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Department of Political Science   Tutor: Moira Nelson

How do workless tenants of social housing perceive the advantages and disadvantages of their available pathways into work, in Pennywell, Sunderland?

Moving towards an understanding of worklessness.

Laura Collings
Wpm12lco

Abstract

Current research shows that the number of workless people living in social housing is disproportionately high in comparison to other housing tenures. The aim of the Thesis is to examine the pathways into work available to social housing tenants, to better understand the phenomena of worklessness. Our object of study is that of residents within a social housing neighbourhood in Pennywell. A case study has been made of Pennywell, utilising in depth interviews of social housing residents in the neighbourhood. We use neighbourhood effects theories to measure the pathways available to the social housing residents, specifically social network theory, spatial mismatch and local institutional resources. Residents relied heavily upon very tight nit social networks, creating an insular community that restricted the flow of job information. Spatial mismatch revealed that residents believed their pathways to work to be restricted because of a decline of jobs in the community. While, local institutional resources in the community provided the greatest support in finding work as they built confidence and skills.

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Introduction

The research problem to be considered is the prevalence of worklessness in social housing within the UK. The Hills Review (John Hills 2007) confirmed what had already been a long-standing perception, that unemployment levels in social housing are disproportionately high in comparison to other housing tenures. Some looked to diminish the implications of such a finding, noting, that declining levels of stock and entitlement based upon stringent means testing have resulted in only the poorest and most vulnerable sections of society gaining access to social housing, therefore high levels of labour market exclusion are perhaps a reflection of the demographic for which it serves (Ian Cole 2007:4). Others have noted that even when we control for the demographic of social housing the unemployment levels of residents remain disproportionately high (Hills 2007:101). Whilst consensus has been established regarding the existence of the problem of worklessness and social housing, discord has emerged about what causes it, and how best to develop policy which can mediate it.

Objective and Research Question

This study will seek to capture the subjective experiences of social housing tenants in Pennywell, in the North East of England. Our objective is to document the experiences and views of the social housing tenants regarding work and the labour market in order to construct an understanding of what causes worklessness in this area, with the help of three theoretical perspectives; social network theory, spatial mismatch and local institutional resources. Each theoretical approach is drawn from neighbourhood effects literature, which places an emphasis upon the role of neighbourhood environment to bring about individual outcomes. Through a focus upon the neighbourhood environment of Pennywell we will seek to offer an explanation as to why the situation of worklessness exists to the extent it does. An empirical question has been selected to address the research problem to form an understanding of the existing reality of worklessness in social housing as it is, as opposed to offering a perspective about how it should be. Therefore, the research question is as follows:

How do workless tenants of social housing perceive the advantages and disadvantages of their available pathways into work, in Pennywell, Sunderland?

The study defines a pathway to work as those routes within the neighbourhood that residents travel down in order to enter work. Utilising the qualitative method of interviews this study aims to trace resident's perception of their available routes into work, to gain an understanding of the wider phenomena of worklessness in Pennywell and social housing.

Neighbourhood effects literature has been selected for the study because it can be used to understand spatial concentrations of worklessness as well as being relevant to current UK policy. Belief in neighbourhood effects has captured the attention of policy makers leading to a proliferation of area-based policies, particularly in social housing neighbourhoods (Maarten van Ham and David Manley 2012a:3). Sections of academic research have, however, remained unconvinced about the power of neighbourhood to act as an instigator for negative individual outcomes (Harald Bauder 2002:85). The unequivocal adoption of neighbourhood effects by policymakers, despite ongoing scepticism, highlights the necessity of continued research into the literature in order to ensure that sanctioned policy is based upon stringent empirical findings.

This study will be of interest to economists, policymakers, social housing providers and anyone who is unemployed or who has contact with people who are unemployed. We aim for the knowledge derived from this study to not only offer an explanation to the research problem, but also to be used to determine the potential effectiveness of interventions designed to mediate worklessness in social housing. The rest of the paper is structured as follows; Section 2 commences with our definition of worklessness and background characteristics of Pennywell. Section 3 outlines the theoretical perspective selected for the study, including its relevance to current policy levelled at mediating worklessness. Section 4 is the methodology, outlining the data collection methods selected as well as sample sizes. Section 5 is the bulk of the study, presenting the findings using a theoretical thematic analysis. Section 6 presents a discussion of our findings and a conclusion.

Definition of worklessness

The term worklessness often refers to people who are not in formal employment but who are looking for a job (the unemployed), together with people of working age who are neither formally employed or looking for formal employment (the economically inactive). Therefore worklessness is the term used to describe a combination of those who are unemployed and those who are economically inactive. The working definition of worklessness for the purpose of the study will draw from Helen Barnes et al 2011 report for the Department of Work and Pensions. This includes:

1. Job seekers - unemployed, actively seeking work and claiming Job Seekers Allowance.
2. Incapacity benefits - unable to work due to work limiting illness and claiming Incapacity Benefits or Sever Disablement Allowance
3. Lone Parents - unable to work due to being a lone parent with a child under the age of 16 and claiming Income Support.
4. Carers - unable to work due to caring responsibilities and claiming Carers Allowance.

The strength in utilizing an approach of worklessness is that it broadens traditional understandings of unemployment to include those who are not actively seeking work, building a more comprehensive picture of factors affecting labour market participation.

Situating the Pennywell estate

Pennywell is one of the UK's largest post-war social housing schemes, located in the central west area of Sunderland, Tyne and Wear. This form of housing tenure is defined by controlled rents set below the market level offered by local councils and non-profit organizations. Currently the social housing population of Pennywell comprises 1,430 homes with 1,669 residents (HACT 2014:7). The estate was built over a four-year period from 1949-1953 in the wake of Aneurin Bevin's 1949 Housing Act. Social housing built during this period was for the 'deserving' working class who it was

was felt had borne the brunt of suffering throughout the war and held a growing political power (Peter Malpass and Alan Murie 1999:53). Although the roots of social housing lay in a desire to reduce what the Beveridge report of 1942 called widespread squalor across Britain, the demographic for whom the new social rented sector served lay primarily with the skilled blue-collar worker (Peter Malpass 2005).

Pennywell estate was built during a time of great expansion for the welfare state, and while other social institutions of the time such as the National Health Service have remained largely unchanged, social housing has over the last 60 years often found itself at a crossroads. The paper is not concerned with summarizing the various twists in the fate of social housing (for overview see Michael E. Stone 2003), but much literature has highlighted a process which saw the initial expansion of social housing contract becoming increasingly fragmented and residualised (David Mullins et al 2006). Cole (2007:4) now claims that the sector is no longer reserved, as it once was for the 'working class' that it has now become the sector of the 'non-working class'. This analysis would seem appropriate when considering the Pennywell estate, where unemployment stands at 11.8%, whilst those who are deemed to be economically inactive lies at 39.5%, creating a workless population of 51.3% (HACT PDF 2014:37).

Drawing from our workless definition we can see that the economically inactive who are lone parents, disabled or carers form the bulk of those who are out of work in the area. For the paper this highlights a key issue, that many residents may be faced with prior constraints be it poor health or caring responsibilities, which permeate into their ability to gain work. These constraints should also be understood in conjunction with an area which is one of multiple deprivations, spanning both social and economic issues, residing in the bottom 10% of the most deprived local super output areas (LSOA) in the UK (HACT 2014:43). The Index of Multiple deprivation is comprised of seven components, measuring income, employment, health and disability, education skills and training, barriers to housing and services, living environment and crime. Surrounding neighbourhoods in the West of Sunderland, share similar scores across these components, placing Pennywell in a well-defined pocket of deprivation geographically.

Increasing levels of deprivation and low labour market participation have been markers of a declining community. A community which throughout the 1980's, 90's developed a local and national reputation as a centre of high car crime and anti social behaviour (Eileen Spencer 1990). Pennywell was earmarked as one in need of regeneration, and in 2006 the social housing stock was transferred from the city council to the Gentoo Group, a local non-profit housing association. Regeneration has brought with it 60 million pounds of investment in, new homes, the development of a new shopping and leisure area, school and community spaces (John Ford 2011). Reducing the numbers of those out of work has also formed a cornerstone of Gentoo's approach to regeneration. Alan Middleton et al (2008:76) in their research paper that considered the transfer of social housing to the Gentoo group within Sunderland, noted the sustained efforts of the organisation to tackle long-term unemployment through raising aspirations and investing in the local labour force in Pennywell. Most intriguing for the paper is that we investigate Pennywell during a period of much investment and drive to improve employment prospects in the community, so considering residents perception of their pathways into work is particularly apt.

Context of Worklessness in Pennywell

The investigation into worklessness within social housing estates is certainly not a new endeavour, but the Hills review (2007) caused a spike in research on behalf of government bodies (Del Roy Fletcher et al 2008, Barnes et al 2011). Existing literature has centred upon areas that have lagged behind the rest of the UK in terms of economic development and also where pockets of worklessness exist in relatively buoyant labour markets (Helen Ritchie et al 2005:9). Pennywell fits into the former category, lying in not just a lagging city but region. Understanding worklessness in Pennywell requires also situating the phenomena within a wider geographic and economic context.

Pennywell is situated within Sunderland, a city traditionally reliant upon three dominant industries of shipbuilding, coal mining and manufacturing. During the initial introduction of social housing, residents of the city would have represented the target population of blue-collar workers, with plentiful opportunities for work. However, the city began to struggle with unemployment as early as the great depression of the

1930's (Gillian Callaghan 1998:95). By the late 1960's, debate in Parliament saw the call for 'immediate and urgent action' to be taken in order to halt ever increasing unemployment in Sunderland, one beacon of hope highlighted by Frederick Willey MP, was the development of an industrial estate in Pennywell containing factories and some smaller businesses (HC Deb. (1969) 776, col. 620-625). It is a development which now lies largely empty, but for a few occupied units. Manufacturing has instead moved out towards newly industrializing countries and western European countries have seen a shift towards service sector employment (Tony Gore et al 2007:3). This has seen a movement away from low skilled and unionized manufacturing work, and the complete collapse of shipbuilding and coal mining in the area.

The North East as a region has struggled to find a foothold in the national economy since the proliferation of service sector work. Whilst we acknowledge that the area has faced transition problems, it is important to note that there are jobs in Sunderland, and in recent times the city has experienced what may be considered a revival in manufacturing jobs (Gillian Callaghan 1998:101). This has been coupled with the emergence of a number of large energy and communications companies placing their call centres in the local area. The Nissan car plant established in 1986 is five miles from Pennywell and is the North East's largest private sector employer with some 6100 employees and a further 12,000 indirect supplier jobs in the area, Sunderland now exists as the UK's biggest car producer (Chris Tighe 2013). The car industry and call centres had brought a revival to the city and in 2004 the numbers of those in employment were the highest since 1975, unfortunately the area was hit hard by the recession and we have once again seen a fall in employment (Vince Taylor 2010:4). Even during the early 2000's a period of relative buoyancy for Sunderland's labour market, Pennywell held a worklessness rate of 53% (Ian Hall and Jill Clark 2003:4).

Theoretical Framework

Neighbourhood effects have been selected as the theoretical body of literature for this study. It was selected for its ability to understand spatial concentrations of worklessness and why we find low labour market participation saturated within certain geographical areas. This notion is key to our wider understanding of the research problem,

namely, why it is that worklessness is concentrated so intensely within the spatial location of Pennywell?

Under this body of literature the spatial concentration of worklessness in Pennywell would be linked to the influence of neighbourhood environment upon individual outcomes, in our context that outcome is worklessness. In this study we seek to consider the way in which neighbourhood environment may shape the pathways into work available to residents residing there and in turn whether these pathways pose advantage or disadvantages to gaining work. In order to guide our understanding of pathways within Pennywell we have selected three theoretical models from neighbourhood effects literature. Social network theory will be used to help us gain a wider understanding of the way in which social interaction between actors in the neighbourhood may play a role in forming pathways into work. Spatial mismatch pertains to the proximity of jobs in relation to residents and therefore offers an understanding as to how the geographic positioning of jobs may influence pathways, while local institutional resources considers employability resources within the neighbourhood and their role in neighbourhood pathways. The approach between the models is an interlinking one, using the theories to reinforce each other, in order to produce a greater understanding not only of the theories themselves, but also our research problem.

