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The Importance of Geographical Location to People Who Have Experienced Homelessness

Paul M Anderson

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of
Sheffield Hallam University
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

September 2023

Candidate Declaration

I hereby declare that:

1. I have not been enrolled for another award of the University, or other academic or professional organisation, whilst undertaking my research degree.
2. None of the material contained in the dissertation has been used in any other submission for an academic award.
3. I am aware of and understand the University's policy on plagiarism and certify that this dissertation is my own work. The use of all published or other sources of material consulted have been properly and fully acknowledged.
4. The work undertaken towards the dissertation has been conducted in accordance with the SHU Principles of Integrity in Research and the SHU Research Ethics Policy.
5. The word count of the dissertation is 84,800 excluding References and Appendixes

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Abstract

Recently, the number of people experiencing homelessness moving to unfamiliar geographical locations to secure accommodation has increased. One impact of Covid-19 lockdown was movements of people sleeping rough into emergency accommodation in new locations. This research investigated the importance of location to people who have experienced homelessness, and their agency around it; subjects, on which, little academic literature exists.

The temporary relocation of people experiencing rough sleeping into hotels created opportunities to research their experiences. The largely inductive methods chosen, involved qualitative interviews with this group and with a smaller group of people in more settled accommodation. Data was supplemented by 10 qualitative interviews with other key stakeholders. Also, a short questionnaire was completed by 104 people in various other Covid-19 emergency accommodation. Data was analysed using the writings of Bauman on the plight of the poorest within neoliberalism.

Innovatively, the research told the lived experience stories of people who had recently slept rough and moved to temporary accommodation. The findings show both they, and people who had previously experienced homelessness, value a number of aspects of location such as existing social contacts and work opportunities. However, many feel they have little chance of actualising these preferences..

The contributions to academic knowledge can be summarised thus:

1. People experiencing homelessness have needs and wants around location
2. The practical relationship they have with relocation is often best understood in terms of displacement rather than attachment or ambivalence.
3. Their needs and wants around location often clash with the reality of displacement

4. Agencies trying to help people experiencing homelessness, feel like they are operating in a structural straitjacket created by a lack of resources. This limits the support they can provide

5. Bauman's analysis helps identify the covert mechanisms by which people experiencing homelessness are displaced and excluded from locations in neoliberal societies.

6. Largely inductive methods are particularly valuable in drawing-out and understanding the experiences of people experiencing homelessness

7. Conducting research with people who have experienced homelessness without face-to-face contact is possible, but there are drawbacks, including methodological limitations and complex ethical questions.

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I need to say a massive thank you to my amazing wife Phily, who I met during the process of writing this PhD and who has done whatever she can to support me. She is my eternal rock. Without her there is no way I would have seen this to the end. I would like to thank my Dad for his helpful inputs into this process too. I need to mention Dr M who has frequently served as an inspiration and pal throughout. To Maggi, Tami and Tom for always being there for me. To Homeless Link for their support in making this happen

Although I do not know if they are still alive, I need to thank Mick and Lyndis who in 1993 were the people, without whom I would have been rough sleeping. They stood in stark contrast to my own violent Mother who introduced me to the world of homelessness during childhood. She is living proof that it is unrealistic to believe people can always rely on families to provide them with a safe roof over their head. That said my true biological family of Carol, Dad, Lou, and Rob have helped me immeasurably in recent years.

I need to make a special mention to my fellow-traveller for the last decade Dolly - without whom there would be no life in Sheffield, nor PhD, and no transformed life. I will never have words to thank her enough for all she offers me.

Most of all I need to thank all the participants in this research. Whether they be people with experiences of homelessness, or those trying to find ways of helping

those without a home of their own. I hope that I have done their perspectives on the world justice in the following pages. If I have one wish, it would be that the rarely heard stories of the lives of people experiencing homelessness are heard through this dissertation.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Overview

This dissertation explores the relationship to ‘place’ in the sense of geographical locations (from here on in, usually referred to as ‘locations’) for people who have experienced or are currently experiencing homelessness. By location I mean a defined physical area such as a neighbourhood, town, village or city. As is shown in Chapter 2, the approach of using ‘relocation’ has increasingly been used as a way of addressing homelessness. Indeed, it seems to be increasingly embedded within Government policy and is an effective function of rental housing markets in the UK.

The genesis for the research was a conversation with Lord Best in the House of Lords Tea Room as to the impact of the use of relocation to address homelessness. Subsequent research revealed there has been little academic consideration as to what relationship is between home, location, mobility and displacement for people experiencing homelessness. This dissertation addresses this gap by conducting research with individuals who have been subject to relocation and displacement approaches to their homelessness. It also considers the perspectives of other stakeholders involved in the delivery of such approaches

The research took place within the context of Covid-19 in which rough sleepers were accommodated in hotels under the Everyone-One In scheme (see Chapter 2). This offered the opportunity to interrogate these questions with people who had recent experience of both rough sleeping and recent mobility/displacement. Along rough sleepers, this dissertation also investigated the experiences of formerly homeless individuals who were now housed in flats but had needed to relocate to obtain them..

Specific details of the research methodology are detailed in Chapter 4, but in brief, the research addressed the relationship between home, location, mobility and displacement by answering the following questions.

Question 1 – Are people who have experienced homelessness attached to or ambivalent about locations?

Question 2 - What is it about locations that people feel attachment to?

Question 3 –How do experiences of homelessness and displacement impact on peoples' feelings over whether they will have choices over the future locations?

To explore these questions, a predominately qualitative methodological approach was adopted (full details are in Chapter 6). This was based on interviews with people who have recently experienced homelessness and moved to an unfamiliar location. For pragmatic purpose, all of these took place with people in two hotels in London (the reasons behind this are detailed in Chapter 6). However, this data were supplemented by a short questionnaire completed by other people who had been through similar experiences outside of London. Finally, data was also gathered from politicians and professionals working in the homelessness support sector (see Chapter 6). The methodology was impacted considerably by Covid-19, and this is described in full in Chapter 6.

There is limited existing literature which focuses upon questions of home, location, mobility and displacement with people who have recently slept rough. Partly this is because it is a group whom researchers have often struggled to engage with. It may have also been overlooked as a research topic because the relocation/displacement approach to homelessness is relatively new.

Nonetheless there are still key debates that within academic research which the dissertation built upon and added to. Prominent within these is the contested meanings of the concept of 'home' and specifically its relationship to location. Within this dissertation particular reference is paid to the tradition of literature on 'place attachment' on how that relates to the locational aspect of home. My research serves partly as a bridge between this place attachment tradition and the more recent academic focuses upon 'home making' amongst people who do not have a home in the conventional, socially defined sense. The dissertation also builds upon epistemological questions within literature such as should homelessness be objectively or subjectively defined and if so by whom? And are

home and homelessness binary opposites or do they have a more nuanced, fluid relationship?

The dissertation also built upon debates around the role of residential mobility, particularly amongst the poorest in society. It challenges literature supporting the idea of mobility as synonymous with freedom when applied to those living precarious existences. It builds upon debates around the lack of housing choice experienced by those with the least resources and control over their lives in neoliberal society. Foundational to this research are questions within literature around the formal and informal nature of ubiquitous displacement. Particularly, how experiences of displacement impact upon peoples' everyday lives physically, psychologically and socially – especially in terms of their attachment to locations. Whilst research has been conducted into the impact of geographical displacement and exclusion this dissertation considers it from the position of people experiencing rough sleeping.

1.2 Dissertation Structure

The main body of the dissertation is divided into 10 chapters which cover the following areas:

Chapter 1: Introduction (this chapter)

Chapter 1 offers an overview of the dissertation. It explains why the issues of location and homelessness are timely and important. It also details the unique contextual background behind its development and the specific questions which the research sought to answer ***(1.1)***. It then defines the meaning of the core concepts of location and homelessness which underpin the research ***(1.2).*** Finally, this section ***(1.3)*** outlines the structure of the dissertation

Chapter 2 – Policy Background

The Policy Background chapter covers the key recent policy, legal and economic developments which have impacted upon the relationship between homelessness, location and mobility (***2.2-2.4)***. It includes information on why these issues have become increasingly important and merit research. It also offers some historical context ***(2.5)*** within which recent developments have taken place. It concludes

with a description of the ‘Everyone-In’ initiative ***(2.6)*** which was central to the research.

Chapter 3 – Themes From Literature 1: Place And Location

This chapter is the first to examine existing scholarly literature around relationships to place and location. It starts ***(3.2)*** by looking at academic literature on the importance of the relationship between location and home with some concentration on the concept of ‘place attachment’. It then considers ***(3.3)*** differing opinions as what is meant by ‘place’. The next part ***(3.4)*** looks at the relationships between key concepts such as home, place, location, and house. There is a particular focus on writings considering questions of ‘home making’ amongst people experiencing homelessness. There is then a description of the ‘critical realist’ position of home ***(3.5)*** and its challenge to home making approaches.

Chapter 4 – Themes from Literature 2: Mobility

Chapter 4 is focused upon literature covering the issues of mobility. It commences ***(4.2)*** by looking at the paradigm shift offered by the postmodernist theory of the ‘Mobility Turn’. The chapter then covers questions of socio-economic context ***(4.3)*** and how these impact upon the ideas behind the Mobility Turn. Building upon the previous two sections it, next, looks at the difference between choice and displacement within mobility ***(4.4)***. This then leads into a focus on housing choice, precarity and displacement ***(4.5)***. The chapter then focuses on by consideration of non-academic research into recent displacement of people experiencing homelessness ***(4.6)***. A brief section describes media coverage of such displacement ***(4.7)***. The chapter concludes by detailing the gaps in knowledge which emerged from the literature and which the dissertation seeks to fill ***(4.8)***.

Chapter 5 – Research Questions And Analytical Framework.

This chapter begins with an overview of the questions that this research considers **(5.1)**. It then goes onto explain why an analytical framework was chosen based on the thinking of Bauman around neoliberal, later capitalism, and social exclusion **(5.2).** It then describes the application of Bauman’s literature **(5.3).** There is a section describing criticisms of Bauman’s work made by other authors (**5.4).** The chapter also discusses other analytical approaches that were considered **(5.5).**

Finally, the conclusion (**5.6)** recaps which major themes of Bauman's are pertinent to this dissertation.

Chapter 6 – Research Methods, Methodology And Ethics

The sixth chapter is divided into three distinct sections. The first part ***(6.2)*** describes the methodological underpinnings of the research. This includes considerable information on reflexivity, my ontological position and personal experience of the research process. The second part begins ***(6.3)*** with a description of the unique background circumstances in which this dissertation was competed including the considerable impact of Covid-19. The second section concludes with detailed descriptions ***(6.4)*** of the different methods used in delivering the research and the rationale behind the choices made. The last section ***(6.5)*** details the ethical framework which underpinned the research and the huge personal ethical issues (and learning) which arose.

Chapter 7 –The Importance Of Location To People Experiencing Homelessness

This is the first chapter which presents data analysis and research findings. It starts ***(7.2)*** by anonymously giving an overview of the desires around location expressed by participants who have experienced homelessness. This is followed ***(7.3)*** by an in-depth description of the various themes which arose around these desires. This section is extensive with a particular focus upon the various attitudes towards location, and the various aspects of location, which are important to people who have experienced homelessness.

Chapter 8 – Experiences Of Displacement, Mobility And Relocation

This chapter looks at data findings around perspectives on mobility and displacement amongst people who have experienced homelessness. These include ***(8.2)*** experiences of having to be residentially mobile to end homelessness. This is followed ***(8.3)*** by a section detailing experiences having to move locations whilst homeless. The next section describes other aspects of life, related to homelessness, where people felt they had little autonomy ***(8.4)***. There is then an extensive section in which participants describe which organisations they feel have choice and control over their lives ***(8.5)***. The chapter concludes ***(8.6)***

with findings from other stakeholder. These detail the challenges they perceive around helping people experiencing homelessness in an era of increased mobility.

Chapter 9 –Personal Stories Of Relocation.

Four biographical case studies are presented in this chapter telling individual stories. All four had experienced rough sleeping and were now in insecure accommodation. One person was in a private rented flat ***(9.2)***, the second was in statutory temporary accommodation ***(9.3)***, whilst the remaining three were in Everyone-in hotels ***(9.4).*** The chapter looked at past experiences, present situation, and future desires. In doing so it joined-together many of the themes described in Chapters 7 & 8 and showed the complex nature of the location/home relationship.

Chapter 10 – Conclusions

In the Conclusion chapter the seven contributions to knowledge which the dissertation offers are outlined in detail. Each one ***(10.2)*** is listed individually followed by in-depth analysis and an explanation of how it offers a new contribution to knowledge. The first three add to knowledge of the relationship to location of people who have experienced homelessness and displacement. The fourth offers a contribution by describing the experiences of other stakeholders around location and helping people experiencing homelessness. The fifth contribution shows the value of framing research into contemporary homelessness within Bauman's analysis of neoliberal capitalist society. The sixth is a methodological contribution emphasising the value of largely inductive methods. Whilst the final one outlines the opportunities and challenges created by conducting research by mobile phone with people who were recently rough sleeping. Following the contributions to knowledge, the chapter offers ***(10.3)*** some ways to further build-upon the research in both policy and research terms A final section ***(10.4)*** contains some personal thoughts within which to contextualise the research.

Appendixes

There a comprehensive collection of Appendixes containing references alongside many of the key tools and resources used in delivering the research.

Language and Terminology

In terms of terminology used throughout this dissertation, terms like ‘people experiencing homelessness’, ‘people experiencing rough sleeping’ are generally favoured over ‘rough sleepers’ or ‘homeless people’. This is because it is preferable to not ‘define’ people by one aspect of their lives. The other key terminological issue is around defining accommodation. Sometimes the word ‘house’ has been used to describe generic, undefined, self-contained dwellings. This means it sometimes incorporates other such units such as flats, apartments, and bungalows.

