an alien environment (2003 p.304). My motivation in getting to, and staying at the University of Nottingham had been a study of St Anns, the neighbourhood which had been my home for 20 years. This study was undertaken by researchers from Nottingham in the 1960s: 'Poverty the Forgotten Englishman' (Coates and Silburn 1970). I had come across this study whilst on the Access course and was surprised that I could go to university and study where I lived.

Here begins the connection between personal experience, which I uneasily assert here, and subsequent research findings: I have discovered through this research process that both can be more thoroughly interrogated and situated in prevailing academic contexts. As an undergraduate I began to search out work that spoke to me and my experiences: the work of Bev Skeggs (1997), 'Formations of Class and Gender', became my bible as an undergraduate. It made me laugh and cry; I recognised elements of friends and family members and also

myself within those pages. However, there were gaps: women who were not there, and parts of myself which were not represented, particularly the anger and violence that had been so much a part of my life and other women I knew. This was also missing from the Coates and Silburn study: where was the anger and the violence that is synonymous within council estates, where are the resistances to social positions that choke, where were the baby-women with the hard faces forever pushing pushchairs? There were gaps in the literature, although subtle: the despair, anger and frustration that I had witnessed all of my life through living on council estates were very rarely presented. Simon Charlesworth's (2000) study of Rotherham had been one of the few exceptions. In exploring those debates on class identities, inequalities, sentiments and subjectivities, I also gathered up that which I quite liked, agreed with, found interesting, and some which angered me, and hurt me. Thus began the groundwork to this PhD: the questions I had about my own community, the women who like me had mixed-race children and were working class, the questions I could not fully answer through the existing literature. Always underpinning this was, as Reay (2003) has highlighted, 'a need to care'. Reay discovered in her research that, for most working class women, 'education for its own sake' is strongly linked to a further commitment to make a contribution to society. She also discovered that working-class women in higher education need to be accountable to those needier than themselves. They had, as Diane Reay (2003) noted, a 'need to care', a desire to make a difference to the lives of others, born out of their own difficult, and sometimes painful

life experiences and knowledge. Therefore, the motivation and the curiosity, but also the ethical foundation to this research has been born out of my own experiences, but also out of the existing research of those with a similar passion to highlight the disadvantages that some groups experience unfairly. This research is not about me. However, I cannot remove myself from it entirely: I still live on this estate; I am part of the process and network of this estate; and, because of this research, I am another part of its history. Therefore, this work aims to be truthful and honest, representing the women on this estate as they are, even when that truth can sometimes be unpleasant. However, the words of the women, their practices, and their processes will always be contextualised, and treated fairly.

Methodology

Reflexivity and knowledge

This chapter attempts to pull together the lived experiences, and the academic requirements into a methodology without losing too much of the essence of the research process, or the vitality and humour as well as the pain of those who have taken part. The methodology in this chapter underpins the rest of this research. It is important to understand where the knowledge contained within this thesis has come from, as Skeggs (1997) argues: to assume that knowledge comes from nowhere allows some to abdicate responsibility for their productions and representations. This is not the intention here; it is important to fully

explain how those who are to be represented within this research have been chosen, the methods that have been used to study them, and how their stories and practices have been analysed, and then interpreted and written. This chapter discusses the processes involved, continually recognising how my location informed methodological decisions, and therefore what the research says about the neighbourhood and its residents.

Within this research reflexivity is about giving a full and honest account of the research process, in particular explicating the position of the researcher in relation to the researched. However, within this research there needs to be a process of recognition, an acknowledgment of the similarities but also the differences within this research relationship. As Bourdieu argues, reflexivity must be a goal we work towards rather than something that can be accomplished through research. He writes in terms of 'the taken for granted': those aspects of our identity resulting in bias that we are unaware of and which consequently are unarticulated in our writing (Bourdieu 1990 p.135). However, articulation is only part of the reflexivity process; it is important to differentiate between stating something and exploring its consequences for our research. In the introduction to this chapter I spoke about myself and positioned myself. It was important to do so otherwise there would be little understanding of how and why this research became research at all. However, reflexivity needs much more than that, it is an honest exploration of whether any or all of these aspects of self-identity lead to bias. Bourdieu

argues that there are differences between a 'narcissistic tendency and a genuine reflexivity', which he asserts is achieved by subjecting the position of the observer to the same critical analysis as that of the researched (1990 p.136).

This research relating to women who live on the council estate where I also live is a complex knot to untangle. There are real issues of commonality between the women and me, I have a very similar background to them, similar experiences, and views of life; we share similar values regarding our families and community. However, there were also differences and it was those differences that I struggled with. Recognising those differences has been a very painful journey; this is an unusual position for a researcher to take, as Valerie Walkerdine points out: 'differences between women are all too often conceptualised in stereotypical and pathological ways' (1989 p.46). What Valerie Walkerdine argues here is how often differences have been conceptualised as deficit within the researched, and a denial by the researcher that her dominant position is relevant. However, within this research it has been difficult for me to accept a dominant position as yet; the only obvious difference between me and the women I have researched is the education I have gained through the university. There are as yet no material advantages attached to this education and, in actual fact, I am in a much weaker position after this research within my community than previously. I have come to be known as 'unusual', I no longer undertake many of the practices I might have done before engaging in this process. There have been difficult choices throughout

this process, engaging in the community as I might have done previously is no longer an option; I have found that I no longer have the time, or the inclination. Being a full member of this community consumes time and headspace that I cannot afford.

Within much feminist writing, reflexivity is seen to encompass aspects of autobiography (Stanley 1993, Weiner 1994). However, Diane Reay (1996, 2004) has argued that the complex social positioning of educated working-class women make the thin dividing line between reflexivity and self-exposure difficult to negotiate, which I am aware that I have not yet mastered. Reay argues that feminists writing from bell hooks (1984), Valerie Walkerdine (1989) and Bev Skeggs (1997), have been motivated by an urgent need to make sense of the complex, often contradictory social identities in the alien territories of academia (1996 p.445). Reay continues this debate by adding that this makes working-class women all the more vulnerable in academia, as it is within the discipline of academic research that the self either does not count, or counts against. Although this research is not autobiographical, it cannot be denied who I am and how I have influenced this research; I am not promising objectivity however I do not see this as a weakness. I have experienced real anxiety over the last five years of this research process that I would not be taken seriously as a researcher, and this research would be written off as 'not academic', not only because of my own position but also because of my close proximity, physically and socially, to the women I have researched. This has led me to question at times that, because of my lack of partiality and my identification with

the women in this research, the research will lose validity. Even now I cannot bring myself to call the women 'research subjects'. This language seems very wrong to me: it is unnatural to think of women whom I see taking their children to school, catching the bus, and shopping in town as research subjects; they are not mice in a lab, they are women I have real empathy with.

Walkerdine et al. (2001) have argued that discussions within social research regarding methodology rest on the quest for the Holy Grail or the perfect method: a scientific method that will produce incorruptible data, uncontaminated by the research process itself. However, Walkerdine et al. contest this position; they argue that, no matter how many methodological guarantees we try to put in place in an attempt to produce objectivity within the research process, the subjective always intrudes (2001 pp.84-85). They argue 'reflexivity' is not an uncommon way, especially within feminist research, in an attempt to critically explore the research process. However, 'self reflexivity' has been an important process in making visible the power of the researcher to interpret, represent, and produce knowledge from the voices of the research subjects (Skeggs 1997; Reay 2000; Walkerdine et al. 2001). However, there is a possibility that, like most attempts to produce a solution, this strategy brings with it its own problems, not least of which is the risk of making the researcher's voice more central than that of the research subject (Wolf 1996).

Even though I am aware of these potential dangers, my own subjectivity was useful within this research process, and in many aspects of the research it became less of a problem and more of an advantage. However, the research relationship I had with the women did have boundaries; yet I was never a detached observer.

In order to truly be reflexive and to give credibility and validity to this research I have tried to analyse my own position, as Bourdieu suggests is necessary, and I have read with anguish existing literature relating to my position as an insider within this research process, whilst also trying to grapple with the concept that I am also on the outside because the education that I value so much has alienated me from the only place that I have known as home. Bev Skeggs (2002) critiques the 'tendency to think that the problems of power, privilege, and perspective can be dissolved by inserting one's self into the account and proclaiming that reflexivity has occurred in practice' (2002 p.360). I have attempted throughout this research process to be reflexive, to constantly travel back and forth from insider to outsider, as I have travelled back and forth physically on the buses from St Ann's to the university. It has not been a straightforward or easy process and there have been problems and issues attached to the process which I shall discuss in the later chapters but I believe I have done more than to simply insert myself and claim reflexivity.

A discussion of the women who took part in this research

The decision to talk to white mums with mixed-race children was a long and lengthy process, which mirrors the way that my own thinking was shaping throughout my undergraduate degree and the Masters in Research Methods. It has already been stated that the reading focus throughout the undergraduate degree was vociferously following a path of class and gender. However, being part of a Jamaican family, and living in a multi-cultural neighbourhood, there emerged other questions that could not be satisfied through the literature dealing with class and gender alone, and I began to seek out work relating to race, ethnicity, and eventually the small body of work which addresses whiteness.

I had noticed over the years that there were increasingly more mixed-race children attending my son's schools with a majority of those children having a white mum. This did not seem particularly unusual: after all, the neighbourhood is very mixed. However, personal knowledge of the neighbourhood influenced my thinking; there had been for many years in the neighbourhood a dominant culture linked to West Indian and Jamaican culture. The local pubs in St Anns had played a lot of Jamaican music, many of my friends with mixed-race children had adopted Jamaican food into their everyday lives, as have I. The language used on the estate is a hybrid language of English/Jamaican patois. The neighbourhood appeared particularly interesting and I wanted to know what was behind this mix of culture,

especially when there was so much being written and said about the lack of community cohesion in neighbourhoods that were ethnically mixed; this did not appear to be the case in St Anns (see Dench, Gavron and Young 2006).

It seems an obvious statement that if you want to know what is happening within a neighbourhood ask women with children. As they travel through the neighbourhood at least twice every day taking children to school, they also have a vested interest in the neighbourhood. There are several studies which have found that mothers are always best placed to discuss social networks within any community as it is the social networking that mothers engage in that allows them to have reciprocal relationships with other mothers in order to have friends, social lives and help within the community if they need it (Dyck 1990; Reay 1998; Gillis 2006).

The women who have taken part in this study have a specific understanding of life in contemporary Britain that they believe is unique but extremely important. Their stories tell of life on a council estate, past working-class histories, and their childhoods; and their parents' lives represent important histories of being white and working class.

However, their stories today are modern and contemporary: life in multi-cultural Britain. It was at this stage that it was decided the interest for this research was exclusively with the mothers themselves rather than the children; this is not research about being mixed race, but mixed-

race families, and the identities which ensue. There has been much interest in 'mixed-race identities' (see Tizard and Phoenix 1996; Parker and Song 2001; Ali S. 2003) and there will probably be much more to come, whilst very little has been written about being the parent of a mixed-race child, and even less about being a parent of a mixed-race adult.

The focus of this study is women who have children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, and step-children who are white, black and mixed race. Therefore, their stories are a reflection of a part of British multicultural society, which is reflected within their own homes and families; they believe that their family photographs are true representations of contemporary Britain. Thirty-five women who lived on the St Anns estate were interviewed in total; there were no restrictions upon age, and I often met their families, children, and partners, who quite frequently during the interviews and meetings joined in with the conversations.

Access and methods of recruitment

I made contact with many of the local primary schools and discussed the research with a few willing teachers, head teachers, and the ethnic minority support worker in one of the local primary schools. They agreed to give out letters asking for help with the research to the mums with mixed-race children. This was not a difficult access point: the local

schools had known me through my own children's attendance there; also I still had nieces and nephews still in attendance so I was treated quite fairly and with some enthusiasm.

I also met with the head teacher at the local secondary school who again was very helpful, and agreed to allow me to hang around the school on parents' evening and talk to parents as they came in to see the teachers. Another primary school agreed to publish a letter in their newsletter asking for respondents. The local Sure Start centre allowed me to attend a toy library group and speak to the mums attending. There was a positive response from all of the local schools and the Sure Start centre, which was very encouraging, and allowed me to gain access to mothers with children of different ages. At this point, after some consideration, it was decided not to interview people who worked in the neighbourhood, the teachers, and nurses in the health centres as the questions focused upon how the women understood their own lives, and what was important to them.

However, some of the women who I came into contact with either at the schools or at the Sure Start centre were suspicious about the motives especially because I only wanted to speak to white women with mixed-race children. Some of the women were extremely angry as they felt that they were being 'set up' or 'stigmatised' because of their mixed race children. However, overall there was a positive response to the recruiting campaign and several women made contact either directly

through the phone number on the letters, or indirectly through mutual contacts. On several occasions my son was approached by other people his own age asking why his mum wanted to talk to their mums. Usually this was the end result of a process, I later discovered through the interviews, where several of the women had investigated my connections to the estate. This was a benefit to the research as it enabled me to interview women in friendship and family groups; once I had met one woman from a particular group it gave an introduction to her friends and family. In total, 35 women were interviewed and at least 25 were met with more than once, I also interviewed women in their friendship and family groups as well as individuals. I initially, met up with the women in their homes, and then later in cafés or the community centre when they often brought friends along. Perhaps this might amount to a method of snowball sampling, but there was also a community element to this. At least 50 letters had been sent out through the local schools, and the Sure Start centre, and an article was placed in the local community newsletter 'Eastside'; posters were also displayed in the community centres and local shops. This community element proved extremely useful as it allowed access to women of all ages, and at differing points in their lives. The core group of women consisted of 35. However, towards the end of the data collection period, there were at least another ten women who had agreed to talk but time and resources were beginning to run out, so a decision was made to stick to the 35 women. The women ranged in ages from the youngest at 19, who had a 6-week old baby daughter, to the eldest at 56 with 8

children and 9 grandchildren. It was hoped that there might have been the opportunity to meet the elderly women in the community who had their children in the 1950's and 1960s but this proved very difficult. There are many mixed-race adults in the community who are now in their forties, I approached some of them that I knew but many of their mothers had died, or were in nursing homes and not well enough to engage in this research. This fact alone tells us something about them: their children told me of the difficulties they faced, 'being the first', and I give respect to them.

The recruitment process began in June 2006, just before the schools closed down in the summer and the first interviews began in November 2006. I engaged with the community in many different ways: joining in on community events, getting the local park cleaned up, spending many hours in the community centre talking to women as they came in, attending public meetings, contacting all the services in the neighbourhood, and going to see what they did. This process went on until the early autumn of 2007 when I began to analyse the data, although I have been in contact with many of the women since that time.

Documentary data

In order to build up a comprehensive view of the research neighbourhood, the women who live there and also, more importantly,

how they are viewed and represented through many different discourses, I have collected and analysed many different sources of data. I have used informal, formal and official sources of documentary data, including stories in national and local newspapers, local newsletters that can be found in community and health centres, leaflets for community activities – for example 'St Anns week in action', and the more obvious documentary data from reports, research and policy from local and national government. Written texts have not been the only potential source: photographs, posters, graffiti, and video clips on 'You Tube', 'Bebo', and 'My Space' have also provided rich forms of data. The young people on the estate often use these sites as ways of communicating their feelings, especially anger about their lives, through 'spitting' and making videos. They also use these sites as vehicles in 'cussing' other neighbourhoods, and showing their loyalty to St Anns (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kdq_AQxvkZk). However, there are issues around collecting documentary evidence which have been taken into consideration. Atkinson and Coffey (1997) call for documents to be treated as 'social facts, significant in their own right and not second best to other data' (1997 p.47). What Atkinson and Coffey (1997) mean by this is that documents are not only useful to validate, support or cross check data from other sources, documents can also be used as data within themselves to be analysed separately. However, the documents I have collected have not been treated as stand alone pieces of evidence and, although they have not been used to cross check or validate the narrative accounts from the women, they have been used in conjunction

with other forms of data collected. Local newsletters have been used to find out what types of community events are being held in an 'official capacity'. This information has been used as a comparison to the flyers that have been created to promote 'unofficial' community events, for example parties and sound clashes. I have also analysed how 'word of mouth' promotion, has often been used to promote local 'all night blues', as well as outside sound events, which often take place in residents' gardens or on the small grass fields that are situated within the neighbourhood. However, the documents I have collected, whether formal, informal or official, do not offer a transparent representation of reality or, as Les Back (2007) argues, 'windows onto social phenomena'; rather, they construct particular kinds of representations and provide a unique version of reality. Such interview data documents are products of the context in which they were granted.

Interviews, focus groups and other misnomers

Within the pilot study undertaken previously, it was decided that the interviews would be semi-structured, and there would be an interview guide, with grand tour and mini tour questions. The interviews would last for one hour, and each respondent would be interviewed separately. In addition focus groups would be organised within the community centres. However, there was a reality to this which was not anticipated in the earlier planning stages of this research: and that was how and where the women in this community would feel comfortable in

talking and engaging. Within the first few interviews I did try to use the interview schedule I had compiled (see Appendices). However, the women very early on told me that they did not like the pieces of paper, and often laughed at my questions, because they were so structured. In the early interviews the women asked me to just talk to them.

Therefore, the interviews were very informal: usually the television was on, or music was playing throughout and, we often, talked about the music we were listening to or the television programme that was on. I found out that daytime television and soap operas can be a great resources when you are asking questions about families, communities, children, and relationships. There were often children playing in the same room and then, as the research process became more popular and more women agreed to meet me, there were often two, three, or even four women waiting to meet me when I turned up at their homes. The idea of the official focus group was abandoned in favour of coffee mornings, which were already in motion and set up by the women in their friendship groups. I was often invited to meet up with the same group of women more than once, where the conversation continued until they decided they were exhausted. However, this was potentially a very long process, as the women's enthusiasm for talking about their community, themselves, and their children was often inexhaustible.

In March 2007 I met up with 'Shirley': she had been canvassing the estate for the local council elections; she was standing for local councillor. 'Shirley' had been to my sister-in-law's home to drop off

leaflets, and my sister-in-law had told her about the research and passed on my contact details. 'Shirley' called me and a meeting was arranged in her home, we talked about her campaign to become a local councillor and she invited me to help her canvass. 'Shirley' ran a voluntary organisation in the area which helped women to exit prostitution and, through canvassing with 'Shirley', I met her friends and other volunteers, most of whom were white mums to mixed-race children. I became quite close to this group of women and spent most of the summer canvassing with them, and meeting up at 'Shirley's' house. There was also another group of women who had been campaigning to clean up a local park; again many of those women were also white mums with mixed-race children and I helped them over the summer in the campaign, meeting up with them for coffee usually in the local community centre. At one point the two groups came together and set up a women's group for St Anns which I was also part of, minutes were taken at these meetings, which I was given a copy of and used as documentary evidence in the research.

During the meetings in the women's homes I recorded the interviews with a digital recorder; none of the women I interviewed had any objections to this. However, I kept a research diary which I wrote in religiously. This was an important tool during the research process because the methods used were not straightforward, and many of the women as we walked round St Anns canvassing for the election, or cleaning up the park were amused that I had a book that I kept writing

in, I even had instructions as to what they thought should be written in it. This came in many amusing anecdotes: from the women saying how unstylish someone looked on a particular day, to the general abuse we sometimes encountered through canvassing for the election.

Confidentiality and consent

I sent a statement of confidentiality and consent (Appendix 2) to respondents with the letters explaining the research. This statement was also read out again at the beginning of each interview. However, none of the women seemed very interested in the details, and were more reliant on the fact I was 'local', and therefore had an interest in the community and would not misrepresent them or the neighbourhood. In addition, most of the women understood confidentiality through my local connections, as one woman said to me:

'if you go about chatting my business I'll know where to come.'

Informed consent

Mason (1996) suggests that the issue of gaining informed consent is a difficult and complex process, particularly as respondents and often researchers are not clear what they are consenting to. I discussed with the women the implications of taking part in the research, and they were assured that they could withdraw from the research at any time and the collected material would not be used. I also discussed 'off the record' information with them, this was particularly important as I spent many

hours with the women taking part in the research in situations where I could not record what was being said. An example of this was when we were cleaning up the park or canvassing the streets of St Anns, when we would generally talk about life, and the neighbourhood. None of the women appeared to have any concerns about this, and when they did say something they knew they did not want me to write about: they often said 'don't use that'. Initially I thought that this might put a strain on the relationships that had been built up, but it never seemed to. The women accepted that I was writing about everyday life and often commented on what was being written. For example, when we were cleaning up the park it was full of needles and used condoms as it was frequently used by prostitutes and drug users; they always would say on occasions like that 'I hope you write this down'. However, these relationships did not come easily before everyone felt comfortable in each other's company. I had met most of the women many times before the informal interactions. They seemed to get used to me writing things down and often asked me to read it back to them which I did.

Sometimes they asked what would be done with everything being gathered, and particularly who would be told about it. These were difficult questions to answer honestly, as Mason (1996) suggests that respondents are usually unfamiliar with the principles and techniques of analysis. However, the women always asked if they were all saying the same things, and if so did that mean that the research would be more valid. They wanted the research to speak for them; as Skeggs (1997)

argues, those with little power and authority to speak can sometimes become empowered by research.

Analysis and writing up

The narrative of the personal life

I have over the last few years read my way through maybe hundreds of studies: the ones that really resonated with me, and the ones that inspired me were the studies that you could almost feel the rapport the researcher had with the respondents:, Bev Skeggs's (1997) work on women in the North West of England was one such research, as well as Diane Reay's (1998) work with mothers in London, and Les Back's (1996) work with young people. These were the types of research that I aspired to. As I read the interaction between researchers and researched, the conversations seemed familiar, even easy, conversations I might have myself with friends. Back's (1996) and Skeggs's (1997) work were ethnographic investigations, where the researchers were as much part of the research as the respondents. Diane Reay's (1998) work, although it was not framed as an ethnography, was drawn from her own experiences of being a working-class woman in the education system; her knowledge of those experiences was as important to the research as the experience of the respondents, as was Back's and Skeggs's. The three researchers had a grounding in working class life, family and experiences, which allowed them to interpret the meanings of the experiences. All three of these

researchers had used methods of a narrative structure to analysis, which I felt was right for this research as my relationship with the women had been central to the research process.

Plummer (1995) has identified the useful development of 'sociology of stories' for research with a focus on the personal narratives of an individual's intimate life. The use of the term 'story' has been adopted by other sociologists (Skeggs 1997; Lawler 2000; Reay 2000, 2003; Byrne 2006) who reflected a narrative approach to sociological research. Lawler (2000) argues that the term 'story' can raise issues around fictional accounts of experience. However, Lawler notes that a proven veracity is not the point to a research interview. A narrative approach considers the ways in which the account is 'storied' and recognises that the story's account does not provide the whole or only possible story. Lawler (2000 p.13) argues that stories can involve only fragments of people's lives, events or episodes that they wish to select, so people can interpret and present any story they wish to tell into a more or less personal narrative, which can be shaped either by the respondent or the researcher. One of the main advantages of narrative analysis or having a narrative structure to analysis is that it enables the researcher to consider how the respondent tells her story, which can be as informative as what she says. This approach complements and counteracts the inherent problems of a fragmentation of data, which can often lead to the form of the interview (the way the story has been told) being overlooked by the researcher in favour of what has actually been

said (the content). This fragmentation of data can be an intrinsic part of more traditional approaches whereby the researcher identifies analytical themes and codes data in accordance with the developing of the conceptual framework. This was a process which I initially undertook by using Nvivo (computer assisted qualitative data analysis software), a software computer program introduced on the MA in research methods. It was suggested that this type of software was designed to facilitate the organisation of coding data. It offers obvious advantages, especially the speed of retrieving coded data, once inputting has taken place. I had transcribed all the interview data myself which was an obvious advantage as it brought me closer to the data and I could note how the interviews changed over the period of time. I attempted to transcribe all interviews within a few days after the interview had taken place. At the same time the interviews were entered into the Nvivo software and were coded. When I began to analyse the data after all the fieldwork had been completed, I used the Nvivo package to draw out themes from the data, which I found worked well to a point. However, what transpired was that the Nvivo package was useful in drawing general themes, for example problems with housing, and discussions around education. However, when I wanted to analyse a key theme which had come out of the literature review, and the interview data, also the 'informal' data I had collected, which was 'finding value', how did the women find value in themselves when they had said clearly they felt extremely undervalued within society? Generally this type of analysis was not sufficient, and a 'narrative framework' was adopted.

Throughout the literature review I found, myself reading in many different terms, issues around 'value', i.e. who can be valued and who cannot, however, throughout the interviews I was told by the women that they felt 'looked down on', and de-valued which was consistent with what I had read. Therefore, I began to look through the interview data and the research diary of ways the women thought they were valued, also their aspirations and goals for the future. I found that, through the interviews, the informal data, and the documents I had collected, and also the observation and community participation I had become involved with, there were ways of understanding and analysing different parts of the same story, which really strengthened themes particularly around value, and identity.

As with any analytical strategy, there are many ways to examine 'stories': the classic approach involves consideration of the whole interview, the 'whole story', and the researcher would generally analyse a small number of stories in detail focusing primarily upon the formal narrative structures. The analysis of narratives can also focus on the social action implied in the text. Coffey and Atkinson (1996 p.172) suggest that this approach requires a 'slightly less systematic and structured approach to analysis', therefore relying on the contextual frameworks. These contextual frameworks may or may not be explicit within the interview, but may explain the meanings within the story. When analysing the data collected as a whole, the interviews, the 'informal meetings', and the networks within the community which were

often discussed separately by the women but also when they met as a group, this type of narrative analysis was used, as stories often changed within different meetings and contexts. The influence to adopt this style of analysis came from other research that was particularly focused upon women (Skeggs 1997; Reay 1998, 2003; Lawler 2000; Walkerdine et al. 2001; Gillies 2007).

Diane Reay (1998) outlines a central theme of this kind of narrative approach to analysis. She suggests that the aim is not to impose definitive interpretations on respondents' accounts or to challenge the meanings that the respondents attach to their stories, but to focus attention on the 'taken for granted cultural processes embedded in the everyday practices of story telling' (Reay 1998 p.25). Skeggs (1997) also argues that, in order to understand the meaning and significance of 'storytelling', a method often used by women in order to 'bond' requires understanding of how it is communicated within or against specific cultural discourses. Skeggs (1997) and Lawler (2000) have also identified how the narrative makes up a respondent's story, and through which people explain their lives are not free floating but are inextricably linked to broader social narratives. Lawler (2000) argues that these can be academic, political and moral public stories told about personal life. These public stories provide an important contextual framework for the understanding of personal accounts, one that is both socially and historically specific.

Narrative analysis is a highly interpretative process and the researcher plays a central role in shaping the written account that emerges from the respondent's stories. The interpretative process starts within the interview process or in this case, interviews, observations, and participation of the researcher within the researched community. However, it is the researcher who has control over the interpretative process that occurs through analysis. This can be a very difficult process for the researcher, especially when there are similarities between researcher and researched because ultimately it is the researcher who interprets what had been said (Skeggs 1997 p.29).

Interpretation and knowledge

I have had a continued battle over the 'interpretative authority' I have had to employ over the hundreds of hours of data I have collected. Skeggs argues that all representations are interpretations, and the interpretative process in feminist research can be ignored in favour of seeking out experience (1997 p.28). Skeggs argues that this is often done to set up experience as the binary opposition to theory, in which logical thinking becomes a non-experience. Skeggs then discusses that this is not a useful way to think about experience; if the argument is that all knowledge comes from experiences, then how do we understand that which we have not experienced? Skeggs argues that we are always constantly interpreting experiences throughout our lives (1997 pp.28-29). This is a key theme within feminist research: that women are

not exploited by the research, or have their valid experiences dismissed or re-interpreted by the research in order to fit within a research discourse which has been shaped by hundreds of years of dealing solely with men's experiences and views. Within this study I have been mindful when interpreting experiences to uncover working class experience and understandings which are often misinterpreted or simply not seen. This is where the methodology and the theoretical underpinnings to this research meet. A theme which runs right through this research is how working class practices within council estates are often misinterpreted, disrespected or are simply invisible. Through careful interpretation of the data collected, interviews, observations, documents, and the mapping of the neighbourhood through the women's relationships with each other and the various services, official and unofficial, it has been possible to show working class council estate life in all its nuanced and complex glory.

Throughout this process I have continually questioned whether the knowledge I have collected from this community in Nottingham would ever have been gleaned if I had not done so, or how would the same experiences have been interpreted by someone else. I have throughout this process argued that the women's voices should be the only voices heard within this research, however, I have been constantly reminded by my supervisors that if this is the case then what was the point in doing the research, a collection of transcripts could have sufficed. Maynard and Purvis (1994) have argued that the individual may not

necessarily be the best interpreter of their own experience. Individuals may not have a full awareness of those systems which constrain them and, as researchers, we have a responsibility to illuminate these systems using their experiences (1994 p.6).

Ethical issues

The research design did not involve direct contact with what are often referred to as 'vulnerable groups' or a particularly sensitive topic.

However, there was never a complacency about ethical issues, not least because the community and the women being represented within the research were also my home and neighbours. The decision to use the actual name of the estate 'St Anns' was taken early on because the name and the neighbourhood are such an important part of the research findings. It is also the name of the estate that the residents live with, and are often stigmatised by, as well as the name of the neighbourhood 'St Anns' being part of an identity that the women on this estate identify with. In the later chapters it will become clear how important the estate is to its residents. By using a fictitious name, for example 'Rivermead' or 'Waterside' as is sometimes used in sociological research, I believe that the essence of the research which I have tried to keep would have been surely lost. In addition I felt that by not using the name 'St Anns' would be to disrespect the neighbourhood. It should not be assumed that there is nothing to be proud of within this estate, as the later chapters will show.

The process of interviews and gathering data for this research needed close relationships with the respondents., I have been careful not to expose the respondents' identities through the transcripts, by changing names and any details which make them recognisable. However, this has not always been possible as at least one of the women had a high profile within the community and the city, and her identity could be discovered. I spoke to her about this and she gave her consent to be represented within this research even though she knew it might be possible for someone to identify her. However, before writing up the thesis, I have visited her and shown her the transcripts and data I plan to use which she has been involved in, and she has looked over them and given consent for their use.

Conclusion

Throughout this research process I have identified specific researchers who have had a great deal of influence in the way I have learned to frame and understand arguments, concepts, and ideas. However, there are other research processes that I have admired, and been drawn towards, raising important methodological issues for all research that is of a sensitive and political nature; this research can be placed within this category. I have given a true account of my background, which was not easy to do; it is unusual for women from my background 'to wash their dirty linen in public', especially to a public which I still feel on the outside of. However, I felt that this was necessary in order to

demonstrate my own personal convictions, but also the methodology regarding this research would have been difficult to explain without it. I feel that I have demonstrated an awareness of how the researcher's position can shape the research and that this occurs throughout the research rather than at any single point within the process.

Chapter 5

St Anns Nottingham: Home or Hell



Introduction

'You are now entering St Anns home for some hell for many'
(Graffiti taken from a wall as you cross over Shelton Street into St Anns)

The primary aim of this chapter is to map the history of the physical space known as 'St Anns', the people who live there, and the social space which they inhabit but also have inherited. This chapter then becomes the bridge from the literature review, and methodology to the neighbourhood and its people. So far, I have discussed how poor neighbourhoods and poor people have become stigmatised as

valueless, wrong, and un-modern; the site of their 'wrongness' has been centred around their culture of lack, and located in the places where they live. Therefore, it is vital within this thesis to contextualise the actions and meanings of those who live in poor neighbourhoods, as without context any social practice becomes awkward and difficult to read. Therefore, it is fundamental to place any neighbourhood, whether upscale or deprived, within a sequence of historical transformation. Within the metropolis it is only possible to understand any 'cross sectional slice' of an urban neighbourhood by knowing the evolution of that social space (Wacquant 2008 p.2).

Pierre Bourdieu, in 'The logic of practice' (1990), and Loic Wacquant's (2008) 'Urban Outcasts' remind us that it is the historical processes of any society that enable us to follow and outline the social predicament and elucidate the collective fate of what Wacquant calls 'the wretched of the city' (2008 p.2). Wacquant (2008) argues that it is the 'generic mechanisms' that produce specific forms of urban marginality, which can be traced through an historical matrix of class, state, and space characterised by any given society through any given epoch. In Chapter 3 I used Bourdieu's symbolic economy and the notion of habitus to argue that it is by exposing the inherited space, practices, and habits of any society that we can begin to understand how power works within that society. Therefore, this chapter mapping the history of St Anns becomes an important foundation for the rest of the thesis.

Within this chapter I should like to orientate the reader within the research field, St Anns, a council estate in Nottingham, but also with its residents. It would be unfair and inaccurate to examine this 'slice' of a city in isolation, risking objectifying the neighbourhood and its residents, which is all too common in research that concerns the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods. By understanding the history of this estate and its residents we can have a greater understanding of how this poor neighbourhood and its residents have over time managed the very difficult circumstances in which they have often found themselves. We can then begin to understand and open up debate about the consequences, and the impact that living within a neighbourhood which has been disadvantaged over an extensive period of time has had upon its current residents. To forget that urban space is a historical and political construction is to risk mistaking disadvantages, deprivations, and stigmas as 'neighbourhood effects', which according to Wacquant is nothing more than 'the spatial retranslation of economic and social differences', another way of socially reconstructing hierarchies within that society (2008 p.9). Nevertheless if we only treat this neighbourhood as an historical construction it downplays the disadvantages that the neighbourhood has suffered, and does not truly show how those disadvantages manifest themselves within the neighbourhood through the residents' practices and their everyday lives.

This chapter shows how St Anns, a neighbourhood housing the poor and the working class, has historically been regarded as little more than

an overflow tank within an urban industrial city which depended upon industrial capitalism. Nevertheless, throughout history the neighbourhood and its residents have shown remarkable resilience shape shifting to the needs of a changing market, changing their practices in order to cope when capitalism takes on different forms (Haylett 2000).

Therefore within the first section of this chapter I will examine the history of the estate, its people, and how they have been positioned and known over time. In the second section of the chapter I will show the estate as it is today, through examining the local community, what services are in place, and how the estate is used and known.

Working-class Nottingham

Nottingham is the largest city situated within the East Midlands of the United Kingdom. It is the seventh wealthiest city in the UK, and is one of the government's current 'driver cities': an attempt to drive some of the wealth and business opportunity northwards out of the south east.

Nottingham and its surrounding county were built upon heavy industry, a past created out of the wealth of coal mining, manufacturing, and engineering. Heavy industry and manufacturing work is embedded in the history of Nottingham, and also the life of the working-class people employed within those industries. The history and the significance of working-class Nottingham can be seen at almost every turn of a corner

throughout the city. The architecture within the city has a very different look and feel to it than the finer, and more nuanced architecture of some of its neighbours in the East Midlands. This is because the city centre of Nottingham was the hub of the manufacturing of lace, clothing and hosiery, and the large substantial factories and mills built predominantly in the 1840s are still within the city, albeit taking on a different role today. The city's Council House, which is situated at the centre of Nottingham, is a large, heavy, solid-looking building with two unyielding stone lions which guard it on the newly re-built square. The Council House in Nottingham is typical of the heavy, large, and looming symbolic structures of the power of local government more typically found in northern cities such as Manchester or Leeds. The power and wealth within the traditional cities of the industrial revolution were generated by the mine, mill and factory owners, who accrued enormous wealth in very short periods of time, and built gregarious structures to celebrate their success. These structures which celebrate the success of early capitalism are noted throughout the City of Nottingham's history and recognised through local walking tours and visitor information guides, but also and more significantly through their protection, by becoming listed buildings. However, the history of Nottingham and the successes that it enjoyed are also the history and the successes of the working class in Nottingham. At the same time they are the stark reminders of the massive wealth inequalities that have always been with us in Nottingham.

The City of Nottingham began to thrive, as tens of thousands of workers poured into the city after the Enclosure Acts 1813-1860, with Nottingham increasing its population from just 20,000, to 200,000 in the 10 years between 1821 and 1831 (Pearson 2007 p.114). This left the city with a dilemma of what to do with their newly-created proletariat workforce. Within the ward of St Mary, which is situated within the Lace Market; the site of many textile factories in Nottingham, there were as many as six families living within two-room dwellings, creating one of the most overpopulated and dangerous slums in the country at the time (Pearson 2007). After several serious outbreaks of cholera in the St Mary's ward, an area to the east of the city known as the 'Clay Field' was used to bury the hundreds who died in the outbreak, but also was taken into the city boundary to house the proletariat workers and their families (Beckett 2006). This area was at the edge of the city and was very close to the Lace Market, and now is known as St Anns, but originally it was called 'New Town' because it was built and thought of as a town within the city. 'New Town', as St Anns was known, had been specifically built for the working poor consisting of very basic workers' cottages, the largest number of public houses in the city, bakers, butchers, a market place, and 'allotments'. The 'allotments' started life as a green space situated between two of the three steep hills in the area. The workers were 'allotted' a slice of land where they could grow their own produce and continue their traditions of the rural life they had left behind. The allotments, as they were named, were the first of their kind in the UK, and have now become a Grade II listed site by English

Heritage. They are still worked on today by the local residents in St Anns, and have become a treasured resource within the estate, and one of the few historical tributes to working-class history in Nottingham.