The selection of three theories is driven by the findings of previous research, which notes that there does not exist a singular explanation for high levels of worklessness within social housing, instead pointing towards a complex arrangement of interlinking factors as the root of the problem (Helen Ritchie et al 2005). Therefore, attempts to isolate one explanatory factor would not offer a sufficiently robust insight into the research problem. The following chapter will commence with an introduction to neighbourhood effects literature, noting how the study will position itself within existing literature. Followed by further elaboration upon our theoretical models, noting their suitability in understanding the individual outcome of worklessness.

Neighbourhood Effects Literature

Maarten Van Ham (2012a:2) attributes the emergence of neighbourhood effects literature to the work of American sociologist Herbert Gans in the 1960's, however, he

credits the current popularity of the topic to Julius Wilson and his book "The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the underclass and Public Policy' (Julius Wilson 1987). Whilst the seminal in depth community case study by James Rosenbaum (1991) of the Gatreux project in Chicago has inspired a range of debates regarding neighbourhood effects. Many studies within the discipline have followed Rosenbaums (1991) lead and focused upon producing in depth community case studies utilising qualitative methods. However, under current neighbourhood effects literature two distinct strands of research have emerged.

The first strand focuses upon individual outcomes deriving from neighbourhood residence including social exclusion, health, education attainment, welfare dependency and deviant behaviour (for an overview see Ingrid Gould Ellen and Margery Austin Turner 1997). These studies have largely been quantitative, and aimed to identify, using relevant data sets such as household surveys and census results, statistically significant correlations between individual outcomes and neighbourhood characteristics. The second strand of research looks to offer a focus upon the causal relationships between neighbourhood and individual outcomes. The aim of these studies is to reveal the mechanisms, which exist between neighbourhood characteristics and specific individual outcomes.

It is in the second strand of research that this study will place itself. A wide range of causal mechanisms have been highlighted within neighbourhood effects literature (for an overview see George C. Galster 2010), for the study our mechanisms are considered to be the theoretical approaches selected of social network theory, spatial mismatch and local institutional resources. The identification of our theoretical models as causal mechanisms highlights the relationship they hold with the studies focus upon pathways into work. As the study holds that it is the availability of pathways into work in the neighbourhood that act as causal factor in worklessness levels, our theoretical models will be used to identify those pathways.

Critique of neighbourhood effects has largely been found in this second strand. Galster (2010:1) notes that despite an ever-growing body of research we still do not know enough about the causal mechanisms, which produce neighbourhood effects, and about their relative impact upon shaping an individuals life. A difficulty claimed to

exist with the research is that neighbourhood literature seeks to find causal mechanisms based upon preconceived stereotypes of bad areas. Bauder (2002:88) notes that neighbourhood effects is implicit in perpetuating negative stereotypes of deprived communities as it pathologises issues such as unemployment, low qualifications and single parent households as de facto ills of society. Neighbourhood effects literature is according to van Ham and Manley (2012a:7) normative with regard to what makes a good neighbourhood and how people in deprived areas should live their lives.

In selecting worklessness as the studies outcome variable, and highlighting high levels of it as our 'research problem' the study acknowledges that it may also adhere to these normative conceptions of individual conduct. The study sought to mediate these aspects in pursuing neighbourhood effects through a research question that considered both advantages and disadvantages posed by the neighbourhood for residents when it came to securing work. Social housing in the UK occupies an often-maligned position, with the very notion of state supported housing becoming synonymous with deprived and failing communities (Malpass 2005). Therefore the study attempts to not play into these existing perceptions perpetuated by a normative literature, and attempt to utilise neighbourhood effects to offer a more balanced perception of deprived neighbourhoods.

Social Network Theory

The theoretical approach selected to consider social interaction within the case study area is that of social network theory, which has been used to explain the way individuals can be influenced by the interpersonal communication, of information and resources, transmitted through neighbours and others in the community (Galster 2010:2). We look to establish the role of social networks as a pathway to work using Mark Granovetter's (1983) approach, which states that gaining work is dependent upon having access to weak ties outside of the local neighbourhood. Studies have shown that those in deprived neighbourhoods have restricted social networks and are heavily dependent upon their strong ties within the community, often becoming socially isolated (Nan Lin and Mary Dumin 1986). The difficulty posed by this in workless communities can be that those strong ties may be largely comprised of those who are unemployed or in low paid insecure work, offering little by way of quality

job information. Social network theory, and indeed a focus upon social interaction, contributes to our wider understanding of worklessness through demonstrating the degree to which residents rely on others within the neighbourhood for job information and to facilitate pathways into work. Where reliance is high it raises the importance of neighbourhood composition and social isolation as contributing factors to worklessness.

Social interactive approaches to explaining worklessness claim that the structures of family and friends, surrounding an individual, can influence potential job expectations and access to work (Tony Gore et al 2007:28). The importance of social interaction in moulding the nature of communities and the individuals who live within them has formed the basis for much research into workless areas. One perspective held is that production of deviant norms and values, transmitted through social networks within neighbourhoods, have normalized labour market detachment (Helen Richie at al 2005:26). Giving rise to current discussions, which have suggested a 'culture of worklessness' exists and is responsible for labour market detachment in some areas. This 'culture', is identified by a reluctance to engage in work and job seeking, with individuals preferring to rely on welfare benefits and the informal economy for preservation (Green and White 2007:14).

Social housing neighbourhoods have often been at the forefront of targeted policies, with a focus upon instigating mixed tenure communities, offered as a solution to the concentration of deviant attitudes to work (Malpass 2005). The study rejects the notion that worklessness in Pennywell is the result of a 'culture' of deviant norms and attitudes towards work. Instead the study holds that labour market detachment is related to poor social networks in the community leading to a form of labour market exclusion. According to Wilson (1987), where neighbourhoods have diminished access to job opportunities due to social networks lacking in collective efficacy, we find residents who are socially isolated. European studies into the social isolation hypothesis have found consistent evidence supporting the view that poor social networks act as a causal mechanism which can prevent or delay opportunities to find a job, as access to information and services are restricted (Ellen and Turner 1997:840).

Therefore a focus will be placed upon considering how the makeup of a resident's social network can influence their access specifically to job related information. Granovetter (1983:202) offers a useful understanding of the connection between social networks and jobs, noting that what is important when trying to obtain a job are acquaintances or as he terms, weak ties. Studies have found that when looking for work many people found their current jobs through an acquaintance rather than a family member or close friend who could be considered a strong tie, strong ties are signified by neighbours, family members and friends (Granovetter 1983). Rachael Kleit (2010:562) claims that a characteristic of deprived neighbourhoods is a lack of weak ties necessary to gain job information, as they are likely to surround themselves with people only from the immediate community, limiting their access to job information from outside the area.

The context of the case study area means that strong ties have traditionally been the primary method of job acquisition for residents. The area is exemplified as an 'occupational community', where the social networks of work and non-work are hard to separate; hence communities are generally homogenous and very close nit (Gore at al 2007:29). Homogeneity underpins the notion of social networks that individuals stick together according to socioeconomic, behavioural and interpersonal characteristics (Miller McPherson et al 2001:415). Many residents in the case study area would in the past have acquired jobs in the dominant blue collar industries serving their communities be it, coal mining, ship building, or low skill factory work. Learning of job vacancies in these industries would be generally unproblematic as close friends and family would largely be employed themselves in these prominent industries or in related work, posing little problem for a reliance upon strong ties. Phillip Klasinitz and Jan Rosenberg (1996:187) note that an advantage of strong ties such as family and friends is that they can 'vouch' for your character with an employer, enhancing the prospect of employment.

The decline of traditional pathways into work mean family and close friends can no longer offer a supporting network into one of the dominant industries of the area as these occupations have disappeared (Gore at al 2005:1). Therefore reliance upon strong ties in the area may now present a barrier to employment. As we have noted, worklessness within Pennywell is high, residents who are searching for a job now

have networks comprised predominantly of others who are also unemployed or in low wage work, inhibiting their opportunities to hear about possible job prospects. It is not simply a case that poor networks offer limited job information but also that these networks set our own aspirations and intentions for work (Green and White 2007:58). When your network is dominantly comprised of those who are unemployed this can have a knock on influence to your own perceptions of the work you are able to acquire.

This highlights that it is not simply about the number of ties an individual holds but it is also about the quality of those ties. Fenne Pinkster (2008:154) notes that when individuals do gain job information from their strong ties it leads to short term work, however, in the long run they tend to lock individuals into dead end job options. This can be attributed to the nature of social network theory as an individual social capital approach; individuals exchange social resources with the aim to improve their own social position (Nan Lin 2001). Lin (2001) claims that there are two types of social capital when we consider networks within deprived neighbourhoods, bonding and bridging capital. Intra-community ties are considered to be bonding capital, while our bridging capital concerns those ties outside of the community.

In disadvantaged communities we often find a heavy reliance upon bonding capital, largely due to a lack of resources, most notably fiscal (Granovetter 1983:209). Residents form strong bonds in the community through necessity to ensure a safety net of support. The difficulty this may pose, however, is that residents who are heavily reliant upon bonding capital may become socially and spatially excluded, as they favour the familiarity and benefits of their close nit communities (Kearns and Parkinson 2001:2106). This perception links back into our understanding of Granovetter (1983) approach and helps to understand why it is that residents in deprived areas may lack weak ties outside of the community, constraining job information. Wellman (1992) highlights that ultimately residents in deprived areas lack the necessary social resources to improve their own social situations.

Using social network theory we sought to establish how informed residents are about the necessary routes into work, such as where they would look for jobs and knowledge regarding the kinds of work available to them. An emphasis upon the know-

ledge held by residents in relation to work is vital to build up a picture of social networks in the area. This is because each individual resident forms a cog in the social network of another, therefore the degree of his or her knowledge can determine the pathways open to residents. Ultimately, however, we seek to establish the degree to which residents utilise their social networks to gain work and whether those networks are comprised of strong or weak ties.

Spatial Mismatch

Spatial mismatch theory will be used to address the perspective that the spatial distribution of jobs within urban areas may play a role in determining the employment prospects of residents in different locations within those areas (John Kain 1968). The primary focus of the study is not only to consider location of available jobs in relation to the case study area but also to consider possible barriers to entering work that arise from job location. Three specific types of spatial barrier to employment will be considered, commuting, migration and information (Donald Sinclair Houston 2001:10). Ultimately spatial mismatch contributes to our understanding of worklessness by displaying those factors which may influence a resident's ability or willingness to gain work, in relation to a jobs geographic location. The impetus for selecting this theoretical model is drawn from the characteristics of the Pennywell area, with the decline of work in the immediate community and its movement to the wider urban area. In this respect we can utilize spatial mismatch to offer a broader understanding of the impact of the decline of traditional industries as an instigator of worklessness in neighbourhoods.

John Kain (1968) first posited the hypothesis of spatial mismatch, noting that the suburbanisation of jobs and the barriers that prevent inner city lower skilled residents from shifting their labour supply to suburban areas results in high unemployment and low income. The view is that those with higher skill levels face fewer barriers in commuting due to a greater financial capacity and, therefore, are not as restricted by the geographic location of a job. A number of studies reviewing spatial mismatch have found support in their empirical findings for the approach (Harry J. Holzer 1991). Christopher Jenks and Susan E. Mayer (1990) held that there did not exist enough concrete support in their study to support the hypothesis and claimed a need for cau-

tion when trying to build policy around the concept. This view has been supported by others who claim that the evidence upon the spatial mismatch is too varied to confirm it as a cause of spatial variation in unemployment (Houston 2001:13).

Studies upon spatial mismatch have claimed that the arrangement posed by Kain (1968) in the United States, which stated that unemployment is high in metropolitan cores and low in the rings, is not reflective in some areas of the UK. Leading to a new understanding of spatial mismatch and its urban structure division, which reverses Kains (1968) definition, instead noting that unemployment is concentrated in the rings of metropolitan areas rather than in the centre (Donald Houston 2005:229). The reason for this has been attributed to the many British metropolitan areas that have peripheral social housing estates, such as the case study area. Therefore the study looks to consider that unemployment is concentrated in the periphery social housing estate of Pennywell and that opportunities for employment lie in the centre of the metropolitan areas and in surrounding industrial estates.