I have been unsure when to capitalise words such as ‘place’, ‘home’, ‘mobility’ and ‘homelessness’ as they are both nouns used in everyday language but concepts in academia with specific meaning outside of the everyday. There are also times when these words are used as part of an academic concept, such as ‘place attachment’. In the end I have decided to minimise capitalisation of such terms as much as possible.

Chapter 2: Policy Background

2.1 Introduction

This chapter describes policy and legislative factors which have a bearing on the relationship between location and home. These factors helped create the historical, economic, political, and social context which people experiencing homelessness inhabit and that impacts on their daily lives.

2.2 Housing Policy – Winners and Losers

This 1970s saw the age rise of a "New Right" movement in the UK which increasingly rejected state intervention in economic affairs in favour of a throwback to ideas from Nineteenth Century liberalism. This took place against a backdrop of end of Empire, increased governmental debt, strikes, high inflation and low economic growth. This led to the country being labelled "the sick man of Europe" by opponents of existing policies. (Buttonwood, 2017). Against this backdrop, the 'neoliberal' economic ideas of writers such as Milton Friedman and Friedrich Von Hayek increasingly took sway. Dorey (2022) summarised neoliberalist policies as

> *"significant income tax cuts, privatisation, "marketisation" in/of the public sector, weakening of trade unions and workers' rights, maximising profitability and shareholder value, a leaner and meaner welfare state, and the relentless promotion of individualism over collectivism." (p.96)*

The 1979 Conservative Manifesto proposed such a shift in terms of the Government's relationship to housing in the UK[1].

> *"Homes of Our Own*

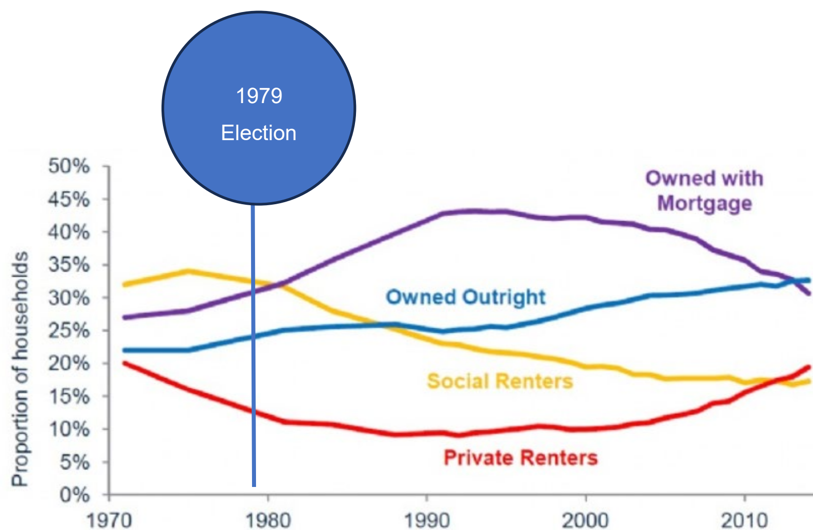
[1] It needs to be added that the Conservative Government of 1970-74 had already tried adopting more of a free market approach and that the Labour Government of 1974-1979 ended up introducing spending reductions as a condition of borrowing from the IMF. So the groundwork for the era of Thatcherism was already laid.

To most people ownership means first and foremost a home of their own.

Many find it difficult today to raise the deposit for a mortgage. Our tax cuts will help them. We shall encourage shared purchase schemes which will enable people to buy a house or fiat on mortgage, on the basis initially of a part-payment which they complete later when their incomes are high enough. We should like in time to improve on existing legislation with a realistic grants scheme to assist first-time buyers of cheaper homes." (CONSERVATIVEMANIFESTO.COM)

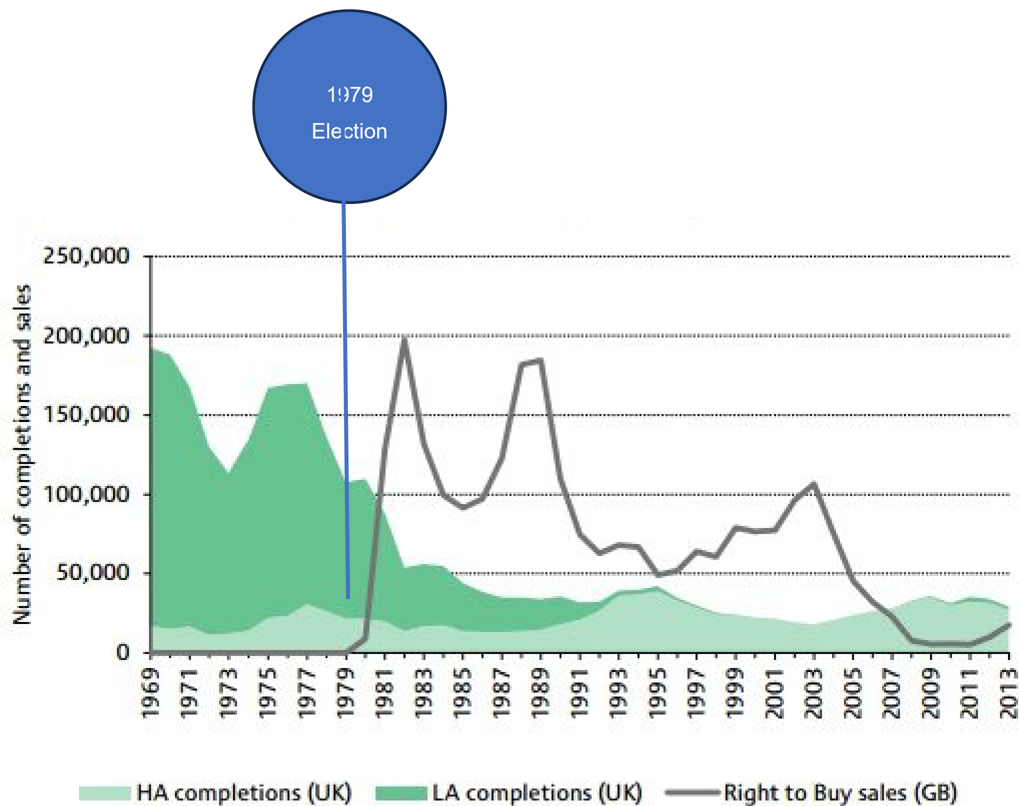
The subsequent legislation introduced in 1980 gave people who lived in council houses the legal right to purchase their home at a subsidised rate. Murie (2106) estimated these properties sold at between a third and a half of market value. This combined with greater incentives for the development of private-sector housing helped create extensive changes for decades afterwards.

Diagram 1: Changes In Housing Tenure Proportions 1970-2015



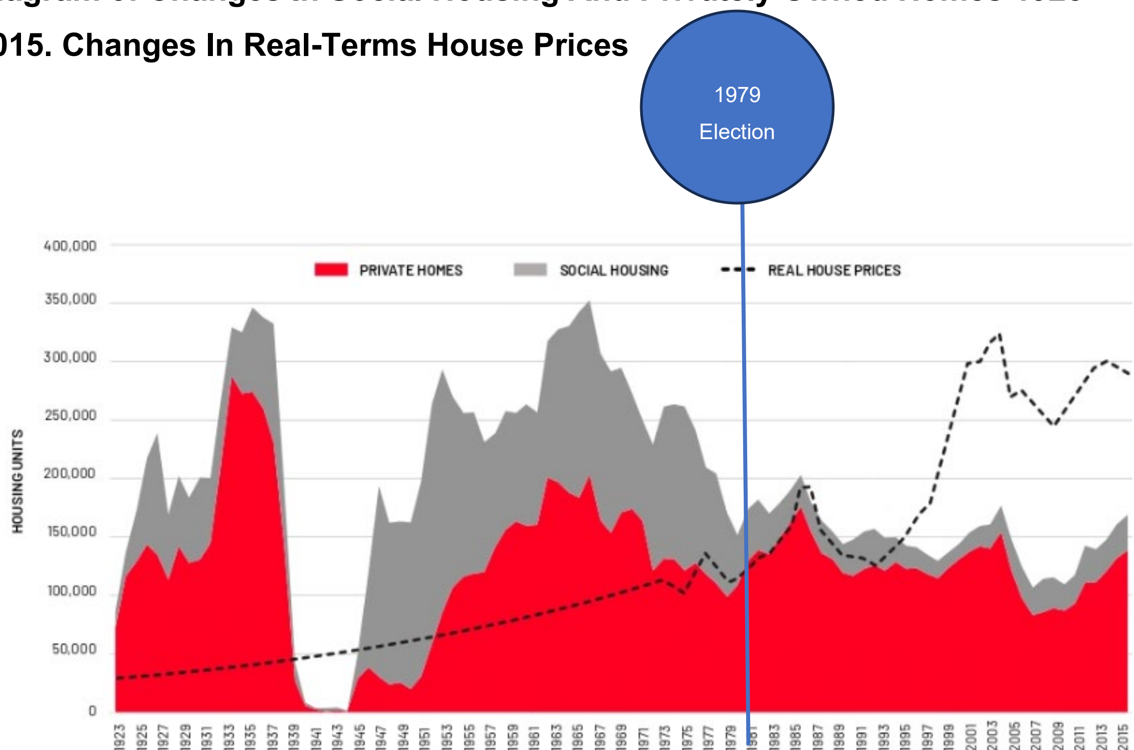
Source: Savills

Diagram 2: Changes In Tenure of New Build Properties (Including Properties Sold Under Right To Buy Policies)



Source: Adam et al

Diagram 3: Changes In Social Housing And Privately Owned Homes 1923-2015. Changes In Real-Terms House Prices



Source: Crisis

Diagrams 1, 2, 3 (above) illustrate the following trends since 1979,

a) Homeownership has increasingly become the default tenure in the UK (Diagram 1). The first decade up to 1989 saw the steepest rise, being driven by the Government subsidies (Diagram 2) mentioned above. This change in default tenure has been matched by a sharp increase in the costs of purchasing homes in the last forty years (Diagram 3).

b) Social house building has declined rapidly (Diagram 2 & 3) and the proportion of people living in these properties has also decreased (Diagram 1). Privately funded developments have become the norm (Diagram 3)

c) The percentage of people living in private-rented accommodation (with short-term leases) has increased to the point where it has surpassed those in social renting (Diagram 1).

It is useful to look back at writings from around 1979 to understand the environment in which these changes began. Bassett and Short (1980) talked of how people often felt they had little control over their housing situation due to lack of choice. They argued access to housing was largely controlled by policy makers, landowners, local authorities, lenders, and private landlords. These were *“agents [who] create the environment in which household housing decisions are made, housing choices are realised, and housing constraints imposed”* (p.57). Headey, (1982) talked of the *“grievances…[of] residents of high-rise [council] flats”* (p.86) built in the 60’s and the social stigma associated with council housing, *“Owner occupiers in their suburbs generally wanted to be as clearly differentiated from council tenants as possible”* (ibid). Whilst Hall et al (1981) described how new developments aimed at facilitating slum clearances actually *“benefited landowners who could make speculative building at increasing tighter densities and county councils fighting urban encroachment”* (p.177). He summarised the system as being *“bound to benefit most those who were in possession of the right cards at the beginning of the game*” (ibid).

More recent writers have offered a revisionist critique of this critical view of housing policy pre-1979. Rolnik (2019) asserted that housing was generally

viewed by governments as aspect of a redistributive welfare state which reflected the housing needs of all sections of the population, Glynn (2009) argued that housing policy was never about being the state being the exclusive provider of housing but instead aimed to ensure that (almost) everyone had access to decent housing. Rolnik (2019) stated *"Between the 1940s and late 1970's, council housing was the main housing provision for middle and low-income working-class households" (p.29).* Jacobs (2019) claimed that whilst the amount of home ownership increased up to the 1970s, it was associated with middle-class aspiration and status[2]. It was also culturally associated with "thriftiness," in which people purchased houses they could easily afford. This positive analysis broadly reflects Bauman description of "solid modernity" in which elites directed policy towards the perceived benefit of everyone[3].

Kirk (1982) wrote at the time of Right-to-Buy, how housing was an aspect of society most comparable to schools, parks, and medical facilities which *"are by their very nature opposed to the imperatives of profit"* (p.142). However, a number of writers such as Glynn (2009) and Jacobs (2019) argued that from the 1970s onwards homes became seen as private assets. Atkinson and Jacobs (2016) described how houses were like stocks and shares from which one aimed to make 'free' money. This created an ideological situation in which inflationary pressures on housing became desirable to millions pf people who had an investment (literally) in that market[4].

Governments envisaged their role as mainly creating the economic circumstances within which the process of an ever-burgeoning market could develop to meet increased demand. The norm became borrowing money (via mortgage) to make substantial amounts of money (via sales). This was part of what Madden and

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[2] When I was young, it was common for people to rent televisions. Only the middle-classes owned their own television. There was no "shame" in renting but the household themselves who owned it might feel a superior status,

[3] As will be shown at various parts of this dissertation these perceived benefits were in fact normatively defined.

[4] This is another paradox within the neoliberal position which generally believes Government should drive-down inflation, even if the cost is unemployment or reduced growth.

Marcuse (2016) described as the financialization of housing whilst Atkinson and Jacobs (2016) described it as "commodification". This reflects Bauman's talk of a neoliberal 'colonization' of most aspects of society. Glynn (2009) described housing as neoliberalism's' "trojan horse"[5] for this type of individualised capitalism in which houses have become viewed as commodities to be consumed, profited-from and discarded. What followed was a situation in which the population became divided between those who could borrow money to purchase their own homes and those who could not. A widening gap in wealth disparities was propagated by increased values of one's home as an asset.