'New Town' was a thriving area of the City for its new proletariat, the workers would be seen in their thousands leaving the area at dawn to go into the factories, and then returning again at dusk. The 'New Town' proletariat were not physically locked into their place of residence like the Jewish Ghetto in Venice two centuries earlier but, emotionally, they knew that this was their place, a place of safety. Here there were no bosses, no coppers, and they were no longer under the intense scrutiny of the under-managers in the factories (Johns 2002 p.15). The local constabulary in Nottingham did not ever venture into 'New Town', the residents 'policed' themselves through family affiliation and gang membership; therefore, very few 'outsiders' were seen within 'New Town'. 'New Town' had a natural spring on its main thoroughfare going out from the city, the 'St Ann's Well'. This 'Well' was supposed to have healing properties and was well known to local women who drank from it, believing it especially aided fertility. Local women still believe today 'there is something in the water', which explains why there have always been so many children in St Anns.

By 1880, New Town had a new name, 'St Anns', and the main thoroughfare where the well was situated became the St Ann's Well Road, as it stands today.



Figure 1 St Ann's Well, drawn from a photograph (1850)



Figure 2 Location where the well is thought to have been (2009)

Loic Wacquant (2008) discusses the history behind those places where the poor have been situated, and in particular the concept of the 'ghetto', in order to understand disadvantaged neighbourhoods today. He argues that the 'ghetto' is a place where those whose only value is their labour are situated. He also argues that the 'communal ghetto' is sharply bounded to a racial element: usually black workers bounded by a collective consciousness, and a near complete social division; it is

acceptable to leave but only to work, as their labour is needed and vital to the economy of the city (2008 p.46).

Wacquant argues that the 'ghetto' acts like a social condom, a way of allowing intercourse but without ever having to touch 'those who are unclean'; but the 'ghetto' also acts as a screen to balance out some of the negative effects of 'inner city' life, a term Wacquant despises. He argues that the term 'inner city' is a euphemism which really means the place where the poor live. Within the 'ghetto' the stigmatising effects of low pay and poor living conditions and class racism can be offset to some extent through the buffer of community and local culture (Wacquant 2008). New Town in Nottingham, and then when it later became St Anns, was a place where the working poor lived, raised their families, engaged in their own cultural pursuits, and had little interaction except through work with other parts of the city. The labour of the residents within New Town/St Anns was vital to the wealth and the economy of Nottingham.

Nevertheless, I would not go so far as to say that New Town/St Anns was a ghetto within that period of time. However, St Anns as it is known today is often referred to as a 'ghetto'; this is still an inaccurate definition, as there is high unemployment in the neighbourhood, and St Anns has the highest number of incapacity benefit and income support claimants in the city (ONS 2008). Loic Wacquant (2008) might call St Anns today a 'hyperghetto', a place where those whose labour has no

value live, and there is also no buffer against the negative effects of poverty and class racism. The neighbourhood also has no real bind of a racial element, or segregation based on race because St Anns is a neighbourhood with a multi-ethnic population (2008 p.56).

‘Whatever people say I am that’s what I’m not’

Poor neighbourhoods in Nottingham have always been notorious places, associated with danger, crime and sickness, but also resistance, from the Luddite uprisings, and the riots of 1832 in which the iconic and then hated Nottingham Castle was burnt down (Thompson E.P. 1963). However, one of the city’s most famous and iconic anti-heroes came out of the pages of Alan Sillitoe’s (1958) ‘Saturday night and Sunday morning’. During the 1950s many young authors began to note their experiences of working-class life in post-war Britain, and this novel contextualises the recent history of working-class Nottingham. Alan Sillitoe depicts working-class life in one of the poor neighbourhoods in Nottingham in his semi-autobiographical, yet fictional piece of work. Based on his own experiences, it is a relevant account, adding to this historical journey in understanding the poorest neighbourhoods in Nottingham and those who reside within them.

Sillitoe’s anti-hero, Arthur Seaton, was one of the original 1950s working-class angry young men, working in the local factory, drinking and fighting in the local pubs, whilst enjoying the local countryside, a

solace from the endless noise of the factory. Alan Sillitoe captured working-class life in Nottingham in the 1950s with passion but also with a sense of fear, fear of what might happen to these incredibly complex but vulnerable characters. The people of Nottingham in Sillitoe's stories are vulnerable to their environment, but they are also angry: they are seething with anger at their unfair treatment by bosses, the government, their cramped and inadequate homes, and mind-numbing and soul-destroying jobs. Many sociologists (Charlesworth 2000; Walkerdine 2002; Lawler 2003, 2008; Skeggs 2005), especially those few from working-class backgrounds, have complained that the seething anger that they have understood, witnessed and experienced as very much part of working-class life is often omitted or absent from research regarding working-class life. There can be no mistake that in Alan Sillitoe's Nottingham there is seething anger and resentment, which often explodes into physical fights between both men and women, and their anger is very often turned on each other. There is no real sense from Alan Sillitoe that he objectifies his characters, or glorifies the working class's ability to make virtue out of necessity, as other authors have done through condescending misunderstandings of just how difficult working-class life was, and still is. Arthur Seaton, the fictional character in 'Saturday Night and Sunday Morning', is neither a likable character, nor a working class hero (whatever that term may mean). However, there is a complexity about how Arthur Seaton is presented and how this plays out in the relationship between his family, his employment, and the neighbourhood where he lives.

However, the focus within this thesis of women and women's history has traditionally been left out of depictions of working-class life. The women in Sillitoe's depiction of Nottingham in the 1950s are pretty passive, but Sillitoe does briefly, although without any real awareness, show subtle resistances in the way working-class women resist their positions. Arthur Seaton often complains, even 'hates the hard faced, grabbing women of Nottingham', women 'who you can't be nice to ... they wont let you' (p.81). He understands that the 'hard facedness' of the women in his life is the consequence of their hard lives. He hates the sadness and pain in his mother's and Aunt Ada's face and body as they move slowly through an unforgiving life, a life that has never forgiven them or let them forget that they are working-class women; their purpose, 'get a man, keep a man, have broods of kids, and make sure the dinner is alus on t' table' (p.64).

What Alan Sillitoe does in his fictional work of Nottingham is represent life for 1950s' working class in Nottingham from the view of a 1950s' working-class Nottingham lad. He presents a slice of the city's history through a very working-class method: 'story telling'. However, this fictional piece of work is important to this academic thesis: it traces a path of working-class life; it shows what living in poor conditions, working in physically demanding jobs, and having little expectation or opportunity have on communities, families and individuals, to which this thesis also aspires, as this is also a working-class story. bell hooks, constantly argues that fictional stories within working class traditions are

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ways of passing history down. She argues that academics should not ignore fictional work, especially when the authors are writing about their own locations. bell hooks argues that the 'stories', which have been written or told by minority and disadvantaged groups, may be the only record of how life is, or was 'on the inside' (hooks 2000).

Poverty; the forgotten Englishman '1968'

Figure 3 Street scene mid slum clearance

Storytelling has been an important method used by the women in this research to explain and tell their life histories. Many of the women who have been involved in this research have lived on this estate most or all of their lives. Some of the women have family histories attached to this neighbourhood going back generations, and those whose families were not 'original' to St Anns have similar stories of working-class families and life in other neighbourhoods around Nottingham, the Shire, and wider. The histories and stories of past white working-class life were important to all the women I spoke to they told me of grandparents, and

aunties and uncles, working at 'Raleigh bikes', or Players cigarettes. They told of the social clubs they had been part of with their families, holidays in Skegness, the difficulties they had experienced as children, the poverty they remembered, and the hardships they and their families had endured. What happened in their past was always important to their present story. When those stories of past working-class history particularly relating to inequality and poverty are told through families, there is very rarely in-depth evidence of those inequalities, apart from memories, and sometimes photographs that families have held on to. St Anns is an exception.

In 1968 two young researchers from the University of Nottingham boldly announced that 'poverty is back among us', even though Alan Sillitoe had written about poverty in Nottingham a decade earlier. Bill Silburn and Ken Coates (1970) argued that during the 1950s there had been a myth that widespread material poverty had 'been finally and triumphantly overcome' (p.25). Rowntree and Lavers' report in 1950 concluded that poverty in most places had been reduced, and eradicated in the south east and midlands due to full employment and plenty of overtime for men (Rowntree and Lavers cited in Coates and Silburn 1970 p.45). However, there was a small group of persistent people at the time who constantly maintained that there was still a serious problem of material poverty, Peter Townsend being one of the most consistent and vocal. Coates and Silburn (1970) decided to conduct their own study in Nottingham to discover whether Townsend

was right. The research centred upon St Anns. By this time it was an extremely poor and run down area, the residents again living in slum conditions, situated three minutes from the city centre, and housing some 30,000 in the 10,000 two-up two-down back-to-backs which were prevalent all over the City of Nottingham. The St Anns area by 1968 was approximately two miles in radius, with its boundary right on the city centre, as it has always been. Coates and Silburn over a period of five years went around the estate using a questionnaire, and interviewing residents, attempting to uncover the social and economic situation of the people of St Anns. The research also collected statistics and other information on the housing in the area, such as the number of houses which had inside bathrooms and toilets, and also other health-related statistics. They found that only 9% of all the 10,000 houses had an inside bathroom or toilet, and over half of the properties had no hot water system installed, having to heat up water in pans on the stove for washing and bathing. Coates and Silburn reported in their work that many of the houses and yards (a yard being a block of 10 houses situated together and sharing an entrance, and often outside lavatories) had open Victorian drains with waste running through at all times. Rats were in the houses, and disease and dysentery was a problem, especially for young children and the elderly. Infant mortality in St Anns was running at three times the national average, and the research discovered that this figure became worse when they studied the newly arriving West Indian families, who were often living in the worst conditions and suffered the most overcrowding (1970 pp.84-92). The

study also examined educational ability amongst the children in St Anns and found that only half of the seven-year-olds in the neighbourhood could read. The schools were inadequate, having been built in the 1870s and in the same run down state as the housing. The teachers were 'well meaning, but had no sociological understanding of the neighbourhood' (1970 p.134). In the research, published in 1970, Coates and Silburn did not directly address or analyse how the residents thought about themselves or their neighbourhood, rather focusing upon the material consequences of poverty. Nevertheless, there is evidence within the research that the residents at the time had strong opinions of who they were, and how they were thought of.

Coates and Silburn asked their respondents how they thought of themselves in financial terms, and over 70% of the respondents 'did not see themselves as poor', with another 20% describing themselves as 'hard pressed'. Coates and Silburn have recently talked about some of their findings in St Anns at public meetings, and they have said that this was always the most surprising part of the research, that the respondents who took part in the survey either did not want to tell the researchers from the University of Nottingham the full extent of their poverty or, as Coates and Silburn suspected, they simply had no way of comparing their own situation to another. They thought this was the case because the people of St Anns during the 1960s had very little interaction with anyone who lived in different circumstances to themselves (pp.128-135).

However, the study was met with some anger through its publication in the local and national media, and a short documentary was made and shown in 1970 about the neighbourhood and the research featuring Ken Coates and Bill Silburn. After the film was shown and the research had been publicised in the Nottingham Evening Post, some of the residents complained that the research had 'shamed' the community by making them 'look poor'. One engineer who was also a trade unionist at Raleigh Bicycles complained at the time that he was being made fun of by his work colleagues; he recounted his story in Ruth Johns' (2002) book 'Inner City voices':

'I went to my lathe one day just after the poverty survey was in the post (newspaper), and there was half a boot strap on top, when I asked what it was some of my workmates said "its for you poor fuckers as live in St Anns'. (Johns 2002 p.241)

During 2007 the St Anns documentary was shown again at the local arts cinema in Nottingham and then within several of the community centres in St Anns. Ken Coates and Bill Silburn attended the showings and were available for questions afterwards. I went along to the showings and they were well attended by local residents, past and present. All spoke of their hardships within St Anns at the time, but also spoke of the wonderful community spirit they remembered in the 1960s. Many of the residents thanked Coates and Silburn for the research and the documentary. It seems that much of the anger from 1970 had dissipated into a fond nostalgia of the past, and it is always easier on the soul to remember poverty, than to live in it.

By 1970, as 'Poverty; The Forgotten Englishman' was published, the 10,000 houses in St Anns had been earmarked for slum clearance and many of the families were already being moved out to the larger and newly-built sprawling suburban council estates on the outskirts of the city. Similar slum clearance programmes were occurring throughout the UK from Glasgow down to the East End of London. Michael Young and Peter Wilmot (1958) preserved their fears of the future for working-class communities in 'Family and Kinship in East London', sometimes known appropriately as 'Fakinel'. Michael Collins (2004) and Lynsey Hanley (2006) have also recently mapped their own family histories of slum clearance to council estate in Birmingham and South London respectively.

What Coates and Silburn discovered in their original research in 1960s St Anns was that this neighbourhood in Nottingham was part of a bigger picture of what was happening throughout the UK. The poorest people here were not 'work-shy' and in actual fact there was very little unemployment in the neighbourhood, but poor housing and low wages were at the root of the neighbourhood's poverty and disadvantage. The poverty experienced here in St Anns in the 1960s was rarely in the view of those who did not reside in the neighbourhood, as it had always been. Coates and Silburn reported a flagrant ignorance to the hardships that were being endured in St Anns by other neighbourhoods in Nottingham, even those situated in close proximity. Coates and Silburn's work in St Anns was conducted during 1968, a revolutionary

year where there were challenges to the existing social order in many parts of Europe and the world. The research took place at an intersection in history, not only through world events, but also local events. St Anns was about to be demolished, and so was an inner city working-class way of life. St Anns was changing and so was Britain.

‘Gone foreign’: out of the frying pan into the freezer; Jamaica comes to St Anns

St Anns began life as the place where the poorest and usually the most distasteful of the city’s population resided. It was also the place where migrant workers who came looking for jobs in Nottingham would initially settle because of its low rents, and the residents’ reputation for not asking too many questions. At the end of the 19th century there were many migrants from Scotland, Ireland, and Wales coming into Nottingham looking for work in the textile and mining industries, and many settled in St Anns because of its proximity to the Lace Market. After the First World War, Europeans came to St Anns from Poland, Italy, and also Russian Jews. Many opened their own businesses in the neighbourhood and began the burgeoning and exciting trade in ‘out of the ordinary goods’ that St Anns became known for and Coates and Silburn (1970 p.66) wrote about in their research. However, most moved their families out of the neighbourhood as soon as they could afford better housing, and had learned how to mix within more affluent neighbourhoods, yet keeping their businesses in St Anns. There was

another large migration of Irish workers after the Second World War, again settling in St Anns. However, they have stayed and have had an enormous influence within the neighbourhood, setting up Irish social clubs, and contributing to the two Roman Catholic churches on the estate. However, after the Second World War there was a new group of migrants in Nottingham, workers coming from the break up of the British Empire from all over the West Indies. These migrant workers, like others, found the cheapest and most affordable places to settle. They predominantly settled in St Anns, Radford, and The Meadows' areas of Nottingham throughout the 1950s until 1968 when the Immigration Act all but closed entry into the UK for West Indians. In St Anns the first West Indian workers came in the early 1950s increasing each year, and those settling in St Anns were primarily Jamaican men, with women following later. The 'small Island people' (Barbados, Dominica, Trinidad, St Lucia) had settled in The Meadows area of the city. This is said to be a factor in the ongoing rivalries between St Anns and The Meadows.

The Jamaicans brought with them to St Anns their culture, their vibrancy, and their love of music, style and dance, and settled into the neighbourhood. Within a few years of settling, the Jamaicans had set up food stores selling West Indian produce, their own churches, and the illegal and notorious Shebeens (illegal gambling, drinking and dancing parties; later they were known as blues). The black community in St Anns also set up their own West Indian club, the 'WINA' (West Indian National Association), which eventually was renamed ACNA (Afro-

Caribbean National Artistic Centre); this was one of the first to be set up in the UK. In the early days of the 1950s it was a small office above the Co-op food store in St Anns, the only organisation in Nottingham apart from the local Labour party who were willing to give assistance to black people. WINA helped newly-arriving West Indians to find a place to live and work, and gave them appropriate clothing as many only had their light Caribbean clothing, inadequate for Britain at any time of year. Later they acquired premises, where they have over the years and still hold wide-reaching community projects, from Saturday schools for black and mixed-race children, and lunch clubs for the elderly black community. It turns into a night club in the evening where local and Jamaican sound systems play, serving West Indian food and drink, and all of the community in St Anns are welcome.

By the late 1950s and early 1960s the Jamaican community in St Anns became stable as more Jamaican families moved in, rather than out as previous migrant populations had done. There was another wave of Jamaican migrants in the early 1990s as existing and settled families became more affluent and began to send for their relatives, sometimes children they had left behind, or partners they intended to marry after visiting Jamaica. Consequently, today, many of the West Indian families are considered as 'old St Anns' mainly because of the associations that the Jamaicans had with St Anns before slum clearance, and in 2009 St Anns is as much about being Jamaican as it is about the white working class. However, this was not always the case and initially the West

Indian community and the white working class struggled to live side by side.

Was there blood in the Trent?

It was August 1958 and there was a reported disturbance in St Anns at one of the local pubs, 'The St Anns Inn' on the Wells Road. By 1958 there was a substantial community of Jamaican men already living in St Anns, and socialising in the local pubs. There had been some tensions in the neighbourhood about the numbers of single Jamaican men living in the area; there had been fierce competition for jobs and housing between the host community and the newly-arriving West Indians, but also raw competition between the local teddy boys and the Jamaicans for the attention of the local girls.

It was Saturday night, 23rd August, when tensions exploded in the St Anns Inn. Eye witnesses at the time (Archive Nottingham Evening Post August 1958) said that the trouble had started because there were two black men in the pub with white girlfriends, and as they left they were insulted by the teddy boys. It was reported that the argument spilled out onto the street and within an hour there were 1,000 people on the street, fighting, and damaging property.

The Nottingham Evening Post reported: 'The whole place was like a slaughterhouse, and many people were stabbed' (August 1958

archive). There were reports at the time that the white teddy boys from Nottingham, who had been accused of instigating the disturbance, were carrying weapons, bike chains, knives, and machetes, but they were met by the young West Indian men with similar weapons. According to those who lived in St Anns at the time, tensions had been rising for a while because some people in the white community felt outraged that black men were going out with white women. There were also frustrations within the West Indian community because they were struggling to find decent jobs as some Nottingham factories were reluctant to take black employees. Therefore, the tensions and frustrations of the poor living conditions in St Anns, fear of falling down the social ladder even further by becoming unemployed, together with the racism experienced by the black community, and the anger over the distasteful sexual practices of some of the white women on the estate exploded in 1958.

However, that same August Bank Holiday night, events in Notting Hill in London were beginning to overtake the scenes in Nottingham (see Gilroy 2000). Ten years after those initial disturbances, Enoch Powell predicted rivers of blood in the UK as he stated that the majority of migrants did not want to integrate and had their own agenda 'with a view to the exercise of actual domination' (Solomos 2003 p.61). After this disturbance, the local West Indian community in Nottingham began to get involved in the local politics, and backed the campaign for Labour councillors in St Anns, which had traditionally been held by the

Conservatives. The support for the Labour Party by the West Indian community in St Anns has been a key factor for the continuous success of elected Labour councillors representing St Anns since 1970. After the disturbance in St Anns in Nottingham, many of the residents felt that the situation had gone too far and there were enormous efforts by the local community to prevent this in the future. Local community leaders from the West Indian community and the white British community came together to discuss what might be done. The end result was the ACNA (Afro-Caribbean National Artistic Centre), a social club in St Anns where the black community could socialise, and engage in education, and training. Around the same time the SATRA (St Anns tenants and residents association) was set up, to initially fight the demolition of St Anns, even though they were unsuccessful. There has been never blood running through the River Trent in Nottingham and, since the disturbance in 1958, both the West Indian community and the white working class have successfully carved out a community in St Anns.

Figure 4 Local West Indian store



Demolition and concrete: we fade to grey

As 1970 approached, St Anns Victorian back-to-backs came down and the cobbled streets were covered in tarmac; there was a need for cheap mass housing throughout the UK's cities. Modernist interpretations vaguely linked to the works and writings of Le Corbusier's visions of homes and cities began to spring up all over the UK, from the Thamesmead estate and Trellik Tower in London, to Manzoni's concrete modernist dream of Birmingham. Local authorities on tight budgets have since been accused of plagiarising modernist theories (Cross and Keith 1993 p.47) on urban renewal which often failed to understand the essential humanism behind Le Corbusier's plans, and his would-be imitators led modernist architecture to being blamed for the problems of western cities in the 1960s and 1970s. Cross and Keith (1993) argue that, in the 1960s and 1970s, the inner city middle class scurried to the suburbs leaving the poorest whites and ethnic minorities within their new concrete estates. However, in St Anns there had never been an obvious middle class, although all of the small businesses were run by independent and small business men and women often coming from the migrant population and had made the area vibrant and colourful; but they had also been demolished, and after that the small business never returned.

St Anns became one of those loose modernist projects of the 1970s, with its rows of prefabricated grey pebble dash housing. The estate

houses 14,000 people today within a two mile radius, and is still at the edge of the city centre. There are still some of the Victorian terraces mixed in with the grey concrete, sometimes privately owned, sometimes owned by housing associations or the local council; these are all that remains of the old St Anns. The majority of the housing in the neighbourhood is council owned; they are practical and simple blocks of housing constructed by Wimpey for low-income families. The original plan had been the Radburn layout, which separates vehicles and pedestrians.

Even as the houses were going up there were deep concerns by the local people and SATRA about the lack of provision for different groups within the community, particularly the elderly. The local businesses were offered new units on the outskirts of Nottingham, in the newly-developed industrial estates, many of which folded within a few years. Since 1970 millions of pounds have been spent on St Anns through different government initiatives, like the City Challenge programme and urban regeneration, in an attempt to put right the shortcomings of the original redevelopment.



**Figure 5 The old Church of Christ
St Anns 2009**

The estate today sits between two hills with a valley going through it. This main thoroughfare, the St Anns Well Road, runs from one end of the estate into the city centre; effectively it cuts the estate into two. The St Anns Well Road was once a vibrant shopping area containing every shop that the neighbourhood needed and more; it catered for the many different needs of the neighbourhood. Now it is a two mile long soulless busy road leading out of the city for commuters. It is flanked by the low pebble dash houses on the left, and the backs of the multi-levelled flats and maisonettes on the right, all grey and all pebble dashed. Halfway up the road is the new doorless police station: all communication takes place through the intercom at the side of the blacked out windows. The 'Robin Hood Chase' sits to the side of the police station, once a Victorian pathway through a wooded copse, now the local precinct. It houses most of the community projects: Sure Start, the housing office,

the local surgery, a non-profit community laundry and the Post Office. There is also a betting shop, a chip shop, and the Co-op, a British institution which never seems to abandon the most deprived of estates. There is also the community centre: the YIP (youth inclusion project) was housed here during the field work, and during lunch time you could buy West Indian food; I met many of the women here for food and cups of tea. However, the centre has been severely scaled down during 2009 because of lack of funding. The St Anns library is also on the 'Robin Hood Chase' and is extremely valued by the community: it is used for toddlers' story time, ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) classes are held there once a week, and local councillors hold weekly and well-attended surgeries; there is free internet use, and the largest range of Afro-Caribbean literature in the city. The 'Chase', as it is known locally, is usually busy in the day, especially on Tuesday when there is a small market; there are always lots of mums and children passing through, pensioners in the Post Office collecting their money, local men usually standing outside the bookies chatting, and is often used as a meeting place for young people. The 'Chase' precinct is the only real community space but it is well used by locals.

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Figure 6 The Chase precinct

The precinct closes down at night and becomes a very different space. It is the main site for drug dealing, usually heroin and crack cocaine. It is dimly lit, and has a real feeling of fear and insecurity; most residents avoid the area after dark. This space belongs to someone else once the Co-op has closed at 8pm, and if you are around and not recognised you will be asked who you are and why you are there; if you are known business will go on around you, socks will be pulled down and crack scored. All this happens 20 yards away from the state of the art police station and in front of the four centrally-controlled CCTV cameras on each corner of the precinct.

If you move into the estate you realise that the old St Anns with its narrow streets, haphazard layout, and confused, illogical planning has been replaced with exactly the same only in grey concrete: rows and rows of the same pre-built constructed grey concrete pebble dash houses, flats and two-storey maisonettes. The flats and maisonettes are

suspended on footbridges on several levels and reach each other through underpasses and subways, which are very often dark and covered in rubbish and debris. Between each row of houses there are three-feet wide paths running down the back of the small square back yards; local people call them the 'rat runs'. Many of these are ill lit and over the years have been one of the main sources of complaint from the residents.



Figure 7 A gated neighbourhood

Phase 1 of the City Challenge programme in 1992 gated and walled off many of the 'rat runs' in an attempt to stop burglary, muggings, and sexual assaults on women in the area. The gates and walls themselves have become a well-meaning source of aggravation for the neighbourhood; there is no direct access through much of St Anns, and the gates act as a visual reminder that you are entering a neighbourhood which has a need for heavy gates, bars and locks.

Many of the addresses in St Anns do not follow in any logical order, being built in blocks and rows facing each other; therefore, one row of houses can belong to one street and the other block adjoining it to another, even though they are situated together usually around a concrete slabbed area. Many of the residents have complained about the difficulties in getting post and deliveries because of the complex nature of the addresses in the neighbourhood.



One of the reasons why the estate is difficult to access is because of the loose concepts of 'modernism' the planners were toying with at the time. The idea behind this was the 'Radburn layout': community without traffic. Hence, much of the estate is not easy to get to by car, and the public transport does not go into the estate, rather through it. This has also left most properties on the estate without

adequate parking or public transport for the residents. Vehicles are out of sight from their owners and susceptible to car theft and vandalism; there are also parts of St Anns which are completely cut off from any amenities because they are positioned on top of steep hills. Recently, Phase 10 of a five-year regeneration project has been completed, where one section of St Anns has had its housing units literally turned

round so the new fronts face the street; previously these had been the backs of the houses. However, much of St Anns still has this complicated and difficult layout. This has caused problems for deliveries of take away food, milk rounds, and paper rounds; there have been problems with taxis refusing to pick up and drop off in the neighbourhood, either through the fear of crime, or the problems of leaving cabs to find addresses.



Figure 8 The houses turned round

St Anns: a neighbourhood of disadvantage



Within this section I will look at some of the key indicators, which show some of the severe disadvantages within St Anns.

The neighbourhood has some of the most serious disadvantages within Nottingham City but also has been deemed by the Social Exclusion Unit to be one of the 10% most deprived neighbourhoods in the UK (SEU 2003). The key indicators I

shall focus upon within this section are educational attainment, and economic activity.

Educational achievement

Educational achievement has long been considered an indicator which shows the affluence of a neighbourhood but also how a neighbourhood fares generally. The 'Local Government Learning Plan' (2004), which was prepared by the CLES – a local government consulting agency, in order to 'provide strategic responses' to St Anns regarding employment and education used Census data (2001), and locally collected data in 2004, in addition to the LSDA Report 'Widening Participation' in 2003. They discovered within this report that one of the key problems in St Anns was a 'culture of low aspiration and low confidence'. The

neighbourhood, which is primarily the council estate spreading over a two mile radius, is known within local government as area 6, which encompasses 'St Anns and 'The Dales' wards. This report showed that St Anns has a resident population with low educational achievement, with 40% having no qualification; this amounts to 8,078 people in 2004.

Local schools

The estate is served by four Infant and primary schools. They were all built after the slum clearance programme, and the secondary school was opened in 1966; in 2009 it became part of the Nottingham Academy. The Infant and Primary schools in St Anns have been ranked by Ofsted (2008) as 'outstanding' in some areas of their teaching practice and methods, especially in key subjects. The report also acknowledged the work being done at primary level around the children's wellbeing, and the high commitment to inter-cultural teaching. The schools in St Anns were reported to be 'outstanding' in these areas. However, Ofsted also reports and recognises the high levels of deprivation and the social disadvantages that the children on the estate experience. They report that two-thirds of all pupils in the primary schools are eligible for free school meals. This is more than twice the national average, and is a key indicator for showing poverty levels within families. Almost three-quarters of the pupils are from ethnic minorities, either African, Afro-Caribbean, a small number of Asian, and Chinese, and the largest ethnic group are mixed-race. Over a quarter of

the pupils coming from ethnic minority groups do not speak English as their home language. The report notes that almost two-thirds of the pupils have special educational needs or disabilities; this is much higher than the national average. This level of special need varies from 50% of pupils to 90% in different year groups, which the report notes is 'alarmingly high' (Ofsted 2008). Ofsted also reports that the children entering the nursery schools in St Anns have skills and abilities that are well below average, in particular in speech and communication and in their social and emotional development. Nevertheless, when the pupils in St Anns are tested at year 7 by the National SATS (Standard Assessment Tests), the results show that 80% of the children in primary school in St Anns do test at level 4 or above in key subjects, in comparison to children schooled within West Bridgford, the wealthiest neighbourhood in Nottingham where 98% of children score at level 4 or above. This shows that the children in St Anns, despite their disadvantages, when entering nursery school have begun to make headway within their educational abilities. However, by the age of 12, when they are tested at their senior schools only 54% of St Anns children score at level 4 or above compared to 89% of pupils attending a similar size comprehensive school in West Bridgford. The picture continues to deteriorate by the age of 16 when only 7% of pupils at the local comprehensive school in St Anns achieve five or more 'good GCSEs' compared to 68% in West Bridgford.

The Ofsted report in 2008 also discovered that there were at least 50 languages identified at Elliot Durham High School, the local comprehensive. Ofsted noted that there had only been 29 different languages identified two years previously and over that two-year period there had been a marked increase in immigration into the neighbourhood, particularly coming from Eastern Europe, Somalia, and the Middle East.

The Ofsted report clearly shows that the children enter the nursery schools in St Anns already disadvantaged through poverty, lack of communication, and social skills. However, by the age of seven there are real improvements and many of the children in this neighbourhood are making up considerable ground in their educational attainment despite being surrounded by the social disadvantages within the neighbourhood. However, the SATS results show that these improvements diminish over the years and the disparity between the children living in wealthier neighbourhoods in Nottingham and those living in St Anns by the age of 16 is enormous.

Economic activity

The neighbourhood also has the highest number of people not employed within the city. This includes the 1,278 people claiming job seekers' allowance, with a total of only 42% of the neighbourhood's residents in any kind of employment, 15% of those unemployed being

over 50, 10% never having worked, and 40% being the long-term unemployed. Recent figures (LGLP 2008) also noted that St Anns has the highest Incapacity Benefit claimants with 19% of the St Anns' population claiming. The report, which was drafted by Nottingham City Council as the Local Government Learning Plan (2008), also examined the ethnic composition of unemployment particularly for young people aged 16-24, and there are large variations between the different ethnic groups, with mixed-race and Afro Caribbean faring badly.

However, the most recent figures for 2009 show that there are still economic differences between different ethnic groups in St Anns. It seems that the 'mixed white and Black Caribbean' group in the neighbourhood fares worst regarding employment, with an increase of 15.6% of this group being unemployed (Nomad 2009).

This appears to be a contradiction, as Trevor Phillips, the leader of the CRE at the time, stated that mixed-race Britons are the fastest rising minority group, and have a better rate of employment than other ethnic groups. However, the MORI poll that Phillips quoted also showed that 'mixed race Britons also exhibit the highest rates of lone parenthood and family breakdown, in some cases three times the average' (Phillips 2006). The later chapters will shed light on these figures, and begin to highlight some of the problems that the residents experience within their families.

Local services

There are two youth clubs on the estate. One is the Sycamore Centre run by a community voluntary organisation; they have a volunteers shop in the day, training, and educational adult advisors, and also small business advisors. The other is a local authority-run youth club, which has a music studio. The YIP (youth inclusion programme) was run from The Robin Hood Chase community centre, until the centre was severely scaled back because the project lost its funding in 2009. Similarly, 'The Flower Girls' course was also held there, teaching flower arranging, and there was a community non-profit-making florist on the Wells Road where the 'Flower Girls' could volunteer and gain work experience; unfortunately these services have also gone from the community.

Service providers tend to bid to provide services in the local neighbourhood and then come into the neighbourhood setting up various projects. The emphasis is on the services being delivered within the estate: education for young people and adults, training, and also volunteering. The focus has appeared to be over the last 10 years to bring services to the community rather than encouraging the people of St Anns to seek support on the outside of the estate. There has always been a significant focus around 'volunteering' and there are many projects set up within the neighbourhood encouraging residents to volunteer, usually within the neighbourhood itself. The opportunities to volunteer are focused upon youth and community work, befriending,

working in the café in the community centre, working on the St Anns allotments, and being part of the 'Flower Girls'. The emphasis is around 'work experience' which, according to the agencies involved, may lead to 'paid work'.

The emphasis upon paid work within the neighbourhood is hardly surprising, as St Anns has been identified by the local authority as 'a high pocket of unemployment' even though unemployment rates have fallen within the city in recent years. Research which was undertaken by the local authority to inform the City Strategy found that 'worklessness' is highly concentrated within the inner City of Nottingham. This type of strategy is in line with the concept of 'workfare' rather than welfare: initially a gentle push in the direction of voluntary work usually ending with more substantial encouragement into low-paid, sub-standard jobs in the service industry, and off of state benefits.

Stannz, Stannzville and SV



The very words 'St Anns' has the ability to invoke many thoughts and feelings by the people of Nottingham, from those who call St Anns home, and those who believe it is hell. According to records as far back as 1880, the neighbourhood of St Anns has always had a reputation for crime and 'villainy'. There were also reports of gang membership and family association linked to specific forms of violent crime at the end of the 19th century. Prostitution has been associated with the neighbourhood for many generations as Nottingham's red light district is on the edge of St Ann's, and in addition it was also the neighbourhood that most of the city's 'poor' and migrant populations have settled, adding further stigma through the fear and development of the 'other'.

Therefore, the neighbourhood's reputation has always preceded it and the words 'St Anns' today conjure up strong thoughts and feelings amongst Nottingham residents in a way that no other neighbourhood

has the power to do. Recently St Anns has been linked again, usually through the moral panic of media representation, as an area ridden with crime, drugs, gangs and guns, following the high profile murders of several teenagers on the estate: Brendan Lawrence aged 16 in February 2002, and the widely publicised murder of 14-year-old Danielle Beccan in October 2004; both were victims of 'drive by shootings'. Like so many estates and poor neighbourhoods in the UK, there have also been many incidents of stabbings, and shootings linked to gang involvement between rivals from St Anns, known as 'Stannz', Stanzville or SV, The Meadows 'waterfront', and Radford 'Raddy'. It is not unusual as you walk around St Anns to see unofficial memorials set up around the estate in the forms of flowers, scarves, teddy bears, and graffiti for the many dead children and young people who have lived and died on the estate. This has led to an attack by the media on the City of Nottingham and in particular the St Ann's area through headlines such as 'Shottingham' and 'Assassination City' (The Sun October 22nd 2004). The BBC's Newsnight programme in 2003, even before the Danielle Beccan murder, labelled St Anns a 'sink estate' and one of the 'most violent estates in the UK' after showing footage from a home security CCTV camera sent to them by a resident of a gun battle outside his home (BBCNewsnight 2003).

Conclusion

At the beginning

within this edge

how over time

triangular relat

urban capital

rather than people. We can see how this process as a social and cultural



Figure 9 Unofficial memorials

The extreme moral panic over St Anns and Nottingham peaked in 2004-2005, and since then there has been less high profile incidents in the city. The media has moved on since and has focused its attention on the constant reporting of the gang-related violence and youth crime in other areas of the UK. Even though there are still shootings and stabbings in Nottingham related to 'estatism', those incidents mainly go unreported as they are localised within the specific neighbourhoods of St Anns, The Meadows, and Radford.



Figure 10 The murder of Danielle Beccan which have

passed through it, creating a neighbourhood that is disadvantaged in

Conclusion

At the beginning of this chapter I set out to show the incredible history within this stigmatised urban space in Nottingham. I wanted to explain how over time the neighbourhood and its people had suffered from the triangular relationship of the state, social positioning, and the flux of an urban capitalist environment, which focuses upon the needs of capital rather than people. We can see how Nottingham as a small insignificant city in early capitalism benefited enormously from the labour, culture and achievements of the working-class people who live within its boundary. By mapping out the history and culture of those whose toil and hardship allowed the city to grow and become prosperous, we can acknowledge the incredible strength, vitality and the will to survive that the poorest residents of this city have within their history. There are many ways of mapping a city's history and achievements: Nottingham is full of 'walking tours' around the Castle and the Lace Market, where we can wonder at 19th century industrialism, and 21st century 'City Life'. However, very rarely is a city's history mapped through the everyday lives of those who have gone unacknowledged for generations, and are still barely acknowledged today, and then only through reports showing their 'lack of' everything from education, employment, culture, and morality. What this chapter has attempted to do is to orientate, allowing the reader to understand this neighbourhood as it stands today, but also the interwoven experiences of the many different lives which have passed through it, creating a neighbourhood that is disadvantaged in

many respects, but also has advantages of the long history of migration, the sharing of cultures, and some of the most interesting and kind-spirited people you could ever meet. As you sit waiting to see a doctor in the local health centre for a minimum of two hours every appointment because of the incredible lack of resources, where there are patients from all over the globe barely speaking English and struggling with the NHS system, often jamming up the appointment system, every day an old Jamaican man comes in and sings a round of old Jamaican Ska songs to entertain the patients as they wait. He gets a round of applause, and leaves, always to return the next day.



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Chapter 6

Dimensions of Exclusion, Stigma and Poverty

Figure 11: The Robin Hood Chase

Introduction

So far within this thesis I have argued that the concept of social exclusion tells us little of the lived experiences of those who are known by the term ‘the socially excluded’. The term itself has been used to critique and criticise the culture within poor neighbourhoods and poor people, I have argued that they are known as lacking in everything needed to be a person of value, un-modern, and simply wrong (Haylett 2000, 2001, Skeggs 1997, 2004, Lawler 2008, 2005).