The concept of deindustrialisation of the UK economy holds an important perspective upon spatial mismatch in our case study area. Spatial mismatch holds that the impact has been greatest upon those of low skills, because not only have jobs moved spatially further away but the decline of manufacturing jobs and movement to service sector employment has also brought about a skills mismatch for many individuals (Houston 2005:228). The shift to service sector employment has also been a driver of the movement of jobs to the metropolitan centres and industrial parks in the UK, as this line of work does not require the same space as heavy industries previously held in suburban areas of cities. This highlights a necessity to consider not just where residents believe jobs to be located but also what type of jobs are available to them.

As blue-collar industries have declined and jobs moved towards the centre of cities and industrial parks, work is no longer concentrated within Pennywell. Studies have placed much emphasis upon the access to transport as a possible barrier to individuals finding work. There is evidence in British studies that a range of transport issues act as barriers to work for the unemployed namely travel time, cost and access to a car (Houston 2005:228). The financial cost of commuting is particularly important for those who are in, or only hold the prospect of, low paid work. When the cost of com-

muting is high and the wages low this means that the profit of an individual will be small and therefore not present an incentive to work. Certainly this may be true when considering travel to industrial estates, which tend to be situated away from town centres and suburban areas making them difficult to reach by public transport (Houston 2005:228).

Graham R. Crampton (1997) has noted that the impact of commuting constraints can be so great that a job seeker may turn down offers which they consider to be to distant from their place of residence. The social network approach offers an alternative perspective to help further understand the transport barrier of spatial mismatch more closely in conjunction with the research question. Green and White (2007:65) found an unwillingness to travel long distances to work was due to a perception that previous generations had worked in close proximity to where they lived. Therefore an understanding that work should be located close to home has been passed through the generations. Offering an understanding that perhaps we see resident's subjective understanding of acceptable distances to travel for work outweighing any physical barriers.

The barrier of migration has undergone a vast amount of research in relation to the mobility restrictions social housing places upon its residents. Studies have shown that those who reside in social housing face greater mobility issues leading to higher unemployment rates (Gordon Hughes and Barry McCormack 1981). The bureaucratic and time consuming nature of housing allocation within the social rented sector make it difficult for tenants to move between social housing estates (Fletcher et al 2008:45). This can make locating to a different area in order to take on a job offer, and overcome the spatial mismatch mechanism, an unrealistic option for some. Moving out of the social rented sector may improve the mobility options of job seekers, however, it also creates a potential financial deficit, as the sub-market rents offered in social housing would be replaced by market level rents in private rental housing. Fletcher et al (2008:17) noted in their study into social housing and worklessness, that tenants pointed specifically to the importance of sub-market rents as vital to entering work.

The view that the bureaucratic nature of social housing associations are a barrier to migration, offers only a one sided perspective. Much literature regarding migration as

a barrier to employment appears to focus solely upon a notion that were it not for the practical difficulties of moving, then residents would leave their neighbourhoods. It is important to consider that moving home in order to take up work is also dependent upon the individuals desire and motivation to do so. Restricted social networks with a heavy reliance upon strong ties may also reduce an individual's willingness to move for work (Gore et al 2005:36). When individuals have ties outside of their immediate community their spatial horizons are broader, making the prospect of moving to another area more realistic (Green and White 2007:2). Those with particularly strong ties, who are heavily reliant on family and close friends, may find the prospect of leaving for another community a particularly difficult prospect, due to their social interaction being consolidated in one area.

The final barrier posed by spatial mismatch is that it can serve to separate residents in a particular neighbourhood from information networks about job vacancies. This barrier is crucially linked to the structure of residents' social networks. When jobs move away from the neighbourhood and into city centres or industrial estates this increases the physical distance between job seeker and work. G Russo et al (1996:1078) note that the further a job vacancy is from home, the less likely an individual is to find out about it. This can be for a range of reasons; Klasnitz and Rosenberg (1986:187) found that word of mouth was an important source of information about jobs for lower skilled workers, whilst Katherine M O'Regan and John M Quigley (1998) noted that lower skilled jobs are often advertised through informal channels such as shop windows or local newspapers, limiting the opportunity for job seekers outside of the area to see them. Here we can see more practically why weak ties with those outside of the neighbourhood are claimed by Granovetter (1983) to be valuable for low skilled workers.

Local Institutional Resources

Studies have documented the vast differences in both public and private institutional resources serving different neighbourhoods (Wolman et al 1991). Neighbourhood residents may have access to many or few local resources of varying standards of quality. This study seeks to consider the provision of employment support and training services in the case study area, to deduce their role as a pathway towards work for

residents. Galster (2010:3) poses a hypothesis for local institutional resources, stating that if an area lacks services individuals may be adversely affected and their opportunities for personal development constrained. The following section considers not only the way in which the quantity of available services may impact resident's pathways to work, but also the influence of the processes taking place within these services upon job acquisition prospects. With the increasing position of government and local housing associations to focus upon supply side solutions to worklessness such as work training programs, the study considers how useful residents consider these approaches to be in alleviating unemployment.

A number of studies have recorded that within deprived inner city areas institutions are often inaccessible or of very poor quality (Galster 2010:3). However, the degree to which this is representative appears more suitable in reference to the U.S than it does to Western Europe, Galster (2001:15) claims that the more centralized funding of welfare states in Western Europe ensures that pockets of resource deprivation are less severe. This has lead to a divided perspective about the relevance of local resources as a causal mechanism for neighbourhood externalities within the literature, particularly in Europe. Nevertheless, Hastings (2009) finds that in the UK, whilst resources are often fairly distributed across local councils, many deprived areas are actually in need of much higher levels in order to ameliorate negative externalities such as unemployment.

Local housing associations in many areas of the UK, and within our case study area, have stepped in to take on a greater role in supplying local employment services to tenants as part of wider regeneration programs. These services range from informal advice services to formal programs offering apprenticeships and skills training. Programs have been targeted across the working age population, with some focused primarily upon tackling youth unemployment, moving up to those who have faced many years outside of the labour market (Ford 2011:6-7). Concern has been particularly expressed in relation to the approach of area based regeneration programs in deprived areas, and van Ham and Manley (2012a: 5) note that the vast majority of programs instigated do so under a 'top down' approach allowing for little involvement of residents.

Social housing literature supports the view that local resources are of high importance, noting that the solution to relieving the negative externalities of social housing such as unemployment, is reliant upon strengthening community services (Duncan MacLennan 2006 in Cole 2007: 10). The direct involvement of residents has, however, been labelled as a vital factor in the success of neighbourhood services, with Ruth Lupton (2003:18) claiming that a 'bottom up' approach is better suited to identifying problems in the community and devising solutions to these issues. The strength of institutions being placed locally within neighbourhoods is that they can be tailored to meet the specific needs of the residents, rather than having to provide a more scattered service to cater to various groups across a region or city.

Considering the quantity of employment services within neighbourhood is not enough to deduce the pathways they may offer to residents, the content of these services is also a defining factor. Therefore a core focus of the analysis upon local resources surrounds the role of the processes, which take place within them and the impact they can have upon individuals. Research into employment and local resources has focused upon the role of processes in shaping the career development of individuals (Bauder 2001:89). These processes can span the practical help offered in searching for a job such as guidance with application forms, advice about where best to look for job vacancies to enhancing skills through training programs resulting in formal qualifications. Green and White (2007:63) found that individuals living in areas of concentrated unemployment lacked the basic social resources and knowledge to perform these necessary steps to apply for and find out about jobs.

Through interaction with people from outside of the community residents are exposed to new social norms and values as well as opportunities to develop social networks, which may over time improve employment prospects (Bauder 2001). Certainly this may be true when considering the influence of peers and role models, such as staff within organizations, upon individual's who participate in community programs (Jenks and Mayer 1990). Staff within organizations may have access to a wide range of social resources, such as connections outside of the community and knowledge of the local labour market. However, for many the people they will primarily come into contact with at employment services will also be unemployed people from within the

local community. Therefore it is questionable how useful these new additions to social networks will really be for improving job prospects.

Developing the skills that may make a resident more employable or improve their knowledge of the application process is a valuable contribution of local organizations. Possessing these new abilities does not necessarily ensure that residents will then act upon them in their search for work. Self-esteem and confidence are a vital component to an individual's ability to obtain work, and studies have shown that low self-esteem can act as a key barrier to participating in the labour market (Lin 2001). Lupton (2003:18) claims that local programs can lead to increased confidence and capacity to become involved in wider spatial areas outside of the community. The notion of confidence and self esteem points to a lack of social capital as a possible instigator of worklessness, as residents do not hold the necessary tools to enter the labour market. Hilary Silver (2007:14) has pointed towards the ability of local organizations to be an agent that can activate or build social capital. Highlighting the need to consider whether taking part in local services and programs can influence how residents feel about work, particularly whether after participating they consider work a more obtainable prospect.

Despite many studies attaining to the positive impact of local institutional processes there are some concerns that they may also constrain the career development of individuals. Bauder (1991:90) argues that local institutional practices are often closely tied to cultural interpretation of social and demographic contexts of neighbourhoods. Therefore institutions may deliver services in a way that is bias according to the cultural stereotypes of a particular neighbourhood. In areas of deprivation where the perception is that residents will not become doctors or lawyers but cleaners and builders, the institutions that serve those neighbourhoods may reinforce this view.

Application of neighbourhood effects

The aim of using the theoretical framework outlined above is to see what it can reveal about the pathways into work for residents in the Pennywell area, in order to build a comprehensive picture of worklessness in the area. In doing so we also offer an opportunity to test the theories selected for their suitability to the research question at

hand. The degree to which neighbourhood effects theories are able to stand up to analysis has been questioned. Cheshire (2007:2) claims that there is little evidence to suggest that living in poor neighbourhoods erodes life chances; independent of those that contributes to their poverty in the first place. This represents a founding aspect the study seeks to consider, is it possible using the theories selected to highlight mechanisms endogenous to the neighbourhood that contribute to residents worklessness.

Methodology

The research will take a deductive approach as it seeks to consider how suitable neighbourhood effects literature is to understanding our research problem of worklessness in social housing. Pennywell, a neighbourhood in Sunderland, has been selected as an individual case study area to form the context for the research question. The case study area will be investigated using the qualitative method of semi-structured interview. The following section seeks to outline and justify the selected data collection tools as well as their limitations and influence upon validity. Neighbourhood effects studies have faced much criticism with regards to perceived methodological weaknesses in their approach (van Ham and Manley 2012a). Therefore where appropriate these methodological challenges will also be considered.

Methodological Considerations

A deductive approach to research sees the selection of a particular theory or theories, in our case it is social network theory, spatial mismatch and local institutional resources, to see whether they hold true for the data produced. This particular approach is more commonly found in quantitative research (Martyn Hammersley and Paul Atkinson 1995:21), however, a quantitative approach was rejected because it does not offer the necessary tools to understand *why* worklessness is so prevalent in social housing. The research problem was highlighted in the Hills review (2007) using quantitative methods, focused upon counting the number of residents out of work. The study holds that in order to offer an answer as to why these numbers are so high we must seek to utilize a qualitative approach, which holds the unique ability to capture

human behaviour. Bruce L Berg (2001:6-7) notes that qualitative research allows us to seek answers to our questions by analysing social settings and the individuals who inhabit them, allowing for researchers to share in the understandings and perceptions of others to discover how people give meaning and structure to their daily lives. Specifically the study sought to capture the perceptions of residents regarding their pathways into work within the social setting of the neighbourhood, to draw the meaning they attach to these available pathways.

Epistemology and Ontology

The study takes a realist approach, with an ontology rooted in realism and an adherence to a weak constructivism with regards to our epistemological perspective. A distinct feature of the understanding the study seeks to hold is a rejection of any 'objective' or complete knowledge of the world and accept that there can be many alternative but valid accounts regarding a phenomena. George Lakoff (1987:265) notes realism assumes that 'the world is the way it is', while acknowledging that there can be more than one way of understanding reality in terms of conceptual schemes with different objects and categories of objects. Under this study we hold that there are many different experiences of worklessness, and that cultural frameworks may shape the processes and opinions surrounding the phenomenon.