However, the significance was a cultural as well as an economic one. Jacobs (2019) argued that home ownership became synonymous with a near universal definition of success. Whilst Madden and Marcuse (2016) argued that that it was increasingly the only way of obtaining a decent home. This meant those who were unable to purchase were failures by omission. Wacquant (2012) talked of the state fostering and bolstering the belief in the market as the optimal way of allocating resources. Instead of government policy acting to reduce the social stigma at council house tenants (Heady,1982), the reverse happened. Goffman's (1990) description of 'socially normal' behaviour came to include aspiring to own your own home

> *"Situational requirements are [framed as being] of a moral character: the individual is obliged to maintain them; he is expected to desire to do so; and if he does not, some form of public cognizance is made of his failure"* (p.240).

Bauman (1997, 2000, 2005) talked of how the concept of a "just society" was replaced by individual rights. The ideological nature of the legislation of 1980 was the way that purchasing a house from the state at a subsidised rate became a "right". This was a departure from the understanding of rights which had underpinned the post-war political consensus which focused on the rights to be free from Beveridge's five social evils of "*Want, Disease, Ignorance, Squalor and*

[5] In 2004 the former MP Tony Benn described this period to me as a Counter-Revolution by the forces of capitalism led by the sale of council houses.

Idleness." The generational shift in Conservatism was underpinned by a debate between Margaret Thatcher and Harold McMillan. McMillan accused the Conservative Government of the 1980s of *"selling off the family silver"* in its discarding of state assets such as housing.

The ideological basis of policy was also seen in the 1979 Conservative manifesto 1979 desire for a greater role for private rented housing. It was clearly implied that these types of rentals were not to be considered as long-term homes as they were to have a default nature of being "short fixed-term lettings."

> *"The Private Rented Sector*
>
> *As well as giving new impetus to the movement towards home ownership, we must make better use of our existing stock of houses. Between 1973 and 1977 no fewer than 400,000 dwellings were withdrawn from private rental. There are now hundreds of thousands of empty properties in Britain which are not let because the owners are deterred by legislation. We intend to introduce a new system of shorthold tenure which will allow short fixed-term lettings of these properties free of the most discouraging conditions of the present law." (part 5)*

Government policies of encouraging homeownership and reductions in social house stock meant this deregulated private rental market was the only housing option to increasing numbers of people. DCLG (2016) figures found that the were 2.5 million more households in this sector in 2015 than 2000. Jacobs (2019) described how

> *"the proportion of the poor and disadvantaged claiming housing benefit in expensive private property rose. Many people who bought their council houses sold them on to private landlords, who rented them to people on housing benefit who could not get a council house" (p.80)*

This was partly fuelled by 35-40% of right-to-buy properties in London being used as privately rental investments by their owners (Murie 2016). As writers such as Rolnik (2019) have pointed out, the fact that this was the only tenure available to many people, combined with increased demand, has created a huge landlord-

tenant power imbalance. The former *can* choose who to accept and reject without any accountability, whilst the latter have very few protections. Powell and Robinson (2019) pointed out how over nine million households on 'rolling tenancies' where landlords could give two-month notice of eviction with no reason required. They further emphasised this lack of control by pointing out how over half-a-million, predominantly private rented households, lived in overcrowded accommodation. Bennet (2011) described how people in a rented property often feel they have no sense of belonging, ownership, safety, security, and privacy. Yet Rolnik (2019) showed how government have continuously rejected any calls to even partly equalise this relationship..

An example of the precariousness of private sector housing was when Powell (2015) showed how those private renters who faced losing their homes because of housing benefit (HB) reductions after 2010[6] were expected to make 'personal choices' to increase income or persuade landlords to reduce their rent. If they could not do this, the state would not intervene to stop them becoming homeless. Under this policy people had no 'right' to expect to live in any particular location if 'the burden on the taxpayer' was too high. The coalition government of 2010-15 reframed 'social justice' in terms of the unfairness of benefit claimants expecting others to pay for their lifestyle.

Bauman (2000) described how neoliberal society is *"saturated with shoulds"* (p.172). Government logic seem to be that renters 'should' buy or rent elsewhere if they want greater security. Yet this lack of control and security is not a pre-requisite of a private rental market. Glynn (2009) has pointed out that in other parts of Europe private rented housing has secure tenancies, rent controls and is a perfectly normal long-term tenure for millions of households. The contrast between the treatment of renters and homeowners is stark[7]. Potential increases in mortgage repossessions are reported as a national disaster but increases in rental evictions go largely ignored .[8]

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[6] These benefit reductions are described in more detail later in the chapter.
[7] According to FullFact, the bail-out of banks after 2008 cost UK taxpayers £27 billion.
[8] Rolnik pointed out how that even after the crash of 2008, Governments have kept coming up with subsidy schemes to assist people in purchasing homes

.

Whilst the commodification of housing led increases in private ownership the amount of social housing reduced. Prior to 1979 growth in homeownership was paralleled by increases in social housing. Glynn (2009) showed how the post-war Keynesian consensus meant belief in the value of social housing was politically consensual. However, the 1979 Conservative manifesto signalled a departure from this.

> *As it costs about three times as much to subsidise a new council house as it does to give tax relief to a home buyer, there could well be a substantial saving to the tax and ratepayer." (part 5)*

This is an ideological statement in the sense that it ignores the value of the asset to the local authority (and therefore the Council Tax payers). The selling-off these assets at subsidised rates, with no replacements being funded, reduced the social housing stock available to the people living in the local authority. Two key interrelated trends followed from this process – 'residualisation' and 'stigmatisation.' Glynn (2009) described the process of residualisation as one where social housing became increasingly viewed as the long-term housing tenure for those who would not be able afford to purchase their own homes in the future (in contrast to private rented housing which seems designed as a stop-gap until people could afford to become owner-occupiers). This was partly because of sales of existing stock (which revenue rules basically made it impossible to replace) but also decades of under-investment in existing stock[9]. Hills (2007) estimated that there was £10 billion in outstanding repairs needed by local authority properties which councils could not afford to complete. Alongside these trends, from 1977-2011 local authorities had legal duties (enforceable in the Courts) to basically provide social homes for certain groups of people experiencing homelessness (this legal basis for this is explored later in this chapter). This meant local authorities needed to target their dwindling, and decaying, housing stock at those

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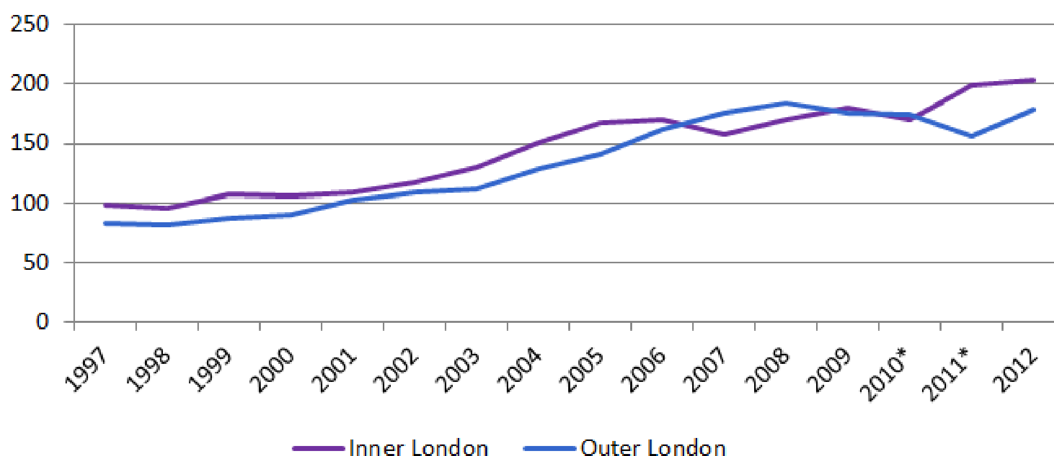
[99] The Greenfell fire killed an astonishing 72 people, The local authority had refused to put fire-proof cladding on the building. This far no Criminal Charges have been bought.

perceived as most in need. Jacobs (2019) quoted Meek (2014) to describe the difference this trend has made,

> *"changes in centralised allocations policies that prioritised vulnerable households…note that in 1962 only 11% of households living in council housing had no unearned income, but by 2003 the percentage was 65%...the shortage of low-cost rental housing in many parts of the UK has led to local authorities targeting allocations solely at households in most acute needs." (p.83)*

Unlike the mixed-economy estates described by Hanley (2012), or the visions of post-war politicians, much social housing became the preserve of poorest, especially those with children and those furthest from the labour market. Waiting lists continued to rise exponentially amongst those who wished to access social housing (see Diagram 4) until changes were introduced in the Localism Act of 2011. These reduced social housing waiting lists but did nothing to address levels of housing need (these changes are described later in the chapter)

Diagram 4: Average Number Of People (000s) On Social Housing Waiting Lists 1923-2012



Source: Future Of London

Jacobs (2019) described how the fact that social housing had increasingly become out-of-the reach of everyone except the poorest created an increased impression of it rewarding 'bad choices',

“public housing was constructed discursively as an iconic emblem of private failure amid a threatening dependency culture that was seen as prevailing amongst the poorest, most irresponsible sections of society” (p.82)

Even more than the private sector, which was more diverse in nature, the users of social housing have become the epitome of Bauman’s ‘flawed consumers.’ They were increasingly seen as those who ‘scrounge.’ Maden & Marcuse (2016) quoted one user of social housing who says that other people categorise her based on her housing tenure, *“You’re dirty, you’re sub-human, you’re poor”* (p.73). Writers such as Hanley (2012) and Jones (2020) have shown how this sort of stigmatisation of social housing has been increasingly fuelled by politicians and media alike. These quotes from the former Chancellor of the Exchequer (George Osborne) and Editor of The Sun ‘newspaper’ (Kelvin McKenzie) are indicative.

“People know that billions of pounds are wasted. Billions of pounds never get near the families that need it. It is an absolute outrage that hard-working people go out to work every day, get up early, come back late, don't see enough of their families in order to pay taxes to fund vast bureaucracies that are inefficient in order to fund a welfare system which allows too many people to sit for the whole of their lives on out-of-work benefits without going out to look for work.” (AZ Quotes, n.d.)

"They're getting a flat in central London subsidised by the taxpayer and yet these guys can still find £60 to £80 a month to subscribe to Sky TV." (de Castella, 2012)

The Localism Act 2011 openly suggested that people being allocated social housing were somehow not needing it, even if they were experiencing homelessness, instead suggesting the insecure, unregulated PRS would be better for them,

This option (of housing people in the PRS) could provide an appropriate solution for people experiencing a homelessness crisis, at the same time freeing up social homes for people in real need on the waiting list” (Gov.UK, 2011, p.2016)

An advocate of neoliberalism, Thomas Friedman wrote of a “golden straight jacket” (Thompson, 2023) in which government expenditure and regulation was constricted by the needs of globalised capital. Powell (2015) argued neoliberalism this has been embraced by certain political ideologues who have crafted a state based upon beliefs in a *“self-regulating market”* (Wacquant 2012, *p.68*). These actions have led to low-wages, insecure employment, unemployment, and a shortage of affordable homes all of which have inflated HB bills. This led to an environment ripe for cuts to state expenditure, post-2008,, badged as the necessary response to austerity[10]. The impact of these cuts is covered as part of the next section.

2.3 Homelessness Policy

In terms of defining homelessness, some criteria provided by Shelter (2007) is helpful:

- *having no accommodation at all*
- *having accommodation that is not reasonable to live in, even in the short-term (e.g., because of violence or health reasons)*
- *having a legal right to accommodation that you cannot access (e.g., if you have been illegally evicted)*
- *living in accommodation you have no legal right to occupy (e.g., living in a squat or temporarily staying with friends).*

(Shelter 2007 p.2.)

Rough sleeping refers to a sub-set of this group. It includes anyone who meets the following parts of the governmental definition of ‘rough sleeping’[11]:

[10] There is disagreement between how much neoliberalism can be seen primarily as a political project about reinforcing power dynamics (see Wacquant) and how much it is a (misguided) utopian vision a la Thomas Friedman based on the primacy of the market (see Collier).

[11] This was a definition I helped devise in 2010

“Rough sleepers are defined…as:

people sleeping, about to bed down (sitting on/in or standing next to their bedding) or actually bedded down in the open air (such as on the streets, in tents, doorways, parks, bus shelters or encampments)

people in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as stairwells, barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations, or ‘bashes’).

The definition does not include people in hostels or shelters, people in campsites or other sites used for recreational purposes or organised protest, squatters, or travellers.” Homeless Link (2020)

English[12] homelessness legislation contains two categories of these people:

a) those with ‘priority need’ to whom a local authority (LA) has a ‘duty to accommodate” (frequently referred to as the ‘main housing duty’ or ‘main duty’)

b) b) those not in priority need, who LAs have some responsibilities toward (but not the main housing duty).

Priority Need

For the first group local authorities have a legal obligation to secure suitable, permanent accommodation. These tend to be (but are not exclusively) adults with dependent children, pregnant women, older people, 16 – 17-year-olds, victims or domestic violence and people leaving institutions. These groups were identified in various legislation from 1977 – 2002 as being in ’priority need’ (see Hansard, 1977. Homelessness Act, 2002). This definition broadly means they have a legal right to permanent housing. The responsibility for finding this accommodation falls

[12] I have spoken of ‘English’ because homelessness is a devolved issue within the nations of the UK

upon any local authority to which the individual has a ‘local connection’ as defined in law (Housing Act, 1977, Housing Act, 1996).