This chapter, the first of four which focuses upon the women’s lives, and the estate they live on begins to ask how this social space, St

Anns, is understood by its residents, and also analyses the relationship the women have with the estate. It is important to understand how the people who live on this estate come to know it, whilst recognising and creating a community within it, consequently finding a place, and a home for themselves and their family. The women on this estate have a powerful connection to where they live, and this informs how they think about themselves, but also how they understand their social positions, and how they think 'others' know them.

The residents who live on this estate identify strongly with the neighbourhood, and 'being St Anns' is extremely important to this community in ways that are contradictory and difficult to comprehend. It is important to examine why such a stigmatised and deprived neighbourhood means so much, and is valued so highly by the people who live within it.

This chapter particularly focuses upon the stigma that is associated with the neighbourhood, how it is viewed and known throughout wider Nottingham, and also how those who live in St Anns have been stigmatised by association, they describe this as 'being looked down on'. The women have an acute awareness of how they are known and represented in Nottingham and beyond, and this chapter focuses upon those representations, in particular an association of 'being rough and ready'. This term has been used by many of the women in explaining how they think 'others' see them, 'rough' meaning violent, aggressive, and dirty, whilst 'ready' means sexually available.

Throughout the chapter the women talk about their lives, and describe how they think they are excluded, looked down on, and demeaned. They discuss these dimensions of exclusion in the way they feel disrespected, but also how they think the neighbourhood is disrespected. This often gives rise to feelings of fear, hostility and anger towards those they believe 'look down on them', but also towards themselves through their powerlessness in trying to change the situations which hurt them.

Towards the end of this chapter I shall discuss the issues around mobility; the difficulties that sections of the neighbourhood have in moving in and out of the estate, but also the difficulties which arise from having real emotional attachment to a place, therefore not only belonging to St Anns but 'being St Anns'.

The concrete jungle

When you spend as much time on this particular council estate as the women who live on it do, it can be easy to miss or diminish some of the real and everyday problems within the estate caused by the original planning and building during the 1970's. This is because you learn to cut through the estate weaving in and out of the alleys, across slabbed and concrete squares in order to reach your destination as quickly as possible rarely taking the time to look what is around you. You often accept the things that are not possible within this context because it has always been so, or has been for as long as you remember. In particular I am thinking about getting a taxi to pick you up from your own address,

or take you home into St Anns after a night out, or have a pizza delivery to your home, or even being able to see your car from where you live. These are the types of things that most people take for granted about the place or community in which they live. The opposite can be said to be true here, what happens here is you take for granted the things that you are not able to do, there is a grudging acceptance that after a certain time in the evening you cannot get a taxi to pick you up, or have a pizza delivery. This grudging acceptance of all the things that you cannot do because of the physical restrictions upon you by the way the estate has been planned and built was generally acknowledged throughout the community and consequently became a topic of conversation throughout the interviews. The physical restriction and the obvious disadvantages which come from living on poor council estates seems to be an appropriate place to start in examining and opening up debate about the particular disadvantages the women I spoke to experienced within this community.

If we are to discuss how and why some groups are disadvantaged in our society, simple things like having a pizza delivery appear to be unimportant and insignificant. However it is this type of small issue that has a big impact on a community, especially when it seems that everyone else can have this service but you.

All of the women I spoke to complained about not being able to have the things that others have:

'Yeah its hard to get deliveries down this part because they have to get out and then they cant find your house, they tried to charge me once cos they couldn't find the house...since the milkman got battered its hard to get anything to come down here'.

'I know they will deliver to the students on the bottom of Wells Road I've seen em'.

As the transcripts above show the women who live in St Anns know that the neighbourhood has become restricted from receiving various services because of the notoriety of the community, and also because of the high levels of crime. However the name St Anns and what that means locally also puts restrictions upon this community, nevertheless they are acutely aware that others who share part of their living space, (the students) are seen and treated differently.

During this research I was out canvassing for the local council elections with a group of women I had met, they were all residents of St Anns and were helping their friend campaign as local councillor. We were targeting specific addresses in order to deliver leaflets and talk to residents. This is not easy in St Anns. In fact sometimes it was near impossible, the houses are built in such a way that there are blocks of 4-6 houses in a row, there are usually 4 rows of houses facing each other rather than facing the road, with a 3ft wide alley (the rat runs) at the back of each row, where another set of houses backs on. The estate appears to be a large two mile in radius concrete maze. Many of the rows of houses do not have the same address; one row can belong

to one street address, another row to another. Almost everything on the estate is grey concrete, and there is little access for cars once you get within the estate. As we walked and talked our way around the estate we found that there were real difficulties in just moving physically through the estate, especially if you had a pushchair, because of the many barriers, gates, walls, and blocks of concrete in the pavement attempting to stop mini mopeds, and scooters. Many of the residents we spoke to complained about the difficulties in getting post and deliveries because of the complex nature of the addresses in the neighbourhood, one of the women as we walked and talked suggested that the architects 'must have been on crack', we all agreed whilst laughing at the idea of an architect sat in his office smoking crack and designing council estates for us to live on, it seemed as rational a response as any other to the irrationality of the neighbourhood layout. It was these conversations that I had with the women on the estate that often made the research process uneasy for me, I wrote in my research diary at the time:

'As we laughed and talked about crack addicted architects on the pipe, I was thinking is this an average and normal conversation, do other people laugh about the crack pipe - and talk about serious drug use and addiction to the point where many of us often forget it is both illegal and anti-social'. (Taken from my research diary dated 29th April 07)

There were many conversations about drugs, prison, prostitution and varying levels of crime that we offhandedly spoke about, laughed at, and gossiped about. It was only when I was alone with my own thoughts and the research diary that I reflected upon those

conversations, often in comparison to the very different conversations that I overheard, and sometimes joined in with at the university. It was at those moments that I felt extreme despair at how we in St Anns normalised our own and others social problems, took the blame for them, and blamed others, whilst laughing at some of the ridiculous situations we were often faced with.

When the estate was built In the 1970s the problems that the residents faced because of the difficult layout were thought to be teething problems, and the residents would become used to the 'modern design' within time. Many of the women I spoke to who had lived in St Anns as it was built, they talked of their mother's pride about their 'posh homes' and the sense of worth they had in this new and modern community, new schools, new shops, new library, new Co-op. The women who remember this time, remember an exciting and modern community moving into the 1970s and out of the poverty and squalor of the two-up-two-down terraces. However over time the estate began to lose its grey concrete shiny newness, and with the 1980's came dark nights, and dark times, rising crime, and the damp and brittle walls returned to the new houses as they had in the old terraces. The estate and its residents were not equipped for the deep 1980's recession that ripped through the East Midlands, with the loss of the manufacturing industries, and the coal mining. The young and first generation of black Britons, that Paul Gilroy (2000) writes about in 'There ain't no black in the union jack' were equally unprepared for the deep and institutionalised racism that was inherent within the fabric of British

whole place down. This would have been unthinkable and disrupting social structures, and became all the more vicious within the 1980's for the community because of the attachment to the estate and the economic recession (Gilroy 2000). The neighbourhood had high unemployment, particularly amongst the young people on the estate and became susceptible to crime, the narrow and ill lit alleyways, and its complicated street plans only added to the problems. In the early 1990's the local council countered this by blocking off the walkways, and setting heavy gates, and high walls so it would be more difficult for those who wanted to burgle homes to have access to the backs of the houses, they also cut off many of the alleys with high metal railings because of the increase in street robberies and sexual attacks on women.



Figure 12 One of the many underpasses

The residents I met and indeed my own perception of the estate as a resident was that although the estate was difficult to live on and move around, it seems that the blocks of concrete, metal railings, gates and locks were necessary evils, otherwise the other option was to knock the

whole place down. This would have been unthinkable and devastating for the community because of the attachment the residents have to the estate, which will become apparent over the following chapters.

I met two sisters 'Della' and 'Julie', they had lived on the estate from being children, and now in their thirties they both rented their homes from the council. 'Della' had 5 children and 'Julie' had 2 children both identified themselves as 'single mums'. They told me of an incident in which the milkman had been beaten up quite badly and robbed early one morning amid the maze of St Anns:

'and cos of that now we cant get delivery people down here cos we've had pizza people battered down here as well'..

'Julie' and 'Della' were really angry about the situation, and also 'felt sorry' for the milkman, as well as the old people on the estate. They acknowledged that it was the old people who used the milkman and would miss the service now that it had been stopped because of the incident. Being unable to have a milk delivery again may seem unimportant to some, but to 'Julie', and 'Della' it was an example of something that they had been restricted because of their postcode, but also because of the poor design of the estate, and the association that the estate has to violent crime. They believed that the estate's physical appearance and structure 'bred crime', as they argued the 'rat runs' are dark and narrow therefore making the estate an easy target for anyone wanting to commit crime, particularly relating to drug use and dealing. This subject was always a complicated subject for all of the women I

spoke to, most were extremely angry and worried regarding the amount of drug dealing and drug using on the estate, which they felt was exacerbated by the ill lit and narrow walkways. However and at the same time there was also a kind of acceptance that it was here on the estate, another part of the fabric of the estate, and many of the women had involvements weak and strong to the drug economy in St Anns, because of friends, family members, neighbours, and sometimes their own involvement. The 'drug economy' within the estate is a theme that this research will return to throughout the following chapters as it was a constant issue for the women, and the neighbourhood reaching into many aspects of their lives, and became a major factor within their everyday practices in and around the estate.

Drug dealing on the estate can be openly seen and witnessed by anyone walking through the neighbourhood. As we walked through the estate canvassing for the election we saw drug users hanging around the rat runs waiting for a taxi to pull up and dealers getting out whilst the taxi was waiting at the end of the rat run. You can see the 'shotters' (young drug runners) waiting on their allocated spots usually outside corner shops for their regular customers. It seems that with every corner shop on the estate which predominantly sells lottery tickets, electric cards, alcohol and cigarettes with very little else on the shelves inside the store, on the outside of the store you can buy heroin, cannabis, and crack cocaine from the local 'shotter'. At the back of the derelict pubs which were once the heart and soul of the estate there are now old mattresses and bits of furniture that the drug users employ

when 'shooting up' (injecting heroin). There are also several houses on the estate which are known to be 'crack houses'. A 'crack house' is someone's home that they either rent or in some cases have bought from the council, and the occupier either allows drug using and dealing to occur within the property or more likely the occupier uses and deals drugs themselves, and allows others to use their home for the same purpose. Throughout the research process the problems caused by the drug economy in St Anns were always prevalent either through complaints about the problems the drug economy was causing, the lack of care and attention that the authorities gave to those problems, and sometimes the women's own involvement loose and strong in the drug economy in St Anns.

Picking up litter

During the summer of 2007 I became involved with another group of women on the estate who were trying to get a local park cleaned up, so it would be safe for the children to play on but also so the women on the estate could use it with their children, or to walk their dogs. The park was the only real green space on the estate, as the few children's play areas dotted around within the rows of houses are also grey, gravelled and concrete. During the 1960's and 1970's the park had tennis courts and a bowling green, the scout hut was also on the site. Over the last 15 years it had fallen into disrepair and the full time park keepers were made redundant towards the end of the 1980's, and the boy scouts hut had been abandoned at about the same time. Like many of the

abandoned spaces on the estate it was now used by drug users, and prostitutes. Over that summer several tents had appeared and the park was becoming a place for the homeless to live. The park backs on to a popular youth club and community centre, and some of the young people who attended the youth club in the evenings engaged in a game they called 'brick the cat'. A 'cat' is a term that the local young people use to identify crack users, and often when drug users came to the park to score (buy drugs) some of the young people from the youth club would throw stones and bricks at them. Therefore the park became an extremely unsafe place in the evenings because of the kerb crawlers and 'punters' which the drug users and prostitutes attracted, but also for the drug users as the local children and young people regularly threw stones and bricks at them.

The group of local women who had come together to campaign for the park to be cleaned up and re-launched as a place for children and families were unhappy about the lack of safe areas for children to play in the neighbourhood. 'Rona' a single mother of four daughters told me she thought that the neighbourhood itself had quite a lot for her daughters to do, they went to the youth clubs, and the community centres, but she told me:

'there is quite a lot for kids to do in the area but the only thing that the kids are missing out on today is good old fashioned parks'.

Most of the mothers on this estate had told me the same thing that the youth clubs and organised centres for children and young people on the

estate were well established and well attended, but there was a lack of 'safe' green spaces for their children and themselves. 'Karen', and 'Anne' were young single mums in their twenties and they both lived in 'Karen's' home on the estate. 'Anne' had fallen out with some of her neighbours so had moved into her friend 'Karen's' house with her son, and 'Karen's' two sons. They were both anxious about letting their children out on the street to play:

Anne *'yeah the other day he [son] wanted to go on park to play football so I said right I'll come down with you and I went but I didn't tek (take) me fags with me or anything and I was gagging I sat there as long as I could and I said come on then and he said 'one more game please' and I couldn't say no could I cos all the other kids were there and he was the only one being watched.. I felt away when I had to take him and I thought well you know if the estate was different you could leave him but you can't risk it but I did feel quite sorry for him'.*

Karen *'well I'm worried that the kids laugh at him [son] cos he has to go in and then he gets bullied more but I worry about someone taking him but he is sensible but I worry that he might follow the bigger boys and then get lost and not know his way back'.*

'Karen' and 'Anne' had both joined the group of women trying to clean up the park, there was about ten women in total, they met at the local community centre with the neighbourhood liaison officer who was employed by the city council. Two or three 'cleaning up' sessions were organised throughout the school summer holidays in 2007, many families and children joined in with the council 'Street Scene Team' and eventually at the end of August a fun day was organised on the park. There was a sound system playing reggae and dancehall music, face painting, a football tournament, and food stalls. The event was well

attended and lots of children and young people came along to take part in the events. However very soon after the event the park was again abandoned by the city council and became the favourite spot for the drug users, and 'brick the cat' was again established as an unofficial past time for the young people at the youth club. There was another effort in the summer of 2008 to clean up the park but this time the clean up operation and getting residents interested and committed to the project failed.

The residents in St Anns remembered how this park was once well kept, with tennis courts, bowling greens, and park keepers, the recent attempts to clean it up amounted to 'picking up litter', cutting the abandoned grassy areas, and asking residents to raise money for the fun day. The park in St Anns is a good example of how inadequate, unsuitable, and crime ridden spaces within inner city neighbourhoods are crucial when analysing the social in social exclusion. The park itself has been subject to abandonment by the local authorities, a lack of care in its upkeep. The Nottingham City council attempted for two years to engage the community in restoring the park; however this seemed to be a short term commitment, and also a token operation.

There is another dimension to this type of spatial exclusion within inner cities, and that is the presumed availability to all regarding the services and facilities that large modern cities in the UK have at their disposal. It might appear that those who live in St Anns because of the close proximity to the city centre might have reasonable access to social and

cultural products a large city like Nottingham has to offer. However access, location, and exclusion are often misinterpreted within poor inner city neighbourhoods, as opposed to the large council estates at the fringes of the City where social exclusion is seen to be actual and physical exclusions of their residents (Power 1997, 2007, Hanley 2007). When in fact the women and their families in St Anns spend much of their time within the estate, and all of their time with friends, family, and neighbours on the estate, and are equally as excluded from the services, and leisure activities of the city centre, as those living on the outer city council estates. This makes what happens to and within the estate extremely important, as Bourdieu (1984) argues the daily and local issues and problems within a poor neighbourhood are felt sharply by those within them, impacting on what they do, how they think, and shapes how they see the world and themselves (Bourdieu 1984 p.170).

Therefore it is very common on this estate, and not unusual at all that the women are involved in community projects, either voluntarily, unofficially, and very rarely officially and paid. I argued earlier that many of the initiatives set up in order to deal with the problems in St Anns have been largely centred on skills, and training in order to prepare the residents for employment, change local neighbourhood practices, and improve parenting skills. What I have shown so far within this chapter, and in fact will continue to show that there are groups of women in St Anns who are working, sometimes part- time and more often voluntarily within the community on community projects. Unfortunately many of these projects are ill thought out, very short term, with no real

commitment to them; therefore the apathy shown by the local authorities is often matched by the apathy of the local residents in response.

My description of the living space 'St Anns' is not unusual, there are many 1970's built council housing estates up and down the UK which have come to be viewed as oppressive by the many that have been allocated housing on them through the thoughtlessness and poor design of the estates rather than the population living within them (see Hanley 2007, Collins 2004, Pacione 1997). Even though the women accept and know that there are incidents on the estate which make life harder for all residents, there are residents who try to make their living space better for themselves and their families. Nevertheless as one resident told me 'living in St Anns is like living at the bottom of a mountain you are always waiting for the next avalanche', therefore for many of the residents the difficulties they encounter are often absorbed into daily life and become part of what it means to live in St Anns.

Rough and Ready:

The women understood and accepted that their neighbourhood had been associated with crime and poverty for generations, some of the older women had known about the Coates and Silburn poverty study in the 1960's, and they often discussed how this association is particularly stigmatising for the St Anns residents. The women I spoke to were especially aware of the media representation of the estate, and how badly the estate was thought of in wider Nottingham. I spoke to 'Mandy'

a life long resident of St Anns; she had lived on the estate as a child with her family, and resided in St Anns now as mother to her own children. Over the last five years there had been a particular association with gun crime to the City of Nottingham. This representation was yet another issue the women had to face on a daily basis, their neighbourhood being represented as 'lawless', and unruly, as 'Mandy' told me:

Mandy *'it's like people looking in I mean it's when you've heard it on the telly about the gun crime and everything I mean my friend she actually made a complaint the other year cos she went to a pantomime at the Nottingham Ice Stadium and one of the people in the pantomime he turned round and said 'oh I don't want to go into St Anns cos we'll get shot' and they brought that into the pantomime and my friend actually made a complaint about it'*

Lisa *'so they actually made a joke and other local people in the audience could laugh at it'*

Mandy *'yeah but for us that's not funny'.*

As 'Mandy' said this is not funny for her, her whole family lives on the estate, she is raising her three children on the estate, and she told me she has known some of the young people and their families who have been victims of gun and knife crime. Therefore for her and for many of the women I spoke to when jokes and nasty comments were made about the estate it was often a painful and humiliating experience. When I visited 'Shirley', a mother of three adult children, who had lived in St Anns her whole life, her 18 year old daughter 'Rachel' joined in the discussion especially when we began to talk about how the estate was viewed:

Rachel *'well if you're St Anns everyone thinks you're like scary and people say to me 'where you from' and I say St Anns and people are like (gasp) and I'm like it's not that bad, they think everyone round here is gangsters it's only people who are not from here who think it'.*

Shirley *'yeah I remember once was it last year I was up city hospital cos I was visiting a friend of mine who was terminally ill and I said ay yer (are you) gonna give us a lift and there was this other guy who was with another friend said oh 'whereabouts do you live' and I said St Anns and he said you never are, are you giving her a lift down there? Will you be alright and I said 'yeah he'll be alright with me I'm a gangsteress' the small mindedness of some people it really gets to me'.*

These accounts of how 'others' had often spoken of St Anns in derogatory ways was common throughout the interviews. All of the women I spoke to had similar experiences when they often felt they had to justify why they lived in St Anns. Other women felt that they often had to defend why they lived in St Anns as 'Rachel' said 'it's not that bad'. However all of the women I spoke to said that when you say you were from St Anns it always provoked some kind of reaction, and it was never a positive one.

Initially when I met my respondents and started to explain the research and what I was interested in, most of the women wanted to talk about the neighbourhood, especially how it was being represented, but also how they as residents, and women had been represented. 'Louise', like many of the women I spoke to had been raised on the estate, her family had been given a house immediately after the slum clearance programme in St Anns. 'Louise's' family had been one of the Irish families which came to St Anns in the 1950's, and they were extremely

proud of their 'new' house when the council handed the keys over in 1970. 'Louise' told me how her mum had thought that they were 'posh' in the brand new house, and tried to keep it immaculate in spite of having 5 kids. The whole family still lived in St Anns within a few streets of each other, but they did not feel so posh and proud of the estate now. As 'Louise' told me:

'When you tell people where you come from yeah you feel like you know that they class you like rough and ready'.

'Louise' told me that not only were you 'rough' because of the notoriety of the estate; you were also 'ready'.

'You're an embarrassment'

Received a letter just the other day, Don't seem they wanna know you no more,
They've laid it down given you their score, Within the first two lines it bluntly read.
You're not to come and see us no more, Keep away from our door, Don't come 'round here no more
What on earth did you do that for?
How can you show your face, When you're a disgrace to the human race?
No commitment, you're an embarrassment, Yes, an embarrassment, a living endorsement,
(Barson/Thompson 1980)

'Being ready' meant that women from St Anns were often represented as 'slags', having little value apart from their sexuality. Many of the women in St Anns talked to me about how they were often viewed as women who were 'easy', 'they think we have no morals'. This overt sexualised reading of the women in St Anns is as Skeggs (1997) has argued, working class women both black and white have been coded as

sexually deviant against the definition of how 'femininity' or a type of middle class femininity has been defined (1997 p.99). This became especially true for the women who took part in this research as they understood their sexualised position, through being working class women, council estate women, and also through their association with black men. All of the women with adult sons and daughters spoke about being thought of as 'slags or prostitutes' because they had mixed-race children. Even the younger women brought up this subject, as one young mum who was 21 told me she thought others, those who did not live in St Anns saw her as 'tainted' because of her mixed-race children. 'Shirley' whose eldest daughter was 30 explained that when she first started dating black guys in the 1970's many of the women on the estate had warned her that 'no white man will touch you now'. 'Louise' who had said that people thought she 'was rough and ready' also told me that when she had become pregnant with her daughter now 23, her father had been particularly upset because she was the second of his daughters who had come home with a mixed-race baby. This was especially hard for him because he thought that he would be a 'laughing stock' amongst other white Irish men because of the perceived promiscuity of his daughters. There has been an ongoing debate regarding how white working class women when linked to poverty have been objectified and sexualised (Walkerdine 1990; Finch 1991; Lawler 2000; Skeggs 1997, 2004). There are also well argued debates from hooks (1991), Frankenberg (1997) and Reynolds (2000) about the sexualised exoticism of black women. However there is very little

academic understanding of how the white women in this research are often demeaned and disrespected not just because they are white and poor women living on council estates but also because they have had sexual relationships with black men. However those women whose children were now adults remembered the 'looks', and the 'comments' which came from within the estate during the 1970's and early in the 1980's. When I met 'Claire' now 31; she described herself as a 'lifer' on St Anns, she recounted a very early memory coming home from junior school with her best friend a black boy the same age:

'My first black friend was one of my closest friends at junior school we were only about nine and he used to walk me home from school and we walked up the close and my mum was at the back door she could see us walking up and she shouted me and as we walked up she opened the gate and let the dog out to bite my friend and it bit his leg and then his mum came up and I remember the beating I got for being a black mans lover and you know ... 'you little prostitute what do you wanna go with them for you're not having them as friends' I was nine but me and my friend was tight and we were good friends and still to this day we are friends we'll talk about what happened and I still feel sad for her behaviour to him'.

This type of abuse that 'Claire' had endured by her mother was regular and common within her family life. She had lived with this type of abuse from her mother until she left home when she was 13 to live with 'Shirley' and her children on the next street. 'Shirley' had taken her in and looked after her as one of her own children until 'Claire' was 18 and the council gave her a flat on the estate. I found out this practice was not uncommon on the estate amongst the older women, many of the women I spoke to had been taken in by other families, or had taken other children into their homes. However for 'Claire' the abuse from her mother never stopped even whilst she lived with 'Shirley', her mother

continued to call her a slag, and prostitute because she was living with 'Shirley' whose children were mixed-race, and the abuse continued when 'Claire' had her own daughter who is also mixed-race.

Many of the older women I met told me that there had been a close association particularly throughout the 1970's and 1980's with white women who had black partners and prostitution, especially when those women lived on the St Anns estate. This appeared to be a common and stigmatising association, I met 'Gaynor' who had moved to St Anns in the early 1980's from one of the mining towns in Nottinghamshire so she could be with her 'baby daddy', now her husband. 'Gaynor' told me that the rumour in her home town was that she had 'gone to be a prostitute in Nottingham', she told me that even her own family had believed it, when in actual fact the first job she had secured when arriving in St Anns in 1981 was a dinner lady at the local school.

In Chapter 3 I argued that the poor white working class have been subject to a 'racialising' of their position from white to 'dirty white' (Haylett 2001 p.355) and for the women in this research their social positions have been racialised because of their poor white working class position, but also because they are mothers to non-white children, which has both simultaneously sexualised and racialised their position. The complexities of these contemporary social positions for the white working class are difficult to unravel, but are important, if not central to the women's understanding and indeed their process of how they

identify themselves. There are two issues here, first the association of black men being 'sexual monsters' (Dines G. 2002 pp.445-455), and secondly and equally an overt feminised version of white women in comparison (Weigman 1993 pp.173-193). However this feminised version of the white woman is not freely available to the women in St Anns. Skeggs (1997) argues that femininity is a cultural resource which belongs to the middle class, and poor white working class women are not able to use it as a resource in gaining respectability, hence they are positioned as the un-respectable. Also, the women I spoke to told me that they were often thought of even by their own families as an 'embarrassment', and it has been the sexual association of white women with black men which has often been at the root of local disharmony in the past (Chapter 4 p.125).

The white working class women on this estate know that they are thought of as 'rough and ready', they understand this through what is known, and thought about them, the way they act, where they live and who they share their beds with adds to this stigmatisation. The arguments raised by Chris Haylett (2001 p.359) and Bev Skeggs (1997, 2004 pp.99-101) that the poor white working class have become through their culture and practices an embarrassment of both their colour and their class, and have become 'abject and white' is particularly important regarding the women who live on this estate. Especially for those who have mixed-race children, for them their

cultural practices, and sexual practices are exposed through what they do, where they live, how they look, and within their children's faces.

Even though all of the women I spoke to said that this type of association of white women being 'slags' and, or 'prostitutes' no longer happens within the estate, or rather from the residents of the estate, I have come across many examples of those who do not live on the estate and still hold those stigmatising and racist understandings around inter racial relationships, and the stigmatising association of being white and working-class and a woman.

During the process of recruitment in the early stages of this research I was waiting in one of the primary schools in St Anns to meet the Head-teacher, my own son had attended this school. The school secretary was chatting to me while I waited and asked me what I was doing and where I had come from. I had told her that I knew the Head- teacher and my own son had attended this school previously and that I was studying at the University researching white mums with mixed-race children. The school secretary said she was happy that I was doing this research and 'it was about time someone did something about this problem', which she said 'was becoming worse'. Initially I was unsure as to what the 'problem' was, I then understood that the problem was the increasing amount of mixed- race children who had white mothers attending school. The secretary went on to tell me that the children were emotionally unbalanced, and felt that this could lead to medical

problems, as the same 'black men' were impregnating different white women, and interbreeding was the natural conclusion. This was only one of those situations where I heard first hand what others thought about my community and without their knowledge, my friends, family and me.

All of the women had said that this common 'Nottingham knowledge' which positions the women from St Anns as 'rough and ready' still exists on the outside of the estate, and they were regularly subject to the view that they are both rough and ready. This was often given as the reason why some of the women had moved into St Anns, but also why they have stayed there. Their mixed-race children and interracial relationships are 'normal' and accepted within the St Anns estate, and they are not made to feel that they have 'done something wrong' at least from those who live there. 'Gina' was 21 when I met her and she had two young sons, she had moved into St Anns because of the racism she had experienced whilst living in another part of Nottingham, but also because of how she as a white woman who had a black boyfriend had been treated by the neighbours:

'I was having a lot of racism letters through my door saying you wog lover... this that and the other... don't bring these black kids round here, I was having all that and then I got my windows smashed by some racist people'.

'Gina' had been grateful for the house in St Anns because of the amount of women in the neighbourhood 'like her', and because of the amount of mixed race children on the estate. She recognised her stigmatised position on the outside of the estate which she understood

had worsened when she became a St Anns resident. However she knew on the inside of the estate that being a young single mum whose children were mixed-race was not perceived in the same way 'by the rest of St Anns'.

For the white women on this estate being thought of as 'rough and ready' and a 'slag' may reveal a racist assumption that white women can only be attracted to black men because they are sexually promiscuous, often immoral, and deficient in some way. However for black women, it has been argued (Frankenberg 1993 p.94) that a relationship with a white man can be read as a desire to 'trade up', a cultural resource which can be positively traded; the assumption being that mixing is driven by a desire, perhaps, for 'class mobility' or white privilege (1993 pp.90-93), or as Walkerdine et al (2001) argue this might account as part of the process of 'remaking yourself' through the use of personal relationships.

However because the women here are choosing working class black men as their partners, it might seem that they have no desire to become socially mobile, no ambition to transcend their situation, or have different definitions of mobility, transcendence and self-transformation. Their social positions at least on the outside of the estate are diminished by their non-white children, they become extremely visible, and in some parts of the UK they have become a short hand marker of how Britain's underclass looks.

Being St Anns

Then, it is hardly surprising that the neighbourhood itself was particularly valuable to its residents given the stigma that they experience from those on the outside of the estate. 'Being St Anns' meant a great deal to the women, and was very important to them, 'being St Anns', or 'when you're St Anns' were phrases that many of the residents used about themselves and their families, 'we are typical St Anns' was another common description. Some of the women I had spoken to had moved out of St Anns at various times to other estates around the city but all had moved back because as 'Shirley' told me:

'I had total withdrawal symptoms and felt like a fish out of water so I come back to St Anns'.

When I asked 'Shirley' what makes St Anns, St Anns she told me it was about people:

'it is a really nice community even though it has got a lot of bad press over the last few years but again there's all different pots of the community the old folks you know the next generation up the old Brendas and the old Bills you know who have watched you grow up and then there's people my age you know who I've seen grow up some of them might be drug dealers some are the local alcoholics or whatever but there's all different pots of the community but faces are more important than places'.

The women did have some pride in aspects of their community in spite of the problems they faced, and they spoke about the neighbourhood fondly and with some gratitude especially in the context of how 'others' represented them. Even when the women on this estate discussed the negative aspects of the neighbourhood of which there are many, they recounted the examples of 'badness' in a context which may be difficult

for many to understand. The neighbourhood regardless of its problems represented, home, community and contradictory their place of safety.

Throughout the interviews I often asked the women, what they knew of social exclusion and then whether they thought of themselves in this way, few of the women had heard of social exclusion as a concept. However when I talked to the women about social exclusion and explained that St Anns was considered a socially excluded neighbourhood and they themselves were also considered to be socially excluded. Some of the women thought this was quite funny and laughed at the idea that they had been classified in such a way. When I asked 'Gina' a 21 year old single mum, and her friend 'Zena' a 29 year old single mum if they had heard of social exclusion, neither of them had and did not think the concept really applied to them or rather not from within their community:

Gina *'really...no I'm not excluded I don't think I am.....but certain people who you talk to do I suppose exclude you a bit.....yer know like when you ring up the council and I'm talking to them and because I'm on benefitswell I don't think about myself as poor but I suppose I am poor but it's people who judge me'.*

Zena *'well I'm not socially excluded but people do look at me in a certain way..... with a certain idea in their mind like I'm a chav with loads of gold do you mean that'.*

However all of the women thought that they were being excluded in the way they felt 'looked down on', and they thought that exclusion was a process which happened to them by 'others', in a similar way to how their children were often excluded from school. They often felt that this exclusionary process was something they had no control of as 'Zena'

said to me she had no control over what was in someone else's mind when they saw her. Some of the women in the research understood exclusion through material goods, things they could not afford which they understood made them different to the rest of society, not being able to afford a new carpet when they needed it, or being aware that 'others' could. 'Gina' told me that she did not really think of herself as 'poor' or 'excluded' however she knew that others did. 'Gina' only recognised herself as excluded and or poor whenever she came into contact with any of the benefit agencies. 'Gina' felt that these 'labels' had been placed upon her and she was judged because of them. She said that every time she gave her address to any of the officials she came into contact with there was often a silence as they mentally processed her single parent status, the ethnicity of her children, and then her address in St Anns:

'I know what they're thinking you can see it ticking over in their brain as you wait for them to think 'oh its one of them from there'.

When I met 'Lorraine' who had agreed to speak to me only after she had found out who I was related to, and spoke to other women about me 'to see if I was really one of them and could be trusted'. This was important to 'Lorraine' because she had only recently ended a prison sentence of two and half years and was trying to rebuild her life with only two of her five children being returned to her from local authority care. 'Lorraine' now in her early thirties, had lived in St Anns since being a baby when her mother came over from Ireland in the 1970's, we spoke about social exclusion because she had 'picked up' its meaning from the various social workers, health visitors, and solicitors she had

been in contact with. 'Lorraine' had a particular understanding of what exclusion meant for her although she had an idea of the official meaning because she told me her barrister had used the definition in her mitigation at court. 'Lorraine' was a single mum with five children; two of her children were still in foster care in a well known middle class neighbourhood in another part of Nottingham. She had visited this affluent neighbourhood in order to see her children, and when I asked her about exclusion she understood how she had been 'excluded' from having things that others had access to and this included her own children:

Lorraine *'well you know it's the people from west Bridgford and that whose got a bit of money and bit better stuff in their house and they can afford to buy a bit better... that shouldn't be nothing anyway it shouldn't matter where people live and how much money they've got we should all be equal, but living here in St Anns, I know that's not how it is'.*

'Lorraine' also knew that by having 'a bit of money' and living in 'a respectable' neighbourhood not only allowed you to have 'a bit better stuff' but also enabled you to be free from stigma, and inequality.

'Lorraine' understood the perceived differences between St Anns and its residents, and other more affluent neighbourhoods and the people who live in them. She had gained this awareness through social services, and social workers involved in her family, who told her that her two children were 'safer' in this more affluent neighbourhood with their 'white foster parents' in this all white neighbourhood, which 'Lorraine' objected to:

'the people who've got my children now who don't know nothing about black people the social worker said the other day that they are sending someone down there to teach em about dual heritage kids and I was like hold on I'm here perfectly good to look after my kids why are you paying someone to go down there and teach them about dual heritage let them look after the white kids and send mine home cos mine don't belong down there'.

'Lorraine' felt that she was being 'excluded' from society by those 'who looked down' on her and judged her because of her situation. She also argued that her children in foster care were being excluded from who they were, and where they belonged which was mixed-race children from St Anns. I am not asserting here that the social workers are wrong, and that 'Lorraine' is right; after all I am not a social worker on this case. The point is to show that 'belonging' is important for 'Lorraine', she feels 'looked down on' and excluded by those who she comes into contact with from outside of the estate, therefore belonging to the estate mattered all the more. Many of the women talked about 'being St Anns', St Anns can mean both place, and people, to those inside, as it does to those on the outside. This is the spatial element of exclusion, who can belong to society and who are 'the imperfect people' a class positioning of those who live on the margins of society, and can be identified by the rest of the population (Sibley 1994 p.69). However these negative identifications also have meaning to those they are aimed at. It seems that once the 'excluded' are recognised and identified through their physical space where they live, and the symbolic social space, in this case the excluded space is gendered, racialised, and sexualised both spaces are subject to the symbolic violence that Nancy Fraser and Pierre Bourdieu argues are rooted in social patterns of representation,

interpretation, and communication (Bourdieu 1977; Fraser 2000).

'Lorraine' and 'Gina' explains what 'social exclusion' feels like for them as they experience it. What they tell us is being 'poor' is an aspect, being disrespected, and 'looked down on' are felt sharply, as is the removal of personal power and control.

Badness and fuckery, fear and hostility

One of the criticisms that has been levelled at studies looking at poor working class neighbourhoods and in particular council estates is that they are often sanitised, this might be because the author very rarely wants to engage with the fear and anger, the hostility and the violence which can be part of working class life (Charlesworth 2000, Reay 2001, and Skeggs 2004). For many researchers and authors it might be the case that they do not want to risk further stigmatising the research neighbourhood. This is especially true of those researchers who come from working class backgrounds. There are those who research poor neighbourhoods, who are not from working class backgrounds and often the extreme anger and frustration that is such a part of working class life rarely shows itself to those who do not understand it, or even fear it. Often those who live in poor neighbourhoods know what to say when they are asked about their lives from middle class researchers, they know they must be the 'deserving poor', they are aware of the differences of the deserving and the undeserving, they know these differences are clear cut and without complication to those who do not live with such disadvantages.

It has been noted by Reay (2000), and Skeggs (2004), that when researching poor neighbourhoods and poor people there is often a thin line the researcher must walk in representing the neighbourhood accurately whilst trying to avoid a tabloid approach to the problems that are often unearthed. I have also walked this thin line and I am aware that I have been privileged by the fact that the women I spoke to on this estate did not represent themselves as 'the deserving poor', and wear the mask of the absolute victim (Lawler 2008 p.103). They were often angry, disappointed, frustrated, and depressed, sometimes struggling openly and desperately with the problems they encountered. Within this section of the chapter I want to show how angry and frustrated the women here in St Anns often felt about many aspects of their lives, but also how this anger and frustration often manifested itself through the women's thoughts and their practices, but always stayed within the estate.

The women in St Anns, as I have reported often spoke of how those within wider Nottingham judged this neighbourhood, however they also knew that they were often judged for other aspects of their lives, their single parent status, welfare dependency and being white mothers to mixed race children. The women often said they felt 'that everything was always against them', and there was a general hostility aimed at them. In particular whenever they read newspaper articles about council estates, single mothers, or television programmes about 'benefit scroungers', and especially whenever politicians talked about a new

policy getting people off benefits. The women I met took this personally, they said that it felt like they were under attack and were extremely angry about how they felt misrepresented and misunderstood.