Research Design: Case Study

A single case study has been selected as the research design. Pennywell is a neighbourhood in the City of Sunderland in the North East of England. The neighbourhood of Pennywell acts as the primary unit of analysis, whilst the social housing tenants who reside in the area will be considered sub-units of analysis. The selection of a case study is driven by its unique ability to investigate a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context (Alan Bryman 2012:68). Worklessness represents the contemporary phenomena under investigation. A case study also allows us to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real life events (Michael Yin 1994:3). As the focus of the study is to capture the experiences of social housing residents in relation to our phenomena, it was deemed necessary to have an encompassing approach to ensure no aspects of value to the study were lost.

The type of case selected is what Yin (1994:48) terms a representative (or typical) case, which seeks to capture the circumstances and conditions of a commonplace situation. In these cases the researcher may have been influenced by various theories and literature on the topic, which leads to the examination of these theoretical and empirical deliberations in a particular research site (Yin 1994:49). In order to capture our commonplace situation of worklessness in social housing, purposive sampling was used to select Pennywell in Sunderland as the case study area, therefore the sample was selected in reference to the aim of the research, in order to answer key questions pertaining to it. To achieve a suitable sample two specific criteria were selected, the first was that that the case study area must contain social housing, and the second held that the area must also have disproportionately high levels of worklessness, in comparison to those not living in social housing in the area.

The first criterion is met, as Pennywell is one of the largest post-war social housing schemes in the UK. The second criterion is met as unemployment rates in the area stand at 11.8%, whilst those who are deemed to be economically inactive lies at 39.5%, creating a total for our workless population at 51.3%, these figures were provided by the Gentoo housing group and refer to their latest workless statistics for Pennywell (HACT pdf 2014:37). These numbers can be compared to the average worklessness rate for the rest of the Sunderland area, which stands at 28% of the population according to the Office for National Statistics (2013). The Hills Review (2007) noted that worklessness was considered to be disproportionate when the rate in social housing stood at around double that of other housing tenures. Therefore we are satisfied that Pennywell's worklessness rate qualifies as disproportionate.

Defining Neighbourhood Boundaries

One methodological consideration pertaining to the selection of our case study area and its relation to our selected neighbourhood effects literature is the importance of defining neighbourhood boundaries. The issue has generated a wide range of debate within neighbourhood effects literature, and concerns how we can define the geographical boundaries of the neighbourhoods we seek to investigate. Commonly, studies utilising a theoretical approach of neighbourhood effects literature have sought to operationalise neighbourhoods by using predetermined administrative units (Ellen and

Turner 1997:843) This may present a problem if residents within a neighbourhood hold different conceptions of neighbourhood boundaries than the ones held by administrative bodies such as local councils. Van Ham and Manley (2012b: 9) note that ill-defined neighbourhood boundaries can lead to biased results regarding the effect of an area upon individual outcomes. This could occur with residents who live at the edges of an area boundary and find that they technically live in one neighbourhood, but in fact may spend more time or work in neighbouring areas (Ellen and Turner 1997).

To remedy any bias in the result from boundary effects we took the predetermined boundaries of Pennywell, which are used for administration purposes, this is the area used to measure the worklessness statistics employed in the paper. At the beginning of each interview, before progressing with the interviews, a map of Pennywell and its surrounding neighbourhoods was shown to the interviewee. Each individual was then asked to place on the map where they themselves lived and where they believed the boundaries of the Pennywell area to stand. Comparison was then drawn between administrative boundaries and those understood by the residents. We found that there was correlation between these two and that the administrative boundary was the one identified by residents in the area. Impetus for this visual approach was drawn from Gore at al (2005) study upon deprived communities, which used maps to determine the spatial horizons of residents.

Case Study: Limitations and Validity

Case study research, particularly single case studies, have faced much criticism regarding how we can remedy external validity, this considers to what extent we can generalise our findings beyond the specific research context it was conducted in (Tim May 2011). Robert Yin (1994:30) notes that those who find fault with the external validity of case studies are considering 'statistical generalisation', which would see us attempt to make inference about a population, in our context the workless population, from empirical data collected about a sample (Pennywell). This approach is inappropriate because a case study is not a sample of one drawn from a known population. Instead our approach is to employ 'analytical generalisation' which seeks to generalise a particular set of results to a broader theory rather than to generalise them to populations (Yin 1994:36). Under this it is the quality of the theoretical inferences

that can be made from the qualitative data collected, which is the basis for generalisation.

Individual Interviews

Semi-structured interviews are utilised as the data collection method for the study. 17 interviews were conducted in total, 15 of those interviews were with social housing residents, whilst the remaining two were supplementary and conducted with a housing association representative and Pennywell community worker. Taylor and Bogdan (1998:98), note that interviews are a useful means of access when a researcher is interested in discovering the perceptions of participants, therefore the method was deemed suitable to investigate residents understanding of neighbourhood pathways. An in depth approach was used during data collection with each interview around 40 minutes in length for the social housing residents.

The selection of semi-structured interviews was largely driven by our need to have some control to ensure that the data collected could adequately address the research aim and offer a perspective upon the theories selected (Bryman 2012:471). However, this element of control is offset by the freedom to digress from the questions for the interviewee allowing them to express opinions on events, helping to explain events and patterns of behaviour (Berg 2001:70). This degree of flexibility in the interview process was paramount, because it allowed residents the opportunity to express there own perspectives on the topics discussed ensuring that the interview was not lead entirely by the researcher.

Supplementary interviews took a more focused approach and were used simply for clarification of issues raised by social housing tenants and to acquire relevant data for the study. This position was taken as the views of social housing residents were of primary concern, and the study looked to avoid being too heavily influence by the perspectives of those who worked within the community. A more formal approach was utilised with social housing residents, an interview guide was derived from our theoretical framework, with points of reference from each theory used to develop prompts and a combination of closed and open-ended questions.

A position of naivety was adopted when designing the interview guide and during interviews. This was in order to encourage the respondent to give a fresh commentary about their experiences and not be influenced by the researchers pre conceived ideas regarding a topic (Yin 1994:85). From our realist approach the primary aim during interviews was to derive 'information', involving knowledge about pathways into work and the processes at play that may lead to worklessness, as well as gaining social housing tenants 'perspectives' to reveal cultural frameworks surrounding the phenomena.

Scope: Selection of the Interviewees

The scope of the interviewees was to a large extent dictated by our case study research design, which naturally meant that all those interviewed were from the Pennywell area. Participants were recruited through community organisations in the case study area. Initial contact was made with the organisations using a gatekeeper (a local community worker) who facilitated communications with residents. Once within the group three participants were identified and from here snowball sampling was employed to find other participants suitable for interview, Berg (2001:33) notes that this is often the best way to locate subjects with certain characteristics necessary for the study. A participant criterion was developed to ensure that those selected held the necessary knowledge to answer the questions and offer a perspective upon the research problem (May 2012:141). Therefore it was stipulated that those interviewed must live in social housing at the time of interview and that they must have been workless at some point during the last six months. Although snowball sampling helped with the issue of participant accessibility it did pose some limitations, as participant selection was largely based upon the opinions of others (Bryman 2012:424). However, in letting the selection of participants arise freely to a certain extent this may help to limit subjectivity.

A core issue relating to the scope of our interviewees and the wider body of neighbourhood effects literature is the presence of selection effects. Van Ham and Manley (2010) note that many studies fail accurately to identify causal mechanisms because they ignore, or do not deal, with selection effects. When we speak of selection effects or bias as we will refer to it, we ask the question as to why a resident opts to live in

the neighbourhood that they do. It may simply be the case that individuals with limited financial resources will opt to live in a low cost neighbourhood because that is all they can afford. In this respect it is not the neighbourhood that has created their position, rather it is an individuals already determined position that prompts their entrance to the neighbourhood (Tom Slater 2013:2). The issue of selection bias is particularly poignant because the case study area is one of social housing. Therefore the residents who are selected for interview have opted into a form of housing, which provides controlled below market rents for those who are unable to secure housing in the market. The study seeks to ameliorate the possible impact of selection bias by remaining aware of precursors of deprivation throughout the study.

Data Production

The interviews were conducted between the 28th of March and the 22nd of April (2014). All of the individual interviews with residents took place within a local community centre. One limitation of the selected tools for data production, which became apparent, was that interviews afford little anonymity for participants. Discussion about employment history and labour market participation may for some be regarded as personal topics, Bryman (2012) notes that under these circumstances participants may withhold information during interview. In an attempt to remedy this issue all participants were reassured that the focus of the study surrounded neighbourhood environment and worklessness and did not seek to make any normative judgments about the labour market participation of individuals. This approach was drawn from Robert E Stake (2010:207) who advocates for researchers to anticipate where there study may intrude upon an informant's privacy or cause discomfort.

Despite these reassurances we did find that men were less willing to participate in the study than women. The root of this was linked to the differing perspectives upon the acceptability of unemployment between men and women, particularly in former industrial communities such as Pennywell with a still strong male breadwinner ethos. This resulted in a 13 to 2 split between female and male informants. Throughout the interview process informants not only conveyed their own experiences but also of those around them, this often included husbands, sons and brothers, helping to ensure

balance to the collected data. All interviews were recorded with the consent of the participants and transcription commenced promptly upon their completion.

Thematic Analysis

The selected approach to consider our findings is a theoretical thematic analysis, a method used for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data (Bryman 2012:579). Coding is used to classify data according to themes, which are then interpreted seeking to identify commonalities or relationships to offer a perspective upon the research question. A thematic approach allows for an opportunity to interpret the various perceptions of social housing residents in relation to their available pathways in the neighbourhood. The ability of thematic analysis to draw up and interpret a number of different themes is pivotal to our understanding of worklessness as a complex multifaceted phenomenon, which cannot be attributed to a single issue.

Themes or patterns within the data can be identified in the analysis using one of two ways, through inductive or theoretical deductive way (Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke 2006:12). As neighbourhood effects literature is to be used to guide the study a theoretical thematic analysis will be utilized. Therefore our three theoretical approaches of social interaction, spatial mismatch and local institutional resources provide the guidance regarding identification of themes from the data set. The theories have been used as a framework from which to identify themes pertinent to the research question and also to be used as indicators during the coding process.

Although we have acknowledged the use of the theoretical framework as a guide to developing themes in the data set, it is also necessary to highlight what the study considers to constitute a theme. Braun and Clarke (2006:10) note that a theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question. The study utilized the direction offered by Gerry Ryan and Russell Bertrand (2003) regarding theme identification, considering repetition of topics across the data set, as well as how much time and influence interviewees placed upon an issue within their individual transcripts. This approach was primarily used to build an initial understanding of pathways into work within the case study area. Similarities and differences in the way that interviewees discussed certain topics across the data set (Ryan and Bertrand

2003), was then interlaced with our repetition approach. Exploring differing perspectives was vital to our research as we sought to understand how residents understood the advantages and disadvantages of their pathways, so it was vital to consider our themes where we saw convergence or divergence on a topic. The study also employed researcher judgment regarding theme identification to ensure potential themes were not excluded without reflection.

One benefit of thematic analysis is its flexibility as it can be applied using a range of epistemological perspectives (Bryman 2012:579). For the purpose of the study a realist perspective pertains, holding that we can theorize about motivations, experience and meaning in a straightforward way, as we assume a largely unidirectional relationship between meaning, experience and language (Widdicombe and Wooffitt 1995). From this perspective our level of analysis in the data set is the semantic, where themes are identified within the explicit or surface meanings of the data (Braun and Clarke 2006:13). This approach is in contrast to a more constructivist perspective, operating at the interpretive level, seeking to highlight underlying issues. Whilst the emphasis is not upon underlying themes this does not mean that the analysis adheres to a descriptive approach. The focus is upon theorizing the significance of the patterns and their broader meanings and implications, in relation to previous literature and the research question (Michael Quinn Patton 1990).

One criticism that has followed qualitative research is that it is not rigorous enough in its approach to data analysis (Bryman 2012:581). Thematic analysis has not escaped such perceptions; whilst its perceived flexibility offers the opportunity to mould it to the demands of the research it can also result in poor application due to a lack of defined steps to fulfil the process (Roulston 2001). In order to ensure that a good standard of qualitative analysis is conducted six specific stages are utilised in the thematic process of the study, which involved, familiarisation of data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes and finally producing the report. These stages were drawn from Braun and Clarke (2006:16), where a more in depth overview of the steps is available.