Until 2010 this group had a ‘de facto’ right to be accommodated in housing within ’social housing’ which tends to consist of local authority or housing association properties. As a result of the geographical placement of these properties (combined with guidance from government) people tended to be housed within, or near to, the local authority who owed the Duty to them (especially if people wished to live in that local authority). However, the Localism Act 2011 increased local authorities’ flexibility over social housing allocations and use of other tenures to meet their homelessness Duty. This effectively weakened the responsibility for accommodating people locally, whilst HB reductions frequently decreased the financial viability of many areas.[13] A situation had developed in which legislation stated that local authorities owed a legal Duty to people experiencing homelessness who were their ‘responsibility.’ Yet they could increasingly ‘discharge’ that duty by placing such people into another local authority with lower rents, an option which was often more financially viable.

This led to an increase in homeless households from London being accommodated outside of the capital (see Diagram 5).

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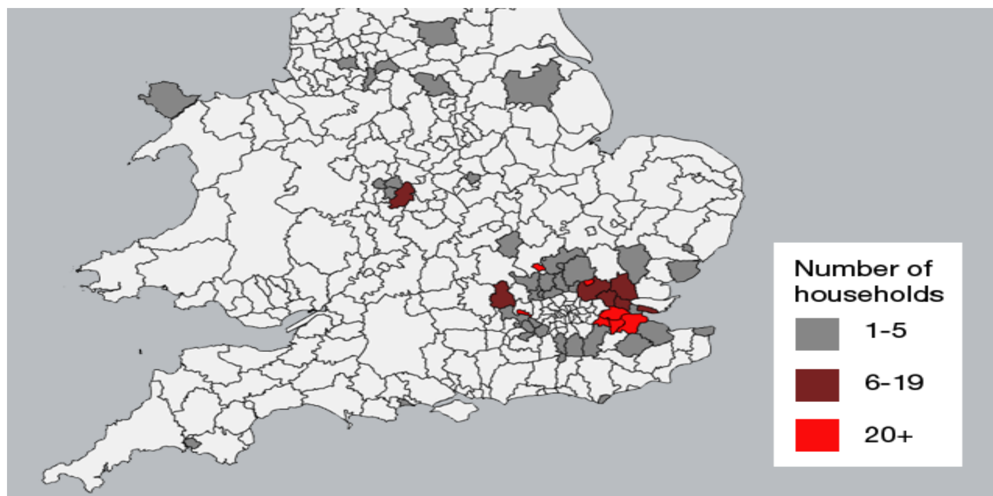
[13] The way Local Housing Allowance rates were assessed and uprated was changed after 2011. This decreased the amount of private rented sector accommodation which was affordable to people reliant on Housing Benefit.

Diagram 5: Locations To Which Homeless Households In 24 London Local Authorities Were ‘Relocated To’ In 2014-15



Source: Garvey and Pennington (2016)

Another example of local authorities using relocation as a way of addressing homelessness can be seen by the work of a not-for-profit software company Homefinder UK since 2013. They specifically focused on relocating households on social housing waiting lists and claimed to be working with several local authorities (HomeFinder UK, 2022).

> *“Prior and during the pandemic, Homefinder UK has allied with over 50 local authorities and housing providers to overcome the lack of housing supply in high demand areas, and to offer an alternative to years spent in temporary accommodation by moving out-of-area to permanent accommodation. Homefinder UK’s business model focuses on offering social housing options that are affordable and not restricted by the need for a local connection. However, it is required that individuals and families move long distance and away from the area they are familiar with.” (p.5)*

The legislative and procedural frameworks remain confusing and contradictory around people in priority need. Vostanis and Cumella (1999) argued that the primacy over houses over locations have always been reflected in UK law around

homeless[14]. Yet there remains ambiguity within governmental guidance as to local authorities' responsibilities. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) has instructed local authorities to not move people long distances wherever possible,

> *"Generally, where possible, housing authorities should try to secure accommodation that is as close as possible to where an applicant was previously living. Securing accommodation for an applicant in a different location can cause difficulties for some applicants"* (Department for Levelling-Up, Housing and Local Government 2022 (DLUHC),17.51)

This confusion is further highlighted by quotes from the then Prime Minister Boris Johnson when he was Mayor of London speaking out strongly against the practise of displacement, (4 News, 2010)

> *"What we will not see, we will not accept, is any kind of Kosovo-style social cleansing. You are not going to see on my watch thousands of families being evicted from the place where they have been living and have put down roots."*

Non- Priority Need

The second group of people experiencing homelessness are the 'non-priority need group,' to whom the law does not bestow a right to permanent housing. Whilst local authorities have powers and obligations to assist these individuals by 'preventing or relieving homelessness' (see Homelessness Act, 2017) they are not obliged to house them. People sleeping on the streets, and those in hostels or shelters for single people[15] provided by the voluntary sector tend to belong to the

---

[14] Factua2lly they are correct in the sense that one can be housed, but legally homeless because the dwelling is too small or unsanitary. However, one would struggle to be found legally homeless because one was in a location where one did not feel at home.

[15] 'Single people' is shorthand here for people who do not have children they have custody of and are not pregnant. It can include people who have partners, some of whom are featured in this dissertation.

non-priority group[16]. For these individuals, the relationship between securing accommodation and local connection has been a changeable one in recent years. Prior to the 21st-century there was no correlation between accessing hostels/shelters and local connection. I started my career working in such a hostel in 1994 and we never asked a single question about this

However, this changed due to alteration in funding for hostels/shelters and supported housing projects in the early 21st Century. Following the commencement of the ‘Supporting People’ programme local authorities were increasingly able to control access to accommodation and services for people experiencing homelessness (or rough sleeping). This increasingly meant hostels and shelters in a local authority were effectively ‘ring-fenced’ for people with local connections. There is evidence that this was happening in defiance of governmental wishes (Communities and Local Government, 2006). The Association of London Government (ALG) expressed explicit concerns about the growth of this process

> *“The way that services [hostels/shelters and supported housing projects] have developed to provide services for single people experiencing rough sleeping and especially people experiencing rough sleeping must be taken into account. The services were not designed to be borough specific but to link across boroughs to enable people to move to appropriate people to move to appropriate services based on need & circumstances” (ALG 2004. p.41).*
>
> *“These services must be available when and where they are required. Clearing House data show that the vast majority of clients are housed outside of the borough of their last settled base or local connection. The mobile nature of people experiencing rough sleeping must be recognised when commissioning service.” (ALG 2004. p.41).*

[16] Sometimes hostels are used to provide temporary homes for people in Priority Need, but these are in a minority of case. Although this is referenced in conversation with Morris, whose PhD is described later in this paper.

The impact of this increased ring-fencing was initially negated to some degree by an ongoing requirement up to 2009 for all Supporting People funded local authorities to produce supported housing strategies. However, in the post-2009 drive towards localism, which was combined with austerity cuts, this regulatory framework was abolished. Since then, people experiencing homelessness, who are not in priority need are dependent on the desire of the local authority to provide some form of hostel, shelter, or other form of support. After 2009 there was no legal obligation, or pressure from central government to ensure that hostels/shelters, (or indeed any type of accommodation) existed for non-priority need people experiencing homelessness

In London, the increase in the importance of local connection has been illustrated in the No Second Night Out (NSNO) service funded by the Greater London Authority (GLA) which has been operating for the last decade or so with people experiencing rough sleeping (Hough and Jones, 2011). This was a service which I was involved in creating in 2011. It seeks to rapidly 'reconnect' those recently arrived in London back to their 'home area.' This reconnection is often the only offer of help made available by charities working with people on the streets. Independent analysis has shown the difficulty of this operating in practise,

> *"Frontline practitioners typically confirm that while some rough sleepers willingly comply with a reconnection offer, they are outnumbered by those whom are resistant. In such cases, the process is often likened to a 'game of chicken' wherein – to caricature the process rather crudely – the reconnection officer says 'go' (offering support of varying types and intensity, or not, in the process), the rough sleeper says 'no' (perhaps raising a defiant finger in so doing), and a stalemate occurs. In time, one or other party capitulates. Typically, the rough sleeper either complies with the reconnection offer, 'disappears' from service networks (to whence no-one apparently knows), or 'digs their heels in' and resolves to remain on the street." (Johnsen, 2015)*

> *"in some areas concerns have been raised about the ethicality and potential harmful impacts of single service offers, particularly the potential denial of key services to individuals with no local connection*

who refuse 'poor' single service offers of support (e.g. a poorly devised reconnection plan)" (Mackie et al., 2017, p.xx.[17])

There also seem to be a contradictory policy within London which adopts the opposite philosophical approach to local connection. There are services focused on relocating people experiencing rough sleeping within London to areas where they have no local connection. Ironically, this 'Safe Connection' (SC) service was funded by the same body which commissioned NSNO (the GLA). Yet In contrast to NSNO, it emphasised peoples' safety and choice as more important than local connection (my underlining),

> *"The Thames Reach Safe Connections service works alongside other outreach teams in London to find alternative solutions for people who are unwilling or unable to access rough sleeping services in the area where they are bedded down.*
>
> *Safe Connections helps people who are sleeping rough to find accommodation <u>in a new area</u> where they feel safe and are able to leave the streets behind." (Thames Reach, 2015)*

Another example of the confusion around policy and local connection can be found in a governmental initiative aimed at helping people experiencing rough sleeping. This is called 'Housing First which' states as two of its basic principles that people experiencing rough sleeping should have both a 'right to a home' and 'choice and control' over the location of that home (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG), 2020b).

For people experiencing rough sleeping (especially in London) this lack of clarity around the relationship between local connection and accessing accommodation and services is particularly important. This group are often wanderers without a clear connection because local authority boundaries are arbitrary and not reflective of the way the those on the streets experience locations. Furthermore, (as acknowledged in the SC literature) people may have left a location for reasons

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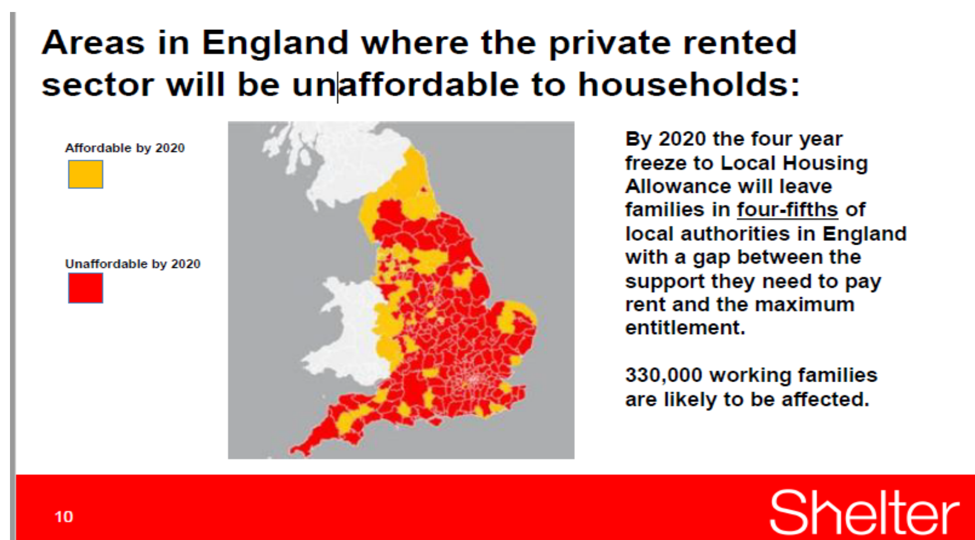
[17] This is not a mistake - the page number is xx.

of wellbeing or safety. Finally, unlike those in priority need, there is no real legal framework regulating what local connection rules can be introduced. This means there is a 'patchwork' of regulations on accessing hostels, shelters, and other support, with each one being applied differently between local authorities[18].

2.4 Policy Contradictions and Confusions

This policy confusion for both priority and non-priority groups is partly because people experiencing homelessness and local authorities have been impacted by other changes. One of the most significant of these has been benefit reductions. Whilst this is described in more detail in this chapter, Diagram 6 shows how it has made large swathes of private sector accommodation unaffordable

Diagram 6: Areas Iin England Where Private Renting Is 'Unaffordable' On Housing Benefit



Source: Shelter (2017)

A second policy change has been allowing more local decision-making at the same time as reductions in local authority funding. Local communities have been increasingly encouraged able to decide how (diminishing) resources are allocated and cuts implemented. This has led to situations such Labour MP, John Cruddas,

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[18] Some people experiencing rough sleeping qualify as being in priority need as thus have the same protection as other people in that group.

opposing the opening of a hostel in his constituency for people experiencing rough sleeping because local public opinion was against it,

> *"This decision goes against public opinion which is whole heartedly against the hostel and against the advice of the local Police Crime Prevention and Design Advisor who recommended the area was already troubled by high crime figures.*
>
> *This proposal has been ill thought out from the beginning and Havering Council need to take some responsibility for their actions.*
>
> *The local residents have my full support in their continued fight to overturn this decision and I hope the council can have some common sense on this issue which will affect many residents of Havering." (Ali, 2011)*

The final policy area to evidence this confusion is the commitment to reducing 'overcrowded' households. Anyone who is in a property which does not fit legal definitions of the size required for the number of people is legally homeless (although not necessarily in priority need). In 2016 new rules (Clair, 2016) were introduced around room sizes. These tightened the definition of overcrowding to protect tenants (MHCLG, 2016). Yet that very year saw an increase in the number of private rented households legally overcrowded in London. It seems that people experiencing (or facing) homelessness are being forced to choose between living in a location they do not want or living in inadequate-sized properties.