The two sisters I met 'Della' and 'Julie' were without a doubt two of the angriest women I have probably ever met. When I first met them in 'Della's' home it was an uncomfortable and difficult experience because of the anger and overwhelming despair of their situation, I wrote in my research diary afterwards:

'Julie was really angry for the whole three and half hours I spent with her today, I felt that she was angry at me, at least she aimed her anger at me, her sister just kept saying "why is it so hard, why is it so hard" I didn't know what to say, I just feel depressed'. (Taken from research diary March 1st 2007).

When I arrived at Della's house her front window had been boarded up, and although I arrived at 11am in the morning there were already a gang of young men hanging around outside her home. 'Della' told me they were 'shotters' (young drug runners) and outside her house was 'their spot'. When I entered 'Della's' living room it was dark because of the boarded window, and apart from the light coming from the television there was no other light. Both 'Della' and 'Julie' are single parents, and both claim income support and housing benefit as did many of the women on the estate but 'Della' and 'Julie' had an acute awareness of the condemnation that wider society has of women in their situation.

'Julie' was particularly angry about how the Government had, as she said 'abandoned certain people':

'I think the Government just let us live in a bad situation knowing we'll deal with it and live with it how we need to... who are they to condemn our lives they wouldn't even live with us they wouldn't even live a day in our lives.... do you know what I've got enough just taking on my one making sure that he's [son] safe without having to kick the government up the backside to mek [make] them do what should be done anyway as long as I can look after my one I can't be bothered about anyone else I have to look after me myself and mine and that's it'.

'Julie' told me that life was 'hard enough' for her and she found it difficult to think about making long term plans, she had to live day by day and see what happens, which she said made her frustrated and angry at almost everything. 'Julie's' sister 'Della' was also angry and frustrated, but she explained that she often felt powerless and disabled:

'there's no incentive, they want all these one parent families to come off benefits but they don't make it easy to do it they don't know the circumstances that you're in... it might be alright for one person to go to work but for another it's not it's not feasible for me to go to work I'd be killing myself to get to work getting someone to look after the kids I will have to be up till midnight trying to cook meals for everyone. Who will make sure that my house runs properly when I am at work I'd end up killing myself for what £10 or £20 extra a week ...I worked until I had my second to last child I worked from when I left school I had a Saturday job and they took me on when I left school but I've always had a job even three jobs cleaning and working behind bars just crap jobs basically but I worked and I was proud of the fact that I still worked but I was in a relationship where he was a lazy wanker he wouldn't get up and do anything so I had to rely on my kids to look after each other when I was at work he weren't in or he was in bed so I had to make sure that all the meals were cooked before and after I went to work and I only had three kids then.... so for me to go to work now it would kill me it is hard it is hard to make something of yourself when you've had kids at a young age... and I didn't... if I had known I wouldn't have made the mistakes.... you would listen to your parents you would know that they were bringing you up properly and you wouldn't fail in life but life it isn't that simple is it?'.

As 'Della' talked about the problems she encountered, she was extremely angry about her situation, not just because the difficulties she might have trying to work with five children as a single mum, she knew very well that by working she would lose her state benefits and only marginally be better off, but also because it seemed to her that no one else could see this. 'Della's' frustration was also with herself as she said 'I wouldn't listen', she also considered herself as a 'failure in life' because of the problems she encountered, this was not an unusual response from the women I met. 'Lorraine' who had recently been released from prison, acknowledged that her situation was as she said 'dire', she was really struggling in the house she lived in. She explained that the council had given her the house she had previously lived in before she spent time in prison; this had been difficult for her and her children as she had been arrested and remanded straight to prison from the house in front of her children, and they had been taken by social workers into care. All of 'Lorraine's' belongings, she later found out, had been put in a skip outside and as she explained to me, on her release from prison she noticed that some of her neighbours had her furniture and carpets in their homes.

I asked 'Lorraine' whether she was angry about the way the council had treated her she said that 'she couldn't be bothered thinking about it anymore'. The housing department and social services wanted to help 'Lorraine' secure a tenancy and get the children out of foster care however they explained that 'limited resources' had given them no option but to offer her this particular house as 'Lorraine' did not want to

move to a different estate, which her social worker 'felt she was being unreasonable'. Nevertheless 'Lorraine' described herself as someone who 'wouldn't listen', and blamed herself for the problems she had encountered, she told me as a young person she had been more interested in 'getting into 'badness and fuckery'.

When we talked about education she told me by the age of 15, like most of the women, she had, had enough:

'I dint get a good education but I went a different way in life and left when I was 15....and no but that was only my own fault that wasn't the school not educating me I was in foster care and kept running away.'

Despite 'Lorraine's' difficult childhood, she had been placed in foster care herself after her own mother left and went back to Ireland, she felt that the problems in her life were of her own making, as she said she should have listened to the adults around her 'rather than keep running away'.

Other women I spoke to also had taken full responsibility for the problems that they were now experiencing, they described this as 'not trying', or 'its my fault', or 'I didn't care' many of these statements came about from reflecting upon their school days or when they were younger before they had children.

'Ella' was in her mid forties when I met her, and she had three grown up daughters, she also cared for her brother who had severe learning difficulties. 'Ella' felt that she was in another difficult period of her life, and one which she felt very frightened about. 'Ella' had her children

when she was a teenager and apart from cleaning jobs she had not worked for a very long time, she was frightened of the future and did not know what would happen to her. 'Ella's' brother was about to go and live in a secure nursing unit, and as she said to me she was 'really frightened' because she had never really learned how to read and write and properly:

'I suppose they [teachers] wont really bothered about me but there again I don't know how much attention I put in and I think in my third year I started bunking off so I suppose in the last two years of my school I weren't really there and on one of my reports they said I wasn't there so they couldn't say anything... I had to take my brother to school I must have had to have some kind of explanation why I had to be late everyday but all I got on my report was hmm... was lateness, lateness, lateness, so hmm... so probably cos my friends were bunking off I followed suit I just followed probably on the last year of school I probably went there a few times and that was it'.

When 'Ella' left school it was 1979 and despite hardly being able to read and write she went to work in an embroidery factory in the Lace Market but did not 'really get on with it', she said she kept catching herself in the machinery. After that she went to work at Woolworths, and then she had her first daughter when she was 18, followed by two more within a few years. Even though 'Ella' had been through many 'tough times', living in homeless hostels with her children, struggling with money when they were young, she said that she was really afraid now because she knew she had to go back to work:

'well I suppose I'll go back to work but my job will have to be a basic job wont it just to earn money it wont be a good wage but hopefully enough... I'm not sure if I will be alright I'll have to be wont I? it does bother me because I wont be able to help the kids out I'd like to help them out if I can but as long as I've got [partners name] I'll be fine, he will help me out... if I could stick education I would go back but I don't think I will be able'.

'Ella' was not unusual as many of the women I spoke to thought that their lives were now 'pretty much set in stone'. Therefore for many of the women in this study the irredeemable 'mistakes' were made as children or young adults, and they have taken responsibility for them into their adult lives. These are the same people who are often accused of not taking responsibility for themselves and their children.

Fear mixed with anger, and self blame, were common responses by the women in this community when they discussed their lives, they often had regrets about their education, wishing as 'Ella' had told me 'that someone had said something' about her not attending school. However as adult women and mothers they often felt overwhelmed by their circumstances, and frustrated that life for them seemed so difficult.

During this period of the research, I found myself reflecting upon my own life. I have similar experiences to the women, I too have been homeless and afraid, done too much too young and I am not exempt from the fear and anger which often consumes council estates. At this point I found it extremely difficult to go into the university, my own anger, and feelings of helplessness were often made worse by the optimism, and opportunities and excitement for the future that many of the students at the university epitomized.

The feelings of fear and anger that are ever present within this council estate are often complex and they are difficult feelings for the women to try and unravel. There is often acute fear around the competition for the limited resources on the estate, whether they are social and physical

resources like housing and state benefits or symbolic resources such as value and respect. This can be difficult for the women to articulate, they have told me that the competition within the neighbourhood for resources such as healthcare, social security benefits, and social housing has given rise to hostility between different groups on the estate, particularly newly arrived migrants.

The women in St Anns have an acute awareness of how accusations are played with of 'white working class racism' when communities have complained about the pressure upon local services when migrants have been moved into the neighbourhood (Dench et al. 2006 pp.182-183). This has been particularly difficult for the women in this community to articulate because of their awareness and understandings of migration and racism because of their mixed- race children, and their inter-racial relationships. St Anns has a long history with migration, and migration is still a feature of St Anns today as there are new migrants moving into the neighbourhood from Eastern Europe, Africa, and the Middle East. When I spoke to 'Julie' and 'Della' they discussed their frustrations about the added pressure to the neighbourhood they felt was coming from migrants moving into the community, they saw this as a policy decision coming from above, and something else they had no control over, 'another part of the avalanche'. They also believed that St Anns was particularly and unfairly under pressure as migrants were never moved into more affluent areas within Nottingham, however this did not mean they had no sympathies with what they described as 'asylum seekers':

Julie *'we've got all the asylum seekers in St Anns look how many problems we've had in St Anns now we've got to integrate with them as well..... they have put all them asylum seekers here and I haven't got nothing against none of them believe me give them a roof if they need one but why cant they have one in Ruddington as well as putting them in here with us we've got our own way of living and now we have to try and adapt to them or them to us... hows that work then cos where they come from they come from a more fuckery place than this I understand what they have probably gone through but it's just more pressure'*

Della *'I look at it different still..... they just the same as us they've been flinged here amongst all this lot imagine how they feel 'we've left where we was and now we've come to this' St Anns where they see people getting shot they thought they was coming out of it how do you win'.*

Julie *'I know some of them have come from good jobs in their own countries and come here for-what- to- what they're not really gonna get accepted you know they're gonna get the most amount of shit... and nothing ever changes for us so do you know what I'll just go with the flow of it now I'll talk to you all day cos nothings really gonna change is it we all know this'*

Della *'we have to make the best of it'*

Julie *'make the best of a bad situation'.*

Again here the dominant discourse of how exclusion is understood for those who live within St Anns is about feeling powerless, having no say, and being disrespected. The women who live in St Anns argue that their community is used as a 'dumping ground', 'a scrap yard for people', and a place where 'they' put people who 'they' do not know what to do with. Both 'Della' and 'Julie' question whether the problems they see within their community are replicated within other areas of the city especially those areas that they understand as wealthy.

These feelings of insecurity about territory, status and power where material rewards are unevenly distributed and are continually shifting,

leaves people with the feeling that they are constantly on insecure ground, which encourages boundary erection (Dench et al. 2006 pp.182-183, Sibley 1995 pp.68-69). These insecure feelings often manifested themselves through anger, and distrust of anyone who the women felt might profit from the difficult situations that they encounter. This sometimes meant that there was real hostility between groups within the neighbourhoods, but also there was hostility towards those neighbourhoods which the women believed were kept free of problems at the expense of St Anns.

'Lorraine' was particularly unhappy because she thought that St Anns had been targeted by the council to put the 'foreigners':

'when I was a kid you seen blacks whites and probably the odd paki Pakistani and now you're seeing Kosovans, Polish, Africans every nationalities that you think of I think this is where they stick em cos it's such a shit hole they're mixing us up and causing all sorts of problems [laughing]... nobody should be discriminated against cos of the colour of their skin I don't think but when it comes to foreigners and things like that and sticking em all in with us blocking em in all one area and I'm thingy about it..... well I'm not being nasty or nothing but I mean I see Iraqis and I see how they look at the kids do you know what I mean watching em following em down the road....they have asked me for business nuff (many) times on my way to the co-op and I've got a thing about that you know what I mean'.

As 'Lorraine' said she was unhappy that every day on her way to the Co-op in the precinct she was asked by a group of men she referred to as 'Iraqis' 'for business' meaning was she selling sex. 'Lorraine' was not sure whether these men thought she was a prostitute, or whether they ask all women for business, nevertheless she felt angry and disrespected by these incidences. However other women I spoke to in

the neighbourhood were having similar experiences particularly on their way to the precinct, one woman told me that she and a group of women had joined together and 'battered' (physically attacked) 'one of the Iraqi asylum seekers' for asking to buy sex from one of the women's 15 year old daughters. When I spoke to this woman about the incident, she said 'why should we be the only ones having to put up with this'. The women understood this as 'the council' disrespecting their neighbourhood by putting people on to it without thinking about the impact it might have, but they also had an awareness that there are other neighbourhoods in Nottingham who did not have this level of incoming new migrants. Although the women vented their anger about the 'new people' coming and living on the estate, they were very careful to say that it was not because they were foreign, and it was not racism, for them it was about being disrespected, their neighbourhood being disrespected, and the fear and insecurity brought about by the inequalities they witnessed within Nottingham.

These hurt and angry feelings that the women have within the neighbourhood were not only vented towards 'asylum seekers', or migrants. They told me it was about a general disregard and disrespect of their neighbourhood by 'them', 'them' could mean the local government, all politicians, wealthy people, and all people who did not live on council estates. 'Them' or 'they', often meant people who were 'supposed' to help like the police, and the people who are paid to work within the community but do not live there are especially resented.

The amount of drug use and drug dealing on the estate was the issue that was constantly raised by the women and one of the issues that the women were extremely frustrated and angry about. When I spoke to 'Claire' who had described herself as a 'lifer', she described the normality of what for many, might seem a severe crime and a frightening scenario:

Claire *'the drugs... it's like the piper has come but it's a crack pipe and the kids are either selling it or using it but probably they are using the crack to keep the badness away maybe to support themselves to face the misery and deprivation that we have to live with you see kids dealing as bright as day in front of me and where are the police? Just humble me can say that I have seen 4 crack deals go on.....what are the people doing who are being paid to stop this there's' something not right here they could have dealt with this years ago ...yet they tell us they're there for us but where are they? Maybe someone like me a 'lifer' here in St Anns maybe I should get a job in the police force I know what they're doing get people who lived it and want it stopped in our streets not kids from West Bridgford who have decided to be a police officer and then... horrified when they see four black guys standing there they are frightened'.*

'Louise' told me that there were too many 'druggies' on the estate and this was the reason why there was so much crime. she also raised the issue that again St Anns was 'excluded' from the rest of Nottingham, seen as and treated differently, and because of this she felt disrespected by the rest of Nottingham:

Louise *'I love it when people turn round to me and say oh there's crime everywhere crime in West Bridgeford I think yeah its small compared to what we have here its minute and I think yeah come and live here then.. I've seen my car smashed up I've seen incidents on the street where I've had to have the police in to come like fights on the street.. police are always round here with helicopters'.*

However 'Louise' who had lived in St Anns all of her life with her family, and thought she was often viewed as 'rough and ready' did have another take on the situation when I asked her who the 'druggies' were:

'No they aren't originals they are people who have come from out of town or are homeless they aren't the originals I know quite a few lads at the bottom of the street and they're ok but I think it's the outsiders coming in and bringing the badness with them'.

'Louise' knew some of the 'shotters' (drug dealers) at the bottom of her street they had gone to school with her daughter and she thought that they 'were alright', she knew they were drug dealing but felt that it was not they who were causing the 'badness', as they were always respectful of her and her daughter. The residents within St Anns know and understand their estate, and are aware of the problems within it, what they do keep coming back to is how they are viewed and treated by 'others' and this treatment is constantly perpetuated and condoned because they are viewed as somehow different, deficient, or as 'Louise' said 'rough and ready'.

It seems that 'being St Anns' can work as a defence mechanism, to fend off those who 'look down on St Anns', therefore being an 'original', or 'a lifer' gives a person a certain amount of credibility, and respect at least within the neighbourhood. The people who live in this neighbourhood, but are viewed as 'outsiders' and are not 'St Anns' like the 'Iraqi's', and the 'druggies', who behave, and act, and look different from 'St Anns' are not easily tolerated within the neighbourhood, and are often subject to aggression and violence by those who live on the

estate and are classed 'as St Anns'. The women have also said that they advertise just how far St Anns has fallen down the social ladder, as 'Lorraine' said 'they put them here cos it's such a shit hole'.

Knowing you are 'looked down on', and your problems are misunderstood, or not recognised, feeling powerless, or being thought of as a 'slag', or 'prostitute' and as the women told me 'even the Iraqis think we're up for it'. Knowing that your home where you and your children live is constantly disrespected undoubtedly causes hurt and angry feelings, insecurities, and real pain as the women here have demonstrated.

They know that the social differences and inequalities they experience are observable, they are reflexive of their lives, and they imagine themselves belonging to St Anns, allowing them to know their problems from those understandings but also informing the things they do and how they react to those problems. They also recognise these qualities in others which forms their notion of who 'we are', 'what makes us St Anns' and also separates them and excludes them from 'others'. Who they are, is the product of those divisions as well as the space that reproduces those social divisions through power, and mobility. Their experiences, and their process of identifying who they are and who they are not, allows us to consider how language, ideas, and practices, in addition to power relations and resources shape how a group self identifies, and identifies as a group, but also how they understand their

place in the world, where they belong, and where and from whom they are not welcome (Urry 2007, Sibley 1995, Bourdieu 1977).

Moving out, and staying in StannzVille

Understanding your place in the world, where you belong, and in particular where you are not welcome are issues that the people here in St Anns know very well. Social exclusion, and class disadvantage also includes a debate about 'space' those who cannot or do not want to 'move' up or out.

The women who are part of this study state that mobility is an issue for them; they tell us time and again that they have to put up with that from which others can move. They discussed this with me in many ways, their feelings of being 'trapped' in stigma, which is often exacerbated when they say they do not want to 'move out' because St Anns is their home, they are often thought of as 'unreasonable' as 'Lorraine's' social worker suggested, or having no sense of aspiration, or simply deficient. This type of 'fixity' is that it helps distinguish the poorest working class from 'others' and also they become easier to move away from (Skeggs 2004, p.48). This mechanism of fixing in place has been well written about and exposed within racist discourse, the assumption that black British people are from 'somewhere else', or an assumption of which 'part of the city' they reside. This locatedness has also been written about in terms of class (Morley 2000, Skeggs 2004, Gough 2005, Reay 2007), in particular the naming of council estates as a shorthand of

meaning 'rough' 'bad' or 'immoral', and the sense of criminality, danger and filth that names of council estates conjure up in the imagination.

These namings as I have argued throughout have two meanings, what they mean to those who do not live with this stigma, and also they hold meanings to those who do, affecting how they see themselves, but also how they understand their relationship to the neighbourhood. It then becomes apparent that the idea of mobility becomes ever important within social exclusion discourse.

This particularly relates to young people and the mothers on the estate who very rarely went outside the physical and emotional boundaries of St Anns: an emotional boundary is the space which is imagined to belong to one group or another and is only adhered to by those groups; a term for this might be 'estatism'. This is not straightforward, and is a highly complex issue, with complex rules of engagement, which I will try and explain. There are parts of the commercial city centre in Nottingham that have imagined boundaries within certain groups and are known by those groups to belong to one group or another. The Victoria centre shopping mall, the Footlocker sports shop and the MacDonalds situated near to the Victoria centre shopping mall are all places which are known within certain groups of young people to belong to St Anns. This is in relation to other parts of the city centre which belong to the Meadows estate, the Broadmarsh shopping mall, and the MacDonalds close to that centre. In addition there are other areas in Nottingham such as The Forest Recreation Ground where the annual Goose Fair is held that belongs to the 'Raddyman' (Radford, another

neighbourhood in Nottingham city centre). This is until the annual Caribbean Carnival is held, and then there are spaces and boundaries within it, different music tents then become bounded by whoever has the greatest representation on the day. These boundaries go largely unseen and unknown within Nottingham; however there are sometimes incidents which bring them to life, and make them observable to some people at some points.

'Lorraine' understood the boundaries and 'fixity' in a particular way because of her association with the gangs in the neighbourhood:

'we shunt (shouldn't) all be sticking to one part it's like going to Broadmarsh we know we're safe in Vic centre but it's like what meadows think about vic centre 'I don't want to go up in Vic centre cos of Stannz man' we used to walk through all them shopping centres and feel quite relaxed but not now'.

I met up with the two sisters 'Della' and 'Julie', their friend 'Dread' was with them and we were talking about the young people on the estate, and the problems relating to 'estatism'. They had a specific understanding about being fixed to a neighbourhood because 'Della's son, and 'Julie's' son were teenagers on the estate, and they found it very difficult to leave the estate:

Della *'you've got kids who live in other areas and they don't want to go to other areas my son had to go to youth offenders in Radford and he didn't want to cos he would have been on his own from St Anns up in Radford they're all not as big as what they think they are or they would be able to travel to other areas but they cant'*

Dread *'they're confining themselves to NG3 for the rest of their lives'*

Della *'they're all big in the gang I'm from Stannz... rare... rare...rare...(ect. ect. ect.) no one can touch me but as soon as they're on their own they cover that up they don't wanna be seen*

Lisa *'how much do you think NG3 is more of a mindset than a place'*

Julie *'well they've stigmatised NG3 so much it is a mindset.... but... and a group of people rather than a place' .*

Not being able to move outside of the estate particularly for the young people became a reality, they could not move because of the fear of violence from youth from other neighbourhoods in Nottingham, this issue of mobility is not only a 'symbolic fixity' for the young people on the estate, it is also an 'actual fixity'.

Therefore those resources available within the estate that the people value become all the more important, particularly for the young people. 'Being known', and 'fitting in' and ultimately 'being St Anns' adds value to a person within the estate but simultaneously removes value on the outside of the estate through becoming recognised, as Urry (2008) notes 'the imperfect people' stigmatised and excluded.

There are many incidents within Nottingham regarding mobility, and the emotional and imagined boundaries become extremely important.

During 2008 in the Victoria shopping centre in Nottingham, a group of young men from Radford, a rival neighbourhood to St Anns were shopping in one of the sports shops in the St Anns side of the Victoria centre, they had dared to enter too far into 'Stannz' territory and as they were 'Raddyman' it was seen as being blatantly disrespectful. Within ten minutes there were fifteen hooded and scarved young men from St Anns in the sports shop with guns, knives and baseball bats. There was a standoff because the 'Raddyman' also had guns. There were several arrests and some of the 'Raddyman' were injured. Surprisingly this was

not reported in any of the local or national media even though a large part of the shopping centre had to be closed off. These incidents are not uncommon within the city, however they are rarely reported.

These boundaries of who can go, and who belongs where, also extended to the service providers within Nottingham, they were all too keen to provide services within the estate. Many of the women whose children were over 16 attended college courses at the local youth clubs and community centres, usually basic numeracy and literacy classes, IT, and NVQ's in business skills; these courses are provided by local colleges who send in tutors to teach within the estate. There are also mentoring programmes that over 18's can get involved with, this involves mentoring the younger children within the estate at youth clubs and community centres. These schemes are considered helpful to the community by assuming that people within the estate cannot be motivated to leave. The BBC's 'Inside Out' programme featured the mentoring programme within St Anns in January 2005 where it hailed it as a 'progressive method':

'The headlines say it all - another murder, another gun crime, another murder victim. Nottingham's inner city has become synonymous with violence, gun crime and communities in crisis. People in St Ann's have had enough of the tragic waste of human life and living in constant fear'. (BBC Inside Out Jan 21st 2005)

The programme after speaking to some of the mentors claimed that:

*'As a result a 'mentor' feels more valued in his own community,
"I've got respect from where I am and from around my way".
(BBC 'Inside Out' Jan 21st 2005)*

This is a very simplistic approach to exclusion and disadvantage, which accepts rather than challenges the people's often limited horizons and poverty of opportunity, and works within a limited framework. Being respected in your community is not the problem; it is being respected outside the neighbourhood which residents of council estates struggle with. It seems that mobility within this council estate whether social or actual is becoming more and more difficult daily. The 'mentors', and students from St Anns who spend all of their time in that locality, after a time it becomes very difficult to move out through fear of stigmatisation, they know they are limited and opt to work and stay within the community not feeling comfortable outside. I am not suggesting that people who live on council estates should be motivated to leave and live somewhere else, but what I am arguing is that through the fear of not knowing how you may be treated and viewed by others. Strong emotional attachments are made connecting residents to a neighbourhood. Particularly by young people who find it difficult to make positive networks out of the estate but also back in. Therefore the potential, skills, knowledge and talent within a poor neighbourhood very rarely becomes realised, especially when it could be used to influence positive change within the neighbourhood.

Conclusion:

The purpose of this chapter was to show what social exclusion means to the residents who live on this estate, how they come to recognise social exclusion, and what are the dimensions of the exclusion they experience.

This chapter shows from the outset the problems which arise through the thoughtlessness of those who make decisions for the many. It is undoubtedly difficult to live on this estate, partly through its design, partly through past local government and national neglect for the place and the people, but mostly through the inequalities that thrive within British society, allowing certain groups to become disrespected, and stigmatised. The residents have an acute awareness of how they are viewed from the outside, and that is a constant problem for them in many ways. They are not sure why they are disrespected so acutely, sometimes they argue it is because the estate has an unfair and inaccurate bad reputation. Sometimes they think it might have something to do with their own actions, because they claim benefits, or are single mums, maybe it is because they have no money, or is it because they wear too much gold, they are often unsure. They think it might be a combination of all, in addition to the ethnicity of their children, and their 'babyfathers', it seems the women on the estate have been simultaneously racialised and sexualised because they are white and working class, they live on a council estate, and their children are mixed race. They fear and complain about being misunderstood and

mis-represented, leaving the women feeling extremely angry, this has sometimes resulted in violence, fear and hostility, and at the same time as one woman told me 'it just makes me weak'.

However there is one thing that they are clear about and that is how social exclusion feels. They feel powerless, and their views are not heard, they feel disrespected, and demeaned, mis-represented, and ignored, usually through being 'looked down on'. This notion of 'being looked down on' by 'others' often gave the women something they had in common a unity, an identity, explained through 'being St Anns'. The estate offered some respite from constantly 'being looked down on', and 'never feeling good enough' although that in no way compensated for the problems they have on the inside of the estate or on the outside. There is a real feeling amongst the residents of St Anns that they have been left behind and are in actual fact not wanted. They understand exclusion in a similar way to how their children have been excluded from school, however they are not sure what they have done wrong. They suspect that it might have something to do with not having a good job, or having little education. However they also believe that because they live in St Anns they are stigmatised which is a contradiction in terms as they feel it offers respite from stigma at the same time. Therefore the estate, and belonging to the estate had real value to the women here even though simultaneously by 'being St Anns' also had a de-valuing effect on the outside.

There is a real issue of mobility here, as Sibley (1995) argues space is often known through who belongs in it, and who does not, therefore the experiences, and the process of identifying who you are and where you belong allows a consideration of how language, ideas, and practices, in addition to power relations and resources shape how groups self identify, how they understand their place in the world, where they belong, and where they are not welcome (Bourdieu 1977; Sibley 1995; Urry 2007). The fear of being 'looked down on', and treated badly often means that the talent, skills and the knowledge held within council estates particularly relating to inequality, what it means and what might be done about it often stays unknown and unrecognised within that neighbourhood; the networks are rarely made out of poor neighbourhoods, and when they are they hardly ever come back in. In the next chapter I will address some of these issues around self identifying with a neighbourhood, and a group of people. The social networks in St Anns are often complicated, that is how the residents network with each other but also the services which are an important part of such a deprived neighbourhood. There are real reasons why groups will network with some services over others, and the next chapter asks what are the reasons, and also the implications of how the women see themselves and each other.

Chapter 7

Inner City Networks and Community Identities

Introduction

In the last chapter I examined the dimensions of exclusion as experienced by the women and their families who live on the St Anns council estate. How they understood exclusion in their daily lives was often conceptualised through the relationship they had with the neighbourhood where they live, but also their relationship within wider Nottingham, and their understandings of wider society. These relationships are complex, and contradictory, and are difficult for the women to articulate. They often said that the neighbourhood was 'a shit hole', 'a scrap yard for people', 'full of crime and drugs, badness and fuckery'. Nevertheless, they also had a pride in their neighbourhood often saying St Anns 'is a very good community', and their own resilience as 'sufferers' for 'badding it out' when as they said 'others couldn't live one day in their lives'. Exclusion was not only understood by the women in the way they were 'looked down on', but also how they often felt 'powerless', particularly in their necessity to claim state benefits, but also regarding how their children were often physically and emotionally restricted in Nottingham because of the issues surrounding territorialism and 'estatism', a theme which I will come back to in the following chapters.

The last chapter showed that the women in St Anns have an insightfulness of their own situation. They are aware of how 'others' see them 'as rough and ready', they know when their situation, their address and their mixed-race children are combined they are simultaneously racialised in a way that Chris Haylett (2001) has identified as the 'dirty white' and sexualised as 'being slags', or 'black man's meat', and they understand how this impacts upon them in wider Nottingham, but also within wider society. Nevertheless, the women also recognise that the estate itself offers some protection, a reason why many of the women stay or have moved into St Anns because of the prevalence and notoriety of it being an area where there are many mixed families, despite it being a difficult neighbourhood to live in because of the many social problems within the estate.

In the last chapter I began to show just how important 'being St Anns' is to the women and their families. The neighbourhood offers a sense of protection to those who are 'St Anns', and it is important to the women in ways that would be unthinkable to those who do not live within such a deprived area. However, clearly the stigma, stereotype, and the general disrespect of the poor working class have serious consequences for those who experience this; particularly in the way they identify themselves, and also how those who experience such disrespect identify each other.

This chapter continues to explore the women's self identification, and asks what battles take place in protecting their own profile, rather than allowing wider Nottingham and the many different agencies and systems they are involved in as mothers, council estate residents and benefit claimants to, as they say, 'label' them. These battles the women have in protecting who they are, or how they wish to be known rather than 'rough and ready', naturally have an impact on what they do. More importantly, they impact upon how they see the world and how they manage their problems which they never deny are 'dire', because of how they are 'put down', 'made to feel small' and 'looked down on', and they deal with them in a way which makes sense to them.

The women are acutely aware of how stigmatising any involvement with state agencies such as local government housing authorities and the Benefit Agency can be, and they feel scrutinised whenever they come into contact with these agencies. In the next few sections of this chapter I will examine how some of the official networks set up in St Anns are used and known by the mothers who live in the community, particularly those networks which have been set up in relation to their children. These agencies were often at the forefront of conversation when the women spoke about their children and the neighbourhood.

This chapter also maps how the women in this community come to know themselves through the official community networks, either through participation or avoidance. I have argued that urban social

inequality and exclusion behave as signifying systems transporting their own definitions and allowing others to identify those who are excluded, but at the same time allowing the excluded to identify and recognise themselves. This chapter investigates this claim in order to examine the processes of self identification, and group identification: it seems 'who we are' is important, but 'who we are not' is equally important, and this chapter examines this by paying attention to the struggle within those signifying systems of welfare, urban inequality and exclusion (Haylett 2000, 2001; Welshman 2000; Lister 2004; Skeggs 2006; Lawler 2008).

It's a sure start in fighting the brick wall

There is no doubt that the women in St Anns often find life very difficult to cope with. The last chapter explicitly illustrated how hard life can be when you are a mother, and you live on a poor council estate, often having very limited opportunities to change your situation. However, there have been many government initiatives set up in St Anns to 'help', or 'give a hand up'. This is especially true when it comes to parenting and early year's development, an area that the government has identified through the Social Exclusion Task Force as crucial in ensuring that every child matters (dcfc.gov.uk 2009). The government's vision is to:

'Ensure that every child gets the best possible start in life and to give parents more choice about how to balance work and family life... Sure Start is the Government's programme to deliver the best start in life for every child by bringing together early education, childcare, health and family support.' (dcfc.gov.uk 2009)

The government's Sure Start centres are, as they describe, 'hubs' up and down the country which provide free integrated early education and childcare for under-5s, 'support for parents', including advice on parenting, provide child and family health services, ranging from health screening, health visitor services to breast-feeding support, and 'help parents into work' by linking the Sure Start centre to the local Jobcentre Plus (dcfc.gov.uk 2009). In fact there are now over 3,000 Sure Start centers in the UK, and to have a Sure Start centre in every neighborhood within the UK by 2010 is one of the government's targets in ending child poverty. Sure Start is a clear example of how the government understands its role within poor neighborhoods as provider and instigator of social and cultural change; it wants to reach 'the most disadvantaged families' in order to support them through advice and parenting skills classes, providing some free childcare, whilst supporting parents to gain new skills through their links to local jobcentres (dcfc.gov.uk 2009). Sure Start integrates itself into the community as a valuable service provider, and also as a source in helping to create social change in poor neighborhoods, by changing parenting practices, and also attempting to change parents' employment status.

St Anns has three very well equipped Sure Start centers. They are very well established and the women on the estate have told me that they are made aware of the services on their first visit to see the midwife when they are pregnant; often appointments to attend Sure Start centers are set up through the midwife and health visitor.

The Sure Start centres in St Anns are highly visible, and they are given vast amounts of credence by government as beacons of tackling inequality and child poverty. When I talked to the women on the estate about the local resources available to them, and what they found useful in trying to manage some of the difficulties they often had, I naturally asked about the Sure Start centres because of their visibility. Out of the 20 mothers in this research who had younger children, only three had engaged with the Sure Start programme and only one of the mums was still engaged in the programme, and this was primarily child care, although the local Sure Start programmes had classes and activities on breast feeding, cooking, water play, and a toy library. When I asked the women in the study why they had not become involved in the programme they gave differing reasons: a number of women were suspicious of the centres and were not sure of the link between Sure Start and social services. Two of the women had attended a breast-feeding class and had felt uncomfortable and pressured into breast feeding their babies, so did not return. When I asked about the toy library many of the women said they would not consider using it because they were able to provide for their own children and they did not want to be seen as 'poor'; another group of women thought that the toys might be 'dirty' and not suitable for their own children. When I spoke to 'Lucy' a 23-year-old single mum with a 3-year-old son, she was studying at the local university.

She told me that:

'Sure Start offered me £200 worth of toys and a lot of my friends like sniggered after me but I said I would rather you give them to somebody that needs them than give them to me who doesn't need them. My son's got everything; you go into his bedroom, it's like a toy shop ... I said that "for you to take that when you've already got, you're greedy." Why take from somebody that hasn't got? "If that's the kind of person you are then I don't want to talk to you" sniggering like ... you think your chest's high and why take it if you don't need it?'

'Lucy' had lived in St Anns since her parents arrived from Glasgow looking for work in the early 1980s when 'Lucy' was only three years old, and now as an adult she rented her house on the estate from the council and was a young single mum, but she did not recognise herself as someone 'in need'; she did not recognise herself in the way that Sure Start might.

I met Karen when she was pregnant with her second child. After the baby was born I went to her home to see the new baby. We were talking about Sure Start because the health visitor had tried to sign her up:

Lisa *'Are you going to go to Sure Start?'*

Karen *'no'*

Lisa *'not even with the baby'*

Karen *'no'*

Lisa *'do you know anything about it'*

Karen *'no, I just think it's for women who can't cope and stuff'*

Lisa *'what did the health visitor say?'*

Karen *'well the health visitor asked if I wanted to sign up for Sure Start and I said 'no' and that was that'.*

'Karen' was not happy at all about the health visitor trying to engage her in Sure Start. She thought that the health visitor 'was taking the piss'.

'Karen' thought that Sure Start was for women who could not cope and, by asking her to sign up, the health visitor had insulted 'Karen' and, as she said, 'that was the end of that'.

A few days after I had visited 'Karen' in her home I saw her in the street and she stopped me and asked if I thought she was struggling with the baby. I was very surprised and was not entirely sure what she meant, but she then said 'because you asked about Sure Start'. 'Karen' and 'Lucy' had been very clear with me that they thought Sure Start was for 'those in need', and 'those who couldn't cope', and both women did not want to be categorised as women who needed this type of state intervention. They were extremely sensitive about from whom, and how they might receive help, because of their acute awareness of how they were already viewed as single mums, living on St Anns with mixed-race children.

For many of the women I spoke to, the 'official' services, housing offices, Benefits Agency, and now Sure Start had a stigma about them, and by using them you risked further stigma. None of the women wanted to see themselves as 'disadvantaged families' and knew by engaging in any of these 'official' services it signified that they were disadvantaged, poor, 'no good', 'unable to cope'. Lone mothers living on council estates are amongst the poorest groups in society; they are more likely to have low and no educational qualifications, in addition to poor health (Duncan and Edwards 1999; Katz and Redmond 2009) and

the link between poverty and lone parenting is generally acknowledged. Therefore, drawing state benefits in order to have financial independence while their children are young and childcare is difficult, or they are unable to secure employment which pays enough for them to live on, as 'Della' argued in Chapter 5 (p.173), they have little choice in engaging with the Benefits Agency and local housing authorities.

I met another single mum, 'Trudy', whose youngest daughter did have a part-time place at the Sure Start nursery. 'Trudy' lived with her two young daughters, and her brother and sister were both staying with her in the two-bedroomed house until they found somewhere else to live. 'Trudy' told me that she 'was just about managing' on the income support and housing benefit she claimed. She had lived in the neighbourhood for three years, moving in just before her second child was born. 'Trudy' liked the neighbourhood but did not like the place where her house was: it was at the top of a steep hill, and with two young children this made life quite difficult for her. Nevertheless, she utilised the neighbourhood well and said, apart from 'town' (the city centre), she never really left St Anns. 'Trudy's' youngest daughter was at one of the Sure Start centres and she thought it was very useful for her because she 'liked to stay local':

'I think it's a really good thing here in St Anns; it helps mums. They do all sorts down at Sure Start and it's close, so sometimes I go to the St Anns market which is quite good where you can see other parents there ... yeah, well I use Sure Start, and the library and the Sure Start library group and then the community centre; it's all on the Chase [precinct]. I like to be there where I know people.'