Thematic Analysis: Limitations and Validity

When we reflect back upon our findings and begin the process of coding and thematic analysis we must remain aware of the role and influence of the researcher. A risk is posed that we may inadvertently contaminate the words and behaviours of the subjects replacing them with our own perceptions and intentions (Bryman 2012:578). We have already in selecting 'analytical generalisation' placed some expectations upon the findings, as a theoretical framework is utilised to guide our study. As a result of this a number of themes are already highlighted in the study. The study holds that bias is an inescapable aspect of research, which ultimately cannot be avoided. In order for the findings to acquire significance we must reflect, interpret and theorise about the data generated. Therefore the study holds that the most suitable approach is to simply remain aware throughout of possible researcher bias. The use of the six stages of thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006) offers not only offered guidance to the study but also increased the validity of our study.

Analysis

We found a close correlation between our theoretical framework and the themes produced as a result of the thematic analysis. Social network theory presented itself as the most influential theoretical model; it seeped into discussion concerning the influence of spatial mismatch and local institutional resources upon resident's pathways to work. The reason for this presented by the findings was that social networks played a large role in shaping the subjective perceptions of residents when it came to work. A prominent reliance upon very tight-knit familial ties intensified the influence of networks upon residents, it also lead to very restricted access to job information and low labour market aspirations. Residents held mixed opinions regarding the ability of social networks to facilitate work, some claiming them to be vital while others saw them as largely redundant because of a lack of jobs in the area.

It was in fact spatial mismatch that residents believed presented the greatest disadvantage to available pathways into work, the concentrations of jobs away from the neighbourhood created difficulty in accessing work. Many felt that the poor quality of

available jobs meant that they did not present an incentive to travel long distances to obtain them. The pathway into work that offered the most prominent advantage according to residents was the availability of local employability services in the area. The emergence of one particular theme that had not been accounted for during exploration of background theory was the prominence of a gendered division in attitudes to labour market participation and the influence this held upon residents perceptions of there routes into work.

Insular Community

Our social network approach noted the tight-knit nature of deprived communities, where individuals depend heavily upon other members of the neighbourhood for job support and information. Where this was seen by some to cause problems was its ability to produce very insular communities, excluded from wider social networks, ultimately producing areas of social isolation (Wilson 1987). A core focus of the interview process was to establish an understanding of resident's social networks through determining the geographic proximity of these contacts and how strong or weak these relationships were. Our findings showed a dominant preference for reliance upon strong familial ties and small friendship groups within the neighbourhood, which were saturated geographically not only within the neighbourhood itself, but in close proximity to where the resident lived within the neighbourhood. The primary consequence of these restricted networks was that it created an intensely inward looking community. The impact upon worklessness was not only that residents had poor access to job information but also were highly dependent upon bonding capital in the community.

Job Search

Nowhere was the effect of very tight-knit communities more evident than during residents' job search. As Granovetter's (1983:202) strength in weak ties argument notes those who have few weak ties will be deprived of information from more distant parts of the social system, resulting in a disadvantaged position in the labour market due to their insulation from wider networks. Only one of the residents interviewed could name a weak tie outside of the community who they had approached to ask about job vacancies. Despite restricted social networks outside of the neighbourhood the ex-

change of job information and utilisation of contacts within the community to secure work was highly prevalent.

'I went on a work program… and they told us that 70% of jobs aren't advertised…. so I had my C.V. and then one of the girls who comes in here works cleaning up at Grindon Hall (School) and I gave her my C.V. to hand in and he (headmaster) phoned and says I've had your C.V. pushed under my door…I wouldn't have heard about it if not, and he (headmaster) phoned and asked me what sort of work I was looking for…" (Nicol)

Exchanges such as this were common throughout the interview process and ranged from very close ties such as immediate family to neighbours and friends in the neighbourhood. The reliance upon close ties in the community served more than as a space to receive job information, these ties also formed, for some residents, a vouching system to gain work. In this respect we move away from Gronovetter's (1983) understanding of ties being primarily concerned with simply the exchange of information. Instead the findings reflect those of Klasnitz and Rosenberg (1996:187) where social networks can open doors to individuals because friends or family members vouch for their character and capabilities with an employer. The root of this for many residents in the area was a lack of formal qualifications, which meant they did not stand out in the job application processes.

"My partner just started doing maintenance, just getting in… I think because he hasn't got a lot of qualifications but he has experience, but that puts you back if you don't have that bit of paper saying you can do it" (Nicol)

Feelings of exclusion from the formal labour market due to a lack of qualifications were expressed by many of the interviewees. Therefore 'vouching' or 'getting in' as some residents referred to it was a productive way to move around a lack of qualifications and enter work. While we found incidence of the 'vouching' system it was more closely tied to jobs residents had gained in the past, particularly in factory work, rather than their most recent job searches.

"With Tywell (Factory) it was me sister that worked there and that was in Pallion so not far away, so I got into Tywell through my sister so it was just like word of mouth" (Sandra)

The characteristics of a strong occupational community continued to be present in Pennywell, Gore et al (2005) assertion of a thin line between work and non-work relations, where residents offer pathways into work for others continued to be relevant, and these pathways were considered an advantage to work. However, by the admission of those interviewed it was no longer profitable to rely only upon family or friends to find work, it must now be combined with other methods.

"I was talking to such and such, and she was saying that somebody needed a cleaner, erm and you know I've gotten bits of stuff like that, but not really, you don't hear it anymore…you've got to go out and do it, I was sending twelve letters out a week, just going on the computer and sending letters to people I thought might need a cleaner" (Jean)

"*Most of it's online and vacancies in store or word of mouth, but not many people talk about jobs there aren't many going*" (Amy)

The interviews showed a perception from residents that there had been a decline in the ability of neighbourhood ties to act as an appropriate pathway into work. When residents were posed the question regarding what they felt was the best source of job information, it was the Internet that arose as the most common answer. Our findings proved contradictory to those of Green and White (2007) who found in their study into workless communities, that residents particularly younger ones, were not aware of where and how to look for work.

The rising influence of the Internet as a job search technique questions whether Granovetter's (1983) strength in weak ties approach, which hinges upon actor exchange of information remains relevant to our studies of deprived communities with the dominance of technology in the job search market. The study holds that it does in fact remain relevant, despite the noted decline of interpersonal exchange of job information and the rising prominence of the Internet, learning about job opportunities word of mouth via ties in the community was prominent across

word of mouth via ties in the community was prominent across residents current and past work history. The prevalence of word of mouth arose during interviews because it was often the information from strong ties that resulted in jobs for residents in the case study area. Many noted that when applying for jobs via the Internet they had limited success.

"I have had one reply back by letter, and even email just says if you haven't heard in 6 weeks then you haven't been successful" (Joan)

Residents consider reliance on strong ties an advantage because it offers a pathway to work, which the formal application process cannot, that is often a personal connection between the potential employee and employer. For residents in the area with low qualifications and often-patchy work histories standing out during the interview process presents difficulties. Using Granovetter's (1983) approach we can interpret the high levels of worklessness in the area as being due to the prevalence of residents to obtain jobs through strong ties in the community, their limited ties outside of the area restricts the volume of information open to them, and in tern places residents at a deficit in the labour market.

A further implication for worklessness which arose from restricted social networks was that the job information exchanged between residents, revolved around occupations that are often low paid and insecure. Largely what we found was a flow of job information through the community centred upon care work, with the elderly or children, cleaning and factory work. Pinkster's (2009) assertion that the job information available between strong ties in deprived areas often leads to work, but locks individuals into dead end job options, is reflective of the circumstances found in the case study area. Zero hours contracts, in which employees are offered no fixed hours per week and work at the employers' discretion, were common in our interviews particularly in child-care work, placing individuals into limbo between work and continued benefit dependence, due to the financial insecurity of having no guaranteed income.

"I've still got to sign on but I've got to fill in a form saying what hours I've worked and they deduct it out of my money, but if you've worked more than what your job

seekers is you've got to sign off. Then the next week if you haven't you've got to sign back on' (Nicol).

The inability of residents to branch out from these very low quality jobs highlights the lack of social resources held by residents. Bonding capital is plentiful and residents utilize it well in the 'vouching system', however, there is a distinct lack of the necessary bridging capital to gain access to a better standard of job information (Lin 2001)

Labour Market Aspirations

Social networks and ties between family and friends not only determine access to job information but also shape the expectations of individuals about the labour market (Gore et al 2007) Whilst family and friends can act as pathway into work, as we saw in our 'vouching' system, they can also be constraining, not simply through a lack of access to wider networks of job information, Green and White (2008:35) note that family ties and close communities can be stifling, acting as brake upon those willing to aspire to better jobs or living outside of the area.

The aspiration levels of the interviewees were varied, although we did find that younger residents generally held more ambitious expectations than their older counterparts. Amongst the young people interviewed we saw teachers and police officers listed as desired future occupations. These ambitions were matched with a good awareness of the necessary steps needed in order to achieve such ambitions, even where currently individuals did not hold the qualification level needed to attain these occupations.

"I would like to do my uniform course at college. I've always wanted to be a policewoman. I'm thinking about doing my Maths and English at college first because you need high grades on them" (Shannon)

Older interviewees congregated around entry-level service sector work and low skilled factory work, when asked about their own aspirations in the work place. Where we did see a desire to progress, such as to opening a business, it revolved around these same occupations. A local community worker noted that it was the low labour market aspirations are a prominent issue for worklessness in the community.

"There are low aspirations here, when you hear the children say oh I would like to be a doctor or nurse their parents will say…. oh well you might not be able to do that, outside of Pennywell is a completely different world to them" (community centre worker)

Parents were asked during interview about their own hopes and expectations for their children when they grew up. Exploring the relationship between parents and children was seen as an important aspect of understanding not just current aspirations in the community but also those of the future. For many parents their hope was hinged upon a desire that their children would not like them be unemployed or reliant upon the state for support.

"I want her to get a job. I would love her to get a job and work" (Jean)

"I think a lot of children round here see a lot of parents don't work and they get benefits and they see that as the only way. I don't want my kids to be on benefits" (Person x)

Perhaps most revealing is that discussion often did not centre upon the desired type of occupation for their children but on the very notion they would work at all. Whilst expectations were low with regards to occupations, it was high with regard to ensuring labour market participation. Certainly the study found no evidence of the transmission of deviant norms supporting benefit dependence, which have formed the basis of many studies into worklessness (Richie et al 2005). This was further reaffirmed by the value placed upon further education within the community, being seen as a pathway into better work opportunities.

"…the youngest (son) he's at college…its his second year, he's doing joinery so I've told him to stop there until he gets his level 2 and then he can go back next year again until he's 19, better than sitting on the streets" (Sue)

Residents did not perceive their residing within Pennywell to be a disadvantage to advancing in the labour marker. Many referred to the advantage of having higher educa-

tion opportunities in close proximity to the area, meaning moving forward did not mean having to leave the neighbourhood. In fact higher education was perceived as very viable and worthwhile pathway into work, standing in contradiction to many studies into workless communities that have found a negative attitude towards the necessity of gaining a good education (Green and White 2007)

Gendered Labour Market Participation

The case study area is historically an occupational community with strong links to heavy industries. A gendered bias in terms of occupational uptake between men and women in these communities has been a prominent theme in previous studies (Gore 2007:31). This was the case with men seeking to obtain manual labour work, whilst women looked for work in shops or in care roles. The impact of entrenched gender stereotypes upon worklessness in the community was related more to the strong preference for women to opt out of the labour market whilst raising their children. This was found to be the case not only for older women, but also the younger generation who were currently mothers. For women in the case study area, a responsibility to family came first before the pursuit of a career and in many respects raising a family was seen as an occupation.

Familial social networks within the community served to shape the expectations women had of themselves but also the way others viewed them. We cannot underestimate the impact family and friends have upon shaping individuals, not just as a source of job information as we explored with Granovetter (1983), but also in shaping behaviour and attitudes of their role in wider society. Particularly in our case area of very restricted social networks these attitudes are reinforced as individuals are exposed to limited knowledge from outside the community, which may challenge existing attitudes. Many of the women interviewed credited the influence of their own mother upon their decision to stay at home, illustrating well an example of family ties shaping behaviour.