Diagram 7 Proportion Of households In London That Are Overcrowded By Tenure (2007-2019)

Source: Gov.UK

2.5 Historical Policy Context

To understand the nature of recent policy changes it is important to understand the policy history which has underpinned approaches to homelessness. These have tended to emphasize the importance of local connection and assistance. Below is a summary of these and the changes they introduced.

- *1603 Poor Law Act* – Originated the idea of local Justices of the Peace being responsible for poor people in their parish. This local responsibility has remained a theme of governmental responses ever since. The Poor Law was amended in the 1830s to introduce Workhouses which distinguished between 'deserving' and 'undeserving poor'

- *1977 Housing Act (modified in 1996 and 2002)* – Created a distinction between those who local authorities had legal 'Duty' to house (mainly those with dependent children, known as being in Priority Need) and those who they only had an obligation to provide 'Advice and Assistance' to (these people were

known as being in 'Non-Priority Need'). This duty fell upon the local authority where a person had a local connection as defined in law.

- *1980 Introduction of 'Right-to- Buy' subsidies* - Reduced the amount of not-for-profit social housing by offering it to tenants to purchase at a subsidized rate. The impact of this policy is seen is Diagram 1-3.

- *1981 Housing Benefit (HB) devolution* - Transferred responsibility (and some aspects of funding) to local authorities for the payment of rents for people eligible for benefits. This has changed somewhat since the introduction of Universal Credit since 2012 although still applies to people in hostels and shelters.

- *1988 Housing Act* – Removed formal controls on rents and introduced time-limited tenancies in the private rented sector (PRS), to try and increase the size of the PRS market as a means of renting accommodation. The increases in the size of the PRS are demonstrated in Diagrams 1-3.

- *1990 Rough Sleepers Initiative* – Transferred ownership of hostels for people experiencing rough sleeping from the state to charities. Street outreach services were commissioned to encourage and support people into these hostels. Investment took place in improving these facilities as well as provide ring-fenced flats for people who had slept on the streets. This was followed by a drive between 1998-2001 to reduce rough sleeping by two-thirds with added resources made available.

- *1994 Habitual Residence Test* – The first piece of legislation, which made it harder for local authorities to pay HB for non-UK nationals. This was followed by a raft of changes, over the next 30 years or so, which further restricted access to benefits for people from abroad.

- *1998 Introduction of Local Housing Allowance Rates* – Capped the amount of how much HB could be paid for a PRS property. The amount was supposed to be reflective of the local rental markets.

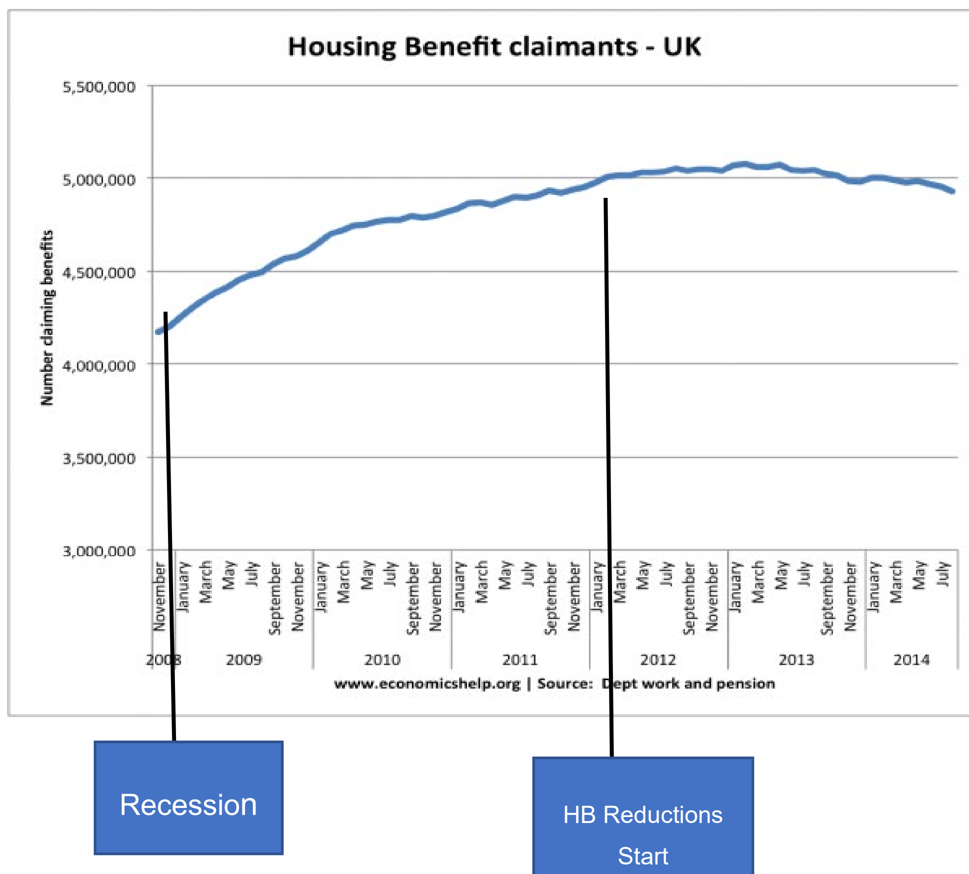
- *2003 Introduction of Supporting People* – Transferred some of the funding previously paid out of HB to local authorities in the form of an annual grant.

This included the support provided to people in hostels and shelters. This led to a situation in which councils were more able to ring-fence access to those who they felt had an adequate local connection. These new local connection rules tended to reflect those of people in 'priority need.' However, there was no legal obligation on local authorities to ensure that any accommodation (such as hostels, shelters or supported housing) existed for non-priority people experiencing homelessness in their area.

- *2008 Local Housing Allowance introduced* - A flat-rate maximum allowance was introduced based on local rents, deciding the maximum amount of HB a claimant could receive in the private rented sector. This replaced a system tying the level of benefit to the individual property.

- *2008 – Recession.* – Technically not a policy initiative, but hugely increased the number of people on HB (see Diagram 5).

Diagram 8 – Housing Benefit Claimants 2008-2015

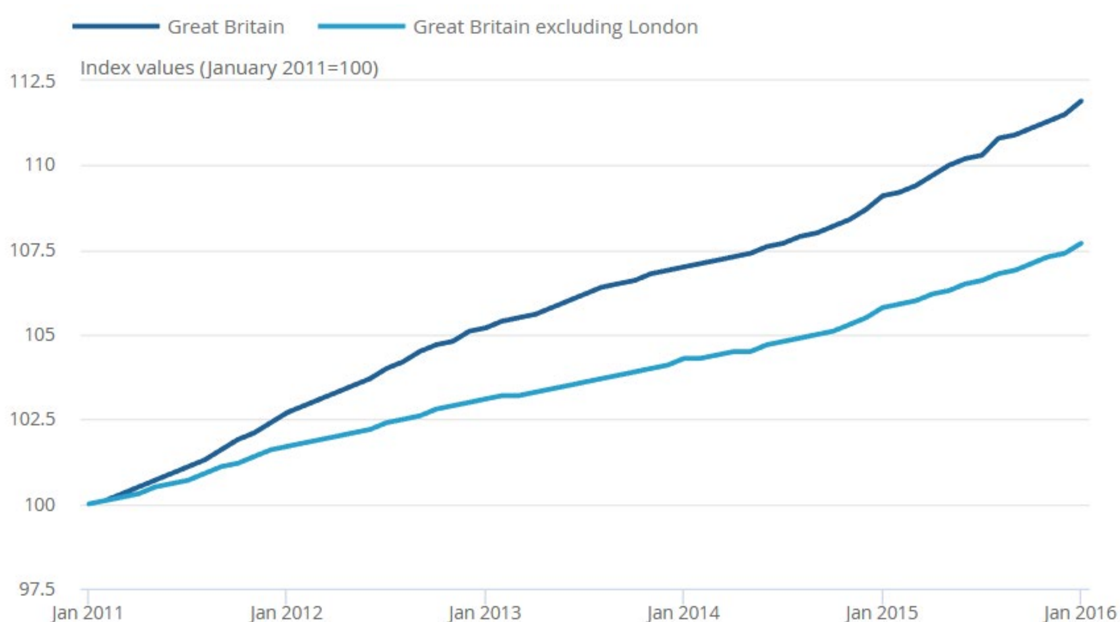


Source: Paul Anderson (2017). Data gathered from Gov.UK Housing Benefit Caseload Statistics

- *2011 Localism Act* – Increased local authorities' flexibility over social housing allocations and use of the private rented sector to meet their homelessness duty. Effectively weakened the responsibility for housing people locally, although government guidance remained that people should be accommodated as close to their local area as possible

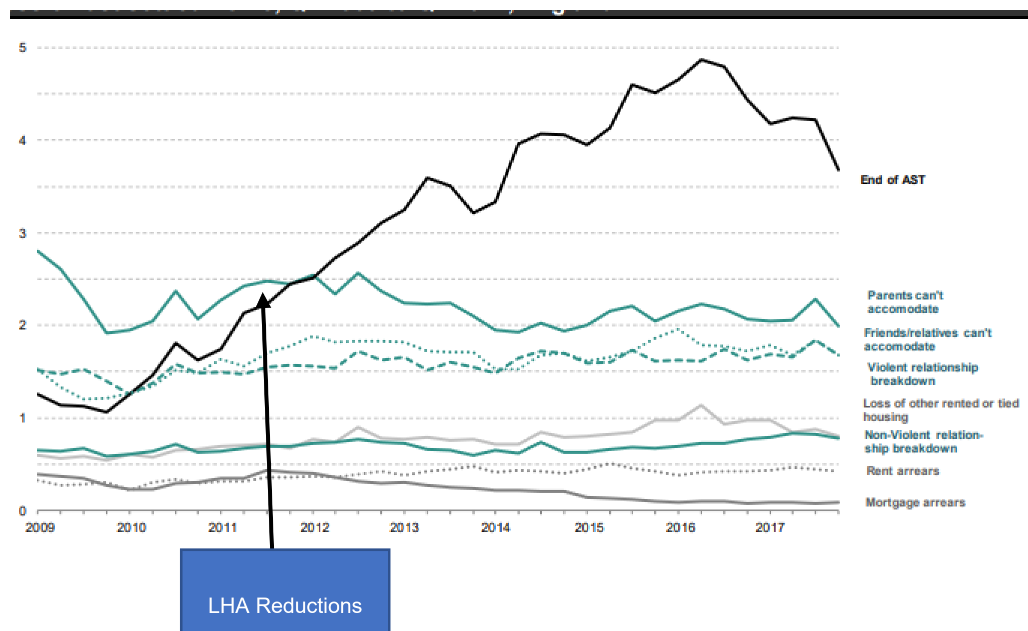
- *2011 Benefit Reductions* – Reduced the way that LHA was calculated. This led to fewer properties being affordable in the private rented sector for people on HB. A decade of reductions in LHA rates followed coinciding with rental inflation (see Diagram 9). There appears to have been a correlation between this and a huge increase in people evicted under End of AST notices (Diagram 10). These 'no-fault' evictions allow landlords to unilaterally end tenancies without the tenant having breached the terms of the agreement.

Diagram 9. PRS Rental Inflation In The 5 years Following Housing Benefit Reductions In 2011



Source ONS (2023)

Diagram 10– Changes In Reasons For Eviction From The PRS 2011-18



Source Generation Rent (2018)

- 2017 Government announces a target of reducing rough sleeping by 50% in five years and eliminate it altogether by 2027.

2.6 The ‘Everyone-In’ Policy Initiative

In early 2020 Dame Louise Casey, who was leading the Government’s pandemic response to rough sleeping wrote to local authorities asking them to ensure all people experiencing rough sleeping were ‘inside’ and safe from the Covid-19. This process became known as the ‘Everyone-in’ initiative This was supported by Government funding for local authorities to facilitate this process. A report by Shelter (2020) released four years ago claimed that 26,167 people had been moved on into ‘settled accommodation’ or ‘supported housing’ because of the policy. The relevant Select Committee was effusive with its praise about the initial stages of this policy response (Select Committee on Housing, Communities and Local Government (SCHCLG) 2021).

> *“At the start of the pandemic, the Government, local authorities, and charities helped to provide tens of thousands of people experiencing rough sleeping with emergency accommodation through what is now known as the ‘Everyone In’ initiative. Researchers at University College London estimated*

that as of December 2020, 242 deaths were prevented because of Everyone In.