This was an extremely useful resource for 'Trudy', who said she valued 'the community feeling', because most of the local resources were in one place, and it was important to her in seeing 'local faces' – people who she could say 'hello' to. The Sure Start centres also had links to resources in training and employment for parents. I asked 'Trudy' whether she was considering returning to work; she had worked in a factory before having her children:

'Yeah, now [daughter's name] is in play group, I'm looking to find a job that will earn me 10 to 15 pounds a week that won't affect my benefits. With the government paying for [daughter's name] to be at nursery two days a week it might help me to get back to work or just the feel of work, 'cos I think it's a big gap 'cos I've had 5 years not working so I need to wean back into it.'

What 'Trudy' is saying here is very similar to many of the other women I spoke to about working: they were happy to work and it was not employment in itself which deterred them. It was the thought of coming off benefits, which are 'secure' and at least a level of consistency. They knew what they would get every week to live on: 'it might not be much', as another woman told me, but it was consistent, and most importantly allowed them to 'be there for the kids', which was important for the mothers.

Even though many of the women with younger children were unsure about the Sure Start centres, they were very supportive of the local primary schools and often talked about how the schools were 'good', and supported their children. The women were also more willing to engage with the local primary schools than other official resources on

the estate. Many of the women had strong links to the primary schools; some of them worked or had worked as lunch time supervisors; many of them had been involved in the campaigns to 'Save our Schools' when several of the primary schools had been earmarked for closure; and some of the women had been pupils themselves. I met two friends, 'Sonia' and 'Shelly', who were both 23 and had been best friends from primary school in St Anns. 'Sonia' had three boys, and 'Shelley' had four boys. They spent almost every day together, either shopping in town, or in each other's houses. When I asked them about their children's school they both thought that, on the whole, the school was doing a 'good job'. However, 'Sonia's' four-year-old had been excluded that day:

Sonia *'yeah my kids are improving well at school, but saying that he's [son] got to spend special time at school for his behaviour 'cos he's got very bad behaviour. He has a separate teacher who has him until I pick him up. I mean he should be there now but they won't take him today because of his behaviour and they don't have to yet you see 'cos he's not 5 yet, but they are trying with him but sometimes I do feel like they're slack with him but that's only 'cos he's naughty and I do want to give him every top chance. Otherwise my kids are doing well in their school in St Anns. It don't stop them learning you know being here in St Anns or going to school here in St Anns'.*

'Shelly', whose four boys were under the age of eight, had a similar story about her eldest son who was subject to dinner bans:

Shelly *'my kid's school, well they have time for you; like my eldest is eight, like he's had nuff [many] dinner bans but they haven't got rid of him yet you know they've threatened me nuff [many] times but they haven't'.*

Both 'Shelley' and 'Sonia' thought the local primary school was very supportive; they liked their children's teachers and thought they were

approachable. They discussed some of their problems with the teachers relating to their children and were grateful that their children as yet had not been excluded from the primary school. The women often told me that their children were 'bad' and 'too cheeky', and believed that the primary schools were doing a good job by working with them, as part of the community, and 'not excluding' the children. The women thought of the local primary schools as part of the community, and understanding the needs of St Anns, and were more likely to engage with them, even when their children were 'bad'.

However, the 'supportive role' of the community regeneration projects like Sure Start and the increasing role that local primary schools are having in poor communities because of the government's commitment to early years' development have often been complemented by a disciplinary policy aimed at older children (Welshman 2000; Gough et al. 2005; Power 2007; Jordan-Zachary 2008). This includes a number of measures: policing to stop absence from school, curfews on youth, and making parents legally responsible for their children's behaviour. The supportive and engaging roles of the primary schools in St Anns were not replicated by the local senior schools; many of the women who had older children had a very different understanding of their relationship with the local comprehensives, and the local police the two institutions that they had most contact with regarding their children. 'Della', whose home I visited, where you could hardly see because of the boarded-up windows, explained what had actually happened:

Della *'my eldest son right he's done nothing but give me a load of stress. I've had to throw him out. He don't live with me now; he lives with his grandma. He's put my windows through, he's pulled out a knife on me. I've phoned the police x number of times; the amount of calls I've had to make to the police, and the police have had to come out to this house at this address, yeah it's ridiculous, yeah and when he went to court, yeah all he got was an 18-month supervision order to do with youth offenders and when he turns 18 it's probation. It's a constant thing with youth offenders; he breaches it then it's another supervision order ... I had to even tek [take] out a machete that he had on him and the police didn't even tek [take] it out the house with them ... This time I was walking all the way through St Anns with it in a plastic bag, with the handle sticking out of it'.*

'Della' and her sister 'Julie' both had problems with the local school regarding their children, and they told me that the constant battle 'often wears them out':

Della *'it's like fighting a brick wall; they hide behind policies like now if your child don't go to school you get a fine ... I've had a fine for my daughter for not going to school even though she was made to go to school every day. What she does, once she's up there isn't my fault so why should we get the fine? Why can't the child get the punishment?'*

Julie *'I cant understand that, if they can't keep 'em in school, why's that our fault? My son never truanted because he was hardly ever there 'cos they kept excluding him, and he always went to school in uniform apart from the trainers; always in uniform. He never assaulted none of the teachers; it was never assault; it was always opinion. I think he gets it from me ... even though he's a child, why can't they disagree? ... But it was always disrespectful to a teacher who can't control him. What they did is say that he was holding up everyone else's education 'cos he was holding up the class by having an opinion; freedom of speech – what's that about?'*

'Della', who was a single mum with five children, told me that sometimes she was struggling to cope. The children's father was now in prison serving a very long sentence and, as 'Della' had said, he was a 'lazy wanker' and had never helped with the children or worked before 'he left'. She was involved in various services which might help: four of

her children were in local schools, and her eldest son was part of the YIP (youth inclusion project) and was under a supervision order with probation. As 'Della' said to me, 'where's my support?' At the time I met 'Della', her four-year-old daughter had just been excluded from the local nursery for one week for holding her hand up to a teacher and saying 'whatever'. When I asked why a four-year-old would be excluded 'Della' said they had a zero tolerance approach to bad behaviour at the nursery. 'Della's' other daughter was constantly truanting from school to the extent where 'Della' had been taken to court and fined; and, as she said, her eldest son was under a supervision order for breaking her windows.

'Della', like many of the women, could see the services in place for the children and young people on the estate but could not see how she 'fitted in'. 'Della' was only one of many women who had noticed the amount of services for young people and children, the youth clubs, youth inclusion projects, Sure Start, which all of the women viewed as a place for children not parents. However, they did not feel that the local services were there for them, as mothers, or women.

Many of the women told me that they often felt that, if you were not under 25, black, and male then the services in St Anns had no interest in you. The women felt that this demographic was the only demographic that the 'white project managers' on the estate cared about. I met a mother and daughter, who often used the community centre to meet up

and have a coffee, but the YIP (youth inclusion project) was now housed there and the mothers felt like they no longer mattered:

Sharon *'it's like on the Chase now; there's all them YIP kids. No-one seems to be telling them off... they are just doing what they want, fighting, screaming. I can't go there no more.'*

Tanya *'there aren't proper teachers down there. It's being run by one white posh woman and the rest are local drug dealers she feels sorry for on the mentoring scheme.'*

Sharon *'yeah mentoring to shotting'*

Tanya *'that is showing kids badness; it's like they're funding them places and it's sorting them out and making them better; it's not, it's making them worse ... Look at my youngest who's four, they've only just started putting them Sure Starts in the community. Now I've noticed that when you've got a kid of two they can go there. I think that's excellent; that is a good funding, but the YIP I think that is a bad funding; that's a waste of money ... Sure Start, that's money used wisely; that's about getting into activities young ... well it gives the mum a break as well after she's had a child, even if it's just a little two hours – that two hours helps'.*

Many of the women noted that there was little support or services set up for them as mothers or, and more importantly, women or individuals.

This was unless, as many of the women complained about, 'they are trying to tell you what to do', or 'trying to tell you how to bring your own kids up'. These feelings of either being 'ignored' or 'interfered with' were complex; the women accepted they needed some help but often did not ask, either because the help on offer was inadequate or stigmatising.

The women wanted services and support which respected them and their status as mothers, and did not stigmatise or patronise them.

Working-class motherhood is a source and resource of great pride and self-respect, marking an important transition to adulthood (2007 Gillies p.118). There has been previous research which has shown that working-class women use motherhood in order to gain status but also

as 'positive new starts' (Kirkman et al. 2001; Gillies 2007). Most of the women in this research had become mothers in their teens, and used their experiences of motherhood as ways of feeling 'worthy' and 'respected', especially after particularly difficult childhoods.

'Lucy', who had a three-year-old son, had refused Sure Start's offer of £200 worth of toys, because as she said 'I don't need it'. However, 'Lucy' had asked for help with child-proof gates, and anti-tamper electric plug covers, and other child safety products from Sure Start when she had moved into her new home in St Anns. However, Sure Start no longer provided this service. On the one hand 'Lucy' did not want Sure Start's help in providing for her child (she as a mother wanted to do this); on the other hand, she did want help in securing her home for her son.

This was a common theme within the estate: the women accepted they needed some form of help, particularly around securing their homes, good childcare services, good transport services, and real skills and training opportunities; however, what they did not expect or want was to be given things that they thought as mothers they should provide, like toys, or clothes, or food. All of the women without exception told me the only thing they were really proud of was being mothers, and they were extremely proud of their children. This made it all the more difficult for them to ask for and accept help, especially when they thought the help was the wrong type, or would demean their valued status as mothers.

This was in opposition to the women's employment status or their thoughts on education; they did not value these sections of their lives, and felt they were secondary to their roles as mothers. This is hardly surprising as the women constantly said there was little in the way of real opportunities for them, unless it was about getting them off state benefits and 'into a cleaning job'. Although many of them really wanted to work within the community, 'helping others', most had volunteered in different projects on the estate, but as they said 'we volunteer, they get paid'. This subject regarding local people 'getting jobs' and the amount of money coming into St Anns for various projects was often a serious contentious point within the neighbourhood. 'Shirley', like most of the women, brought this subject up:

'you see, my argument is that there is a lot of money going into places like this, like St Anns, but then they haven't got the community people ... like the young runners here the young drug dealers ... well say me I could go to their mums and say like we are starting this project blah blah blah and we are doing it for the young kids; would you come and work there 16 hours a week 'cos we can pay yer rather than work for nowt [nothing]; this is important ... yer see, get them involved then you get the arguments from the semi-professionals who don't live here ... 'cos they're scared of losing their jobs and they're saying "well you can't really trust people from the community" ... and we volunteer again and they get paid'.

Getting women into employment and off state benefits has been an important policy initiative. The single mother getting pregnant for the council house, and having baby after baby solely for more welfare benefits have been consistent messages about poor working-class women over the last 20 years (Lister 1996; Skeggs 1997, 2006;

Walkerdine et al. 2001; Lawler 2008). Val Gillies (2007) demonstrates the moral panic around 'the lone mother': her moral lack, and her threat to social order through her reproduction (2007 p.45); when, in reality, lone parents are among the poorest groups in the UK, and are often forced to live on the lowest of state benefits. Some of the women in this research echo that message. They claim state benefits as their only source of income, and continually explain that being in paid employment which is of low value and low pay is too much of a risk: it is too insecure, with too little benefit. However, most of the women said they would like to work in the community, as youth workers, drug workers or teaching assistants, but they struggle with the qualifications they need, and the competition from, as 'Shirley' states, 'the semi-professionals'.

The women on this estate also tell of the many other issues within their lives, not related to parenting or childcare, which make family life for them extremely stressful. As the last chapter explained, sometimes the problems that the women dealt with on a daily basis left them frightened and angry, but also apathetic about their future, often leaving them with little ambition, but also little hope that their situations could be better through work, training or education. However, this did not mean that they sat at home all day watching day time television, as they are often depicted. As I showed in Chapter 5, many of the women are or have been engaged in local and community voluntary work, which often leads nowhere.

Signifying systems, recognising yourself

I have argued throughout this thesis that it seems those who live in poor neighbourhoods, 'the excluded', and the socially-excluded neighbourhoods themselves have been defined by what they are lacking, morally, spiritually, physically, educationally and economically (Haylett 2000 p.351; Lister 2004; Skeggs 2004 p.97; Lawler 2008 p.132). These notions of 'lack' are not lost on the women in St Anns. This thesis has shown clearly that they are acutely aware of how 'others' view them, and also how they are stigmatised through their use of official agencies, such as claiming welfare benefits, living in social housing, and being involved in other state systems involving their children. They are aware that these stigmatised readings of their families and themselves relate to what they do, as in claiming benefits, and being in relationships with black men; and also who they are, white working-class women, mothers to mixed-race children; and they never forget where they live, 'being St Anns' is both important and damaging to the women in their process of identifying themselves. All of the women in this research are extremely careful of which services they use, and how many at any one time they are prepared to deal with because of the way they feel demeaned, and disrespected as women and mothers. For them, failure has already been defined and they see their reliance on the state as confirming this; therefore, in order to resist these negative namings, they often refuse some of the support set up for them. Their main complaint about state and official support is that it

is often patronising and assumes that they are deficient in every aspect of their life. 'Lucy' was offended when Sure Start offered her toys, especially when she asked for help in making her home safe for her toddler; she was insulted that Sure Start thought she would not provide her son with toys. 'Karen' was extremely offended at being asked about Sure Start, and would not engage in the subject with either the health visitor or with me. These signifying systems of welfare, urban inequality, and exclusion are, as Haylett (2000) says, industrious in themselves, creating ways of thinking about 'the excluded' by those from within an excluded neighbourhood, and also by those on the outside. The involvement in those agencies set up to help is contentious on the estate. The women accept they need the state for basic subsistence, and they claim income support and housing benefit; they know this stigmatises them but have to 'take it on the chin'. They also see the local primary schools in a similar way: as a provider but without the stigma attached, which means they are more comfortable engaging with the schools and can have a sense of engagement without shame. 'Karen', who would not even talk about Sure Start, was very proud that she was 'a volunteer reading helper' at her son's primary school and hoped one day to train to be a teaching assistant. She felt that the school respected her and was a service for her and her son she could engage with.

Richard Titmuss (2000) in 1967 highlighted the concept of 'Universalism' relating to welfare provision for all. He argued that the

most fundamental reason for adopting a universalistic principle to welfare services in the UK was that it would not involve humiliation, loss of status, or loss of self respect (2000 p.42). When it comes to the primary schools in St Anns it seems that this educational provision does indeed allow those who use it to be free from stigma and humiliation. However, this is not the same for all welfare provision, and the women on the estate are acutely aware of what they might engage in, and the cost and benefit of engaging in that service. Unfortunately, because of the link between the government's 'Child Poverty strategy' and Sure Start, most mothers see Sure Start as yet another service which requires an element of deference by them to engage in it. This is a shame, because the Sure Start centres in St Anns are well equipped and have real benefit for families.

Therefore, regarding the provision and delivery of some services such as primary education, working-class mothers do not feel shame or stigma in using them, but perceive those services as important, part of the community and something they may want to get involved with. Consequently, there are other welfare services such as weekly income benefits that are heavily laden with stigma, but the women need to claim those in order to live. There are also other services which are optional for families such as Sure Start, which might provide quality and much needed services; but when there is a whiff of poverty solving and moral lecturing attached to them the mothers are reluctant to use them.

There are also the projects set up in the community which rely upon local volunteering, which the women are sceptical about. They know the 'semi-professionals' will use their local knowledge and skills, but not give them a paid job. They understand this to be a form of disrespect or, as they say, 'taking the piss': always being good enough to volunteer, often giving their knowledge of the local community freely to those who have none, but never getting the benefit of the paid job.

Even though the concept of social exclusion is little known by the mothers on the estate, the language and meanings of exclusion are omnipotent: children are excluded from school, nursery and lunch break, the neighbourhood is excluded, the women feel excluded by 'others', and the community is often excluded from paid work within. It seems obvious that the language and underlying concepts of 'exclusion' would produce cultural meanings and identities for the people and places they target. Those cultural meanings and identities become part of the cultural texture of people's lives, as the thesis has shown thus far, with how the women think that 'others look down on them', and they will never get the job of 'youth worker' or 'teaching assistant'. The women are often subjected to humiliating experiences when dealing with any of the benefit-related agencies. They are often 'shamed' by their children's exclusion from school, and they become anxious, stressed and angry when they speak of their feelings of 'being looked down on'. These negative cultural meanings for people who live in poor neighbourhoods have a massive impact upon aspiration, and confidence within the

community, and within the last chapter it became clear that the women often blamed themselves for what they saw as 'their failure in life'.

'Whatever they think I am, I am'

This section continues the theme of how negative namings and depictions of 'welfare culture' impact upon this community, particularly in how the women self-identify, but also how they see others who live in the same community.

Whenever I spoke to the women we always talked about other people who lived on the estate, known as 'chatting business'. 'Chatting other people's business' is a common pastime amongst the women in St Anns, and is in fact an important part of 'being St Anns': who is doing what with whom, and whose kids are getting up to what and where, is an important part of the community; it is how the women in this community feel included, 'you've got to know what's going on' was often said to me in many different contexts. So when I talked to the women on the estate I often asked them 'who else lived on the estate?' The women told me the types of people such as families, or old people; sometimes they said 'asylum seekers' or 'Iraqis'. However, the more usual answer was, as 'Karen' and 'Ann' told me:,

Karen *'tramps ... [laughing] ... Single mothers like me who have got no ambition and don't want to do anything with their lives and sit down and smoke weed and fags.'*

Anne *'yeah sit there all day chuffing ... cup of tea ... ashtray that's it, telly on [laughing] ... and the kids being told to fuck off out the front door'.*

'Karen' and 'Anne' lived together with their children because 'Anne' had fallen out with her neighbours, coincidentally, 'for chatting her business'. The conversation above shows their awareness of the stigmatised view of women who live in St Anns, and they play with the irony of their own situation, laughing at what they think others think of them, but also laughing at the women who they think this is really aimed at. As they told me, they knew women on their street who were like this:

Karen *'yeah that's what you see'*

Anne *'and what you know, you know people round here'*

Karen *'from here to the bottom of the street, how many do you think goes to work?'*

Ann *'three probably, not many full time; there are some older women, a few that work'*

Karen *'well, when I was going to go to work full time when I just had [son's name] I was thinking why should I go to work and slog my guts out when everyone else round here will have a better life than me and I'll be tired at the end of the day, but you have to force yourself to do it and rise above it'.*

So far in this thesis I have showed how the women in St Anns understand exclusion and especially how exclusion was felt from the real or imagined stigma from the view of the 'other', the 'other' being those who lived in more affluent neighbourhoods in Nottingham. I also examined how hostility can be both externalised and internalised, how those signifying systems of welfare and exclusion can define a group but also influence how that group then sees itself. The external markers of living in St Anns, how you dress and look and also having your mixed-race children with you, allows you to be identified by 'others'; however, these identifications are also internalised. Bourdieu (1990 p.56) argues that the social is integrated into the self through the

habitus, the form that allows us to analyse how the social relations of the women become constituted into who they are, and how they recognise themselves. The habitus is the socially produced self; here in St Anns it is the self which has absorbed those negative signifying meanings of needing welfare provision, 'being looked down on', and being white, working class, and mothers to non-white children. Living in St Anns is not simply an address to the women on the estate; it has cultural and social meanings for its residents. The way the women identify themselves is fraught with conflict, which takes constant negotiation, often battling against the negativity about the estate from the outside but also by attaching themselves to what they value on the inside.

Their relationship with the neighbourhood is complex: it offers some protection; it has valuable services that the women particularly relate to St Anns, for example the primary schools. The value attached to the primary schools is because they *are* in St Anns; they believe their children are getting something valuable because of the cultural make-up of the neighbourhood; as they say, 'there are loads of mixed families here' and this is important to them. However, there is another part to this relationship that the women are fully aware of, that is the negative namings of the estate, the racialised and sexualised perceptions of women who live on the estate, and they balance all of those social and cultural meanings absorbing them into who they are, and how they want to be seen, but also in what they do.

Those negative namings, feelings of 'being looked down on', anger and humiliation, are absorbed into the self but can also act as signifying systems to push against. 'Karen' says she 'forces herself to rise above' what she imagines is expected of her, and also what she sees other women on the estate engaging in or not, especially when it comes to employment. This is an important point because, even though habitus can be adopted from historical understandings of social positions, it can also adapt; therefore, it is not determining but generative (Bourdieu 1990 p.58). Bourdieu, with this analysis, offers us a way of understanding both how negative namings and stigmatised positions can be absorbed into the habitus but also how individuals and groups can push against, resist or adapt to those negative namings. The women on this estate do resist, and adapt; they push against those negative namings, although their resistances may not be obvious and are often mis-recognised.

'Julie', one of the angry sisters I met, had an awareness of how the outside saw the people on the inside of St Anns and also had an understanding of why this might be:

Julie *'well when I went to college after failing my GCSEs I did an Access course where I did some sociology and learned about the nature or nurture debate. I believe it's what you're born into; if my mum had money and I was born into money I wouldn't be going around with all these little runts ... sorry, I don't mean to say it like that but that's how everyone else sees 'em ... but because I was born into an inner city working-class family that's all I've known init ... if I'd known about degrees for this and that and how to learn ... you only have to go out of St Anns to see that there's a different way of living out there'.*

I asked 'Julie' to expand on what she meant 'by being born into money' and how this can change people's outcomes:

Julie *'the case of being born into money, well that money had to come from somewhere to start with back back back back; them people must have worked fucking hard for what they've got now. That's how people get born into it and when that system of money has you got you into the system of education like the Nottingham Girls High School'.*

What 'Julie' is saying here is that she believes in the 'common understanding' of the discourse of 'middle-class meritocracy'. Andrew Sayer (2005) has argued that the belief in 'middle-class meritocracy' is that the middle class deserve their social advantages through merit alone, and those advantages go unseen and unquestioned; consequently, working-class meritocracy is about working-class disadvantages being visible and linked to visible behaviour (2005 pp.61-69). Bourdieu would term this 'common understanding' as 'doxic': those things that go unnoticed and are not questioned, but consequently have severe repercussions for some, what Sennett and Cobb (1977) might term 'hidden Injuries'. 'Julie' believes that those who have money, or are born into it, must have deserved their wealth and success even if it is through the hard work of an ancestor, whilst she sees her own apparent failure as hers. Social history and personal history are important, especially when we are examining how groups of people understand their lives, and even more so when one group is severely disadvantaged by where they live, what they do, but more importantly who they are. This is particularly true when 'who you are' relates to an

'embodied history', a term used to explain an internalised second nature, a way of learning to act, to behave, what to expect and what not to expect, but to know these things without remembering that we have learned them (Bourdieu 1990 p.56). One of the fundamental effects of an 'embodied history' or habitus (the socially produced self) being internalised is that there begins 'a harmony between practical sense and objectified meaning' in the production and understanding of a 'common sense world' (Bourdieu 1990 p.58). Therefore, what happens both around people and indeed to people become as if 'natural', and the reinforcements of social structures, negative namings and other signifying systems all identify individuals and groups through their difference. Bourdieu does tell us these things as predictions but also to show us how power works, creating the illusion of 'natural disadvantage' allowing the disadvantaged to be responsible for the inequalities they experience.

Steph Lawler (2004, 2008) notes strongly that social difference actually means social inequality for some. Lawler (2008) uses Bourdieu's arguments regarding 'taste': what is 'tasteful' and what is not, into who is valued and who is not, and in particular within classed inequalities. The women in this research are working class. They are aware that they are 'looked down on' and 'not good enough', through where they live, who they are, and who they are associated with, particularly black working-class men. They recognise themselves through stigmatised readings, and negative namings of 'welfare mothers', 'single parents',

'black man's meat'; they sometimes accept these namings, but they also reject them, push against them and resist them.

I asked all of the women I met 'who lives in St Anns' in order to establish whether or not there is or was a collective understanding of what it means to 'be St Anns'. When I asked 'Lorraine' she told me:

Lorraine *'women like me ... who dint [didn't] know what were out there ... for me but I went on a different way of life ... I think that now ... that's what I tell my kids I regret now ... I think to myself I feel like I need to go to college to do something instead of just sitting here and living off benefits that I can't afford to live off and just get a proper job and go out and enjoy myself instead of sitting here but then again I don't mind sitting here in my own house but going to my friend's house and sitting around a table and everybody's talking about everybody's business and everybody knows everybody else's business that's who lives here'.*

'Lorraine' had an acute awareness of what was wrong with her life, and she was involved with enough outside agencies who advised her on where she needed to make changes. However, she explained that she was just too tired and worn down to do anything about it. She knew that by claiming benefits and not working but 'sitting around talking about everybody's business' meant, as she told me, 'whatever they think I am I am'. To some extent she accepted those negative namings. 'Trudy', on the other hand, did not seem to have the same awareness. She was also a lone mother and had not worked for five years. She rented her home from the housing association and said she 'was in bad arrears'. However, as we talked about having a social life and going out at night, she told me:

'hmm only at the weekends when I was working now and then I used to like my music too much and I used to treat myself to records and clothes and I had a big wardrobe before I had kids but that's all stopped now. They've [the children] got bigger wardrobes than me now yeah I spent most of my money on the kids. If they need a new coat they're getting one; if they need something they'll get it over me. I think it's important they look nice. Some people don't care about their kids do they? They bring their kids in the world just to get money from the government'.

As 'Trudy' was talking, I remember thinking was she aware that 'having kids' and 'getting money off the government' might be something that she would be accused of doing and, as she told me she had read a newspaper about 'bad mothers on benefits', I wondered whether she had realised that whatever paper she had read was talking about her. However, this was not that unusual as most of the women I spoke to discussed 'other women' on the estate who were either 'bad mothers', or 'trampy', not providing for their kids, and taking government handouts, never having a job. Very quickly, however, they all explained to me why this description that they had given about 'some of the women in St Anns' did not apply to them. They usually defended this position by explaining that they had worked previously, or were willing to work if they got a real opportunity, which I had no reason not to believe. They were resisting the negativity around the social position they knew was placed upon them through stigma and shame, particularly around claiming welfare benefits and living in council houses.

Conclusion

The central argument within this chapter is that negative namings, stigmatised readings and shame, which are attached to claiming welfare benefits, not only identify those groups as 'different' and 'lacking' but also allow those groups to internalise this general level of disrespect. The women in this research have a clear awareness of how they are known, particularly when it comes to the services that are on offer for them within their neighbourhood. They are aware of what happens to their profile when they use these services. They know that claiming income support, housing benefit, council tax benefit, and living in social housing cost them dearly in how they are viewed and treated within society, but they know they have to 'take it on the chin' in order to survive. They choose carefully what they will be involved in and what they might avoid. They are wary of Sure Start because of its link to child poverty. They are sceptical about local projects asking for their time and local knowledge. They believe that these resources they have will be taken and used by the 'semi-professionals' to further their careers. However, they are happy to engage with local primary schools as they do not feel stigmatised by their involvement, and they believe that they are valuable resources to the neighbourhood.

The women believe that, because of how they are viewed as 'lacking', there is little opportunity for them, although they argue that they are not lacking in everything and every aspect of their lives, even though they admit that 'things are not good' for them. Often they are apathetic,

angry and disheartened; the way they are treated and named as 'no good' absorbs into who they are and in what they do; sometimes they 'can't be bothered', as they say, 'to fight'.

This seems very depressing and deterministic, and sometimes it is. However, there are resistances: they do push against those negative namings, and the women's narratives are far more complexly textured; they speak of adaptation, collectivity and a reflexive awareness of their surroundings. This chapter has only touched on those resistances, and it has been a chapter which seems depressing and almost deterministic that the women's fate is sealed. However, this chapter is only part of the story, and the women's accounts are inflected with recognition of heterogeneity and a sense of positive as well as negative aspects of estate life. The next chapter leads on by looking at how the women in this community do find value within this sea of disadvantage, and how they find positives within estate life, and they do. Even though they are not seen, often misinterpreted and lost within the estate of St Anns, valued identities and valued resources nevertheless thrive at least within. The next chapter, rather than focus upon what the women lack, begins to unpick what they value. It examines that, in the absence of the established resources such as wealth, education and status, within poor neighbourhoods people do have value and status, and these resources are particularly important in the absence of universally recognised resources.

Chapter 8: Resources in St Anns

Introduction

In this third chapter which analyses the lives, thoughts and practices of the women who live in St Anns, I will examine the resources, the things the women on the estate value, and also the things that the women understand as valuable. These valued resources within the estate are often not substantial or concrete resources such as employment, or education, cars or houses, they are often feelings of belonging, and 'fitting in'. It is often how well you are connected to the neighbourhood which matters bringing value to some families over others. There are also cultural markers: how you wear your clothes or your hair and what type of music you like all adds to who is valued within the neighbourhood.

Therefore this chapter examines those resources and asks whether these localised and specific resources which are based on networks, local respect, and local understandings of value are important and relevant locally because of the absence of respect and a loss of dignity that the neighbourhood and its residents experience. I have spent the last two chapters describing the difficulties and problems the women and the neighbourhood encounter but also the stigma which is prevalent because of who the women are, and also how this is heightened through their association to the estate.

However this is not the whole story. If there was only disadvantage, damage, and shame attached to this estate why would anyone want to live on it, moreover defend it, relate to it, and identify with it? In the original Coates and Silburn study of St Anns in the 1960s the main theme which came out of the research was that the residents wanted to get out, they wanted to leave (Coates and Silburn 1970). There are complex reasons why the residents in the 1960s wanted to leave as opposed to the residents today who want to stay, this chapter examines those reasons, and finds out what is valued, and valuable. However and at the same time by finding out what the women value locally on this estate we can begin to build the meanings and the processes of the local value system which shows what is valued but also what are the restrictions for the women on the estate, and how they might compensate.

Council estates as places of safety

Throughout this thesis thus far I have argued that there is a contemporary preoccupation with social exclusion in the UK and this has emphasised the importance of geographical location. Large local authority council estates like St Anns are perceived to be “ghettoes of the workless and the hopeless” (Toynbee 1998 p.22), areas which ‘The Times’ (2007) described as ‘morally, spiritually and emotionally disconnected from the rest of society’ (Phillips 2007 p.15), and in response to the ‘Karen Mathews’ arrest for kidnapping her own child,

the media found blame in a defunct culture breeding within Britain's council estates, and their residents:

'People who'd never had jobs, never wanted one, people who expected the state to fund every illegitimate child they had – not to mention their drink, drug and smoking habits....A whole legion of people who contribute nothing to society yet believe it owes them a living – good-for-nothing scroungers who have no morals, no compassion, no sense of responsibility and who are incapable of feeling love or guilt'. (Malone, p.15 2008)

However while the Social Exclusion Task Force report, and the media coverage paint a bleakly homogenous landscape of social alienation and abandonment of hope, the people who live on this estate in Nottingham tell of a far more complexly textured life, they speak of adaptation, cooperation and a reflexive awareness of their lives. Their accounts are inflected with recognition of heterogeneity and a sense of positive as well as negative aspects of estate life.

The women who took part in this research regarded St Anns as a place of safety, which may seem a contradiction bearing in mind the problems the estate has with crime, especially crime and anti-social behaviour resulting from the local drug economy in St Anns. However the women who were part of this research invested in the neighbourhood in many ways, spent much of their time in St Anns, and thought of themselves as 'St Anns'. However as the women increasingly engaged with the estate, it seemed they stood out more from what their perception was of 'normal Nottingham', on the outside of the estate.

'Zena' told me that she rarely left the estate unless she was 'going into town shopping':

Zena *'I think it's safe if you live here because people know who you are, it's not safe if you don't live here and you're walking through at night, so yeah you are better off living here if you come here..... I never used to go out a lot cos I had all this paranoia that people were out to get me you know but since I've moved down here I've started going out... from living here yeah it's quite easy to make loads of friends erm this stereotype that St Anns has got it's not like that at all, erm... it would be if you're not from here it probably would be'.*

'Dawn' another single mum with three children has lived in St Anns for most of her life. She said that she had 'no problems in St Anns' and had no plans of leaving, however she was aware that her position of 'being well known' gave her an advantage of how freely she could travel through the estate in opposition to those who live on the estate and are not well known:

Dawn *'some people are scared to go out now.. some people who live here don't know anybody who lives here now and they've tried to sell their houses but they can't cos it's in St Anns..... but there again I don't have no problems here in St Anns I get on with a lot of people and I am very well known and so are my kids we go wherever we want in St Anns the dealers on the 'chase' [shopping precinct] just say 'y'alright'.*

Throughout the thesis I have shown that the locality of St Anns is extremely important to the women and their families in many ways, particularly how their association with St Anns affects how they view themselves, both positively and negatively. Many of the women have told me that apart from 'town' (City centre) they have little or no contact with other areas within Nottingham or even wider, and their social life is firmly located within the neighbourhood. Most of the women have

family, friends and a close social network within the estate, and therefore what happens and how you can operate within St Anns is essential to the women who live there. Consequently it is extremely important that you 'fit in', and 'being known' is particularly important.

This is important to women, and to mothers who are constantly aware of their own and their children's safety, particularly when the women talked about the practicalities of their daily lives as mothers. Most of the women used informal childcare, other women picking up their children from school, and babysitting in the evenings or at weekends; this allowed many of the women to have a social life. There was also the significance around safety and your children 'being known' as they played out on the streets, the women told me that often other women, neighbours or friends or other children had brought back their own children after they had been hurt whilst playing. Describing why she feels safe in St Anns, 'Mandy' describes a recurring situation with her 16 year old son who has severe learning difficulties and is autistic:

'well he [son] you have to watch him like a hawk because the minute you turn your back he's off...I have had to phone the police to look for him so many times cos he struggles with the roads and he could easily be killed but everyone knows us round here and when he's escaped usually someone has seen him or even the kids bring him back'.

'Mandy' was also aware that outside the estate where she was not known that her son could often draw unwanted and negative attention which was often difficult for her and therefore staying within the

boundaries of the estate was especially important to 'Mandy' and her children:

'I couldn't really go to any places with him because of how he behaved and I was always scared with what people would say about him and what they thought of me and how they judge you 'oh look at her with that naughty boy' you know'.

For 'Mandy' 'being known' was important for her son's safety, because she had lived in St Anns 'all her life' her son was less likely to get bullied because of his learning difficulties being known as 'Mandy's lad', or 'Remy's' brother (her eldest son). 'Mandy's' son had always attended the local schools with specialist tuition so 'Mandy' thought that it gave all the kids on the estate a chance to 'get used to him and know him'.

'Mandy' went on to tell me that she had once lived outside of St Anns when she had fell into rent arrears with the council, because she was 'not known' in the new neighbourhood she could not let her children out to play because they were also not known. Consequently 'Mandy' very rarely left the house so as not to have 'to explain' anything about her children, she became very depressed and ill at this point in her life until a social worker helped her to return to St Anns. Therefore for 'Mandy' and many of the women on the estate 'being known' and 'fitting in' meant the difference of having some quality to life, and no quality to their life.

Consequently staying in St Anns for many of the women seemed the 'safest' and often the only option. 'Lorraine' told me that she would 'probably always stay in St Anns', she knew a lot of people, and she

had some local support, she had recently started volunteering at the prostitute outreach service which had been set up by women who had been involved in prostitution from St Anns:

Lorraine *'I want better things now that's what I mean you know I've started to get involved with things cos before I've sat back but I do want to help people and myself now..... but I always say to my kids and say to people do you know if I ever won the lottery or anything like that I'd buy this house and have it the way I wanted probably take my driving lessons and get myself a car but still be me and do whatever I could to help people here and people say no you wunt you'd go out and you'd buy this posh house and I say no I wunt I'd have this house how I wanted it and stay right here where I am there's nothing wrong with the area it's the people and we can change if we want to'.*

However 'Lorraine' like all of the women I spoke to knew that not everyone on the estate could be safe within it, St Anns only offered partial safety and then only if you were 'St Anns', therefore becoming 'St Anns' was both a resource and a necessity. Belonging to the neighbourhood and 'being St Anns' is therefore more important than it initially seemed when I introduced these concepts earlier in the thesis. 'Being St Anns' and living in St Anns are not the same things; the women can positively identify themselves through 'being St Anns', although being a resident of a council estate through mainstream understandings is not a valued identity. 'Being St Anns' meant safety in St Anns, 'Lorraine' recognised this and knew that other council estates offered similar safety for those who 'belonged to it' she knew that this type of safety could not be offered to her in other neighbourhoods, because 'Lorraine' and her children are 'St Anns'.

When I asked her whether she would leave the neighbourhood she told me:

Lorraine *'no no I don't know why cos this place's a shit hole [laughing] I don't know cos it is such a shit hole, and I think it's cos of being so young and growing here, I mean and then like I wouldn't say that I get problems as in problems cos there is a lot of people who move round here who don't know nobody right that do get problems, and when I see that it makes me think that God if I went into another area.. with my kids as well with the way they are I'm definitely gonna have problems do you know what I mean'.*

'Being safe' was often used as a key reason why many of the women chose to live or to stay in St Anns; this might seem controversial because what is thought to be known about the estate. Therefore being part of St Anns and being widely known, was valued highly by the women in this community, it allowed a freedom to move within the estate which many of the respondents understood was not available to all. However 'Lorraine' told me that she did not always 'feel safe' within the estate, as she did not know everybody on it. Some people were strangers:

'the ones who have moved into this area the Iraqi's or whatever they are all men in them flats loads of them here on their own they shunt have been put here in the middle of all these families I've walked from this house to over there and it's been quite dark and I've been glad that there's people around who I know or I might not be able to walk about my own street..... sometimes and I've seen an Iraqi walking with his hands in his pockets and I've gone past him and he's gone (whistles) like that and I've turned round cos I don't know...so don't ignore people so if you don't turn round you don't know what they're gonna do to you so I always turn round in case it's a sign that they're gonna do something to you'.