"I got my first job at McDonalds at 18 and I excelled to be a manager and I was 21 when I left to get married and had children. My son is quite demanding so I need to

spend all of my time with him, just to be like my mam…a just think it's the way I've been brought up" (Person x)

There was a perseverance of the gendered role of women as caregivers, and of the male breadwinner model. Despite this, women valued their role in the home and emphasised that staying at home with their children was something they enjoyed. While the preference of many women to assume the role of primary caregiver appeared to be conditioned largely by social networks, there were also more practical concerns that played a part. Most notably the provision of childcare, which for many was difficult to secure, because the cleaning and care work prevalent to women in the area required unsociable hours, either early in the morning or late in the evening. Where women had in the past found work in these areas often a complex network of family and friends were employed to help with childcare, even where family breakdown occurred responsibility to family persevered.

"*My ex partner only lives five minutes away from me…he gets off work at half three and he comes round and gets her (granddaughter) and then brings her back on the night when I get back from work so I haven't got to get childcare*" (Jean)

This reliance upon family and friends for support with childcare underpins the importance and often-beneficial role of strong ties upon residents' pathways into work. Studies concerning the impact of social networks upon individuals often focus heavily upon the negative aspects of strong ties (Klasnitz and Rosenberg 1996, Kleit 2001). Here we see instances where they can in fact be of great benefit to individuals seeking to enter work, as without these support networks many would be unable to find appropriate childcare. While we can draw positives in possessing strong ties for some individuals, it is important to acknowledge that the need to rely upon these ties is born from a lack of alternative support mechanisms. Granovetter (1983:213) highlights that deprived individuals believe themselves to have few options other than to rely upon strong ties largely due to economic pressures. Certainly for many women within our case study area the economic pressure of being unable to secure better-paid work opportunities, either through a lack of weak ties for job information or a lack of qualifications, mean they are reliant upon strong ties for support.

Women who did find access to childcare, or who wished to return to work once their children entered education, faced difficulties gaining access to the labour market due to long periods of exit. It was here that women felt that the negative impact of child rearing upon their pathways into work.

"*I just think they want somebody who's got more experience and who's had a job more recent, because I haven't had a job for 11, 12 year with having kids. Its just ridiculous they (employers) just don't think that you've got kids*" (Leigh)

Women looking for work often had outdated labour market experience and limited marketable skills outside of those they had performed in the home. Therefore they found that their available pathways into work were limited when they attempted to re-enter the market.

Geographical location of Work

The distribution of jobs found in the case study area confirmed the understanding posed by Houston (2005), which holds that unemployment is concentrated in the peripheral housing estates surrounding metropolitan areas, while employment opportunities are within city centres and industrial estates in the surrounding areas. Through interview we deduced that residents believed employment opportunities in the local community to be low due to the decline of local industry notably low skill factory work. Service sector work now dominated work opportunities with call centres being primarily found in the newly developed industrial parks and shop work in the city centres, these pathways to work were viewed negatively by residents. Our findings highlight the prevailing impact of deindustrialisation upon the available pathways for residents in the case study area.

Decline of jobs in the neighbourhood

Studies into occupational communities such as the case study area have often focused upon the decline of prominent industries within communities as a cause of workless-

ness (Green and White 2007). The perspective of many during interview regarding the availability of job opportunities in the community was a negative one, with an acknowledgement that finding work now meant looking outside of the neighbourhood.

"*Mmmm not really, the industrial estate… that used to be heaving with places for people to work but its just derelict now, its sad really when you look at it because it was loads of people working there, it's a shame that they've all gone, there are a couple of places open, and there is space to make jobs for people if they wanted to*" (David)

The decline of the industrial estate and factories within the neighbourhood was a prevalent theme across the interviews. One particular barrier that we considered in relation to the movement of jobs from the local area was that it constrained access to information about jobs. O'Reagan and Quigley (1998) note that particularly low skilled jobs are often advertised informally through local newspapers and shop windows, making spatial proximity to employment opportunities important. For residents in the case study area this presents two key issues in relation to worklessness. The decline of jobs in the community means residents have limited opportunities to find work through the informal channels in their own neighbourhood, whilst their restricted weak ties outside of the neighbourhood mean they are unlikely to hear about the low skilled jobs advertised through informal channels in other areas. This situation underpins the views expressed in our *Job Search* theme, where residents claimed that word of mouth exchanges in the neighbourhood had declined.

Older residents who held work histories comprised of interruptions due to redundancy and factory closures felt the decline of manufacturing most acutely. Dominant industries within the area served as the foundation not just economically but also for forming and maintaining a sense of identity. As one community worker noted it was this loss of identity that is most difficult to overcome for many.

"*I mean really it's like the region has experienced a 30 year hangover we haven't moved on, men still want to work in those very masculine industries and they just don't exist anymore*" (community centre worker)

As Gore (2007:1) notes in a relatively short space of time occupational communities and their residents have moved from making a recognized contribution to the local economy to a much more indeterminate role. The disappearance of traditional working class pathways into work in the community is a key symptom of this fading identity, and growing worklessness. Previously there had existed a clear path from education into work within the neighbourhood manufacturing industry.

"*I was at Rexons (factory) and they had a YTS (Youth Training Scheme) where they started you off in there, like training school with a view to a full time job and that's what happened I stayed there until it closed*" (Sandra)

Where a community has experienced such a path dependent existence in regard to occupations as the case study area has, there is a lack of knowledge about other work and training opportunities. One perception of occupational communities is that residents have historically been reliant upon a few dominant employers, leading to a lack of entrepreneurial knowledge to generate new small and medium businesses to fill the vacuum left (Coalfield Regeneration Review Board 2010:26). Certainly our broader *Insular Community* theme highlights the added difficulty in establishing a new identity and pathways as residents not only lack the bridging social capital to make these movements but also the heterogeneous ties to others who may be able to provide it.

Spatial concentration of Jobs in the community

When we spoke with residents about where they now felt most job opportunities were situated we saw a high return for newly built industrial parks located in the outer rings of the metropolitan area, along with work in Sunderland and Newcastle city centre. It was widely accepted by residents that entering work now meant travelling outside of the neighbourhood. Many did not own a car in the area, with only 13% of residents interviewed having access to one, echoing McQuaid and Lyndsey's (2002) understanding of areas of high unemployment being characterised by low car ownership. Houston (2005) noted that it is often poor access to public transportation from peripheral housing estates which make it difficult for residents to access work outside of their neighbourhoods. However, residents noted that transportation into local cities

and most of the industrial estates in the area were very good, pointing to the introduction of a new metro system as a benefit.

"I don't drive, well I suppose for jobs these days you've got to travel. To work you've got to find your metro routes and that, we're lucky because we have the metro on hand so if it was like South Shields or anything like that, for me its just a walk down the bank to the metro so easy to get to" (David)

Unlike in some UK studies into spatial mismatch the barriers presented by poor transportation to gaining work do not hold true for the case study to the same extent. In fact it was not the availability of transport to jobs outside of the area posing a prominent barrier to pathways into work. Instead a great onus was placed upon familiarity from those both young and old, when it came to considerations about where they would be willing to live and work. Particularly a concern about coping in the world outside of the neighbourhood permeated into resident's objections to commuting to unknown areas for work.

"I don't really know me way about and I get worried in case I get lost…it's out of my comfort zone" (Jean)

"*Newcastle is alright as long as it's the city centre and not other streets dotted about because I haven't got a clue*" (Leigh)

These restricted spatial horizons in relation to leaving the neighbourhood for work also followed through into resistant attitudes of moving to find work. Largely we found a resurgence of issues found in our *Insular Community* theme, signified by reliance upon strong ties. It was a desire to protect strong ties between residents in the area leading to a lack of consideration when it came to contemplating job opportunities outside of the neighbourhood. Kearns and Parkinson (2001) noted that these strong ties could contribute to a form of socio-spatial exclusion in which familiarity is favoured because of a preference for the comforting benefits of local neighbourhoods or a fear of the unknown.

"I wouldn't move, not now… I like it up here, we all help each other out and that. Especially round our way were all like close to each other, all rally around to help" (Sue)

Social networks are a key aspect when considering the role migration and commuting place upon residents when jobs become spatially distant, as they can determine the motivation residents hold to leave the neighbourhood. The importance placed upon strong ties superseded many of the issues which spatial mismatch theory focuses upon, where the bureaucratic nature of social housing (Houston 2005) or the high cost or private rent (Fletcher et al 2008) are considered to be primary barriers to migrating for work. Residents did acknowledge that moving between social housing could be time consuming and that they would not be able to afford private rents. However, these issues were not considered barriers to employment because for many moving from the neighbourhood was not an option.

Quality of available jobs in the Community

The quality of work available to residents also played a large role in their willingness to consider migrating or commuting as viable pathways into work from the neighbourhood. As highlighted in the *Job Search* theme residents primarily gained access to low paid and insecure work characterised by the prevalence of zero hours contracts. Spatial mismatch theory notes that a potential barrier to entering work outside of the neighbourhood is the lack of a financial incentive to do so in low paid work when coupled with cost of transport (Houston 2005). While we found that access to transport was plentiful in the area it was not considered financially viable for many to make long trips outside of the area on a regular basis. This aspect was present to the extent that we found evidence correlating with Crompton's (1997) understanding that commuting constraints can be so great that job seekers turn down job offers which are too distant from their home.

One interviewee noted that she had turned down work outside of the neighbourhood because she could not afford to travel there, she was instead considering taking on a job within the neighbourhood that would pay less.

"I did have some work in classroom support, things like care work and crèche work. The majority of the work is through South Tyneside, it is like a few buses to get through there. It would cost more to get there than what I would get working. I just had a phone call about a job its only 10 hours a week… I would be £20 better off (than being on benefits), then I was thinking if I did get it I don't have to pay for bus fare money because that is right on my doorstep. It is still all experience even if it is only £20 extra" (Nicol)

For the smaller minority of residents interviewed who were open to the prospect of commuting and moving for work, the primary condition was that it would be a "good" job, one which they enjoyed and was paid well. A skills mismatch has often been considered in conjunction with spatial mismatch to explain the difficulties faced by individuals in securing work (Houston 2001). A perception that residents in these areas lack the skills to acquire work in service sector work is not reflective of the findings. Many residents interviewed had entered into care work and more predominantly call centre environments, over various periods of their work history. However, these were often short-lived periods, not because residents lacked the skills to do these jobs but that they did not value or enjoy them.

"I will do any job as long as it doesn't use a phone, I don't like that, definitely not a call center" (Amy)

"I don't want to work in a call center but it's all that's out there…me husband works in a call center and he can't stand it, its just the amount of crap you get" (Leigh)

Call centre work was widely derided throughout the interview process with many viewing it only as a last resort. Mainly based upon an opinion that they presented a difficult work environment one in which you received little remuneration.

Provision of Job Support and Training

We found two prominent pathways into employability support organizations for residents in the area, first was a formal referral system. Individuals under this route had been sent to employability services in the neighbourhood by the national job centre,

attendance is mandatory in order to continue receiving benefits. The services residents were sent to operated under a new public management approach with private firms being employed by the state to provide computer courses, work experience and advice. The second system was largely informal and residents were informed via word of mouth. Residents were at the centre of these organisations and participation voluntary, with financial support coming from the local housing association and charitable grants. The approach from these groups was more holistic, offering employability support as well as family support and advice. Interviews revealed that residents considered the voluntary services to provide more successful pathways back into work than the formal job centre courses.

Uneven service provision

Studies considering service provision of local organizations within neighbourhood effects have often recorded low levels of quality and quantity for institutions in deprived neighbourhoods (Galster 2010). Within the case study area residents acknowledged that a difficulty faced with service provision in the area was that it was uneven in nature. It was perceived to be uneven in two specific ways, the first surrounding the quality, and the second concerning the diversity of services. Quality issues largely surrounded compulsory employability services where residents were referred by the national job centre.