"We recognise the enormous success of the early stages of the Everyone In programme, made possible through cross-sector collaboration, substantial funding, and joint working towards a clear goal (p.3)"

However, elsewhere in the report, the Select Committee identified concerns around the long-term plan for people who remained accommodated under the policy. The Government had announced a strategy in June 2020 to provide around 9,300 new units of accommodation (MHCLG, 2021a). However, since by their own figures (SCHLG, 2021) it was estimated that 37,000 people had been helped at this point, it was unclear whether 9,300 would be enough. As of January 2021, there were still 11,263 in Everyone-in emergency accommodation (Cromarty, 2021). The Select Committee was particularly concerned about the individuals who were non-UKs nationals experiencing rough sleeping, who had 'No Recourse to Public Funds.' The committee stressed how, for these individuals, housing options out of this emergency accommodation seemed extremely limited (SCHLG, 2021)

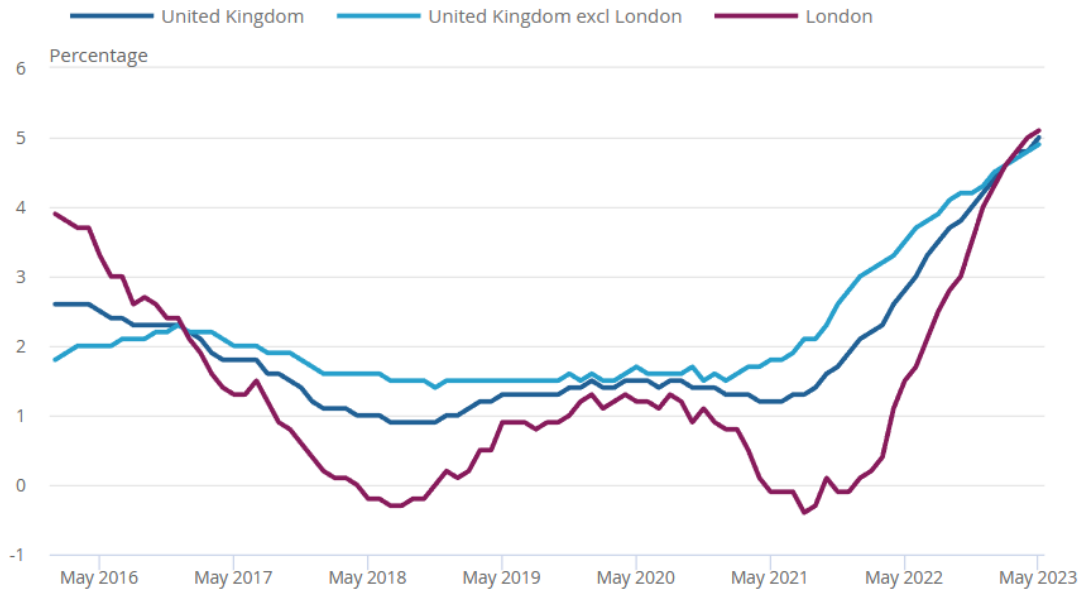
The governmental announcements as to 9,300 new units in June 2020 and the Select Committee Report of March 2021 basically mirrored the time-frame of my research interviews with people accommodated under Everyone-In. The individuals I spoke to were still living in hotels that the GLA had commissioned as part of the Covid-19 response to provide emergency accommodation for people experiencing rough sleeping. This aim was to only accommodate people rough sleeping when Covid-19 arrived. However, there remains some disagreement over whether this was the case. An anonymous interviewee, close to the process talked to me about Louise Casey's abrupt resignation from the program (see Booth & Butler 2020). They said this was, partly, because she felt it was encouraging people into using homelessness services who did not need to do so. This theory is given some credence by comparing the official figure of 37,000 people having been helped by the programme to official rough sleeping figures for a 'typical night' in Autumn 2020 as 2,688 (MHCLG, 2020c).

It is difficult to find specific governmental papers addressing Everyone In after 2021. However, in 2022 The Government announced a strategy to capitalise on the progress made.

> *"The cross-government Rough Sleeping Strategy is backed by £2 billion and builds on the significant action already taken by the government, which has driven a 43% drop in rough sleeping since 2019 and rough sleeping has fallen to an 8-year low. As a result, England now one of the lowest rough sleeping rates in the world" (Gov.Uk 2022)*

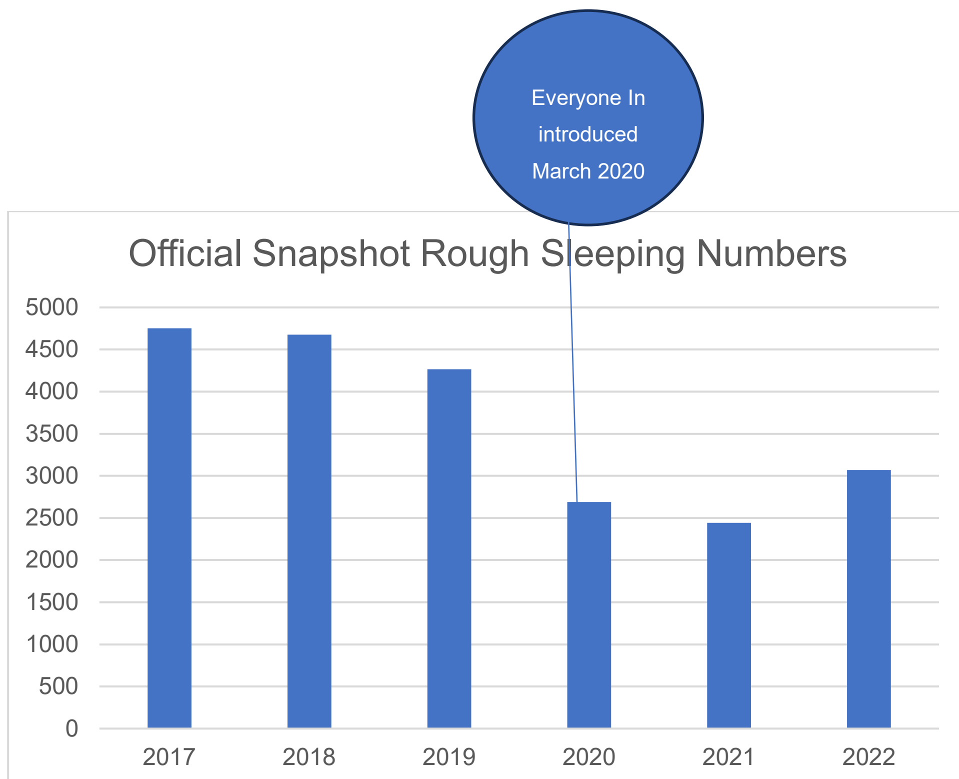
However, as the Government made this announcement many of the structural challenges identified in this chapter remained problematic. After a period of relative rental market inflation stabilization between 2016-22, rental prices rose again (Diagram 11). A survey found that 63% of PRS tenants sampled had seen an increase in their rent over the last year, with the mean rise being 13% (The I, 2013). Shelter have claimed the number of Section 21 Notices in 2022 was 50% higher than before the pandemic (4 News Factcheck, 2023). There is increasing pressure on the available properties to rent, *"On Tuesday [21st June 2023], Capital Letters, a property agency owned by 10 London boroughs, could find only 18 homes within the limits of what the government will pay in housing benefit, in the entire city."* (BBC, 2023). A recent report from Sheffield showed how little social housing remained available. *"There are 22,000 people registered for social housing here in Sheffield…but every week just 54 council houses come up for bidding" (Channel 4, 2023).* Finally, the figures released from rough sleeping snapshots (Diagram 12) suggest that numbers started to increase again in 2022.

- **Diagram 11 PRS Rental Inflation 2016-2023**



Source Gov.UK (2023)

Diagram 12: Official Rough Sleeping Nightly Snapshot Figures 2017-2022



Source: Paul Anderson. Adapted From Gov.UK Figures

Chapter 3:
Themes from Literature 1 – Place and Location

3.1 Introduction

There is an extensive collection of literature on the concept of 'place' much of which focuses upon geographical location. Chapter 2 considers why this literature is significant in any understanding of the concept of 'home'. It then reviews how writers have used the term place. Finally, research inro the relationships people have with place is then examined with a particular emphasis on the 'attachment' to locations. Literature from competing sociological models are used within this chapter to explore different concepts of place

3.2 The Relationship Between Place Attachment and Home

Writers who focus on relationships to places often use the terms 'attachment' to describe strong connections people have to particular spaces. Lewicka's (2011) review of place and home literature showed the significance of attachment to places,

> *"Comparison of psychological profiles of attached and non-attached participants [within research] shows that the attached participants were first of all more firmly "socially anchored," that is, had higher acceptance of other focused values such as benevolence and universalism, had closer ties with their family, friends, and neighbours, and trusted people more. They were also more aware of the temporal dimension of their existence, that is, showed a stronger sense of continuity—perceived their life as more meaningful, took more interest in family history and in history of own city/town. In effect they were also more satisfied with their life."* (p.707)

In terms of what such attachment' means in practise and how it is formed, Brown and Perkins (1992) talked of actions and interactions developing positive bonds to

certain environments. Weldrick et al (2021) argued one uses physical spaces to develop personal identity leading to a sense of home. Williams and Stewart (1998) described how attachment is categorised through *"the collection of meanings, beliefs, symbols, values, and feelings that individuals or groups associate with a particular locality" (p.19).* Leith (2006) defined attachment as strong feelings of belonging which bind one to place. Tomaney (2015) characterised it as a sense of local belonging in which one feels at home, safe and in which one's behaviour feels appropriate. Cooper Marcus (1992) added that attachment happens in places where one feels anchored, safe but also free. Burns et al (2020) described a *"feeling in-place*" (p.14) which is brought about via feelings of self-determination, employment/education, and technological awareness. By contrast, they argued that attachment is reduced when spaces are associated with discrimination, feeling trapped and unaffordability.

Many writers have emphasised the pre-reflexive nature of attachment to places. Feldman (1990) believed attachment it was a process of <u>feeling</u> rather than thoughts. Casey (2001) believed one does not see places in some detached Cartesian sense but rather inhabits them. This reflects a tradition from writers like Tuan (1975) who emphasised the non-cognitive, sensory aspects of place through smell, taste, touch in nurturing the feeling of physical and psychological safe space. Riley (1992) argued that attachment is a unique, malleable, bodily experience with place which feels instinctively normal to individuals.

Clearly attachment to place is an important concept, and many writers have described how it interacts with the concept of 'home.' Easthope (2004), Lewicka's (2011) and Feldman's (1990) all completed literature reviews and emphasised the significance of home in place literature (my underlining).

> *<u>"There is almost unanimous opinion that the prototypical place is home</u>. Home is a symbol of continuity and order, rootedness, self-identity, attachment, privacy comfort, security, and refuge. Home means ownership and symbolizes family life and friendship. People are domicentric (Lewicka, 2011 p.211)*
>
> *<u>One's home, then, can be understood as a particularly significant kind of place</u> with which, and within which we experience strong social,*

psychological, and emotive attachments. The home is also understood as an open place, maintained, and developed through the social relations with in it… [it is] more than the physical structure of a house or the natural and built environment." (Easthope 2004 pp.135-136)

The home environ becomes a unique place of familiar, known, and predictable activities, people and physical elements; a focal point of one's experiential space. Psychological bonds with home place are most often unconscious or taken-for-granted experiences of bodily-orientation in the physical environs as well as an innate sense of embeddedness, belonging, comfort, at ease and security in this locale." (Feldman 1990, p.188 my underlining)

3.3 The Meaning of 'Place'

The three literature reviews suggest that home seems to be the single most significant place in one's life. Indeed Easthope used the term '*home place'* interchangeably with "*home",* whilst Burns et al (2020) concluded that *"Home…[has] became a metaphor for [a particular type of] place"* (p.13). This leads to a question of what is a place?

One approach sees place as primarily (or even exclusively) as a material and objective space existing beyond individual perception. Murphy (Kindle) gives this definition, *"place represents physical spaces, areas set aside for a specific purpose – homes, buildings, neighbourhoods, lands."* McCley and McAllister (2014 Kindle), argued that a place is physical space which is a particular entity, outlasting any human interaction with it. Sack (2001) described places as any space *"we have bounded or controlled [relationships with]" (p.232)*. Moore (2000) offered analysis of three decades of research into home and suggested there were substantial bodies of work which argued that a 'sense of home' was linked to rootedness to a physical space. Hernandez et al (2007) and Ramkisnon et al (2015) all claimed that attachment was formed when people wished to remain geographically close to a particular physical space. Jackson (1994) saw place attachment as something developed as result of a relationships to physical places (rather than feelings about abstract places). This reflected the thinking of early place scholars such as Fried (1963), Relph (1976) and Milligan (1998) who

presumed elevated levels of attachment were reliant upon time spent in actual physical places.

Menig (1979) is part of a materialist school which go even further. He argued physical environments intrinsically contain a sense of certain values and feelings. This approach was expanded on by Cuba and Hummon (1993) who claimed there were *“encoded meanings”* (p.133) within certain spaces which made them particular types of places. Examples of this include Lewis (1979) who suggested landscapes have a natural identity which exist beyond any interpretation. Whilst Stedman (2003) claimed a bustling, shopping mall could never be interpreted as a place of tranquillity. Using similar language, Boyle et al (1998) identified literature which suggested places can have an *“inherent sense of meaning and identity”* (p.212). Wiesenfeld and Panza (2008) and Stedman (2011) suggested there were limitations to the extent which places could be (re)constructed.

However, another approach identified by both Trigg (2013) and Lewicka 2011) both argued that place attachment is formed to the other people inhabiting spaces (not with the physical locations themselves). Murphy (2018) claimed that human beings instinctively develop emotional bonds to people to people considered ‘similar’ to oneself. He also argued place attachment was strengthened by a sense of ‘otherness’ to people dissimilar to self. Putnam (2000) distinguished between attachment based on dislike of outsiders rather than positive feelings towards a place. May (2011) argued that cultural, relational, and sensory belongings are key to places feeling like home. A 2022 Sheffield exhibition entitled *“Home is Not a Place”* (Pitts, 2022) argued that home is *“mood”, “atmosphere”, “community”*, and *“people”.* It reflects this poem below in which home is seen as being near to “natural kin,”

> *“A lonely wanderer upon earth am I.*
> *The waif of nature -like uprooted weed*
> *Borne by the stream, or like a shaken reed,*
> *A frail dependent of the fickle sky*
> *Far, far away, are all my natural kin:”*
>
> (Coleridge, 2022 on the meaning of home)

3.4 The Relationship Between Home, House, and Place/Location

The literature on place and attachment is significant. One can see that whilst authors on tend to a agree that home is a place but disagree over what a place is. From the perspective of homelessness literature, the question of what type of place (in terms of location and dwelling) constitutes home is also raised.