Although 'Lorraine' told me that if any of the 'Iraqis' did anything she knew 'they would be dealt with' in a similar way to when several women had 'battered one' previously. 'Lorraine' could not be sure that she was 100% safe on the estate but she did know that there would be some level of support if she needed it, and being on the estate was probably as safe as she could get.

Safety from class prejudice

The feelings of safety that the women often articulated through their sense of 'belonging' to the estate, appeared to be as much about feeling excluded from what they called 'normal society' or 'out there' as it was about belonging to St Anns. In the last chapter the women had clearly said that they knew 'others looked down on them', and that services like the housing office, and benefit agencies made them 'feel excluded', and 'not good enough'. When I spoke to the women about the way 'others looked down on them' I asked whether they thought this was related to social class. Very few of the women talked about social class, even when I asked them they were not sure if they were working class because as many said 'I'm not working'. However they often said where they thought they were positioned, as one woman answered 'pretty much at the bottom of the pile' or 'lower class'. Most of the women understood this in several ways, some thought this was because of where they lived, others because they were benefit claimants, and those who were lone mothers usually thought that their

single mum status 'classed them'. 'Sharon' who was in her 50s was one of the few women who had a good understanding of what it meant to be 'working class' in the traditional sense because her father had been a trade union shop steward as a builder, her daughter 'Tanya' who was 27 also understood the concept of class through her grandparents:

Tanya *'I know what that means my granddad and grandma were working class and they went out to work like my Dad worked all his life and mum she even worked and done all jobs like worked in cleaning places, cob shops still, when we were growing up we never had free school meals when we were at school never none of that we have always had our parents work for us'*

Lisa *'Do you still call yourself working class now?'*

Sharon *'I just call myself a housewife and I'm like well on social so I'm like a housewife who looks after the children I've got 2 grand kids here and my own two children so I would just say I look after the children'.*

However 'Sharon' told me she used to be working class, and she knew this because of her father, but also because she had worked in the local factories in Nottingham until the early 1980s. However 'Sharon' did not think of herself in this way now because as she said she was not in paid work and was 'on the social', despite being the only carer for her own two children, her two grandchildren, and her eighty year old mother. 'Sharon's' daughter 'Tanya' also understood that being working class was about being proud of working, not relying on the state, and not having free school meals, both their understandings 'of being working class' left them unsure of where they fitted in society now.

In the literature review I argued that there have been 'fragmentations' of identities particularly relating to white working class communities.

Skeggs (1997), argued within her research with white working class women in Manchester that there was a 'distancing' from 'being working class', she describes this as 'dis-identifying' with a class position of no value. Consequently she noted that the women in her study in the 1990s made attempts to accumulate what they understood to be 'middle class' resources and capital in order to gain 'respectability' and accrue symbolic capital (1997 pp.81-94). Most of the women here in St Anns did not discuss their 'working class positions' directly, but at the same time did not dis-identify with 'being bottom of the pile', or 'lower class', their anger and resentment was aimed at those who thought they were 'worthless' because of this. 'Mandy' whose 16 year old son was autistic had been advised by a social worker to go to the Gingerbread club, a local group of Nottingham mothers who met up with their disabled children, however 'Mandy' felt awkward when she arrived, because the women there were 'not like' her:

'well I thought the people were posh people do you know what I mean the way they looked at me I felt really small I had to come out and my kids were playing up basically but I felt they were looking at me cos I was white and they the kids were mixed race no one talked to me yeah I felt that if I had said well if they had said where are you from and I'd had said I'm from St Anns they would have said oh yeah I can see why, that is how I felt I wont there very long at all they dint mek me feel welcome and that Gingerbread club has been around for years I don't know if it's still going and I think that was one of the things that made me feel more secluded with my disabled son cos I felt like people were looking at me all the time at that Gingerbread club there was a lot of people there with disabled children do you know what I mean but they seemed posh and I felt that I was lower class'.

'Mandy' was one of the women who had been campaigning for the park to be cleaned up, and she was also helping to canvass for one of the local women who was standing in the local council elections. The two groups over the summer of 2007 had begun to meet up in the community centre as the 'St Anns women's group' where they discussed the local issues which had an effect upon them as women, and mothers. 'Mandy' told me that she really enjoyed her recent involvement in the community and afterwards she came home 'buzzing', she hoped that her experiences could be passed on in order to help other women, but only women like her:

'I want to do that with our group people like us no upper class people do you know what I mean people like us that have been there and done that to help other women like I was'.

'Mandy' was only one of the many women who told me about their experiences of class prejudice, or neighbourhood prejudice, and because of this were extremely reluctant to ever meet any one who they thought might be 'posh'. The women in St Anns did not appear to engage in a 'respectable performance' as Skeggs noted (1997 p.94) so we might assume that they were not interested in accruing symbolic capital, but this was not the case, the women in St Anns looked for value, and resources of value from what were available to them. Consequently some of the heavily stereotyped, and negative aspects about 'being St Anns' was celebrated by the women, all of the women often made challenges to the 'others' who looked down on them, when they said 'they could not live one day in our lives', or when they discussed the 'professionals' working in St Anns, 'they should not be

working here'. The women who I met knew the difficulties of living on the estate, and because of this found a value in 'being St Anns' because of the challenges that the estate brought. This is a stark comparison to how Simon Charlesworth (2000) describes the working class people of Rotherham as zombies, 'living bodies without the access to capital to really have a life' (Charlesworth 2000 p.159). The women in this study are in similar positions to the working class people in Charlesworth's study, they too are isolated, without access to institutional capital, excluding them from being 'people of value', by not having the access to respected modes of employment, educational attainment, the 'right ways' of being a family and a mother.

Nevertheless I think it would be very difficult for anyone meeting them to describe them as zombie like, even though they often said 'they felt like giving up', the constant engagement in local networks, and local cultures became important practices in 'keeping going'.

This network and engagement located in neighbourhood culture was often practiced through how you represented yourself, therefore 'being St Anns' meant that you could be recognised easily through ways of dressing, speaking, and acting; this is part of a local culture and code showing you belong. Most of the women wore a lot of gold jewellery, big Creole earrings, and expensive and branded sports wear and trainers are important. The women on the estate spoke in local dialect, a mixture of local Nottingham, and a Jamaican patois; these were the symbolic resources of value within the neighbourhood, and were sought after. The women felt a real sense of injustice that they were constantly

'disrespected' because of this by those on the outside, however it seemed that conformity; not wearing the big gold earrings, not wearing their hair in particular ways, and not speaking in a locally influenced Jamaican patois, was never considered in order to 'not stand out', and 'be respectable'. 'Tanya' told me one day that she could not understand why she had noticed 'on the telly' that when someone was supposed to be 'common' (Matt Lucas's Vicky Pollard, Catherine Tate's Lauren, and Bianca from Eastenders were mentioned) they wore big hooped gold earrings, she liked them, and she thought they suited her. 'Zena' told me that she 'knew' that some people would call her a 'chav' because of the amount of gold she wore, she also told me she had been followed around shops being mistaken as a shoplifter. She thought this was because of the way she looked and dressed '*too much gold, tracksuit and trainers, black baby in the pram*'.

All of the women had recognised other markers of disrespect particularly on television programmes; the white mother with 'the black baby in the pram' was always noted by the women. The women cited programmes like 'Eastenders', and ITV's 'Benidorm', 'Little Britain' was also mentioned, as programmes which used white women with mixed-race babies and council estate stereotypes to show quickly and easily 'how rough someone was', and these markers were never lost on the women.

The way the women looked, dressed and acted, how they spoke, and how they decorated their homes was often discussed by them as 'their taste', they liked the way they dressed, particularly wearing a lot of gold jewellery and did not seem to care whether 'others thought they were common'. However they also knew that these cultural markers had two values, one on the inside of St Anns, and one on the outside. Therefore 'being St Anns' was a way that the women could feel of value in and around the estate, but also with other people who valued them and their taste, whilst at the same time having respite from 'being looked down on' on the outside.

Putting the social into exclusion

In addition to 'feeling safe', and having respite from 'being looked down on' being part of St Anns had other benefits. It also allowed a social life, being included in the official and unofficial social events which often took place in the few remaining local pubs and the community centres. One day I met 'Tanya' in the community centre where she volunteered at lunchtime; it was a Tuesday and very busy because the small market was on in the precinct, and it was 'curry goat and rice 'n peas day' the most popular dish in the centre. 'Tanya' served the food and her 'baby daddy' 'Alan' who also volunteered cooked in the centre. As we talked about the unofficial local events that often took place in St Anns particularly through the summer, 'Tanya' told me that 'Alan' had a

'sound crew' (mobile reggae/ragga/dancehall disco), he was also the volunteer van driver for the community non-profit launderette in St Anns, in addition to volunteering in the community centre. As a consequence 'Tanya' and 'Alan' were very 'well known' and a popular couple within St Anns, 'Alan' often set up the 'sound' in his front garden and people would come round:

Tanya *'I do things in the community cos him [Alan] does a lot for the community and I do things around him to put events on to try and get the kids off the street and that's all voluntary that I do..... in summer we have dances all over the estate, everyone comes and brings a lickle (little) drink and some chicken we all have a good time and get together till late'.*

'Tanya' and 'Alan's' 'events' were widely spoken of within the estate and many of the women talked about them, they really enjoyed these impromptu events throughout the summer, they could take their kids and meet up with other people from the neighbourhood, however if you were not known to the family or within the neighbourhood then it would not have been appropriate for you to turn up. However 'Tanya' told me that she had at 'least one hundred' people on the estate who she would call family, and 'Alan' had about the same, even though many of these people might not be blood relatives, they are people who they have grown up with, or have intermarried within their families. I have attended many of the events held in 'Alan's' front garden, and the events he has held in other parts of St Anns, these events are usually centred around family events, children's birthdays, christenings, even weddings. Dancehall and Reggae music is played really loudly, everyone brings a

drink, and the mutton, chicken and rice that 'Alan' cooks is paid for by whoever's party it is or on the day by everyone 'putting in' who eats. There are usually the same people there, many of the women and their children who have taken part in this research, and apart from 'Alan's' brothers, cousins, and sons, not so many men. Most of the young people in the immediate area turn up, no one seems to mind as long as they behave, and when they don't there is always someone there to tell them to 'fuck off'. Often the 'cats' and the 'fiends' (drug addicts) might try and get close, by sitting on the pavement across the road in order to listen to the music, and as long as they do not come any closer than that they are tolerated, when they have tried to 'beg a drink' or get too close there is usually harsh retribution. I have seen some of the young people on the estate kick and beat the drug users until they move on. Most of the street is out and taking part in the event, or sitting in their gardens listening to the music, therefore no one seems to complain, and the police have never been called. Loud music coming out of people's homes is a feature of St Anns in the summer, and has been cited by many of the women as one of the things they like about the neighbourhood.

The networks in this community as the rest of this thesis will focus upon are extremely tight: who you are associated with, related to, and how well known you are, is linked to being respected, which is both important, and crucial in having a sense of well being, and safety on the estate. 'Being known' and 'one of us' was in-fact central to this research

being undertaken, many of the women have told me the only reason they allowed me into their homes and their lives was because of how I was known within the estate and the family network I was connected to. Therefore 'being known' was extremely important, but so was 'belonging', the relationship between the women and the estate was reciprocal, it is important to be known on the estate, but equally it was important that you belonged to St Anns.

Local inclusion, social exclusion

So far within this thesis I have explained how important safety is to the women who live in St Anns, but also the protection of their profile, and feeling of value. Consequently safety was construed in many ways, the processes and the way safety is understood is multi-dimensional and complex; personal safety, feeling safe walking around the estate, safety from class prejudice and racism were noted as important. Also there was a need to be safe from stigma, and their fear of 'being looked down on' because of the misunderstandings of their lifestyles by those who did not live on the estate. Therefore belonging to the estate, and 'being St Anns' were ways that the residents on this estate mapped out geographical space, but also emotional boundaries as defensive means. The women on the estate often said they felt safe in and around the estate, they said they never went 'too far away', and 'being one of us' was extremely important, as I have shown 'outsiders' are not easily tolerated.

Whilst boundaries are put up by the women on the estate in order to feel safe, or as Wacquant (2008 p.47) says as a screen to shield against the prejudice of the external, at the same time those boundaries act as a wall, keeping in a closed and suspicious group of people, whose fear of stigma and 'being looked down on' often prevents them from engaging in pursuits which might make real and positive differences to their lives. Throughout this thesis I have talked about 'estatism', how the council estate where you live seeps into your soul, you belong to it, and it belongs to you. These feelings are often unconscious, but more commonly as this thesis has shown feelings of belonging are spoken of regularly, and actively sought by the residents of the estate. This is how 'estatism' works; it is a reciprocal dynamic of fear, prejudice, and resentment protecting those who engage in it to some extent but also causing immense amounts of damage. In the next chapter I will show, and go into more detail how both geographical, and emotional boundaries are having a serious effect upon the young people on the estate through gang membership, but also how those feelings and practices associated to 'belonging' are feeding into the negative effects of what has often been termed as 'estatism' which is not exclusively related to young people.

The defensive measures of 'keeping safe' undoubtedly took a heavy toll on the everyday practices of many of the families involved in this research. 'Lorraine' often spoke about safety in many different contexts because the last ten years of her life had been especially chaotic, even

though she described herself as 'streetwise' and able to cope with the problems in St Anns, she admitted that sometimes she felt 'frightened' by what was happening 'on the street':

'Well I would say that the alleys and rat runs round here I'd say it's not too good like with violence I always hear people screaming and sometimes I go out it's all related to drugs'.

I asked her whether she went outside when she heard the screaming:

'well you know what I do and I've only just learnt that now is keep away from it cos you could get hurt and that was only till a couple of months ago and that was cos I went out and there was this guy battering a woman and it was over drugs right and he sort of got nasty to me until I walked away right... and I would normally go out and try and think that I'd probably know the person cos they're from round here and say like 'come on its not worth it' but it was like it was two people and I did know the lady but I dint [didnt] know the man and he got quite nasty with me so now I've learnt that I'm gonna have to blank it unless I knew that one of my kids wont [wasn'] in then I would definitely be running out'.

Feelings of 'belonging' and local inclusion were invoked in complex ways as 'Lorraine' says she assumes that she would know anyone who was in the St Anns area and that she would be safe even in dangerous situations. The complexity of 'belonging' could be fragile in one discussion or more grounded and robust in another, especially when 'belonging' meant being safe. 'Amanda' who had worked as a street prostitute for many years and understood the dangers of being in certain parts of St Anns especially at night used her sense of being locally included as a measurement of safety, and local inclusion was a resource you needed if you wanted to live in St Anns safely. She specifically related this to stereotypes and fear around black men:

Amanda *'yes I believe it is a safe place to bring your children into it's safe cos we are all classed as working class black and white we all have some things in common the children feel comfortable in places like this with each other you know... I've been pissed up at four o clock in the morning and I've seen a gang of yute (youth) hanging about and they've gone "white Manda y'alright" and I've just gone "yeah I'm al'right" and they've gone "you wan me fe walk you ome" and I've gone "no leave me man" with the keys in my hand but if I was somewhere like Bestwood Park or Arnold I wouldn't be able to do that I think it's because we know the area it's our territory you see when you have lived round black people a long time you get to know how they are like if you see a group of young black guys in town and they're just having a laugh with each other you see people looking frightened and moving out their way when all I see is a group of kids laughing... that's people's ignorance they've been conditioned because they don't know how black people are it's like when you see kids with their hoods up I see kids other people might see danger'.*

Being included in the local neighbourhood, and therefore the feelings of belonging are central in promoting and feeling a sense of safety, 'Amanda' feels safe in the neighbourhood even at night because she is known but also because of the knowledge she has about the culture of the neighbourhood. Therefore as 'Amanda' explains it is not only important to 'be known' but also to have a specific knowledge which can only be gained from being a part of the community, and locally included. However local inclusion means more than just 'being known' on the estate, when 'Amanda' talks to the youths at 4 o clock in the morning, she speaks in Jamaican patois showing that she is not only known, but she has a cultural connection to the estate and the youths. Many of the women had adopted a hybrid way of speaking around the estate which was heavily influenced by a Jamaican dialect. This was one of those cultural markers of a local practice, a local inclusion, one of many

connected to the Jamaican community which said clearly you were 'St Anns'.

Racial and cultural boundaries

There is another point here which needs discussing and is connected to the cultural markers adopted throughout the estate that is the racialised element of local inclusion and 'being St Anns'. I have noted that the women place a great deal of worth upon what they understand as 'Jamaican culture', sometimes they interchange this meaning with 'black culture', the Jamaican community and their culture in St Anns have always held a great deal of respect. Until recently the 'black community' in St Anns have been predominantly Jamaican migrants who arrived in the 1960s and consequently their children and families who have been born and raised on the estate. However with the recent arrival of 'new black people' from various parts of Africa; known as 'Africans', whilst the existing black community are known as Jamaicans, or the 'black community' they are thought of by all the existing residents as indigenous to the neighbourhood and 'belong' with particularly high status, whilst the 'Africans' are on the outside with the 'Iraqis' and are not considered to 'be St Anns', consequently they have low status. Therefore when the women speak of 'black people', or 'black culture', what they are referring to is the Jamaican community and their families in St Anns.

Therefore seemingly there is not a clear racial distinction of who can be 'St Anns' and who can not. Malcolm Cross and Michael Keith (1993) write that 'race is a privileged metaphor through which the confused text of the city is rendered comprehensible' (1993 p.9), what they mean by this is how industrial cities have used racial segregation in order to visibly mark the social hierarchy of the city but also to mark the physical boundaries within its different parts. Loic Wacquant (2008) also argues a similar point through his research in a Chicago 'ghetto', where he makes clear that 'race is inscribed everywhere in the ghetto', especially as he notes in the objectivity of space and the obvious, separate and inferior institutions, but also through the subjectivity of perception, through thoughts, feelings and practices of its residents, so much so that it can go unnoticed because of the deeply entrenched order of the 'natural attitude of everyday life' (Shultz 1970 in Wacquant 2008 p.186). However Wacquant (2008) also notes that within Europe, in particular the French *banlieue*, poor neighbourhoods within the city are highly heterogeneous, and are not organised according to the principle of 'ordered racial segmentation' as in Chicago but are ordered upon a Western European understanding of social class (2008 pp.190-191). However here in St Anns the racial element of who can be 'St Anns' is not as comprehensible as Cross and Keith (1993) have noted, but there are similarities to Wacquant's depiction of the 'ghetto' even though St Anns is highly heterogeneous in terms of ethnicity of its residents, the neighbourhood offers some protection similarly to the ghetto. However in terms of how social class is ordered within the UK going almost

unnoticed, becoming about behaviour and culture in specific neighbourhoods rather than unfair disadvantages, it seems poor council housing estates are by their very nature highly ordered in class terms, and therefore have complex status related hierarchies within.

The hierarchical network is clear to those who live in St Anns, but it is extremely complex for those who do not. 'Lorraine' was just one woman who did not like the new people in St Anns, 'the Iraqis', or the Polish, or the Africans. However this racialised element to 'being St Anns' had a strong correlation with a specific and local culture, linked to both white working class and the Jamaican residents. I met a Ukrainian family who had been living in St Anns since the late 1950s they had arrived at about the same time as the Irish, and the Jamaicans, this family was very much a part of St Anns, they engaged in all aspects of the St Anns culture. The Ukrainian family had made friends with the Jamaicans because of their shared understandings of immigration at the time, and their children became close friends with the black children on the estate. Consequently this Ukrainian family were considered to be 'originals' and 'St Anns' along with the many Jamaican families, and the Irish, and the white working class families. However the 'new' people on the estate are not 'St Anns', yet they act differently, and they look too different.

However there were also new families and individuals moving into the neighbourhood from Jamaica, and they were more easily accepted as

St Anns, sometimes because they have family within the neighbourhood but often because their culture, and language, ways of dressing, and practices were already part of St Anns, and not unusual, or hard to de-code by the existing residents. There were several incidences that I came to know of where white St Anns families had done 'favours' for black St Anns families by marrying a relative from Jamaica in order to help them 'get their stay'. Therefore 'being St Anns' was heavily connected to the local culture, a hybrid culture which had grown out of the estate over many years and several generations of white and black working class families living alongside each other. Les Back (1996) noted similar findings in his research with young people in the 1990s, Back argues that within the council estate in south London where his research took place there was a process that he called 'neighbourhood nationalism'. Back noted that there were constructions of 'cultural spaces' in which 'race is temporarily and superficially banished as a meaningful concept' (1996 p.51). However as Back notes this does not mean that there is a simple notion of community, where race has been ejected in favour of we are 'all the same', what he argues is that this construction of 'cultural space' is merely the landscape of interaction and negotiation (Back 1996 p.51). Similarly to Back's findings in South London, here in St Anns there were also 'insiders' who could belong to any ethnic group, and racial boundaries had been broken down as with the Jamaicans, nevertheless there were new boundaries being erected against the 'outsiders' who are 'culturally

foreign', particularly the 'Iraqis', some of the Eastern Europeans and the Africans.

This means construction of 'cultural space' here in St Anns is ongoing. There is constant negotiation of who belongs, and who is 'St Anns', there are specific groups in St Anns who adhere and enter into those negotiations, usually with each new generation passing on their knowledge and cultural resources to the next. Hence the Jamaican culture brought into St Anns in the early 1960s is still alive, albeit taking on a different form, it has been negotiated amongst the residents of St Anns, and is used as local culture, and a cultural resource by different sections of the St Anns community. The music, food, language and dress styles of the Jamaicans have become an extremely valuable part of the fabric of St Anns rather than belonging exclusively to the Jamaicans. It will be interesting to see over time how these new groups will negotiate and interact with St Anns, and what happens within.

There are other cultural resources within the neighbourhood, which are specific and valuable resources linked to the Jamaican families on the estate. All of the women who took part in this research were white and their children were mixed- race, their fathers largely coming from the Jamaican community in St Anns. Therefore racism was something that most women talked about particularly in relation to how 'other people' looked upon their families. They knew that racism was not just something that their mixed-race children, or their partners were subject

to, many of the women had experienced different forms of racism themselves.

Whilst the neighbourhood offered safety from class prejudice, and stigma, it also offered some safety against racial prejudice, because of the large numbers of mixed-race people, and mixed-families living on the estate. The neighbourhood was not only tolerant towards inter-racial relationships, but openly accepted and encouraged the different relationships that were made by the neighbourhood's black and white residents. Some of the women had lived in other neighbourhoods in Nottingham before settling in St Anns and had encountered stigma and prejudice towards themselves and their families:

Zena *'I lived in Mapperley I was the one that went out with black men, you know 'she's the one who goes out with black men'.*

When 'Zena' had lived in another area in Nottingham she described how she had 'stood out', she was different, she was 'the girl who went out with black men', but in St Anns she had described herself and her children as 'fitting in' and part of the community. The women with older and adult children seemed to have far more accounts of racism than those women with younger children.

'Rona' whose eldest daughter was 19 and whose youngest daughter was 6 had very different experiences with all her 4 children:

Rona *'yeah I do I mean I remember when my eldest daughter was a baby in the pushchair and I was just coming out of a shop and a man looked into the pushchair and said 'you fucking nigger lover'.*

Lisa *'where was that?' .*

Rona *'in town but it was.. what 18 years ago and things were different even then to now a lot has changed even over the last few years in town at one point me and my girls were often stared at but we are just a normal family now....well especially here'.*

'Gaynor' who was now in her late forties and had originally come to St Anns in the early 1980s after being brought up in one of the many mining villages in Nottinghamshire described why it was 'easy' for her to live in St Anns:

Gaynor *'I think I saw it like London a bit more lively it was like yeah London lively and people were more accepting of anybody and I felt comfortable straight away and I suppose I wanted to move out of Tibshelf which was like Emmerdale and farmer Giles and I remember when I was about 17 and the guys from the village had been on a night trip cos anytime you wanted to get out the village it was always a bus trip a coach trip out cos there was no such thing as people just moving about like nowadays and the guys had been out to Sheffield and on the Sunday it was chalked up on the chalk board for the pool table there was what they'd wrote Tibby 6 Niggers 0 in other words they'd been out down Sheffield and fought with niggers that's how they'd classed it was disgusting it used to disgust me Lisa it really did' .*

When 'Gaynor' moved into St Anns she described herself as
'comfortable at last':

Gaynor *'it was like there was so many mixed relationships you didn't stand out any more you were just part of the community weren't you well that's how I saw it'.*

'Trudy' a single mum with two daughters also 'chose' to live in St Anns because her daughters are mixed race, she thought because of the amount of 'white mums' on the estate she 'fitted':

Trudy *'I don't really go far from St Anns it makes you feel more comfortable here cos people have had years to get used to it [mixed race relationships] so they have, and I was talking to someone the other day that there's not many families here who haven't got mixed race kids somewhere in the family so people have had to get used to it'.*

The way women had been simultaneously sexualised and racialised, and subject to stigma and exclusion because of their personal relationships and their mixed-race children, was often given as a reason usually in defence for living in St Anns. It seemed like a constant struggle for the women to explain why they lived in St Anns in the face of such overwhelming negativity about the neighbourhood. However all of the women said they felt valued and of value at least within the estate because of their inter-racial relationships and their mixed- race children. 'Amanda' was especially proud of her daughter and her own choices. She thought that her family was doing a public service for the positives of multi-cultural Britain:

Amanda *'By living here I'm doing something for the country (laughing) there has been like a boom of mixed race children here most white families round here now has got a mixed race child in their family and that's a good thing it breaks down barriers I am breaking down barriers'.*

'Amanda' values her daughter's heritage and also finds value from her own personal choices; she is 'breaking down racial barriers'. This view of St Anns presented by 'Amanda', a place where there are pioneering

inroads into social cohesion, is not the conclusion you might get if you were to examine crime figures, unemployment or health related statistics, if you were to look at those quantitative measurements of St Anns it would be easy to conclude that St Anns is bad for your health, career, and safety. However I have already noted that this 'cultural space' is merely the landscape of interaction and negotiation (Back 1996 p.51) which is constantly shifting, the 'new people' on the estate are part of this negotiation, as are the mixed-families, the white working class, and the Jamaicans. Nevertheless the story does not end here with St Anns being the absolute refuge for women who encounter stigma, prejudice, and exclusion, as I have said throughout this thesis this is a complex account of a council estate and working class life within it, it acknowledges those negotiations, and interactions showing the difficulties but also offers an insight into the more positive aspects of council estate life.

Even though all of the women talked about racism throughout their accounts, there were often several and different ways the women thought of racism. Sometimes it was in the form of what they had experienced from other white people regarding their personal relationships and their children's heritage; however they also talked about racism which came from black people and in particular black women. 'Kirsty' was the youngest woman I met.

She was nineteen and her baby was only 6 weeks old when I met her:

Kirsty *'I get looks especially cos my boyfriends Jamaican and he's a lot older than me her [baby] Dads twice my age so it was like you get looked at for the age difference then you get looked at the colour and obviously when I was pregnant and people would see me with him with my big belly it was like [gives a look] and it was mostly from black people from black women you get that look of disgust'.*

'Kirsty' felt that she was subject to negative stereotypes because of her age and also because of her partner's nationality and ethnicity, her sister 'Lucy' whose 'baby daddy' was also Jamaican told me that she had encountered racism but because 'Lucy' and 'Kirsty' had only ever lived in St Anns from being small children their experience of other communities was limited, so when I asked 'Lucy' about racism she told me that she had experienced racism:

'yes but not as much as you get it from black people don't get me wrong cos I've got just as much as a screw face and a mouth as anyone and it don't matter what colour your skin is but there are some screw face black women look on you like you're scum and they don't agree that you're with black men it's like they're too good to be with a white woman and some white people look on it like they're just black bastards'.

I spoke to 'Rona' a single mum in her thirties with four daughters she also had lived on the estate from being a child, I asked her how she thought things might be different for her own daughters:

'I think they do have a lot more to deal with cos you can have a bunch of kids all the same age but all be different colours and there is still black people out there who are still racist I think I've noticed it more with black people cos a lot of girls that I know who are my friends have mixed race kids... so if I've felt racism it is mainly with black people I think it just boils down to that black women are jealous cos we've took their men away from them or they think we have but if you sit down with black men they've got a different story to tell [laughs] its true yeah but then I've got some black girls who are friends but they don't see it that's what

gets me and there's some that don't see it and accept you for who you are or it's like 'ah yeah you've got black well done' and they like open up their arms to you like family and then there's just others that snub you all the way down the line'.

When the women I spoke to brought up the subject of how black people and especially black women had treated them, this was uncomfortable for me and them. Our children were not white, we all had black friends and relatives, however this came up in every conversation I had with the women in many different contexts, they knew as we talked that I also must have had similar experiences, which made it easier for them to talk about it. However all of the women recognised that this type of racism was different, and talked about black women being unhappy about 'white women stealing their men'. At the beginning of this section I explained that the Jamaican community had many resources of value within the estate and black men appeared to be the most valuable.

Rice 'n peas 'n chicken: and other white working class traditions

Even though it is difficult to show and to write about the complexities of the racial framework here in St Anns, when there are clear antagonisms between newly arriving migrants from Africa, and the Middle East, and at the same time the women clearly value and engage in many aspects of Jamaican cultural resources, whilst consistently speaking of prejudices they have experienced from predominantly black women. There is a real complexity here, and I am not denying the existence of racism towards white people by black people, especially when many of the women described what they had experienced as racism, there was

a more overwhelming understanding, there was fierce and often aggressive competition amongst the women for some of the limited resources available to them; I argued in an earlier chapter that within this estate there are limited social resources such as housing, health care, good education for your children, and decent prospects for employment. I have also discussed the 'fears' that many of the women had regarding 'new comers' especially new migrants, particularly relating to issues of safety and the limited social resources within the neighbourhood which were shared very thinly throughout the community. There was also an acknowledgement that some of the resentments that black women might have for white women who have black partners are forms of competition for resources, cultural, and symbolic resources, and in this particular context the resources are black men, but also the Jamaican culture:

Amanda *'well I know the young girls now they wear the big gold earrings and the black hair styles and I think that's all to do with competition'.*

'Amanda' talks about the competition she has both seen and experienced over the years for black men, but she also explains how this competition has manifested itself through local practices, style and fashion. 'Amanda' told me in the 1970s and 1980s the black women in the neighbourhood really made an effort in having 'white hair styles' in order to compete with the white woman's 'good hair', however she explains that now in St Anns it is the white girls who are adapting their

style and fashion to compete again for black men, by adopting black styles of dressing.

The two friends I met who spent most of their time together 'Sonia' and 'Shelly', were talking about their mixed relationships, 'Sonia' was always defensive whenever we talked about 'mixed relationships', she was never comfortable about talking, or even acknowledging mixed relationships, and always asked me why I was so interested in white women exclusively, this was whether I brought up the subject or any of the other women as we chatted. 'Sonia' often avoided talking about being in a mixed relationship, however as her friend was talking one day about a young girl she knew who had just had a baby the question came up about why so many white girls had mixed-race babies:

Shelley *'have you heard (girl's name) has had her baby he's called Dior'*

Sonia *'is it 'Jermaine's' baby?'*

Shelley *'(laughing) another one of your breed (speaking to her son)*

Lisa *'there's a lot of mixed race babies now here more than even when my son was little why do you think that is?'*

Sonia *'cos of white women (laughing) what do you have to ask that for?'*

Lisa *'It's a fair question'*

Sonia *'why what are you saying that black people are more attractive? what can you say to that question?'* .

However as we sat and ate in the community centre, a few of us were talking about the music being played. It was Damien Marley's 'Welcome to Jamrock'. We were discussing that Damian Marley was the most talented out of the Marley's and his mother had been a white woman

who was also 'Miss Jamaica', we began talking again about mixed-relationships, and this time Sonia joined in.

Sonia *'well you do sometimes get them feelings that you shouldn't say it are them black people gonna look at me a certain way cos I'm white and should I listen to the music you do feel angst about that that you shouldn't be listening to it cos you're white but so what well it's like the other week my husband was at his sisters and this this black lady walked in while he was having somert (something) to eat rice 'n peas and chicken and she said to him I bet you wish your wife could do food like that don't yer well he made her look so small he said listen yer see when my wife does her rice and peas her rice comes out red and she said well I have to give it to her cos I'm black and I can't get it red you see she tried to out me down as a white woman even though I wont (wasn't) there'.*

'Sonia' talks about the 'angst' she often feels when she engages in what she calls 'black culture', she fears that she might be judged for being white and not have a legitimate entitlement to listen to the music, or cook the food. The neighbourhood hierarchies here in St Anns are difficult to understand but they are spoken about by the women. 'Sonia' knows that being a white woman is another 'less than', the dominant culture in St Anns has been heavily influenced by Jamaican culture, and for many of the white working class in the neighbourhood reggae music, Jamaican food, and 'black styles' of dressing have become the visible markers that 'being St Anns' embodies. These markers have become extremely valuable within the local value system. Whilst at 'Shirley's' house one afternoon we were arguing with her 18 year old daughter

'Rachel' who is mixed race, and 'Rachel's' friend who is white about the size of their earrings.

Shirley *'some of her friends won't go out with white boys cos they tell me it's unfashionable'*

Rachel *'but saying that there there are some mixed race girls and black girls who go out with white boys who wanna be black'*

Shirley *'it's like [daughter's friend] I say to her tek them earnings out you look ridiculous even yardie girls (Jamaican girls) don't wear earrings that big you can wear em as bracelets duck put em on your wrists not in your ears... and I'm straightforward I'm against white people wanting to be black but I've got a pride in myself and of my colour yer see I was always proud of myself I used to fight with black girls all the time..... they still give me dirty looks they thought I should be at the bottom and they should be above me but I didn't think that you see here in St Anns it's all switched round black men at the top with black women then mixed-race that we created then us white women and white men at the bottom'.*

'Shirley' explains the 'pecking order' in St Anns as she sees it: black men at the top, then black women, mixed-race, as she states 'we created', and then white women followed by white men. This was often discussed by the women on the estate not always as clear as 'Shirley' explained it, but there was a general acknowledgement that the women in this community placed a much higher value on all things 'Jamaican', and those resources were very highly valued within the community.

The women in St Anns find value and worth from what is available locally, these resources help make their lives a little easier, they have a use-value to them that has no transferable value on the outside. These resources make up the local value system and they are recognised as valuable by those who engage in that system. There is nothing wrong or subversive in wearing big gold-hooped earrings, rather it acquires meaning and significance only in its relation to its context, but we must

never forget 'the intention of the performer, and the interpretation of the audience' (McNay 2008 p.168). Therefore wearing large gold earrings, having gold teeth, or wearing branded sportswear shows the deep entrenchment of how arbitrary social hierarchies upon the body are interpreted. This is an important argument because when individuals and groups, and especially those from poor neighborhoods and low social class positions engage in social practices, social networks, cultural practices and ideas that are not recognised and therefore misunderstood by the wider population, these practices are either invisible, or of no value, or count against.

Conclusion

The interests, beliefs, practices, and other people that matter most to the women on this estate are not simply things which they happen to like or prefer, but things in terms of which their identities are formed and also to which they are committed, even when those interests, beliefs, and practices are pursued and can have a negative effect on the individual. The women on the estate invest in particular practices in order to 'fit in', and to 'be St Anns'. They value the local resources which are available to them and engage in those local practices in order to feel valued, and worthy, they are available to them, they are accessible and they are proven.

However some of the practices they engage in such as wearing big gold earrings may carry value and worth on the estate, and in other similar neighbourhoods. However they are aware that these practices, their taste are often ridiculed. The important part of the argument in relation to the women here in St Anns who have invested in practices, ways of being, and ways of thinking, which are often seen by others as unproductive and self damaging, but the women have found these practices, and ways of being of use-value within and around the estate.

However what the women engage in within the estate and value, for example 'fitting in', 'being known', engaging in what they refer to as 'black culture' in the way they look, speak, and cook, are not simply resources 'for and on the inside', these preferences, practices, and values also create an inside, they are simultaneously 'St Anns', whilst they create what it means to be St Anns. In Chapter 5 I discussed the issues around mobility on the estate, the difficulties in leaving the estate, both physically and mentally a concept I have termed 'estatism'. In this chapter I discussed how the women particularly valued 'safety' which might seem a contradiction, as it was their location within the estate and their attachment to the estate which offered the women safety from class prejudice, racism, and also offered forms of support from friends and neighbours. In the next chapter I will continue to discuss the resources within the neighbourhood but also how the women find value for themselves and their families even though they are often 'looked down on'. I will show how 'being St Anns' gives the

women and their families value, but simultaneously can also cause damage by building walls with foundations of fear, anger, and resentment.

Chapter 9

Finding Value

Introduction

In the last chapter I discussed the resources that are valued by the women within this community, they told me that being part of the estate was extremely important, 'being St Anns' is not simply where you live, it can also define who you are, how you look, how you dress, how you raise your children, your understanding of yourself and how you fit within the neighbourhood. These are the resources the women talk about as useful, and valuable to them, friendship, and family and community connections both official and unofficial.

Therefore having established that 'being St Anns' is valuable and valued within the neighbourhood, allowing the women and their children to 'be known', offers some safety within the estate, and giving access to a social life. In order to 'be St Anns' there are cultural markers which say that 'you belong', and that you are 'authentic', and therefore it seems that local inclusion to those who are socially excluded becomes ever important. In this last chapter I will discuss the local value system which is used by the women in this community, what are the resources involved in this value system, how it is used, and what are the outcomes for those who use and value it. I have already started a discussion about the importance of the Jamaican community in St

Anns, the culture which was brought to St Anns during the 1950s and 1960s through West Indian immigration, the music, the food, the styles of dressing but also the notions of family and community which have fitted in well with the white working class in the neighbourhood. There are real positives attached to this local value system, St Anns has become a vibrant and multi-cultural neighbourhood, and the women tell of their great pride and admiration in their children's mixed-race heritage, and also their own engagement in the Jamaican community and culture.