"*The one I go to is Avanta (employability provider), but they're not on the ball. I was doing ICT, I've got no experience using computers so I couldn't manage in the class. So they offered me some individual lessons but they were cancelled. I've been waiting a year now to hear about a new class*" (Joan)

"*I did a work placement for 4 weeks, they worked you to bits and kept saying they were going to keep you on, and then just say no we can't. I just though well am not going on another course*" (Leigh)

Frustration regarding time delays with courses or promises of jobs upon completion of work programs that did not materialize was a common occurrence during interview. These situations served to act as disincentive to residents who often felt let down by

some of the organizations they had been referred to in the neighbourhood. The wider impact was upon the motivation levels of residents to continue or take on new courses and programs. While there was frustration at the low standard of training opportunities, some residents accepted that they were still useful in order to gain qualifications. Where difficulties emerged due to uneven service provision was that there was a lack of advice about how residents could move forward with their new and existing qualifications.

"We need places where there are some advice for people about what they can do with their qualifications, but I think if there were people around to show them different opportunities in the community, like you have this qualification and that qualification and then you can actually do that job, a think then that would boost peoples confidence to go and get a job" (Amy)

While we saw good levels of employability support in the community it was congregated around training opportunities rather than support services aimed at making the move into the labour market. This understanding reflected well Hastings (2009) assessment that in deprived UK communities there is a good distribution of resources but these levels are often not high enough in deprived areas to meet the high level of need from residents. While service provision was widespread, the need level of residents was also high, as we highlighted within our *Labour Market Aspirations* theme it was a lack of social resources regarding labour market knowledge which contributed to worklessness levels. Highlighting the need for the case study area to have access to intensive services that can guide the direction of resident's careers.

Enhancing Confidence and Self-esteem

Local employability services not only acted as a source of frustration for residents but also presented positives as to how we should move forward in remedying worklessness. Across the three theories selected for analysis local institutional resources offered the most profitable framework in challenging the sources of resident's unemployment. Particularly residents' limited spatial horizons characterised by an inward looking community, which arose from the social network theory. A key symptom of this barrier arising from the interviews was low self-esteem and confidence, impact-

ing upon resident's willingness to participate in the labour market and training programs. This was displayed well in our *spatial concentration of jobs in the community* theme, which highlighted an unwillingness to work or live outside of the community due to a lack of confidence succeeding outside of the neighbourhood.

Lupton (2003) noted that participation in local organisations could lead to increased confidence and in turn a capacity to become more widely involved outside of the community. In order to consider whether employability organisations improved confidence levels the study asked residents whether participating in local organizations had changed the way they felt about work. It was not the courses directly related to employment such as English and Math that were most influential, but more indirect ones, which focused upon building self-esteem and improving communication skills.

"The longer you're on the dole your confidence does take a dipping, so I have done the B course with Gentoo and that was about like confidence and stuff like that, it did help, you know it made you feel good, to hear people say positive things about you, like I can do this" (Jean)

It was this positive interaction with peers, which was noted as the most influential impact upon residents' perceptions of work. Many noted that undertaking the course gave them the confidence to take on new courses and meet new people.

"I think it all works towards your self-esteem and stuff, because before I used to be nervous about going in and joining a new group, but I've just done a course now and a knew one person when I walked in the room, but I thought I'm going to do it, whether I know them or not" (Nicol)

Our findings point towards Silver's (2007) view that participation in local organisations can activate or build social capital in individuals. The capital gained by the residents surrounded interaction skills and confidence to tackle non-familiar settings. Gaining these social resources is paramount also to challenging the social isolation of residents. Participating in local organisations broadens residents' social networks through interaction with new ties and is a vital aspect according to Granovetter (1983) in the job search. Certainly, during interviews residents noted that they had learned

about job opportunities through their peers when undertaking a course. However, these jobs often fell into the same category of low paid and temporary work as recorded in the *Job Search* theme.

The focus of residents upon confidence building programs highlights that simply providing qualifications and training is not enough to tackle worklessness. In fact the approach must be more holistic and consider much wider needs of residents. Gentoo appear to be meeting that demand and are the providers of confidence-based programs in the community, with residents in the estate opting into these programs. Here we, perhaps, see Lupton's (2003) assertion that a bottom up approach is best to identify and meet the needs of residents. Unlike the compulsory state designated 'top down' services which, as we noted in our *Uneven Service Provision* theme, were not received well by residents, the self-esteem courses were voluntary and residents choose whether to participate.

Barriers to Collective Participation in Employability Services

The insular, and often divided, nature of the case study area acted not only as a catalyst to current worklessness in the community, but also inhibited the development of programs designed to remedy it. A dominant theme across the interviews with individual social housing residents was an opinion that the divided nature of social networks in the area made it difficult to get members of the community to engage in job training opportunities. A resident active in a local community organisation noted that different groups were reluctant to become involved in the organisation due to a division of allegiances within the neighbourhood.

'Its trying to get people in here though. We all stick together and certain bits of Pennywell they all stick together…like behind the shops they all stick together and the ones behind the school they all stick together. I suppose it's like that everywhere.' (Leigh)

The way in which tight-knit social networks influence resident participation in employment training programs adds a dimension to our understanding of the role of local institutional organisations and worklessness.

'Our aim now is to link up the different organisations in the community and in surrounding areas such as Pallion (neighborhood next to Pennywell)… the dynamic between the groups is interesting, particularly between the more established ones and those just starting out' (community centre worker)

The local housing association are instigators of the regeneration program in the area offering financial support and guidance to groups in the neighbourhood. Investing in residents to encourage them to produce their own opportunities for personal and collective development was an ethos at the forefront of the housing associations sustainable communities approach (John Ford 2011:5). Difficulty in expanding the networks of local resident run organisations stemmed from a concern about resources in the community. Residents were acutely aware of their own and their neighbourhood's limited resources, this lead to a high level of need in terms of support and guidance contributing to a desire from residents to consolidate their access to resources.

'I feel like we could do with some more support. We still need help you know with getting information out there and getting people to hear about the things we are doing' *(Person X)*

Within Pennywell we found an example of a regeneration that seeks to involve residents in the development of the area, and focus upon the unique perspective they can offer to implementing area based programs. However, bringing residents into the decision making process and attempting to increase their efficacy has also brought challenges, in harmonizing the many groups involved.

Discussion

The study sought to consider the phenomena raised by the Hills review (2007) as to why we find high levels of worklessness in social housing. The notion held was that investigating the neighbourhood surroundings of residents would illuminate the phenomena. Considering how residents perceived the available pathways into work from within the neighbourhood formed our research question. Our core findings hold that neighbourhood environment does in fact influence the perceived opportunities avail-

able to residents, although this is not always in the same fashion as put forward by our theoretical framework. The study has shown that it is primarily subjective factors that influence residents' decision-making over and above any objective aspects. Experiences and attitudes of residents interlink with objective opportunities influencing their perception of the advantages and disadvantages of pathways available in the community.

Social network theory featured most prominently as a mechanism within the findings, which influenced residents' worklessness. We found a correlation with Granovetter's (1983) strength in weak ties theory, highlighting its enduring relevance to understanding the role of social networks in job acquisition. Residents in Pennywell hold very restricted social networks confined often not just to the neighbourhood but also to a few streets surrounding their own home. Certainly we found Wilson (1987) social isolation hypothesis to be present in Pennywell, with a homogenous low-income neighbourhood producing homogenous social networks of residents. Many acknowledged that there was a declining flow of job information within the community. This assertion perhaps points to worklessness being the result simply of poor access to job information, restricting opportunities to hear about job openings, leading to low participation in the labour market.

The study holds, however, that the influence of residents' social networks upon worklessness is actually much deeper than simply the exchange of job information. The resulting impact upon worklessness hinges on the existence of an increasingly inward looking community, Pinkster (2009:27) notes that a desire to preserve support networks in deprived areas can supersede entrance into the labour market. Although in contrast to the often-negative onus placed on strong ties by neighbourhood literature in relation to employment (Granovetter 1983, Kleit 2001), residents in Pennywell often viewed these strong ties as a distinct advantage to their opportunities. Exemplified by the 'vouching' present in the interviews, but also the wider use of networks for childcare or financial support. Interdependence allowed for the pooling of collective resources, and the establishment of a support network for residents. Despite resident's preference for strong ties, policy must focus upon creating more heterogeneous ties for social housing residents, to expand networks and produce a greater of flow job information, rich in quality and quantity.

This desire to preserve social networks in Pennywell was abundantly clear in our geographic mechanism, when residents considered the spatial distribution of jobs in the community. It was not practical or physical issues preventing residents taking on jobs outside of the community, with many noting a good level of transportation in the neighbourhood, a problem that is often considered the root of unemployment in deprived communities (Crompton 1997). Rather it was residents' own restricted perceptions and limited experience of life outside of the neighbourhood which caused many to be unwilling to work outside of it. Migrating to find work was met with the greatest emphasis upon the preservation of social networks as a justification for not moving. Our findings closely reflect those of Green and White (2007), and their study into workless communities, which found the presence of severely restricted spatial horizons and strong attachment to place. In regards to spatial mismatch we find a correlation with the theory on grounds that jobs had moved from the neighbourhood resulting in frustration for residents and a difficulty in taking up new jobs further away. However, those difficulties were not built upon the practical barriers offered by the theory, be it transport or migration, but upon this strong attachment to place.

In terms of accessing jobs outside of the neighbourhood, it was most certainly the perceived rather than the actual barriers that dictated the geographic extent of residents' job search. One theme that straddled across the actual and perceived barriers to work was the quality of jobs available to residents. Many felt it was not worthwhile travelling long distances for low pay, the poor quality of jobs in terms of financial but also personal reward factored heavily in discussion. There was also corroboration with Liam Delaney et al (2013) study into youth unemployment in recession-hit Ireland, which found that individuals would be given part time hours spread over five days, meaning the commute to work ate considerably into wages. The impact of low paid insecure work upon residents' motivation was so great that many rejected certain occupations such as call centres entirely regardless of their geographic location.

Focus upon the decline of quality jobs and the movement of work outside of the neighbourhood points towards an inescapable aspect of neighbourhood effects. That is that neighbourhood does not exist within a vacuum, many factors we find in the area are symptoms of much wider structural changes to the economy. Ritchie, Casebourne

and Rick (2005:3) note that concentrations of worklessness are often found in areas of deindustrialisation because they have failed to benefit from new economic growth. This is an important aspect to consider, particularly in moving forward and improving workless communities. Fletcher at al (2008:132) in their study into workless social housing estates note that policy emphasis must also be placed upon the demand side of employment rather than solely upon improving skill levels of the supply. Creating stable jobs that individuals value and are prepared to invest in is also vital to breaking cycles of worklessness.

Programs within the neighbourhood, targeted at supply side skill development, received mixed perceptions from residents with regards to the degree they helped in finding work, nonetheless local employability services offered the most positive influence upon residents pathways out of our theoretical models. There is a proliferation of training opportunities within Pennywell and residents are intensely aware of the necessity of gaining qualifications often holding a positive outlook about moving forward in the labour market. It was making the step from qualification acquisition and into work that formed the main barrier for residents. This was displayed by our labour market aspiration theme, which highlighted a missing link between the hopes of parents for their own children and the degree of guidance they were able to provide. Bauder (2002) assertion that it is the processes that occur within local organizations that are of peak importance is reflective of our study.

In this respect they harmonize the concerns of van Ham and Manley (2012a: 5) that we often see regeneration programs ostracize residents under an assumption they have little to offer. However, what our findings do highlight is that including residents in regeneration brings its own issues, most notably in how we redistribute a new influx of resources throughout a deprived community and its residents. If we are to adhere to the view that improving negative aspects of social housing estates hinges upon strengthening local organisations (Maclennan 2006 in Cole 2007:11), then creating cooperative local organisations must be at the forefront of discussion. It is here we would seek to focus future research to consider how best to negotiate the regeneration of deprived communities with resident involvement at the forefront.

Limitations

One limitation, which arose upon completion of the interview process, was that our sample, although not intended, comprised of predominantly women. This effect limited the sample selected, as it was more accurately able to offer a perspective upon the workless experience of women rather than men in the community, while its possible impact upon the wider study is that our identification of truly causal relationships between our selected mechanisms and worklessness may be more reflective of specifically women than the case study area as a whole. The emergence particularly of the gendered division of labour in the data collection process is testament to this. Certainly, ensuring a more balanced sample by way of gender must be a priority for future research.