Although nuanced, Neale's (1997b) definition from her literature review of home seemed to assume that it need to be a building (my underlining).

> *"The expression 'home' implies more than just any kind of shelter; it is associated with <u>material conditions and standards</u>, privacy, space, control, personal warmth, comfort, stability, safety, security, choice, self-expression, and physical and emotional well-being. Such criteria change according to the household involved, according to the individuals within it and according to the prevailing economic, social, and political climate"* (p.54)

Reflecting Neale's view, a number of writers have claimed that homes need to be houses, but not all houses are home (see Dovey, 1985, Proshansky et al 1976, 1983, Mikhaylov & Perkins, 2014, Jacobs and Smith, 2008). Parsell's (2012), research with people experiencing rough sleeping found that suitable house was more important than location in looking for a home. He concluded, *"Specific geographical places (locations) did not appear to act as emotionally significant markers or storehouses of past memories."* (p.170). He found a 'bricks and mortar' approach in which participants focused on getting their own flat. Neighbourhoods, suburbs, or other locations were not seen as significant, instead.

In contrast to Parsell's findings some writers believe that a focus on houses risks merging the concepts of house home and in doing so underplaying the complexities of home (Mallet, 2004 Gustafson, 2001, Seamon, 2014 and Nostrand ,1996, Lenhard (2022), Namian 2022). For example, Hoolahan (2022) quote that *"people can feel 'at home' in non-house places such as neighbourhood, city, or nation" (p.214).*

Finally, some writers have argued that <u>both</u> suitable house and location are needed for a place to be home. Hayward (1975). claimed home was usually a free-standing, detached definable unit within a geographical location where one felt a sense of self. Rybczynski (1988) described home as a physical dwelling which required privacy, family-based domesticity and multi-layered comfort in a location which fostered a sense of belonging. Sixsmith (1986) saw home as a building that felt secure in a location where one's individual identity was reflected.

A number of authors have argued that the debate around the relationship between home and house presumes a uniformity of opinion which does not reflect underlying power dynamics (Jackson, 2012, Hareven, 1991, Payton et al, 2005, Eisenhaeur et al, (2000)). Bennet (2011) claimed the current 'normative' ideal of an home as a house was reflective of white, heterosexual, owner-occupying, suburban middle-class values. Whilst Lancione described it as patriarchal and heteronormative. An example of this can be seen Jones (2000) argument argued that any underlying belief that family + house = home did not reflect the experience of the younger people she researched. They had a lack of power and control in unsafe parental 'homes.' Whilst Bimpson et al (2022) argued societal norms around the meaning of home place were different for women which were often linked with the concept of a maternal identity. These findings build upon a tradition of Mallett (2004), Wardhaugh (1999), Harman (1989) Fried (1982) and Blunt & Dowling (2006) who all described how houses can remain a place of patriarchal oppression. Whilst McCarthy's (2017) female interviewees did not always feel safe or in control of the houses they lived in.

Other writers have focused on class differences in terms of home (Manzo, 2014 and Brown et al, 2003).. Belk (1992) argued middle-class people believe home is synonymous with property-ownership and status validation. But that the relationship to home place has always been more complex amongst the poorest. Ogburn & Nimkoff (1964) argued that "*Whereas the home is an important locus for the upper-class, poor housing and [over]crowding may be important reasons for the observed predominance of 'street life' among the lower class*" (p,358). Far from privately-owned dwellings exclusively for the use of nuclear families amongst *"the home [among the poor] tended to become the centre of various kinds of activities: social, educational, recreational and even religious" (p.498).*

These is a lot of evidence supporting the greater complexity of home among people experiencing homelessness. Jackson (2012) suggested some people experiencing rough sleeping 'chose' to be on the streets because do not feel they belong in the house they are 'supposed to' inhabit. Instead, they find feelings of home in locations which offer a sense of belonging (such as day centres). Cloke et al (1999) argued that some people stay sleeping rough in familiar rural locations rather than move to areas where they have more chance of obtaining a house. This was due to functional reasons such as the ease of being 'invisible' and having wild animals to hunt, alongside emotional ones such as a sense of belonging. Mackie (2017) found that some people experiencing rough sleeping felt that public locations such as historical begging pitches, 'belong' to them more than other people. Christian et al (2011) found people experiencing rough sleeping more likely to return to locations containing services when they felt valued by people working there. Robinson's (2002) survey of young people experiencing rough sleeping found they needed be in a geographical location where they had a sense of belonging as well as an adequate dwelling to fell at home. Similarly, Harman (1989) argued some female hostel dwellers defined home as houses, but others said it was about being in locations with key people near them. Similarly, Kellet and Moore (2003) and Hoolahan (2022) found a variety of views from people living in a hostel as to whether it was home depending on several factors including location. Niemen (2022) claimed users of shelters and day centres adopted the term home to describe both houses and wider geographical locations. Fitzpatrick (2000) claimed that for a house to feel like home it needed to be safe, in a familiar community and offer privacy and freedom. May's (2000a) primarily male, research participants tended to say their current experiences of homelessness was because of not wanting to live in inadequate quality flats in locations with few employment opportunities nearby.

In 2013, Somerville claimed that historical locational roots were vital in remedying homelessness. However, in early writings Somerville (1992) offered a distinction between degrees of homelessness. He argued that being in a house in an unwanted location was 'less homeless' than having no dwelling at all. This opinion stands in contrast to Lanicone's (2023) claim that any attempt to classify degrees of homelessness misunderstand the complexities and ingrained nature of it within marginalised peoples experiences. For example, Pleace et al (2022) described

them how the poorest in neoliberal society are "*living without their own space, without privacy and without security of tenure" (p.141).* Lanicone (2020) explained how people in this circumstance who might 'objectively' have a home (e.g. in a hostel or oppressive family unit, or an insecure tenancy) are subject to 'territorially acceptable' rules in which their needs from a home (such as living in a particular location or having a long-term tenancy) are *"deemed incompatible with normative life" (*p.274). They are often faced with a choice of a house which does not meet their needs or trying to make a home on the streets and "*inhabit[ting] places (such as squats or encampments) that are defined [by others] as quintessentially uninhabitable" (ibid).*

Relph and Feldman showed the limitations of the house = home narrative. Relph (1976) argued that *"[a home] is not just the house you happened to live-in but an irreplaceable centre of significance"* (p.83) whilst Feldman (199) stated *"Psychological bonds with home [is] where one has a sense of embeddedness, belonging, comfort, at ease and security"* (p.188). Building upon this tradition a number of writers have looked at how people 'create' this sense of home when they have no fixed place they can inhabit. Hao et al (2021) wrote of how *"they work to obtain a sense of home through material practises, realising control and independence, and developing social relations*" (p.292). Pleace et al (2022) talked of the *"expression of resistance from people experiencing homelessness through the creation of alternative versions of home"* (p.316). Whilst acknowledging the harshness of such an existence this 'homemaking' school of literature seeks to understand the choices people make and why, "*Homemaking is…focused on understanding the imagination, agency, resourcefulness and resistance of people living outside the mainstream*" (Pleace et al, 2022 p.318).

Schneider (2022) argued people on the streets rarely defined home in terms of either buildings or location. Instead, they focused upon being close to non-kinship people important to them *"Unhoused people's homes are embedded in manifold specifics relations with friends, allies, supporters, opponents or competitors" (p.240)* which means *"the physical aspect of home are not rooted in a singular stable locale, but marked by fluid plurilocality in time and space" (p.244)*. Home was created via a sense of family and community. Sheehan (2010) argued that people experiencing homelessness created an 'everyday family' of others in the

same situation. Whilst Lenhard (2022) who described how familial titles were affectionately attributed to individuals within such communities.

Other writers disagree with Schneider (2022) as to the importance of locations in terms of home-making. Lenhard (2022) found that certain locations (rather than houses) created ‘proto home’ places where rough sleepers returned to regularly. They undertook activities which involved being mobile but had the same places (such as train stations) which they used as their ‘base.’ These locations offered some aspects of home in that they were warm, familiar, more relaxed and were good for begging. Jackson (2015) argued that although people experiencing homelessness have no place ‘of their own’, they still feel attachment to locations such as day centres or friend’s houses. Hao et al (2021) argued people who are homelessness can form attachment to locations where services exist, they are able to establish a sense of routine and feel a sense of control.

The work of Despres (1991) is helpful in furthering this discussion. His definition of a home included (amongst other things) these three elements which Hao et al (2002) categorised as physical, psychological, and social,

1. Feelings of security, control and permanence, A place of one’s own serving as a refuge from the outside world
2. A reflection of one’s ideas, values, and personal status, with the ability to act upon and modify one’s dwellings
3. A centre of activity which facilitates relationships and friends

This definition helps pinpoint a question which runs through the literature.

1) Is home a hierarchy of requirement where one needs a house to provide foundational “security, control and permanence.” Only then can one have a sense of home where one can “reflect one’s ideas” and be “a be a centre of activity.”

2) Or is home more of a sense of priorities in which one does not need a house to have aspects of home such as relationships or feelings of belonging. Meaning rough sleeping, hostels, encampments etc could provide such aspects of home

Namian (2022) seemed to challenge a hierarchical approach and instead described ‘trade-offs’. She illustrated how living in a house can provide greater homely feelings of security and safety but lead to increased homeless feelings of

being isolated and trapped. One can feel ‘less homeless,’ being with friends on the street. Jackson (2015) described how young people can be more scared within a hostel than wandering the street “surrounded by death or addiction”. In these examples, new accommodation (or new location) can lead to feeling less and more homeless simultaneously. (see also Watson and Austberry, 1986, McCarthy 2017, Jackson, 1996 and Case 1996 on how buildings contain elements of home and non-home simultaneously).

Hao et al (2021) argued that aspects of home such as independence, control, belonging, and safety are often missing from shelters which are offered to people as alternatives to the street. Herring’s (2019) described of people choosing encampments over local homelessness shelters. Whilst shelters offered a roof, laundry, and showers they were also places of medicalization, warehousing, monitoring and abandonment. Encampments lacked physical aspects of home but met the psychological and social aspects. Dalal (2022) observed that despite ‘refugee camps’ all having the same home/homeless status they were quite different in practise. Smaller ones were quieter, more autonomous and had all facilities nearby. Larger camps looked more like a conventional self-contained, mass planned housing project which had greater privacy and quality of accommodation. One type of camp had more of the social aspects of home, whilst the other more of the private aspects. Hao et al (2021) described how people experiencing homelessness in China were expected to attend ‘service centres’ for help. Whilst these provided a roof, some support and emphasised safety, they offered little privacy, cramped sleeping conditions, and rigid territorial rules (such as compulsory uniforms, activity timetables and restricted movements). By contrast, when they slept rough they had greater freedom over their location, social interactions, and activities but no roof.

People in supported accommodation probably have more feelings of safety and security but less control over other aspects of their lives compared to Schneiders (2022) rough sleepers, or Herring’s (2019) encampment dwellers. For example, Hoolahan (2022) argued that the ability of young people in hostels to create a feeling of home i was limited by rules such as curfews, visitor bans and collective punishments, “*[when] a dwelling… is unsafe, precarious or strictly controlled, the full ideal of home is severely limited if not impossible*.” *(p.215)*. Similarly, Stevenson and Neale (2012) showed how people were often not allowed to have

partners stay-over in temporary accommodation. Harris et al (2020) described people not being allowed to lock their own rooms in local authority temporary housing[19]. Bimpson et al (2022) talked of how dwellings such as refuges, hostels or small flats are often all that are available to women as a way of ‘ending’ their homelessness. Yet when they reside in those they are compromised in terms of their ability to be a mother to their children. Hence they are forced to abandon huge elements of what home means to them (caring for their children) because of the territorial rules decided by others, whilst simultaneously being stigmatized by wider-society for their maternal ‘failings.’

Within the external limitations imposed upon them, writers have identified ways people have attempted to create the sense of home. Neiman (2022) talked of the importance of familiarity and routine. Pleace et al (2022) emphasised how people undertook choices to be clean, busy, and organised. In doing so they maintained an identity other than ‘homeless.’ Hoolahan (2022) described how young people living in hostels also tried to use routines around things like laundry and personal cleanliness as ways or protecting their sense of independence in an environment of enforced communal living. They also attempted to create more of a feeling of home by personalising rooms, having friends visit, engaging in behaviours they enjoyed, and breaking rules[20]. Lenhard (2022) showed how people rough sleeping tried to organise ‘their space’ into a home place by physically and psychologically demarcating areas for particular activities (eating, sleeping etc). They also had daily routines of places to visit whilst returning to their ‘base’ each evening. Hao et al (2021) described how they people try to keep ‘their territory’ clean and tidy. Routines and rituals were also important to Bimpson et al (2022) description of women in several types of temporary accommodation who actively tried to keep a sense of the maternal aspect of home in their relationship with the staff and their children.

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[19] I have worked in hostels where people were not allowed to have keys to their rooms and shelters where people have to leave the premises during the day, and can only return in the evening.

3.5 Realist Criticisms of Home Making Approaches

As seen, writers on home-making have emphasised the complexity of other factors beyond houses in terms of home. These include feelings of belonging and control. They have described several ways people experiencing homelessness express self, such as e routines, modifications to environment, active self-identity choices, being around key people and undertaking locational preferences. Similarly, they have emphasised the (often covert) power struggle between the attempts at autonomy and the restrictions placed upon them by authorities. They also show how being housed does not necessarily end homelessness.