This chapter examines the networks, and the local hierarchies which form part of the local value system which can give varying amounts of value, but also respect which is extremely important within the estate. This chapter argues that this alternative value system which is up and running, and used within the neighbourhood becomes all the more valuable because of the lack of official resources such as good education, decent employment prospects, and a universal respect which the people who live on council estates in the UK are denied (Haylett 2001, Skeggs 2006, 1997, Hanley 2007, Lawler 2008).

The thesis has argued so far that the white working class in the UK have been subject to a common disrespect, their practices are mis-recognised (Fraser 1997), and they are positioned as lacking in everything that a person needs to be a full and respected member of a modern British society (Haylett 2001, Skeggs 1997, 2006, Lawler 2008). Therefore it would not be unreasonable to suggest that if you are a

person known as lacking, un-modern, and 'dirty white' you might attempt a process of moving away from these positions and finding value for yourself through a process of re-making your identity into something you value rather than a valued identity. In the last chapter I explored how the women thought of themselves in terms of social class, it appeared that their class positions were rarely spoken of, however the disrespect they encountered and their understandings of 'being looked down on' and being 'lower' were always prevalent in their conversations. In chapter 3 I discussed Bev Skeggs (1997) work which found similar processes with the white-working class women she researched in the 1990s, but unlike Skeggs's research, the women in St Anns have not attempted to dis-identify with their class position by adopting what they think are middle class practices (1997 pp.93-95). Subsequently this chapter shows how the white women on this estate use what is available to them in order to become a person of value. They work within the networks and hierarchies on the estate, and they find value from what is local, available and achievable; this makes sense to them even when those practices and behaviours used to manage their problems, and become a person of value are misrecognised, and stigmatised.

In spite of some of the positive aspects I have discussed regarding neighbourhood inclusion, towards the end of this chapter I will examine some of the negative consequences in using a local value system, in the absence of real and available institutional resources such as education, safety, respect, and decent employment prospects.

Throughout the thesis I have brought attention to the damaging drug economy in St Anns, and the problems it causes within the estate. Towards the end of this chapter I will return to this issue, and discuss what has happened to this community because of a lack of resources, massive inequalities, and universal disrespect of its residents. The drug economy for some has become embedded within the local value system, which has offered value, and resources for some of those who use it, and recognise it, whilst simultaneously causing enormous damage to the estate, and its residents.

Jamaicanisation

In the last chapter I showed the significance that many of the women who live in St Anns with their mixed-race children place upon what they understand to be Jamaican culture. All of the women I met had 'baby daddies' who were West Indian or of West Indian descent, and the majority of the children's paternal families were Jamaican, although there were a few of the paternal families who came from other parts of the West Indies. The West Indian community and their culture have been popular with the white-working class in St Anns, especially as the first generation of Jamaican children began to attend the local schools, and build friendships with the white children. The rich Jamaican culture became popular within the neighbourhood, and many of the women I spoke to recount stories of their parents in the 1960s mixing with the Jamaicans:

Amanda *'My Daddy used to come into St Anns years years ago and gamble with the West Indians they used to be called the blues, shebeens and he used to be a gambler and he used to say 'beautiful people to talk with and gamble with but I've seen how they beat their women and I don't want that for my daughter' then my Mum and Dad split up and he went back to Wales and my mum met up with my step dad who is black and they are still together'.*

'Shirley' told me what St Anns was like in the mid 1970s when she first met her 'baby daddy':

'when we were young I used to mix in his culture and then he used to mix in mine in the working men's club so it wont just me mixing in his culture we were in both each others culture we would meet up with my mam and uncles in the chase pub then we would go to the blues I was proud of where I came from, but that dint stop me enjoying the blues as well it was the music and the dancing and the staying out late well it was rebellious the rebellious side in me that's what it was'.

Many of the women remembered 'the early days' when there were two different and separate cultures in St Anns, the white working men's clubs, where the St Anns English and Irish would meet, and 'the blues' and 'Shebeens' which were all night illegal drinking venues run by the Jamaicans. However most of the women's memories and experiences are of a shared St Anns. Louise who is now in her forties, and has a 23 year old daughter recounts her experiences as a teenager:

'we went to the youth centre and met black men and black lads I think it was erm.. even though I went out with some white lads but the fun was always there with the black lads and I think well you know.. how I met (daughter's) Dad it was from the Kings Hall Youth Centre and I was about 17 I was walking home from my friends house and he was washing his car and I said 'hey up' and he asked me out and that was it if it wont for walking home I wouldn't have met him and now I wish I never did.. Bastard.. (laughing)'.

However it is the Jamaican culture and practices which have become dominant within the neighbourhood and therefore valuable especially to the many women in St Anns who have mixed race children. When I spoke to 'Della', she told me that being part of the black British and Jamaican community in St Anns, and engaging in the culture connected with this community was extremely important for her not just because she had mixed race children:

'I've never really mixed with white people to me to go to a white club to me I don't feel like I fit in, if I go to a black club I feel more comfortable because that's the kind of music I like.... I was into it even before I met the kids' Dad....I always mixed with black people so as I say for me to go to a white club I can't go to it cos I'm not into that sort of music I feel like the people aren't the same as me even though they're the same colour as me... you know people will say to me do you know you're white I know I'm white but it's hard to explain to someone who don't get it'.

Jamaican culture, and being identified with the Jamaican community was particularly important to 'Lorraine', she explained to me that 'black people' had always been in her life and for her, the food, music, and ways of dressing were as 'natural' as 'being Irish':

Lorraine *'well I think Irish and black mix really well they just do back in the day what was it no blacks, no dogs, no Irish what can you say'.*

'Lorraine' was proud of her connection with the Jamaican community in St Anns and talked about her childhood memories of dancing to reggae music, and eating West Indian food, however now 'Lorraine' has her own children she feels that it is important to cook Jamaican food for her own family. However she also told me that there is a value attached to

how authentic you can do Jamaican food, and the knowledge you have about Jamaican culture, Lorraine told me that anyone can cook chicken, but how many women her age, white or black can cook good green banana:

Lorraine *'my auntie always went out with black guys so I used to go round there and she used to cook and the music was there so I was into it from about 10..... I like the reggae music and the Jamaican food I only listen to reggae music now and every day I have to cook the food I have to cook curries, rice, Yam, green banana I have to cook everything how much white woman can cook all dem tings'.*

Many of the women talked about their authenticity within the estate, and this usually meant how connected they were to the local culture which was heavily influenced by the black British and Jamaican culture.

'Claire' left her natural mother's home when she was just 13, and moved into 'Shirley's' home with her three children, although she told me, to start with it was 'strange' because up until that point she had not known anything about Jamaican, or mixed families because her natural mother was extremely racist, and she had not been allowed to visit her school friends' homes:

'My mum who fostered me would cook West Indian food so it was always there and some weekends I mean I was horrified when I first ate rice and peas I thought God what's that but that's because I was conditioned to mash potatoes and sausage and beans or something and some weekends there'd be arguments cos Shirley would say Jamaican this weekend or English and I would always say English but then there'd be my step brother and sisters, Shirley's kids who'd say and Shirley preferably cos she likes spicy food but she'd say Jamaican or English and I'd often lose out and I used to think God if I was black would I just eat that but then I realised that not all black people would just eat rice and peas and chicken'.

However as 'Claire' began to fit in with 'Shirley's' family she began to 'feel' different, as she said to me 'not black, but not white-white either'. Whilst 'Claire' was attending her secondary school in St Anns a club was set up 'The 4.30 Club' exclusively for black students where they could learn about 'black history and culture'. 'Claire' wanted to go with her foster sister and brother who were mixed race and she could not understand why she was not allowed to go:

'I remember this club happening and all my friends signing up for it and we had an assembly about it and the headmistress explained that the club was just for black people and I remember sitting there on my chair in that assembly as she said it getting really angry about it I wanted to jump up and say why...I want to learn'.

'Claire' was eventually allowed to attend 'The 4.30 Club' because of the tenacity of 'Shirley' her unofficial foster mother whose two mixed-race children were attending. This is part of 'Claire's' story why she is 'authentic' to St Anns and she said many times she is a 'lifer', she traces her St Anns history from the severe poverty and abuse she experienced living with her natural family in St Anns, through to living with 'Shirley's' mixed-race family, where as she says 'she learned to cook food', 'dance' and 'plait hair', to her own life with her daughter who is also mixed race. 'Claire' like many of the women I have met in this community enjoys the 'authenticity' that her knowledge of St Anns, and the knowledge she has of the local Jamaican culture affords her, she finds value for herself and her daughter within her knowledge of the neighbourhood.

Bev Skeggs (2006 p.91) argues that culture has become a central site for the exchange of value, and also the rate it is exchanged, in Chapter 3 I used the arguments raised by Chris Haylett (2001) to show that when the white-working class have been racialised as the 'dirty white' becoming 'a culturally burdensome whiteness' the legitimacy of the symbolic order starts creaking (2006 pp.90-92). The women on this estate like many other women on other council estates within the UK experience poverty and the absence of universal resources such as education, employment, and positive recognition. Skeggs (2004), and Haylett (2001) argue that these absences and poverty have to maintain an appearance of order to justify their existence, therefore culture becomes the site of exchange, in that inclusion becomes cultural. Skeggs (2004) argues that the culture, the aspirations, and the values of the 'rest of us' become those of the nation, whilst those who do not appear to share or achieve those cultural aspirations and values are excluded and different because of their culture. It is right to think that in the absence of those cultural goods that 'the rest of us' have access, those who do not have this access do not sit down and accept their fate, rather they build a value system of their own which works for them as they have done in St Anns, even though it only has worth and value in their own community and sometimes similar communities, neighbourhoods, and social groups.

The local value system here in St Anns is constantly changing; it is dynamic in its nature and is mediated through those who currently live

on the estate, part of the mediation comes through their experiences of oppression, and through social power relations such as class, gender, and race, but also through historical understandings and processes of those relations. Part of the current value system in St Anns relates to the mixing of white working class, and Jamaican understandings, practices, and preferences. The exchange of culture between the different groups of people who live in St Anns is central to how the women find value within this community, and also to the local value system.

‘Black Pearl precious little girl’

‘Black pearl precious little girl
Let me put you up where you belong
Because I love you, Black pearl pretty little girl
You been in the background much too long
Together we'll stand so straight and so tall'

Horace Faith: Trojan Records 1970

Although the culture that is associated with the Jamaican families on the estate as I have shown so far is especially valued but it is not the only site of value, the Jamaican families themselves have value on the estate, therefore being a part of one of the Jamaican families also holds worth. Many of the women have discussed this as being particularly significant to ‘being ‘St Anns’, and the value of this specific multi-cultural identity has been described by the women as ‘modern’, and an urban identity. Therefore it seems that mixing their own white working class culture with an Afro-Caribbean culture creates a culture and identity superior to what they have described as ‘the old days’, when everything

was 'white and boring'. The women on this estate constantly talk of the pride they have of being 'more than just white', and their 'beautiful mixed-race children', along with their modern 'multi-cultural families'. This was always discussed as the positive side of their physical, social and class positions, which they all without exception understood as 'at the bottom'. It was this part of their lives, their own mixed-identities, and mixed-families they felt was really valuable.

Many of the women discussed how they thought their children were special, and beautiful, and they had given their children something of value which they did not have. They had given their children a birth status 'of not being just white', which they valued but they also knew that this was valued within the estate. 'Claire's' biological mother was racist and 'Claire' told me she thought that she had serious mental health issues. She remembers telling her biological mother she was pregnant:

'when she found out I was having a baby I remember her ringing and saying 'don't ever fucking think you're bringing that dirty black bastard baby home in this house don't ever'.... I remember taking her in the house and my mum being dead like do I want to touch her and I was like be grateful I'm bringing my daughter into this squalor.... I remember my mum holding her but you could tell she wasn't looking at her like she looked at her other grandchildren and that and then me just taking my daughter back and just feeling this overwhelming feeling of protection for her but feeling really proud of how my daughter looked, she was quite dark with thick black hair and big beautiful blue eyes she was and still is beautiful'.

'Claire' told me that her daughter also felt special and together they enjoyed shopping at the West Indian stalls on the market for particular hair products for mixed race people. 'Claire's' daughter who is 9 years

old has soft curly hair, she asked her black friends at school to look at her hair and advise her what products she needed and where she might buy them, 'Claire' then took her to the stall and they spent an afternoon buying hair products for 'mixed race' hair, 'Claire' said that her daughter felt 'very special' and 'individual' because she knew that there was hair products on sale especially for her. 'Claire' also thought this was special because she had to go to a particular market stall which only sold West Indian products, this was 'something special' for 'Claire', and she told me that the West Indian people on the stall 'were helpful', and treated them as 'their own'. This may be trivial to most people but being treated as 'special', and 'being included' within a community for 'Claire', and her daughter was extremely important, especially considering that 'Claire' has spent most of her life feeling worthless, and being told she was worthless by her natural mother, only feeling part of a family when she was unofficially fostered by a neighbour who happened to be white, and have mixed race children. Being a 'good mother' to her daughter was 'Claire's' ambition, her ambition and hopes for her daughter were that she would be a good person, and a good neighbour, she knew that living in St Anns did not make you a bad person, despite what was said about it:

'cos all I ever say to my daughter is all I want you to do is live.. live your life and enjoy it what I don't want is for her to have babies at 15.... hope she has a job and a car I want her to love life and see her earning money that's all I want in my life to see her achieve and to be proud of who she is even if she is living in St Anns to be proud of that and to stick up for people and be proud and to be able to feel confident enough to go into Marks and Spencer on a one off and treat your family to a meal I want her to check on her neighbours to be a good person'.

'Claire' hoped that her daughter would have a better life than she had had, and she hoped that her daughter would have value as a person in her own right despite being from St Anns. 'Claire' talked of things that she valued, and hoped her daughter could achieve this value, a job, a car, being a good person by sticking up for others, and having the confidence to go into the food hall in Marks and Spencer, the things that 'Claire' did not feel she had access to.

The women who live on this estate have a great pride in their mixed-race children, and there is an 'in-joke' on the estate even though St Anns is a poor neighbourhood in Nottingham the kids are the best dressed. The mothers on this estate place great importance on how their children look, and how well they are dressed, and also how 'good' their hair is. The women spend hours plaiting and braiding, and oiling their children's hair, or paying someone else on the estate to do so, any money they have they spend on the clothes their children wear, often buying expensive and designer labels. The women I met never tired of telling me about their children. 'Louise' who's family was one of the Irish families within St Anns, and who had her daughter in the early 1980s, told me that both her and her elder sister had mixed race baby daughters and they would sing along to old ska records:

'We used to play records and sing 'black pearl precious little girl', and 'black is beautiful to them'.

'Louise' told me that her daughter, even though she is now 'a big woman' (adult) would always be 'a black pearl' to her and she often

looked at her and still could not believe that something so beautiful belonged to her.

Like everything here in St Anns the story does not stop here, with the women at least being respected and valued as mothers. The women often gave their children interesting and exotic sounding names which they thought added to their children's value such as 'Shanelle', and 'Dior', 'Tyree', and 'Ymani'. However as in almost everything that the women on this estate did, the names of their children had two values, the value on the inside of the estate and amongst those who understood and worked within this particular value system, and then the value on the outside amongst those who did not understand this value system. These types of names which are associated as 'Black names and are deemed as low status' (Edwards and Caballero 2008 p.41) which the women gave their children. On the estate the names were thought of as special and exotic, but amongst those who did not share this particular value system they are ridiculed, stigmatised, and de-valued. The BBC (23/09/05) reported in a segment named 'Children's names spell trouble' that teachers were making snap judgments about children from their names, the BBC reported that teachers were particularly wary of children who had exotic or 'chav' sounding names such as 'Charmaine', or 'Jordan', whilst names like 'Charlotte', and 'Joseph', usually meant 'delightful children'. This example of how the children's names are valued on the estate but often become sites of ridicule on the outside, helps us to understand how culture can become

the site of how value is negotiated. 'Good taste' is that which belongs to the middle class, it is normal and respectable (Bourdieu 1984 pp.52-56). By glamorising their children's names, the women's 'taste' for the exotic is ridiculed, becoming signifiers of bad taste, common, and 'chav like'. Their use of the exotic, their mixed-race children, and exotic sounding names, which they believe moves them away from the valueless positions of being the 'dirty white' are again subject to misrecognition, disrespect, and adds another marker to how they are known by 'the rest of us' (Skeggs 2004 p.90) .

Once you go black you never go back

This valued understanding of 'blackness' and Jamaican culture on the estate is heavily associated with black West Indian masculinity associated with street and urban culture, incorporating language, music, food, and dress. This is a specific understanding of masculinity and is recognised as extremely prestigious in and around the estate. Even though this local understanding is linked to black urban masculinity, you do not necessarily have to be 'black' or male in order to benefit from its value. Dick Hebdige (1983, 1979), Roger Hewitt (1986), Stuart Hall (1990), Les Back (1996) and Paul Gilroy (2000) have over the last thirty years mapped how heavily stereotyped images of black masculinity, particularly the fantasies regarding sexual potency, black men being 'uber cool', through music, style, and ways of speaking as well as the

link to criminality, and macho aggression have infiltrated the British psyche, and especially within white working-class youth culture.

Les Back (1996) noted that the histories and cultural politics of the Caribbean and black America has formed the raw materials for a creative process in which 'black culture is actively made and re-made' (1996 p.184). Back (1996) also argued that within his research during the 1990s in South London that the constant process of 'fashioning and re-fashioning' is happening within distinct and particular urban social relations and creating a cultural-hybridity amongst those particular groups (1996 p.184).

St Anns in Nottingham has all the elements for those creative processes to allow 'black culture to be re-made' in negotiation with the white-working class residents (1996 p.184). This is an extremely interesting and relevant use of 'cultural hybridity' (Bhabha 1990) which has emerged in St Anns and allows another dimension in understanding contemporary identities and theorising possible fragmentation in white working class understandings of themselves especially within multi-cultural urban neighbourhoods. As it is not only the white mothers on this estate who have mixed race children who engage in this hybrid and entwined culture of 'blackness', and 'working classness'. It is widely understood and practised throughout the estate as 'Claire' explained to me what she sees within the estate and how this particular understanding of 'blackness' in practice works:

'you see these white guys trying to walk like black people and you think God it must take you all day to get across the street but you're prepared to do it to keep this image and they have this tough face and you think 'you're not black'.

This is only one of many observations by the women in this research of how 'blackness' is often practised within the estate especially by young white men who appear to have practised 'being authentic' within the community through the visual markers of ways of dressing, walking, and speaking. In fact many of the women struggled to explain their own 'feelings' of ethnicity. 'Gina' a 21 year old single mum of two boys told me:

'I don't see myself as full white neither do my friends especially black friends I don't think they see me as white or a white person, they know I'm white but they look at you different you know cos you've got mixed race kids'.

'Gina' also extended this complexity to her personal relationships:

'yeah I have tried to go out with a white boy before but the white boys think they're black they've got gold teeth they've got the black image so you might as well go out with someone real'.

When 'Gina' talks about 'someone real' she is talking about 'authenticity' on the estate, and what is real and authentic for 'Gina' is the black male, who also holds the most value for her. She demonstrates this in this next extract in how she thinks about 'white men':

'it might seem horrible but you know I think boring old white pub man, and I think of my Dad who just plays football and I know black people play football you know but I just think like beer belly and how they dress and then black people it is different you know you can go to all these different dances different music, food and it's interesting'.

It seems that the taking on of 'black traditions and style' has resulted in a radical reconfiguration of white working class culture in multi-ethnic locales (Gilroy 2004, Back 2000, Hall 2000, Hewitt 1986). This has led to Paul Gilroy (2004, 2000) suggesting that 'Black culture has become a class culture.....as two generations have appropriated it and discovered its seductive meaning for their own' (Gilroy 2000, p.273). The women here in St Anns understand the value and the worth of what Gilroy (2000) calls 'black culture' and have appropriated it into their own lives, passing it down to their children.

'Kirsty' and Lucy' were two sisters that I met who had been born in Glasgow and came to St Anns as very young children. They told me that although they were essentially Scottish they felt very much a part of St Anns, and also a part of the 'black community'. Their family had moved into a council house on the estate when 'Kirsty' was only three years old, and 'Lucy' was a baby in the mid 1980s. Both sisters had Jamaican 'baby daddies' and both sisters used Jamaican patois within their everyday language:

Lucy *'People has said to me 'you think you're black cos you talk like that' well actually no I don't, I see it as street even now I'd get it as a big woman (adult) in the pub you know people say why you speak like that and I'm well that's how I've always spoke'.*

'Lucy's' sister 'Kirsty' who was 19, and had a 6 week old baby daughter when I first met her also spoke in a strong Jamaican patois and like 'Lucy' had defended this way of speaking:

Kirsty *'well a lot of people have said that I think I'm black and I wanna be black but I don't see it like that I see it like it was the community I was brought up in you know if you stick a black person in a white community they're gonna grow up white and if you stick a white person in a black community they're obviously gonna have black ways about them'.*

The sisters see themselves as 'authentic' in St Anns. They have grown up on the estate, and have engaged in the local culture, they both have black friends and both are in relationships with Jamaican black men, they are well known on the estate and therefore 'fit in', the two sisters have adopted an identity which they describe as 'street'. Les Back (1996) argues that identities are dynamic and are social products which cannot be reduced to a single individual and can have local, national or international variants (1996 p.50). The St Anns identity which is valued within the estate appears to have all of those variants: the local is the St Anns element, the national comes from the ongoing class centred disadvantages within the UK, and the international comes from the different migrant workers in this case Jamaicans who have settled and shared their culture. 'Kirsty' and 'Lucy' have often been accused as 'wanting to be black', which they both reject, however they also reject a white identity, opting for 'Scottie Yardie' as a way of explaining their families. They both recognise the importance of the identity that has been passed on to them through their immediate Scottish family, however they also want recognition for the culture they feel they have been brought up with from the streets of their community which they recognise as Jamaican. They both discussed how their family photo would now look in relation to when they were children, as both their

partners were black, and their children were mixed-race, they used this analogy to explain that they were no longer a white family. This was common throughout the estate. All of the women acknowledged themselves as 'white' but many of the women tried to explain often in great depth why and how they were 'different' to other white people, and many referred to their recent family photos.

Within the estate I noted many times how the word 'white' was being used as a disparaging term usually through 'piss taking'. On one occasion I was in the community centre, it was rice n' peas n' chicken day, and there were a few of us sat eating, there were also lots of kids as it was half term. One of the women who was sitting with us got up to go over to the chip shop, she had decided not to have the Jamaican food on sale that day in the community centre. As she got up one of the women asked her where she was going and when she told her she was going to the chip shop another woman started laughing and called her 'white'. All of the women were white, however the word 'white' was used to 'take the piss' out of her choice of English particularly over Jamaican food. I have also heard 'English' used in the community in a similar and disparaging way especially when relating to food, and clothing. The young people on the estate often use 'white', or 'English' when 'cussing' someone's clothing particularly training shoes, 'white man's trainers, or 'English man's trainers' are usually the ultimate 'cuss' for your footwear. Appropriating this local culture, and engaging in the local value system through what you wear, eat, and how you speak is a matter of the

embodied social practice, a constant reiteration and 'performance' of particular discourses (Butler 1990). The particular discourse here is of people who have become known as 'socially excluded' outside of the norms of society. Their understandings of who they are, have both been informed on the inside of the estate where they feel comfortable and fit in, but also by how they are judged, and viewed often harshly on the outside of their community. Recognising who they are is a constant negotiation as Charles Taylor (1994) states 'through dialogue, partly overt, partly internal and with others' (1994 p.32).

It is through these practices, and this dialogue of recognition on the estate, which determines how 'authentic' you are. All of the women I spoke to recognised these practices and engaged in them despite age, this type of street culture is often associated with young people and youth however here in St Anns it is associated with 'being local' and 'being St Anns'. 'Dawn' had three children the eldest two were white, and her youngest was mixed-race she told me that:

'well you have to fit you have to fit like... I've been here all my life it's funny really cos when I go out cos most of my friends are either black or mixed-race I think I've probably only got three or four white people who are my friends.....and for instance I was out a couple of months ago with a white friend and we went to a pub where she likes to go and it was a white pub and I felt uncomfortable'.

'Dawn' went on to say where she did feel comfortable, which she described as 'black places':

'I feel like I fit in that kind of place I feel like I slip in a lot better I love the music that's my music... I play the music for all three of my kids and my daughter she's white and she understands patois and sings to all the words'.

This connection to what they call 'black culture', and the 'black community' is important to the women, they feel like people of value on the estate through this engagement but it was often more than this. The women also felt they might be valued on the outside of the estate through the concept of multi-culturalism, but not through being white and working-class.

When the women spoke of the things they did like about St Anns multi-culturalism was something they often brought up. The next excerpt is part of a conversation between 'Tanya' and her mum 'Sharon' while they were discussing all the things they liked about St Anns. The primary schools were again well regarded and as many women have told me they believe their children are getting something really important by going to school in St Anns, and 'multi-culturalism' was often brought up as the extra value that their children were gaining, all white neighbourhoods and schools were never appealing to the women on this estate.

However 'Sharon' thought that she was also gaining something from the neighbourhood's ethnic mix, as she said 'it's us the lower class ones' who are mixing and she believed that could only be a good thing:

Tanya *'that's one of the positive things about St Anns for the fact is that if you go to certain areas where the kids are all white then them kids have a thing there like a barrier with them people...'*

cos they haven't mixed with them when they've mixed and they're all multi cultural and they have had to learn things and then even in the classrooms here in St Anns the teachers teach them what comes from the Chinese people and whatever else there is round here and that's good our kids don't grow up ignorant they know about multi cultural things and that's good'

Sharon *'I think that Sycamore is a good school they do loads of things for multi cultural things... yeah they need to know about all different cultures the white and the black culture that's what I think is important both'*

Tanya *'I believe that there should be more multi cultural teaching cos it's alright having them all together and them not learning from each other I think it should be a topic at all schools like Art, Maths and English yes because this is a multi cultural country now'*

Sharon *'well I think that eventually this country will be mixed race cos there's that many black and white people going together there's a lot of mixed race cos it's not the richer ones that are mixing it's us the lower ones so maybe our class will not be white anymore we will end up mixed race well that means that life's more interesting for us cos life was boring when I was young I've found out that it's more interesting being with a black man put it this way I've done more since I've been with them and I've learnt more and seen more than when I was with a white man'.*

Although it has often been argued that multi-culturalism is a vague and confused concept having different meanings to different people (Modood 2005) the people in St Anns explained their relationships, families, and community as multi-cultural, and understood it as a sharing of culture, 'mixing it up'. The women often have used the Jamaican national statement of 'out of many comes one people' as a way to explain what St Anns has within its boundaries, and how it should be viewed. One community, many differences, but ultimately

'being St Anns' is important and having this shared understanding.

'Sharon' who was in her 50s and had eight children, six of whom were white, had a specific understanding of multi-culturalism and what it meant to her on a personal level, she told me that her life was more 'interesting' now, and being with her black partner had given her value within the estate that she had not experienced previously:

'you used to go to parties and there was boring food but now it's all different food different music yeah I am proud of my mixed relationship'.

As 'Sharon' explained she, like all of the women on the estate, was extremely proud of their mixed-race families, and the thought of the white-working class no longer being white was not a worrying prospect for 'Sharon', and in actual fact many of the women on the estate thought that all this mixing 'is good for us'.

The positives of 'mixing' on the estate should not be underestimated, although there were problems on the estate with other groups such as the 'Iraqis' and the 'Africans' these tensions were usually spoken of regarding housing, problems getting doctors' appointments, and queuing in the post office, in addition to the amount of single Middle-Eastern men living on the estate. The tensions were never spoken of regarding the women's children mixing with other children from different backgrounds; 'mixing' was always seen as positive within the local schools. 'Mixing' in St Anns is a process of integration, but a two way process. Tariq Modood (2005) describes his concept of multi-culturalism as such a process but works differently with different groups,

however those groups are likely to not just be marked by 'newness or phenotype or socio-economic location' but by certain forms of group identities. Modood argues that in this perspective of multi-culturalism, there is a social requirement to treat these group identities with respect (Modood 2005 p.3). In this case respect is an important point as it is respect, and recognition as a group which the poor white working-class have often been denied. Respect and positive recognition is an especially important issue for the white women in this research, and they have managed to find positive recognition at least within the estate through their association with 'black men', and a 'black culture'.

The association with black men is a complex issue; although the women found respect on the estate through their personal relationships, they knew this was often not the case on the outside. It was often difficult for them to talk about their personal relationships with black men because of the way they were sexualised through this association. It seems that 'falling in love', and being with your life partner who happened to be black was one thing, but admitting to being attracted exclusively to black men was something else and was difficult for the women to talk about. It took many meetings and a great deal of trust for the women to talk to me about this; however eventually almost all of the women I spoke to said they could not see themselves being with a white man in the future. 'Kirsty', and 'Lucy', told me that they could not really see themselves with white men even though their mum had asked them why Jamaicans in particular:

Kirsty *'my mum was telling me just till yesterday to get rid of him [boyfriend] and find yourself a nice man not so much a nice likkle white bouy'*

Lucy *'a decent English black man will do'*

Kirsty *'it's gone to the stage now that we are never gonna settle down in the near future with a white man'*

Lucy *'so you might as well get a decent English man even if he is black that's what she says'*

Kirsty *'if it's gonna be a black one get an English one I think she's racist'*

Lucy *'she isn't'.*

I often asked the women I met, was it because they had mixed-race children, why they would not consider going out with a white man. As Alison tells me, it was her preference:

'I do.....actually find black men well very appealing very appealing well I think all that was because well the different culture and well..... an unknown fascination to you... you know like an attraction that you cant see I don't know I am one of those women who are just attracted to black men there is a lot of women here in St Anns like that'.

'Alison' now in her 40s had been around black people her whole life and recognised that there had been significant changes especially over the last ten years in how you were perceived within St Anns when you were a white mother to a mixed-race child, she knew that there had been an increase in respect when you were associated with 'black people'. This was very different from when she had been young when you were more likely to have been disrespected. 'Alison' told me that as she was growing up in St Anns and began to hang around the black guys on the estate there was a saying that the black guys used to say to the white girls in the 1970s and 1980s 'once you go black you never back' and 'Alison' thought this was true for her at least and now said it in a light-hearted way to the younger women she came across.

Respect, recognition, and status

Out of all of the women I met there were two women who had gone on to have relationships with white men, one of them was 'Julie' who had a mixed-race son, and a younger white son:

'I get it cos I've got a white son I said that at the beginning didn't I it's not fair it's alright if you are white with a mixed race son attached to you but it's not alright if you've got a white son in St Anns that's really and truly how I felt how I feel and I lived here all my life' .

What 'Julie' told me was that her white son does not have the same value within the estate as her mixed race son, and she also felt that within the estate she had lost value. She explained that her eldest mixed-race son was brought up differently from the younger white son who was often bullied because he was white, while her mixed race son had 'respect' on the estate:

'the way I brought my first son up was too ghetto and I was young when I had him I was only 16 when I had him so I thought I was all that with a mixed baby....YEAH LOOK AT ME... I fought hard to bring him up on my own as a single parent which I have done an amazing job.... I brought them up both differently and I think that it is better to bring them up streetwise cos if you try to protect them from everything they get bullied and picked on'.

Respect and status within the estate was constantly spoken about, 'giving respect', and 'being respected' was always something that the women on the estate were aware of, therefore being respected became central to most of the women's stories. As I have discussed previously

the women on the estate were angry and hurt by the way they often felt 'disrespected' and 'misrecognised' as people with no value, although respect on the estate was found through the valuing of local identities, and local practices. 'Julie' argues that respect on the estate was connected to black men; she felt that because she had a relationship with a white man and then had a son with him her status on the estate had fallen. When I spoke to 'Lucy' whose 'baby daddy' was Jamaican and had invested heavily into a form of black and in particular Jamaican culture. 'Lucy' told me that when you are brought up in St Anns you have to act in a certain way otherwise you would be disrespected and bullied:

Lucy 'well I was rude when I was ready I was rude I don't care who you are if you're not my mum or my dad I don't business (care) if you look at me in a certain way I'm gonna cuss yer I can make you feel small with my mouth alone..... that's just me I had to grow like that I had to be kind of wickeder (worse) if you like than the rest of them to prove a point you know that you cant take the piss out of me because I'm white regardless of being white I'm still a person and so are you in the same way ...as I don't like look at you as you're ignorant cos you're black don't look at me as sarff (soft) because I'm white cos I'm wickeder than you and you'.

'Lucy' is explaining that within the estate there are certain codes and understandings, if you are white, and in particular a white girl you have something to prove, you have to prove that you are not 'soft' otherwise there is a chance you would be disrespected and bullied.

'Lucy' shows in the next excerpt how the process of 'being respected' works in practice, but also the implications for young white women, and men:

Lucy *'Really yeah in St Anns there is a status and they play on it I think with a lot of white girls there's a status of going out with a black guy they put them on a pedestal and they forget that their dads are white and that their dads are a good man and their dads brought them up and he wasn't black they think that to be with a black man is the be all and end all'*

Lisa *'why do you think that is?'*

Lucy *'I don't know I don't know.... It's just the way it is..... there is a big thing to be with a black man I think it's because they think they're wicked and they like that bad boy image'*

Lisa *'do you think it's that bad boy image?'*

Lucy *'yeah I think it is but then again some of them white buoys(boys) are just as bad if not worse cos they're trying to have that image and trying to have that persona like them.... they're not gonna progress in life they're just gonna end up in prison or out on the streets although I can understand why they're out on the streets cos the money's there... bin there done that but the money's there why go and slave for somebody for a pittance when you know you're not gonna get any thing for it'.*

'Lucy' understands the 'street respect', the status that can be given within the estate however she understands the down side of this, having to constantly think about being 'wicked' than anyone else, the image which must be maintained, and ultimately how this might end up in a person going to prison. It is not just about being with a black man, it is what 'being with a black man' represents: a street credibility, a reputation and respect and a status within.

The start position for the women on this estate, as they see it, is social rejection. Therefore in order to be a person of value, and a valued person, the women here use the local value system which is available to them, which also makes sense to them: it works. Whereas the wider

and universal system that Bourdieu (1984) terms the symbolic economy, where education can be exchanged in the open market for economic capital, prestige and status, does not really apply here. Within poor council estates this universal system is not available, and is rarely proven as worth investing in. Therefore the people who live on council estates invest in what works for them, through what is available, and worth investing in. Education, training and even employment does not always 'pay off' within council estates, whilst wages are being driven down in real terms, and higher education is a risk, and is often feared, the universal system which Bourdieu (1984) terms the symbolic economy moves further away from the poorest people.

Therefore the practices that offer status and respect within this social group become extremely important, and were often spoken in many different ways and contexts. How you dress, how you look, what food and music you prefer, and in this particular case in Nottingham being connected to valuable resources such as 'black masculinity' becomes an opportunity to obtain prestige and status at least within the estate. As I stated earlier you do not have to be black or male in order to benefit from this resource. The women on this estate benefit by association from their personal relationships but also through their children.

Don't hate the player hate the game:

Come on let's face it, a ghetto education's basic
Most of the yute dem waste it
An when dem waste it, that's when dem tek da guns an replace it
Then dem don't stand a chance at all
And that's why a nuff little yute have up some phat matic
With the extra magazine inna dem back pocket

(Damian Marley 'Welcome to Jamrock')

In chapter 3 I asked if symbolic and cultural capital always equalled value for those who appropriate them, I concluded that this is only the case once symbolic and cultural capital have become legitimated through middle class acknowledgment. However throughout this thesis I have demonstrated that there are similar if not misrecognised processes at work within poor communities, and even though those resources are not universally legitimate they can give great value to those who recognise them.

In this last section of the thesis I want to engage in an argument which shows how an alternative value system created by those who live in poor neighbourhoods which gives value to those who cannot take part in the universal value system can cause tremendous damage to that community. I have over the last four chapters showed the positives and negatives of living on a council estate, the difficulties, but also the benefits of feeling part of a community, having an understanding of belonging, and engaging in something you feel is exciting, different and new.

However there is on this estate, and other estates around the UK problems with that which I have termed 'estatism'. 'Estatism' is a concept which describes the intensive and often debilitating nature of the consequences of 'being looked on' dis-respected, and marginalised by those on the outside of the estate you live on, something this thesis has strongly shown and for good reason. As I argued earlier those who have been positioned with such 'lack' do not simply accept it, but find value and worth through other routes often through local, neighbourhood inclusion.

'Estatism' is the negative side to that value; it is what happens when groups who live on council estates stop engaging with the outside, through fear or stigma, or ridicule, and become only inward looking. This has particularly devastating outcomes when there is a relentless and dynamic underground economy usually linked to drug dealing, and also because of the ever tightening grip that 'estatism' has over those who live in the neighbourhood, the problems that families on the estate endure, and their reactions to them are also dynamic in their adjustments.