Conclusion

Our study worked from a belief that the neighbourhood environment of Pennywell held an influence upon the specific outcome of worklessness for the residents living there. The findings support this view, revealing a multitude of factors contributing to worklessness arising from neighbourhood residence. Neighbourhood effects literature provides a comprehensive framework from which to trace residents' pathways into work. While we found the presence of causal mechanisms from each of our theoretical positions selected the study holds that isolating pure neighbourhood effects remains elusive. Instead neighbourhood effects literature must be considered under the much wider regional and national contexts, with an acute awareness of historical, cultural and economic factors, which trickle down to neighbourhood level. Nonetheless the research has revealed a multitude of factors contributing to our understanding of worklessness in Pennywell, ranging from social, geographic and institutional aspects. The limited spatial horizons of residents underpin the phenomena of worklessness in the area, a situation that is exasperated by the lack of work available in the case study area. This study does urge that the current focus of government policy upon tackling the supply side of worklessness through community skills training is matched with equal investment in developing good quality jobs, which offer stability and an incentive to work.

Executive Summary

Introduction

The research draws attention to a problem highlighted in the Hills review (2007), which posited that worklessness in social housing was disproportionately high in comparison to other housing tenures. The study investigated the phenomena by capturing the subjective experiences of social housing tenants in Pennywell, regarding work and the labour market. Neighbourhood effects literature was utilised as the theoretical basis, specifically social network theory, spatial mismatch and local institutional resources. A case study was employed of Pennywell and qualitative methods of semi structured interviews employed for data collection. The study operates under an assumption that through considering neighbourhood environment we can reveal a greater understanding of worklessness. Therefore, the following research question was adopted:

How do workless tenants of social housing perceive the advantages and disadvantages of their available pathways into work, in Pennywell, Sunderland?

The purpose of the study is to reveal a greater understanding of worklessness by investigating the resident's perceptions of their available pathways in Pennywell. By pathways we refer to those routes that can facilitate entry to work from the neighbourhood. Ultimately the research seeks to generate data that can contribute to the further understanding of worklessness in social housing. For the purpose of the study worklessness was defined as the combination of those who are unemployed and those who are economically inactive, drawn from Barnes et al (2011) study for the Department for Work and Pensions.

Theoretical Considerations

Neighbourhood effects literature was chosen as the theoretical basis for the study as it is able to offer a perspective upon spatial concentrations of worklessness, as found in the case study area. A trio of theoretical models from this literature, namely social network theory, spatial mismatch and local institutional resources were selected and used in conjunction with each other. The relationship assumed with the theories was

by looking through them to see what they could reveal to us about the phenomena of worklessness.

Social network theory revealed the way in which social interaction between residents can influence worklessness. Gronovetters (1983) strength in weak ties argument was used to establish a link between understanding worklessness and social networks. It posits that what is needed to gain information about work are weak ties or acquaintances and a wide social network. However, studies have shown that those in deprived communities often hold social networks of primarily strong ties such as family and friends within the neighbourhood limiting their access to job information (Kleit 2001). The job information provided by these strong ties is often of poor quality. Using social network theory the study considered the composition of resident's networks to see if they are strong or weak and considered the quality of those ties, in terms of job information.

Spatial mismatch theory holds that the spatial distribution of jobs within an urban area may determine the employment prospects of residents in different locations to those jobs (Kain 1968). This approach offered a perspective about the possible barriers to employment posed upon resident's pathways to work when the jobs were placed geographically away from the neighbourhood. Three specific types of spatial barrier to employment will be considered, notably, commuting, migration and information (Donald Sinclair Houston 2001:10). Using spatial mismatch the study established, firstly where residents perceived jobs in the community to be located, and whether any of our three selected barriers intervened in obtaining work.

Local Institutional Resources was used to consider the degree of employment support services available to residents within the case study area. Galster (2010:3) poses a hypothesis for local institutional resources, stating that if an area lacks services individuals may be adversely affected and their opportunities for personal development constrained. Others have also sought to highlight that it is also the processes, which take place in community programs influencing outcomes for residents (Bauder 2001). Using local institutional resources the study seeks to understand the quantity and quality of available employment services, and also the influence of the processes taking place within these services upon job acquisition for residents.

Method of data gathering and Analysis

A qualitative approach was taken for the study, utilising semi-structured interviews as the data collection method. A single case study of Pennywell formed the research design. 17 interviews were conducted in total, 15 of those were in depth lasting around 40 minutes with social housing residents in Pennywell. An interview guide was developed from the theoretical models selected to guide the process. The final two interviews took place with a community centre worker and Housing association representative. These were purely supplementary interviews and used to clarify aspects raised by social housing tenants and to gather background data regarding the case study area. Upon completion of the interview process a theoretical thematic analysis was employed. The theoretical models selected for the study formed a framework used to identify relevant themes to answer the research question.

Findings

Resident's perceptions of the advantages and disadvantages of their available pathways into work displayed varied perspectives, revealing a complex arrangement of factors contributing to worklessness in the area.

The first broad theme was the emergence of a very insular community, signified by tight nit resident social networks comprised primarily of family and confined geographically not just to the neighbourhood but to within a few streets. Residents were by and large socially isolated with very little contact with individuals residing outside of the neighbourhood. These very tight nit social networks contributed to worklessness in the area in three specific ways, in the job search, upon labour market aspirations and creating a gendered division of labour. Ultimately we found a restricted flow of job information between residents limiting their opportunities to hear about work. However, residents themselves did consider their social networks to be of benefit to their pathways into work, primarily through a 'vouching system' which saw friends and relatives testify to their character and ability with employers, allowing them to gain work they may otherwise have not.

Our second broad theme considered the geographic location of work, spawning three sub themes regarding the neighbourhood that was, the decline of jobs, spatial concen-

tration of jobs and the quality of jobs available. The interviews revealed a severe lack of available work concentrated within the neighbourhood, leading to much frustration amongst residents. The limited social networks of residents exasperated this situation. Jobs are considered to be placed in surrounding industrial estates and larger cities surrounding Pennywell. What we found was that residents did not consider many physical barriers to reaching these jobs such as transport issues, instead it was an unwillingness to venture to far from the neighbourhood for work which deterred many. The perceived poor quality of the jobs situated away from the neighbourhood also provided a disincentive to residents when considering geographically distant jobs. Of our three theoretical models it was spatial mismatch which residents considered to be the largest negative to their pathways into work.

Our third and final broad theme considered the provision of job support and training within the neighbourhood, spawning three sub themes of uneven service provision, enhancing confidence and self-esteem and barriers to collective participation in employability services. While residents expressed some frustration about a lack of career guidance in the community, overall perceptions of local employability services were positive. The study holds that local organisations provided the most positive outlook when considering how we can overcome worklessness. This is linked to the positive processes, which took place particularly, the building of confidence and skills.

Recommendations

The study holds three recommendations necessary to improve the workless situation in Pennywell and in turn address the research problem derived from the Hills Review (2007). The first holds that area based policies must seek to expand residents social networks, not just in quantity but also in quality. In order to do this, residents must have opportunities to acquire more heterogeneous social ties rather than the very homogenous ties which currently exist. This would open upon the flow of job information, increasing it not only in volume but also provide a better standard of jobs.

Access to better quality jobs does however, hinge upon more than simply improving social networks, residents must also hold the necessary skills. A lack of formal qualifications arose across our interviews as a barrier to gaining work, while we also found

that residents placed a high value upon local employability services to improve their job prospects. Therefore, the study holds that a sustained investment in local job support services both in the provision of skills training and employment advice must be pursued.

Government and policy makers' focus upon improving worklessness rates through a focus upon the supply side of the phenomena is welcomed by this study, as we have noted investment in skills and training for workless communities is vital. We do however urge that this supply side focus is matched with equal enthusiasm for tackling the demand side of worklessness. That is renewed focus upon providing stable good quality jobs at the entry level. The current prominence of 0 hour contracts and part time work seeks only to act as disincentive to work and consolidate residents benefit dependence.

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Appendix 1.

Interview Questions

Background

Name

Age

Education

Preliminary Questions

Explore their current situation of unemployment, how long have they been unemployed?

What have been the previous occupations you have worked in? Where are they looking for jobs now?

Map exercise

Ask residents to define what they consider to be the boundaries of Pennywell.

How would you describe Pennywell? (Cultural)

Social Network Theory

Establishing the degree of social networks

During a typical week, how often do you leave the neighborhood to undertake leisure activities in another part of the region? (Including: shopping, sporting activities, socializing).

(Links with geographic: use this question to determine whether tenants are prepared to leave neighborhood for leisure but not work)

Over the last week, who have you spent most of your time socializing with outside of those who live with you in the family home? Ask if this is typical for them?

- How much time you spend with them?
- How far do they live from you?
- Where do you socialize with them?

About how many neighbors in your current estate do you know well enough to say hello? Don't count relatives or friends already listed

- Ask how well they know the person to decipher whether it is a strong or weak tie.

Over the past 6 months can you think of anybody whom you know who is not a close friend or family member who you have spoken with who lives outside of the estate?

- How did you meet them?
- Where did you see them?
-

Try to discern how important these people are to them?

Strength of social resources within Social Networks

What are the most common jobs which your family and friends are employed in? (personal)

- Do you think this is the same for most people in the area? (Cultural)
- Which jobs do/did your parents do? (where were these jobs located- geographic)

When you think back to jobs you have held in the past, how did you find out about the vacancy?
- If someone told you about it who was that person?
- How did you know them?
- What type of job was it?
- Was the job situated within the neighborhood? (Geographic)

If you were going out to find a new job, do you know anyone that would be a good source of information about getting a job or getting a better job than you now have?

- Ask how well they know the person to decipher whether it is a strong or weak tie.

Have your friends and family been helpful during your job search?

Can you tell me about the process of applying for your most recent job? (Specific tour question)

Spatial Mismatch

Establish the geographic placement of jobs

If you were talking to a friend about where to look for jobs, where would you direct them? (Hypothetical interaction question)

- Establish if these jobs are inside or outside of the neighborhood!
- What type of jobs are these? (Skills mismatch)
- Are these the sorts of jobs you would like to do? (Skills mismatch)
- Have you seen any shift in the type of available jobs?

Do you think that you would stand a better chance of getting a job inside or outside of the neighborhood?

Commuting

When you think about commuting to work, what would be your chosen method of transport?

What do you think of the transport links from the area into the town center and surrounding areas in order to reach jobs?

- Consider aspects of cost and time.

How far would you be willing to travel for work each day?

- How far did you travel for your previous jobs?
- Consider the aspect of part time work perhaps it isn't worth travelling for that amount of time?
- Part time work doesn't make travelling far worth it?

Can you think of anything, which would make you prepared to travel further for work each day?

You mentioned earlier about the jobs your family and friends are involved in, how far do they travel to get to work?

(Links into social networks, to determine how influential networks are on expectations and willingness to travel for work)

Migration

How did you come to live in the neighborhood?

How long have you lived in the neighborhood?

Would you be prepared to move to another part of the city if you received an offer for a job in that location?

- If not what would make you more likely to move?
- Are there any particular areas within the local community that you would like to live in?

Can you think of any close family or friends who have moved from the neighborhood so that they could take up a job somewhere else?

- Where did they move to?
- What sort of job did they move for?

Do you think that living in social housing would make it easier or harder to move in order to take up a job in another area?

Bureaucratic nature of social housing

Do you think it would be easier to think about working whilst living in social housing or private rented housing?

Talk about cost of rent and tenancies?

Do family and friends help out with child-care so that you can work?

Information

You mentioned earlier that you heard about some jobs from friends, can you think of any other ways that you have come to hear about available jobs?

How easy or difficult do you think it is to hear about available jobs in the area?

Local Institutional Resources

Could you take me through a typical visit to the employment club?

Do you know of any local organizations or places you can go to which can help you with advice about getting a job or training?

- Are they situated within the neighborhood or outside?
- How did you find out about them?
- What kind of service do they provide is it training or advice?
- Have you participated in them?
- Can you describe a typical day at the (chosen organisation)?

What have been your experiences with local organizations within the neighborhood, could you describe them?

- Do they provide the services you want?
- Do they match your own ambitions for the sort of jobs you would like to do?

When you think of the programs you have taken part in within the community have they changed the way you feel about going into work?

Has it been helpful to talk with others who are also searching for a job?

Would you be prepared to travel outside of the community if their available employment support?

Would you be willing to retrain to find work?
- If yes would this be dependent upon it being inside the neighborhood?