Throughout this thesis I have discussed in parts the problems this neighbourhood has had with the drug economy, and also its association with gang culture, and estatism. These three parts of this overall problem are all interlinked; the differing parts are interlinked in different ways. The drug economy as it is today on the estate is a fairly recent

problem, stemming back only five to eight years, St Anns over this period has become the main drug dealing neighbourhood in Nottingham, and it also has a large majority of Nottingham's registered drug users living on the estate. There are also many more transient groups coming in and out of the neighbourhood to score (buy drugs). This has led to an increase in drug dealing on the estate, particularly the practice called 'shotting'. The 'shotters' are usually the low level drug dealers carrying and holding low levels of heroine and crack cocaine, a couple of hundred pounds worth. The 'shotters' are usually quite young sometimes as young as 13 and 14 years old and predominantly black, mixed race and male. They are given a 'spot' by the older dealers, one or two rungs up on the ladder and can earn about £50-£150 a day. The 'shotters' often employ even younger children as 'spotters' and 'watchers' who look out for the police, or rival dealers, these children can be as young as 6 or 7. The 'shotters' carry the most risk of being arrested as they are the most visible, and are 'holding' (carrying drugs) around the estate. The 'shotters' are organised by slightly older local men who have worked their way up the ladder. They have more respect, and money, and drive around the estate in their cars, or hire taxis to carry them around the estate.

Therefore ensuring that St Anns is the main neighbourhood in Nottingham for drug dealing is a priority for them, this is their 'endz' (land, neighbourhood, patch) sometimes referred to as 'Stannz', 'S.V' and 'Stannzville' and the business of drug dealing is very lucrative.

Therefore the defending of the 'endz' becomes a key aim for the lower echelons of the drug economy. Within St Anns there are several semi-organised groups of young men who have 'spots', and organise themselves loosely; some of the gang members are heavily associated with the drug economy, whilst others are only loosely connected, or have no connection at all.

The largest and best known gangs in St Anns were 'Cadburys', 'Brewsters', and 'bad breed'. The first two of the gangs 'Cadburys' and 'Brewsters' are neighbourhoods within St Anns and represent drug dealing spots. However they have now joined up and become one large gang who represent the drug dealing spots in St Anns, now called 'Street Life'. The third gang 'bad breed' was a gang who were exclusively mixed-race young people, and their 'bad breed' identity was important to the gang, however recently they have opened to any St Anns youth, and are no longer exclusively mixed-race. They are a relatively new gang on the estate but they are very quickly becoming notorious for the level of 'badness' they are engaging in, from robberies, to street attacks. The term 'bad breed' is an old Jamaican term meaning mixed-race, and the elderly Jamaicans on estate might refer to mixed-race people as 'bad breeds', 'half breeds' and 'cut breeds', or sometimes just 'breeds'.

There was low level animosity between the different gangs in St Anns, but since they have joined into two larger gangs 'Street Life', and 'Bad

breed' the real competition is between other neighbourhoods in Nottingham, the Meadows, and Radford which are also drug dealing neighbourhoods. On a street level whoever you are in St Anns by living there you are considered as 'Stannz', or 'Stannzman', the same goes for Meadows, and Radford. This is what 'estatism' means, a form of territorialism, which is not always linked to the drug economy as it encompasses a much wider group of residents. Children as young as 3 and 4 can understand and engage in estatism, through their allegiance to Stannz, they sing songs, and raps, about other neighbourhoods which have been made up by older children in order to 'cuss' other estates. There is a non-profit making clothes shop on the 'Chase' (the local precinct) which sells T- Shirts, beads and other clothing that represents the neighbourhood, made and designed by the young people at the YIP (youth inclusion project). The T- Shirts sometimes are commemorating young people who have died on the estate, with the words R.I .P to whomever it commemorates, often there is S.V, or NG3 printed on the T-Shirts, and the beads they sell are the colours of the estate, in the case of St Anns they are red. Estatism here in St Anns is about being 'St Anns', belonging and the connection, and the loyalty you have to your estate.



Figure 13: NG3 T- Shirt: Note Victoria Centre at the back of St Anns and a gun at the front

Over the years the level of understanding on the estate at what is happening within the gang and drug culture has become common. I have not come across a single person as yet who resides in St Anns involved with the gangs and drug culture either young or old, or from any background who does not have the knowledge to the extent that these practices are affecting the neighbourhood. The women on the estate are acutely aware of the drug and gang culture on the estate either because they are directly involved with it usually through sons, partners and other male family members, or indirectly because of the problems it brings to the estate. The amount of drug users, and prostitutes attracted to the estate because of the drug economy, or the problems that arise when crack houses are in full swing, or the park becomes unsafe, are issues the mothers have brought up and have been represented within this thesis. In an earlier

chapter I discussed in particular the drug users and the contempt some of the women have regarding the 'cats' and 'fiends' coming into the neighbourhood. However there are also women who are involved with the drug and gang culture through their children, partners, and other family members. This often caused tension on the estate:

'and then there's the mums who say they don't know what their kids are doing yes they do know what their fucking kids are doing where did they get their £200 trainers from and they say 'I cant do anything' yes they can'.

Because of the sensitive nature of this issue within the estate I have decided not to use any of the names of the women who have spoken about this issue even though the names throughout this thesis are not in fact the real names of any of the women. However I should like to make every effort in keeping these women's identities anonymous.

One of the women I spoke to told me that she knew that her son was involved with the gangs and the drug dealing and had reported him to the police because of the effect he was having on his younger siblings:

'it's more difficult for me to control my kids yeah and when you've got one child who's doing the gun thing then the others are looking to that one... but the police don't do fuck all'.

Some of the women I spoke with were aware of what their teenage sons were involved with and although they had fears around their sons' engagement in the drug and gang culture in St Anns in some ways they were complicit with it:

'I try not to beat myself up about it anymore I'm proud that my son breathes today that's it the way he is he does things which aren't legal but he makes money and he's still alive for now'.

I got to know this woman quite well and met her several times in the community centre for coffee, on this particular day she was upset and agitated, when I asked her if there was anything wrong she told me:

'I got a phone call from one of my son's friends this morning asking me if my son was dead it had gone round on MSN that my son had been killed last night and everybody in St Anns knew that this was true so I had to get hold of him this morning to find out whether it was true I have to get hold of him every night or I speak to him every night and that's stupid cos what's that about then every night I know that he's in danger with others cos of what he's involved in and you know what I mean I got that phone call this morning and he'd not stayed at home last night so my mind was ticking over into allsorts.....yeah I had to get hold of him this morning and say to him that your names gone round MSN and you were meant to have been killed last night and he knew something about it so something had happened what he didn't say but that's the worrying aspect of it do you know what I mean he knows something now I've got to go out to see if he's involved in something again and when does it stop when does it stop it stops when they're either dead or locked up one or the other, I mean they never grow out of it cos they always think they're missing something if they're not down here they're all took in by it Tupac wannabes they'll end up dead or they'll end up in penn (jail) for a long time'.

This woman is speaking about her 16 year old son, who she knows is involved in low level drug dealing and heavily involved in the gang culture within St Anns. Although she told me that she is afraid that he might be killed on the streets, or that he might 'go to jail' she has some respect for her son's independence as she told me 'he's making money', and he was respected within the estate, and he was respectful of her, which ultimately meant that as his mother she was also

respected on the estate by the other young people involved in similar practices:

'yeah but at the end of the day he [son] always comes through to me and how he represents outside he's not bringing through to me....I know he's dealing with guns and I know what's going off in his life and that's all I'm bothered about if he's dissing (disrespecting) me then there's no point is there cos if he can diss me or disrespect me and I'm just nothing then and he can just walk all over me'.

Another woman told me that sometimes when she went into the community centre some of the younger girls who were involved with the YIP (youth inclusion project) would try and intimidate her:

'she come out with some nasty comment and that intimidates me and makes me feel like I don't want to go to that community centre but there again as soon as they find out who my son is they're all over me you see he's [son] a bit of a big boy down there'.

However because her son was respected 'on the street' and had a reputation within the St Anns gangs it meant that when any of the young people who would hang around the community centre knew who her son was she was 'respected' and made to feel welcome within the community centre, she told me that his reputation had benefits for her, as she enjoyed spending time in the community centre with the young people who went there.

I met 'Della', and 'Julie' in the community centre one day, they were with their friend 'Dread' a black Rasta man, we talked about respect within the community and what was happening on the estate with the young people, and particularly their loyalty to their postcode NG3, some of the young people in the centre overheard our conversation, and

vehemently defended their loyalty to their 'endz'. Dread' questioned their logic with his own:

'Dread' 'if you're gonna die for Nottingham die for Nottingham not just NG3 die for NG that would make life a lot easier if that's what you want just be NG Nottingham there's enough crackheads here for all of you to sell drugs to them let's be honest about it here... that's what it's all about they need to be taught that there's enough crackheads for all of you to make money rather than dying let's be honest'.

The young people in the community centre did not accept 'Dread's' argument that they should unite as 'Nottingham' and stop fighting each other, they said that they would die for S.V and there was no way they could see themselves working with Raddyman, or Meadows man. This may seem unimportant or trivial to some, but these sentiments of dying for S.V are very real to the young people here in St Anns, the estate is extremely important to them, it provides them with respect, value and status. Even though their mothers may worry about the level of gang involvement on the estate they do understand and acknowledge that inside the estate is the only place they can be a person of value, as it is the same for the women who live here.

I have said from the first page of this thesis that the story here in St Anns is complex, the lives of the women here are both simultaneously positive in the way they feel about their children, how they have pride in their neighbourhood, and their efforts to live in a place where many would find life impossible. However there are negative aspects, some of the women here tacitly encourage their children's involvement in

criminal behaviour. They do so because they believe that the local value system in St Anns is the best way, or the only way that they or their children can be valued, their choice in partner is often made within that same value system, they choose men who are valued and respected on the estate, as this brings with it value and respect for them.

Lynsey Hanley (2007) in her book 'Estates' sums up the meaning and consequences of 'estatism' with the analogy of the situation of the fall of the Berlin Wall. After the fall of the wall in 1989 the Germans had a phrase to describe the East Berliners, fear, and suspicion around 'the every man for himself' nature of modern capitalism, 'de mauer im kopf' or 'the wall in the head'. Hanley (2007) argues that to be working class in Britain is also to have a wall in the head, and because council estates are filled with the working class, then the wall is especially strong if invisible within council estates (2007 pp.148-149). There is fear and suspicion within every council estate up and down the country and there are strong and unbroken walls preventing those within to as Hanley says 'make a break for freedom', although she misses an important point with this analogy and that is you will only make a break if you know you are walled in, the grass is only greener on the other side if you can see it. Some of the women may have had experiences of living on other council estates, or in other poor neighbourhoods, but that is the point, the real criminality of 'estatism' is those who are positioned as 'excluded' and on the outside cannot see in.

Conclusion:

Within this chapter the last analysing the stories, and the lives of the women here in St Anns, I discussed how the women find value, this is particularly important when they have discussed their feelings of being de-valued by those 'who look down on them', ridicule who they are, and stigmatise their lives and ways of being. The women have very little of the institutional capital which Bourdieu (1984) says is needed to be a person of value; they have limited formal education, those who work tend to work in unskilled and low paid jobs, and they all live on a council estate, as do their families. Being a person of value is important here as it is in any group within society; we all want to feel valued and have worth in the things we do. However the women believe they have been socially rejected by those on the outside and compensate by engaging in what is local and available, but also provable. This forms an autonomous entity which is defined by a negative polarisation to the norms of wider society and creates an alternative value system; this type of concept is more frequently used by those studying youth deviance, but also explains the type of powerlessness felt by women on this council estate. By creating an alternative value system there can be an illusion that those who are marginalised can create feelings of worth, power, and status on the inside of their neighbourhood, and amongst those who recognise and take part in the alternative value system (Cohen 2002 p.28). This seems to be important for the mothers on this estate; they need to feel that they have some power over their own

lives, and there is a process available to them where they can be valued in the practices they engage in.

The alternative value system, and the elements which make up this system are difficult to pin down, because of the complex nature of the estate, the constant and shifting power relations between those who are positioned as lack (Lawler 2008), and 'the rest of us' (Skeggs 2004). But also the system takes on different forms to different groups within. The women place high value on motherhood, and being a mother is extremely important to them; it is often the only thing the women cite as being proud of in their lives. Therefore being a mother ranks highly on the estate.

There is a real and acknowledged value in engaging in the local culture, which has been heavily influenced by black Jamaican culture, particularly for the mothers who have mixed-race children. West Indian food is an important element and is enjoyed and cooked by many families on the estate not just West Indian families but also by white working class families, who sometimes have a direct connection with the West Indian families through their children or their partners, but sometimes their connections are simply local as neighbours and friends. Being authentic to the neighbourhood, being known and fitting in are other elements to how you become a person of value on the estate, but also to whom and how you are connected to the estate is equally important.

There has been an exchange of culture on this estate, which the women who live here are extremely proud of particularly their success in 'mixing'. This type of 'mixing' and in particular 'cultural mixing' has often been associated with 'youth culture' (Dick Hebdige 1979, Roger Hewitt 1986, Les Back 1996, Paul Gilroy 2000). However here in St Anns in Nottingham this exchange in culture is not simply limited to young people, it has become a hybrid and interchangeable culture which has grown throughout the whole community over fifty years of the West Indian and white working-class communities living side by side. This intertwined culture here in St Anns which is recognised and valued as 'being St Anns', is an example of how a symbolic economy works in practice at a local level.

'Being St Anns' is inscribed upon the community with its nuanced marking characteristics, of look, dress, speech, and practice and condenses a complex cultural history, becoming not only a way of 'being' or a way of recognising, but an actual resource within the neighbourhood. What is clear within this estate is that being valued and respected is of high priority, if only within the estate. This suggests that respect and value as resources are not available or not obviously available to those who live on this estate from the outside, therefore to be respected and valued within the estate have become resources in themselves.

In this chapter I have outlined how status and value can be gained through a form of black masculinity. You do not necessarily have to be

black or male to gain value from this form, the women often do this by way of their personal relationships, and their children. The white women on this estate have noted that 'black men' on the estate have a higher status than white men, and what they understand to be 'black culture' is highly regarded, therefore by engaging in this 'culture' and being in relationships with black men they have gained value for themselves but also their children through this association and these practices. There is no evidence here, as in Skeggs's study (1997) that the women are dis-identifying with being working class by engaging in 'middle class respectability', however there is evidence that the white-working class are confused about where and how they fit in within modern Britain, and the women here use a 'mixed-identity' to fit in on their estate, and to move away from the white working-class identity they see as having little value.

Towards the end of this chapter I opened up the debate about the young people on the estate and the postcode gangs that are rife within the council estates throughout the UK; in particular the problems that 'estatism' brings to the estates and the residents of those estates. The women on this estate who are the mothers to those who are engaged in gang culture have a level of understanding of what their (mostly) sons are 'getting into'. However even though they worry about their sons' involvement and the consequences of that involvement, on one level they understand it as being part of the estate, part 'of life' and accept

their sons financial independence, and the street respect, understand the value that this activity brings.

This value system is very localised on one level, but it is also class distinctive on another. These problems of 'estatism' are replicated in poor neighbourhoods and particularly in council estates up and down the country, the resources within each value system may change, but the need for local value, in the absence of universal value is the same. The practices which are valued and are part of the local value system have two discourses, initially they compensate for what is not readily available, by giving illusions of status and power, but they also build walls, as Lynsey Hanley (2007) has noted 'the wall in the head'. Those who engage in these local and alternative value systems which are non-transferable on the 'outside' create an 'inside' but also put boundaries around the outside, simultaneously creating an outside in which they do not belong.

Chapter 10

Conclusion

Introduction

In this last chapter I will draw together the findings from this ethnographic study and begin to analyse and conclude those findings. At the beginning of this thesis I argued that poor neighbourhoods and council estates in particular have often been named and known through media and political discourse as 'lacking'. I also argued that policy interventions are often prescriptive positioning poor neighbourhoods and their residents without worth and value, focusing upon changing the behaviours of poor people in order to change neighbourhoods. These types of prescriptive and 'one size fits all' measures lack the understanding that within poor communities there are real complexities, and nuances.

This study has shown from the beginning that within this neighbourhood in Nottingham there is a local value system having meaning to those within this community. However throughout the thesis I have shown that this value system is often misunderstood and not recognised by those on the outside. This often leads to the notion that poor people and poor neighbourhoods are one dimensional and without any value. In recognising this complexity it would be wrong within this conclusion to extend these findings into more 'off the cuff' policy recommendations; instead the aim is to provide alternative ways of thinking about poor communities and their residents.

From the outset of this study I have maintained that this is a complex account of a council estate and working class life within it. There are inconsistencies, contradictions, and a constant but restless dynamic in the stories and the practices which make up council estate life for the women involved in this research. The aim at the beginning of this process was to challenge the negative and homogenous readings of Britain's council estates and their residents. In the introduction to this study it was noted that there had been increased fervour in the moral panic and negative namings of those who live on council estates and in particular mothers, and children. Therefore within this last chapter I will discuss the consequences of those negative namings but also the practices that the women use to counter them.

Exclusion

At the beginning of this thesis I examined how the poor working class, those who are in extremely low paid and insecure employment, or who survive partly or wholly on state benefits have been named, understood, and recognised within public discourse. I argued that those understandings of poor neighbourhoods and their residents inform policy, the wider British public, and poor working class people themselves. It was shown that there is a lack of positive namings and valuations of working class practices and behaviours, and that the poor working class have become sites of ridicule and condemnation. It has been important to this study to examine the social exclusion discourse, the concept that has been used over the last 12 years in the UK to

understand and work with some of the problems that poor neighbourhoods and their residents experience. Social exclusion in its original form was about the multi-dimensional affects of poverty which included the lack of resources, but also broadened out to include how social structures had become broken down within a society and how specific groups became excluded from having any political power, or the resources to make changes to their own lives. However I argued that in the UK the concept has been used to focus upon specific neighbourhoods and also their residents, therefore the neighbourhood suffers from social exclusion, and the residents become 'the excluded'. They become known and named, stigmatised because of where they live, and their practices, and behaviours become scrutinised as problems within themselves, rather than methods for managing the difficult situations they encounter. However I also argued that social exclusion is not 'the problem' it has simply been used within the UK as the most recent prescription for dealing with a society that has depended increasingly upon market capitalism (Walker 1995; Tomlinson et al. 2008).

These arguments regarding the places where the poor live and the association between poverty and the behaviour and practices of the residents of those neighbourhoods have been well documented.

Michael Young and Peter Willmott (2002) found similar practices within London's East End in the early 1950s, Oscar Lewis (1961) also argued that local value systems were used within poor neighbourhoods in Mexico city compensating for what was not available, his theory of the

culture of poverty was then used by neo-liberal politicians to blame the poor for their poverty by focusing only upon behaviour whilst ignoring the conditions which they lived in. The original St Anns study during the 1960s also highlighted coping strategies by the residents, but focused the research on the poor conditions the residents lived in. However Coates and Silburn still had to counter the arguments which arose, that St Anns residents were buying televisions, and smoking cigarettes when they should have been spending their money elsewhere (1970 pp.150-155).

In this study which focuses upon women in contemporary Britain those accusations relating to the neighbourhood as a place which is unruly, 'rough' and no good were never lost on the women. I asked at the beginning of this thesis whether the women on this estate were aware of the negative positioning of council estates and council estate residents. The women in this study had an acute awareness of how they were judged, because of where they lived, their single parent status, and their reliance upon the welfare state.

Exclusion for the women on this estate was understood as something which happened to them, how they had been excluded by 'others', in the ways they did not feel welcome in other parts of Nottingham.

Sometimes they described exclusion as a similar process to how their children had been excluded from school, lunch breaks, and school trips. However they were unsure as to what they had done wrong to provoke their exclusion. They often thought that they were 'looked down on', and

dismissed, being labelled as 'rough and ready'. These negative stereotypes that the women on this estate, their children and families endured through local Nottingham knowledge, media stereotypes, and political rhetoric had an impact in how they thought about themselves. They constantly talked about how they were stigmatised and the consequences this might have on their children, and themselves.

In the introduction to this thesis I asked what have been the consequences for those who live on the St Anns council estate in Nottingham being known as socially excluded, are they aware of the stigmatised readings regarding their lives? Throughout this thesis there has been a clear message, the women know and are fully aware that they are 'looked down on', 'made to feel small' and disrespected. They have talked about the shame which is attached to claiming welfare benefits, living on council estates, and being a single mum, and when all those negative positions are combined with their mixed-race children, and their personal relationships they become simultaneously racialised and sexualised.

The consequences of those negative stereotypes have manifested themselves in many ways. An important finding within this study is how the women view the services that are on offer for them within their neighbourhood. They are aware of what happens to their profile when they use these services, they know that claiming income support, housing benefit, council tax benefit, and living in social housing cost them dearly, in how they are known and treated within society. They

described their difficulties in making themselves heard and understood by those who work in the many different services the women have to engage with. In particular the women often speak about services they are engaged in relating to children. It was found that the women are often suspicious of coming into contact with the 'official' agencies, they are never sure how they might be judged, and fear being 'looked down on' again by another set of 'professionals'. This became apparent when I asked about the Sure Start centres; they were suspicious and reluctant to make themselves known to yet another set of 'professionals'. Sometimes they did not see themselves in the same way as those 'official agencies' might, as vulnerable people who need help and support. They were also aware that engaging with those services like Sure Start might signify that they are 'not coping' and therefore they refuse to engage through fear of stigma. However the women were more willing to engage with local primary schools and all of the women spoke very highly about the primary schools in St Anns. The primary schools were universal, and did not have the same connection to 'poverty solving' as the Sure Start centres, and the mothers thought the primary schools were part of the neighbourhood, and working with the local community.

There is another point to discuss relating to the concept of exclusion, and that is how it is not only the neighbourhood itself which becomes excluded but also the residents. The residents in St Anns did not think that they were socially excluded because of their circumstances; they believed that they had been socially excluded because 'others' thought

they were 'not good enough'. I have argued that over the last thirty-years because of how capitalism has changed the social conditions within poor working class neighbourhoods, and the poor working class in particular have become devalued. Their traditional places of employment have gone, and they are now on the outside of a modern Britain (Haylett 2001). The women in this neighbourhood are reflexive, and discuss their lives as 'narratives' they remember what it was like to be 'working class' when they were young children, and young adults. They spoke about their parents and sometimes themselves working on the local markets, and in factories, holidays in Skegness, and going to the working men's clubs. However, they recognised their positions now had changed and when they spoke of being 'working-class' it was something that belonged in their past.

I have argued that there has been a shifting in class positioning within the UK possibly in an attempt to remove it from the British consciousness, Nancy Fraser (1997), Bev Skeggs (1997, 2004, 2009) Valerie Walkerdine, Helen Lucey and June Melody (2001), have all written about the particularly difficult nature of theorising class as a concept especially relating to women. I argued in Chapter 3 that within post-modernist and post-structuralist interpretations of class it is possible for women to go through a re-making process. Whilst Skeggs (1997) also argues that women can dis-identify with a de-valued working class position and identify with a more valued identity through the site of culture, as Bourdieu (1984) argues it is 'taste' which can classify a group as being worthy or unworthy. However this 're-making'

process is a false concept, in Skeggs's study she argued that when the women in her study attempted to identify with a middle class and respectable identity they were 'always getting it wrong', in reality it was unachievable, whilst Walkerdine et al (2001) argue that the 'remaking process' cannot really be achieved by those who live with little economic, and educational resources. Therefore what is happening within the UK is rather than class becoming less important, and less visible, there are sections of the population who are now being defined, and known through a sharp and clear lens.

The findings from this study show clearly that the women in St Anns are easily identified, through their practices, their clothing, where they live, and as Lawler (2008 p. 126) argues 'who they are'. They have talked about how they are represented through the media, the ways they dress, their big gold earrings, and they know that these markers signify them to other people as women with little value. However unlike other research relating to working class women they have not dis-identified from 'who they are' (Skeggs 1997, Walkerdine et al 2001). They celebrate their big gold earrings, and styles of dressing, and although they are aware of 'being looked down on' they do not know why 'their style' has been devalued through soap operas, and comedy shows. However they were never prepared to compromise the way they looked, spoke, or dressed in an attempt to 'become respectable'.

Chris Haylett (2000, 2001, 2003) has also added another distinction to this argument and she notes that it is the poor white working class who

have become particularly negatively valued, she argues there is a racial distinction between the wider 'white' population and the 'dirty white' who she argues has become an embarrassment in a multi-cultural modern Britain (2000 p.353). Therefore it seems that class as a concept is more relevant than ever. The recent government report on social mobility, 'Unleashing Aspiration' (2009) shows clearly how class disadvantage immobilises some whilst mobilising others. There is also a cultural aspect to class distinction and there are now clear and observable distinctions, marking out those who Skeggs (2004) argues the rest of us want to move away from, stigmatising them, separating them, excluding them. Therefore they become 'the excluded' not through their own actions, but by the unfair disadvantages, and the reaction to them by others.

Value and Local Inclusion

Their awareness of how those on the 'outside' view them, and treat them means they look inwards towards the estate, their families, friends, and the wider community. They find value from within, and the local resources become ever more valuable to them. The resources valued within this social group have no real exchange value outside of this social group, but they are often recognised between similar people living in similar conditions. Whilst those on the outside misrecognise them, dis-respect them, ignore them, and laugh at them. The women often discuss this through their 'taste' in clothing, how they wear their

hair, and especially through the amount of gold jewellery they wear which has been noted is valued highly within, but ridiculed on the outside. There are other resources of value within the estate, the estate itself holds worth being part of it, understanding the local culture, and being part of the networks inside offers resources and value to the women in this community. 'Being St Anns' is valued and accumulating the resources to 'be St Anns' is an achievable goal. Although those resources, practices and culture, mark the women, they become more distinguishable as council estate mothers. These practices create a boundary around the outside but at the same time creates an inside, including locally, and excluding from wider society simultaneously.

Local inclusion is important on council estates where people are socially excluded from wider society, it is the place where they are valued and feel of worth. In St Anns there are resources, practices, and processes that the women recognise within, making up the local value system. The local culture has been heavily influenced by black Jamaican culture, particularly for the mothers in this research whose children were mixed-race, although this was not exclusive to them. Many of the St Anns residents regardless of their ethnicity also value this culture, West Indian food, music, and styles of dressing, and ways of speaking are popular and embody what 'being St Anns' means. Being authentic to the neighbourhood, being known and fitting in are other elements to how you become a person of value on the estate, but also to whom and how you are connected to the estate is equally important. The networks

are complex, and the social hierarchies on the estate feed into the local value system, the West Indian families are respected, and there are very few of the white working-class or West Indian families on the estate who do not have mixed-race relatives. Consequently 'mixing' is also valued as one of the women told me 'all this mixing is good for us...we are not white and boring now'. It seems that the women in this study know and have internalised those negative understandings regarding the poor white working class and have resisted them, not through dis-identifying with being working class, they often said 'we are at the bottom', but through positively identifying with a local culture heavily influenced by the Jamaican residents.

It was found that Motherhood was considered to be a source of value for the women, all of the women without exception told me the only thing they really felt proud of was their children, and they placed extremely high value on their children. Although motherhood was of value in itself there was more status attached through being a 'baby mother', a white mother of a mixed-race child. The women's mixed-race children held high status, and the women raised their status on the estate through dressing their children in expensive and designer clothing, gold jewellery, and exoticising their children's names. Although the women's social positions on the outside of the estate had been de-valued, they found ways and practices on the inside to become people of value.

The neighbourhood was important to the women and their families and the women spent much of their time in and around the estate; it was found that most of the women in the study had worked within the estate itself. Some of the mothers had worked as lunch-time supervisors in the local schools, most often the women had worked on a voluntary basis in and around the estate. Working on the estate and 'helping others' was something all the women aspired to, all 35 women had been engaged within community projects at one time or another. However very few of them had gained employment through voluntary work, and they were angry that they were 'always good enough to volunteer' but they never got the paid jobs. They discovered that their lack of formal education, training and skills 'let them down' and the jobs always went to the 'semi-professionals' who did not live on the estate. When projects were set up to help them gain the skills they might need, these projects were often short term, and funding ran out before any real advantages were felt. The women were left feeling 'let down', and the 'piss had been taken again'. They had given up their time and knowledge for nothing, while the 'semi-professionals' had run a successful project and moved on to another.

Therefore when there is an absence of institutionalised resources such as education, skills, employment and a general respect for a group of people, those people find value for themselves and their families from local resources within. Those resources are often mis-understood by those who cannot see the complexity of a situation, they are often de-

valued, and sometimes those resources might have a negative effect upon lives.

The process of identification

In the first chapter of this thesis I said that there are several themes which run throughout, value and location but also how the women on this estate know themselves, recognise themselves and imagine themselves is important to them and to this thesis. When welfare policy sets out to name and change those who it sees as failures as I argued in chapter 2, it impacts upon how the wider population sees those people, but also how they see themselves. I have argued that negative namings, stigmatised readings, and shame which is attached to claiming welfare benefits, and living on council estates not only identify those groups as 'different', and 'lacking' but also allow those groups to internalise this general level of disrespect. Therefore the women on this estate know they have little value on the outside of their community, and within the wider population, they know that they have little education which has impacted upon the rest of their lives, and they often blame themselves for 'their failure'. However it would be wrong to think that they only know themselves as 'valueless' as I have argued they find value locally, in the local value system. Bourdieu's concept of habitus helps us to understand how negative namings, and stigmatised positions can be absorbed into the habitus even though it can be adopted from historical understandings of social positions. It can also adapt, therefore it is not determining but generative, it can help us to

see how individuals and groups can push against, resist or adapt to those negative namings (1990, p.58). As I have argued poor working class people have experienced a de-valuing of their social positions, the women on this estate have constantly said they feel disrespected and demeaned, however as I have argued they do find value for themselves within the local culture even though by engaging within the local culture and 'being St Anns' further devalues their social position on the outside of the estate. They find an identity within that they value even though it may not be understood as a mainstream valued identity. They do not dis-identify with their working class position, although they do dis-identify with a white working class position which they feel has little or no value attached to it; instead they find value for themselves and their children with a local identity linked to the West Indian community. I have used the work of Bourdieu (1996) to argue that there is a cognitive element in the learning and habituation process, and the women on this estate have clearly taken an interest in what they have invested in, however there is also an emotional interest, and investment in certain things not merely for the rewards but because people see them as valuable within themselves, even when those things can be viewed as negative by others.

'Being St Anns' had many meanings and values attached to it; it offered a certain amount of safety for the women, through being known, and fitting in. It also allowed the women to be people of value, it offered respite from class prejudice, and racism for the women, and allowed

them to have a feeling of belonging. However there are other issues that 'being St Anns' entails. I have introduced the term 'estatism', which is what happens when the council estate where you live seeps into your soul, you belong to it, and it belongs to you. 'Estatism' is a type of territorialism: feelings, understandings and meanings that offer value, respect, and worth to those who cannot achieve this, or believe they cannot in any other place than where they live and amongst the people they live together with.

In the first chapter which presented the research findings, and the initial introduction to the women's lives, I purposefully talked about minor issues such as pizza deliveries, milk men, and taxis. I wanted to show the general disrespect and annoyance that life can be like for those who live on council estates, however and again I purposefully introduced at the end of the thesis the gang culture, drugs, guns, and 'estatism' building a picture of life in St Anns.

The drug economy in its present form is relatively new but the conditions in St Anns which have allowed its success are not. As I have argued the people who live in poor neighbourhoods, who come from poor families, and have very little of the universal accepted and respected resources allowing a person to become valued, can become resentful, angry, and suspicious; the cheery common folk whistling whilst making a virtue out of necessity really only exist in the post war Ealing comedies.

Consequently it becomes more difficult for those who experience such great disadvantages, and who have become 'the excluded' by being excluded through being disrespected, demeaned, and misrecognised to leave the emotional boundaries of where they feel safe, and increasingly as I have shown for the younger people on the estate to physically leave. This is how 'estatism' works: it is a reciprocal dynamic of fear, prejudice, and resentment protecting those who engage in it to some degrees but also causing immense amounts of damage.

Concluding remarks

This thesis set out from the beginning to show a more complex view of council estate life, families, and women. The aim was to challenge the mainstream negative understandings of council estates and their residents, and offer a more complex picture, although the process and the journey has not been simple. The women in this research live complex lives, they have meaning to their lives, they care about the community they live in, and also how they are known, it hurts them when they are 'looked down on'. They think they live in a 'shit hole' which is disrespected by the council and everyone else in Nottingham, but they find value for themselves and their children, despite this, they are resilient, and resourceful, but also misrecognised and disrespected.

The aims of this study were to show this complexity and encourage other ways of thinking about poor neighbourhoods. They are not places

which simply need 'changing' and there are practices, behaviours, and resources within them, set up by the residents which work well and are valued by the community. Nevertheless what is needed are long term commitments from local and national governments, voluntary services and educational institutions to work with those neighbourhoods. The women on this estate want to be part of the community; they want to make this neighbourhood better for themselves and their families; however they lack the resources, confidence and networks to do so. This neighbourhood like many throughout the UK needs long-term commitments, working with them on the long-term problems that poor neighbourhoods have. They need real opportunities to gain the skills and education to work within their community, but also to make the networks out of the estate to end the negative consequences of 'estatism', and then to make those networks back in, so positive role models are in and around and living on the estate.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Letter to parents

Appendix 2. Interview Guide

Appendix 3. Ethics and Confidentiality

Appendix 4. Glossary

Appendix 1. 'Letter to parents'

Dear Parent,

My name is Lisa Mckenzie and I am a student at the University of Nottingham. I am currently working upon a research project which is interested in white mothers of mixed-race children. This is of special interest to me as I am also a white mum to mixed-race children . I would be interested in talking to white mothers of mixed-race children who have a connection to the St Anns area of Nottingham. The kind of things I am interested in is your experiences of living within St Anns, both good and bad, do you think there is a community spirit in St Anns, what do you like about living in St Anns. I am also interested in your experiences of being a mum, what concerns you have for your children, and what are the things which make you proud of being a mum.

If you are interested in talking to me or would just like to know more please contact me on xxxxxxxxx

Thanks Lisa

Appendix 2. Interview Guide

Background

- Can you please tell me your age
- How would you describe your ethnicity/ children's ethnicity
- How long have you lived in this area
- Did you grow up here/ similar area
- What did you parents do employment
- Where did you go to school, did you like school
- Who do you live with

The community

- Do you think St Anns is a community, do you think you live in a community
- How would you describe St Anns to someone who doesn't live here
- What kinds of people live here
- Are there any service that you use either within the estate or outside
- Do your children go to the local schools
- Ho many people do you know in the area
- Do you have friends and family close by
- Do you use the buses, or do you walk
- Do you know your neighbours or recognise people who live in St Anns

Families and children

- Do you have any friends who are mums, in the estate or outside
- Does any of your friends have mixed race children
- Do you think about your own childhood now you are a mother
- How does your children's life differ from yours when you were a child

Social Division

- Do issues of race and gender and class ever come up with your children, family friends, others
- Do you think about your identity, national local
- Have you ever experienced racism, or prejudiced

Identity

- Do you think you are part of the community
- Do you think there is still a stigma about being a white mum with mixed race children

- Do your children feel part of a community
- Do you feel like you belong to any particular group/community in Nottingham, St Anns
- Do you identify with any particular group or community
- Do you think there is still a stigma for mothers with mixed race children
- Do you think it is important to live in a multi-cultural neighbourhood
- Do you buy or engage in anything culturally specific (black dolls, books, food)

Appendix 3 Ethics, and confidentiality form

**School of Sociology and Social Policy
University of Nottingham**

**Participant Consent Form: Research in St Anns
Nottingham**
Researcher: Lisa Mckenzie

In signing this consent form I confirm that:

I have read the Participant Information Sheet and the nature and purpose of the research project has been explained to me.	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have had the opportunity to ask questions.	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand the purpose of the research project and my involvement in it.	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw from the research project at any stage, without having to give any reason and withdrawing will not penalise or disadvantaged me in any way.	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that while information gained during the study may be published, any information I provide is confidential, and that no information that could lead to the identification of any individual will be disclosed in any reports on the project, or to any other party. No identifiable personal data will be published. <i>[If other arrangements have been agreed in relation to identification of research participants (e.g. in a focus group) this point will require amendment to accurately reflect those arrangements]</i>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
I agree that extracts from the interview may be anonymously quoted in any report or publication arising from the research <i>[Omit if quotes not being used]</i>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that the interview will be recorded using audiotape/electronic voice recorder/video recorder <i>[Amend/delete as applicable]</i>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that data will be securely stored	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that the information provided can be used in other research projects which have ethics approval, but that my name and contact information will be removed before it is made available to other researchers. <i>[Omit if data will not be used in this way]</i>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that I may contact the researcher <i>[or supervisor]</i> if I require further information about the research, and that I may contact the Research Ethics Officer of the School of Sociology and Social Policy, University of Nottingham, if I wish to make a complaint relating to my involvement in the research.	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>

Glossary

• Armshouse	Argument/fight
• Badness	Bad behaviour/ anti-social behaviour/crime
• Bad up	'Badding up' intimidating
• Beef	Argument/fight
• Big man/woman	Adult
• Cat	Drug addict
• Crew	Group based around a common purpose
• Cussing/ Cuss	making jokes at another's expense/ berating
• Dis/dissing	Insulting/to be insulted.
• Endz	Area/areas/part of town.
• Fiend	Drug addict
• Fuckery	Badness/lying/not true/gossip
• Lick	Hit/punch/attempt/try 'give it one lick' one attempt
• Lean up	Hurt/ attack /fight
• Man	Man/woman, men, people.
• Tupac	American rap artist who was shot and killed
• Pickney	Child/baby
• Penn	Jail/ prison
• Repping	Representing (supporting your friends/ 'crew').
• Screw face/bad face	Giving dirty/bad looks
• Shotter	Young local drug dealer
• Spitting	Specific form of 'rapping' in a British urban context usually aggressive, and angry form
• Sufferer	Someone struggling with life because of inequality poor Jamaicans are often referred to as sufferers
• Wicked/ Wickedder	Good/ better/ harder
• Yardie	Jamaican
• Yard	Jamaica/ home
• Yard Food	Jamaican food