However, despite their efforts, much thinking in the field of homelessness believes that home and homelessness are objective states. This is summed-up by Neale's (1997) quotes that *"Home, for each human being is shaped to some extent by the individual's understanding of that concept"* (p.55) but also *"in spite of definitional complexities, home and homelessness are [objectively] real"* (ibid). This quote reflects the "New Orthodoxy" in homelessness thinking which adopts something of a Critical Realist approach. This is often focused on the structural causes and prevention of homelessness beyond individual perception of experiences. The New Orthodoxy largely views homelessness as something which 'happens to' people They argue that studies in 'home making' often focus on small sections of people experiencing homelessness (such as rough sleepers and the destitute) and risk romanticizing their existence as some form of political rejection of society's values (see Pleace 2022 for a good summary of this).. They view the behaviours, which others describe as 'home making,' as transitory and adaptive responses from people who "*cannot access orthodox housing"* (Please et al 2022, p.326) Indeed. Watts and Fitzpatrick (2020) warn of a risk of academics romanticizing people experiences as that of "exotic outsiders" rather than survival mechanisms.

3.6. Conclusion

Lanicone (2023) argued that the feelings/views/needs of people experiencing homelessness after often viewed as peripheral because of wider discussions

around power-relations in neoliberal society. Notwithstanding Critical Realist concerns, home making studies are ground-breaking in understanding these feelings/views/needs. They reflect Blackshaw (2005) view that sociology needs to treat people *"as partners in dialogue"* (p.68) whilst surrendering *"the monopoly of interpretive rights"* (ibid).. Writers such as Parr (2023) have strongly made the case for lived experience as crucial to a better understanding of social exclusion. As Herring (2019) put it, what is missing from much analysis of homelessness are first-hand stories of *"the marginalised actively struggling over recognition and resources"* (p.286). Lanicone (2017) described the need to understand "*how accumulation, dispossession and other urban phenomena are lived and embodied by the ones experiencing it"* (p.982).

Hao et al (2022) argue that instead of seeking to understand these experiences, *"existing homelessness studies mostly focus on the causes of homelessness, including individual, structural and cultural factors"* (p.293).Lancione (2023) is critical of what she described as the belief that *"social problems can be dealt with in specialized, technical and therefore detached ways"* (p.61). It may be that failing to listen to lived experience has led to an assumption that providing any type of housing ends homelessness. Certainly, this seems to be the direction of Government policy since 2011. Indeed, that was the assumption amongst staff (including me) when I worked in front-line services.

What home making, and place attachment, studies suggest is that elements beyond housing such as belonging, control, networks and routine are significant. They suggest that these elements are sometimes linked to locations. Irreducible aspects of home may include historical connections, being around significant people and being near to certain services. Expecting people to give these up as part of a policy to end homelessness only 'works' if a persons' needs/wants from a home are ignored.

Finally, this chapter has highlighted the following huge gaps in knowledge around people experiencing homelessness:

- How important is location in any meaning of home (compared to having a house)?

- Does this importance differ between different ‘groups’ of people experiencing homelessness
- Which aspects of location matter (e.g. the physical environment, key people, history, opportunities for self-development etc)?
- What is meant by location (is it tangible, definable, and fixed; what scale is it; how much does it vary)?

Chapter 4:
Themes from Literature 2 - Mobility

4.1 Introduction

This chapter considers literature on mobility, particularly residential mobility. It starts by looking at theories that mobility has increased. It then looks at the relationship between choice and displacement within mobility. This is followed by a discussion around the relationship between precarity and mobility within neoliberal society. Finally, there is a focus on non-academic work looking at increased displacement in people experiencing homelessness.

4.2 Has Mobility Increased?

Coulter et al. (2015) defined mobility as the *"movements of people, objects, capital and information"* (p. 352). Creswell (2006) claimed it was geographical (or social) movement, which has a particular cultural significance. Adey (2017) argued movement became mobility when it took on a particular psychological and/or sociological significance (see also Relph, 1976 Tuan, 1975 Riley, 1992)..

Cresswell (2006) described a postmodernist *"Mobility Turn"* (p.738) to describe the collapse of hierarchical, societal certainties. Braidotti (1994), expressed this as a psychology of liberating 'nomadism',

> *"Though the image of "nomadic subjects" is inspired by the experience of people or cultures that are literally nomadic, the nomadism in question here refers to the critical consciousness that resists settling into socially coded modes of thoughts and behaviour. Not all nomads are world travellers; some of the greatest trips can take place without physically moving from one's habitat. It is the subversion of conventions that define the nomadic state, not the literal act of travelling" (p.5)*

She adds how this mobility represented freedom from traditional restraints.

[the nomad is] the kind of subject who has relinquished all idea, desire, or nostalgia for fixity. This figuration expresses the desire for an identity made of transitions, successive shifts, and coordinated changes, without and against an essential unity (p.22)

A number of other writers argued that this type of (literal and metaphorical) mobilityincreased freedom. Klanten et al (2015) claimed that mobility allowed challenges to elitist rules of modernity. Bachelard (1988) argued that mobility is synonymous with liberation. Deleuze and Guattari (1988) found that mobility allowed for a variety of relationship beyond ones socially prescribed by tradition. Morley (2000) argued those who eschewed mobility risked being perceived as 'left behind' (see also Bauman 1998, 1998). d people from binary thinking such as 'insiders' versus 'outsiders' (see also Malik, 1992, Urry, 2000, 2007, Kaufmann 2002 and Clarke et al (2017)..

Molloy (1998), McVeigh (1997), Kendal, (1997), all thought that nomadic lifestyles were attacked because they challenges hegemonies around what constitutes respectability and normality. Clark Ham and Coulter (2014) argued that geographical mobility challenged normative assumptions around deviance and instability. Klanten et al. (2015), believe that mobility allowed people to challenge modern and premodern certainties.' Schorr (2018) argued that hierarchies such as '*primitive societies"* and *"slum residents"*, are swept away in recognition that people want different things. As Smith (1999) put it *"The effort by modernity's legislators to impose perfect order on society by tidying it into neat garden plots has failed"* (p.144)[21]

A number of writers have written of the practical implications of increased mobility. Lash (1990) claimed the postmodern middle classes are more likely to embrace populism and image-centred culture.[22] Bowlby (2001) suggested that shopping

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[21] This rejection of what passes for pure' rational logic' as laden with value-judgements is hardly surprising when in 1970 one finds an article on 'Animal Sociology' (Calhoun). This looks at how mice and moles react around each other. This is a real sentence from that article- "By virtue of his biological heritage *Homo sapiens* appear to have been long related, and presumably adjusted to a way of life that was most harmonious when the population was fragmented into twelve adults. For this reason it behooves us to examine what restrictions upon culture such biological heritage may impose." (p.201, his italics)

was way women were able to choose social, geographical, and metaphorical identities. Magdol (2000) and Friedberg (1993) also talked about how people could choose to change their identities via choices. Barber et al (1994) showed how people with learning disabilities were much happier with homes they chose rather than institutions that elites had decided they should inhabit (such as psychological hospitals). Urry (2007) saw the growth in tourism as an opening-up of 'pilgrimages' to a wider range of people beyond the rich.

In terms of residential mobility, Bevan (2011) argued that people living in mobile accommodation, like park homes and barges, felt they have freedom and choice where to live. A number of other writers agree that people increasingly reject sedentary metaphysics in favour of embracing choices which reflect their preferences,

> *[Residential] Moves are, for the most part, rational, deliberate, and planned…The sequence begins with a desire to move and proceeds to crystallise intentions or plans and finally to the move itself*. (Duncan & Newman 2007, pp.174- 175).

Examples of these preferences are provided by Stokols & Shumaker (1982) and Stokols et al. (1983) who described housing choices as being reflective of the individuals life-stages such as marriage, children, retirement etc (see Kendig, 1984; McAuley & Nutty, 1982, Morris et al,1976),). Desmond et al. (2015) believed these choices reflected aspirations for a better life which they labelled the "*residential attainment perspective".* Savage et al (2004) summarized the mobility turn towards residential belonging in terms of 'elective belonging'" these *are kind of people who have made a choice to live in a particular area, and thereby through their agency avoid their fixity which comes the habit of from living where one always lives*" (p.45).

A number of writers have made criticisms of the mobility-turn. Taylor and Saarinen (1994) claimed locations as are increasingly viewed in terms of consumption not needs. Baumann's (1998) dismisses the growth in nomadism as a 'fashionable term' to describe *"compulsion [of consumption] turned into addiction"* (Bauman, 2012, p.72, see also Kaplan, 2002). Similarly, Toffler (1970) talked of locations being treated like everyday consumer products which are used and disposed of.

This is like Relph's (1976) criticism that tourist holidays were being treated like shopping lists of sites to be 'ticked-off' '[23].

Other authors have criticized the mobility turn as being too narrowly focused historically and culturally. Evans Prichard (1949) and Atkinson (1999) claim that nomadic lifestyles have long functional histories as ways of staying alive during times of frequent military invasions. Whilst Deleuze and Guattari (1988) argue that regular mobility was a vital tactic for workers negotiating labour conditions as far back as the 12th century. Smith (2011) showed that increased mobility was a characteristic of the type of modernism created by the Industrial Revolution

> *"In 1854 alone, 92 million journeys were made in England and Wales on a network stretching 6,000 miles. Train travel had caught the public imagination, and the rapid expansion of the railways had an effect on every aspect of Victorian society.*" (p.16)

Elsewhere in the World, example Kundera (1992) and Boyle et al (1998) argued that there are still many areas of the world which have long been influenced by traditional nomadic cultures. Boyle et al. (1998) argued that contrary to a mobility turn, responses to mobile populations are still shaped by sedentary metaphysics. They describe *"attempts to undermine the nomadic existence and promote settlement '*(p.219) of populations including Mali/Burkina Faso (Bassett 1988) and Kenya (Monbiot, 1994).

A third criticism is that mobility turn theorists fail to describe a coherent perspective on increased mobility the relationship between identity and increased mobility. For example, Magdol (2000) argued that people adopt a new identity when they undertake mobility *"[if a] mobility event involves a change in physical environment, it [therefore] involves changes in roles and identities"* (p.184). However, Friedberg (1993) argued roles and identities do not so much switch but

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[23] in the post-modernist world of images being objects themselves rather than representations of other things, I'm left pondering whether a series of YouTube video set inside a tourist location, where one can pause, come back and watch again is as 'meaningful' a depiction as fleeting physical visit where one rushes through in an hour, shop by crowds into certain parts, before jumping on the coach to see the next thing?

are in a continual state of flux *"the increased centrality of the mobilised and virtual gaze is a fundamental feature of everyday life."* (p.179).

4.3 Mobility And Socio-Economic Context

In his liquid modernity narrative Bauman (1998, 2000, 2005, Blackshaw 2005) agreed with mobility-turn theorists that mobility was increasing

> *"[in liquid modernity] the era of unconditional superiority of sedentarism over nomadism and the domination of the settled over the mobile is…stopping slowly. We are witnessing the revenge of nomadism over the principle of territoriality and settlement." (Bauman, 2000 p.13)*

However, for Bauman the mobility turn was driven by the needs of a neoliberal economy rather than increases in in free choices. Relph (1976, 2016), Tuan (1975), Riley (1992) all believed that capitalism was leading people to live in interchangeable houses conceptualised as rational and private rather than meeting individual needs. Smith's (1999) description of a *"variety of socially approved lifestyles available for purchase, advertised through the mass media and in shop windows" (*pp.132-133)[24]. Hummon (1992) summarised this type of thinking thus:

> *"The modern individual – highly mobile, socially rootless, living in a grey landscape of sterile houses, mass-produced neighbourhoods, Manhattanized cities and disappearing regions – has supposedly become homeless, with little sense of [belonging to] the place in which he or she resides, [and] little attachment to home[25] (p.141)*

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[24] Bearing in mind Statisa estimated there were nearly 48,000 estate agents in the UK in 2023. This is not just a metaphor. [UK number of estate agents 2023 | Statista]

[25] The underlying assumption is that locations are essentially logical and functional, For example, the New Towns of the 1960's (such as Milton Keynes and Basingstoke) were devised to be places where people felt no particular attachment and were really bases from which to easily access London.

Bauman (2000) talked of how the collective identity provided by memberships of class, unions and long-term workplaces had been replaced by nebulous and weak connections. Stokols et al (1983) said "*Some [theorists] contend that our advanced technological and heightened mobility have eroded the physical and interpersonal foundations of social cohesion and created communities of placeless, traditionless strangers"* (p.5). Bauman (1997, 1998, 2000) claimed that modern changes have led to a breakdown of previous loyalties and any fixed sense of belonging. Grantover (1983) talked of *"weak ties"* and Senn (1996) of *"fleeting forms of association."* Oishi (2010) described *"moving from rootedness to rootlessness"* (p.7). (p.148-149). Bauman (2000) argued "*the harnesses by which collectives tie their membership to a joint history, custom or language of schooling is getting more threadbare by the year* (p.169). Szalavitz and Perry (2010), Kasarda and Janowitz (1974) argued that the modern capitalism was characterised by relationships of association rather than communalism.[26]. Benedikt (1995) and Grantover (1983) claimed that mobility was creating more superficial interactions between people. Whilst Porteous (1996), Cuba and Hummon (1993) and Putnam (2005) argued that close relationships were increasingly limited to immediate family.

Some writers have argued that the impact of increased mobility depends on socio-economic positioning (Bauman 1998, 2003, 2007). As Brah (2000) put-it, *"the question is not simply about who travels, but when, how, and under what circumstances"* (p.182). Everyone may be impacted by increased mobility (Bauman 2000) yet whether it is liberating or disempowering depends on other factors:

> *"[increased mobility can be a] process by which people are prevented from participating in the economic, political and social life of the community because of reduced accessibility to opportunities, services and social networks, due in whole in part to insufficient mobility in a*

[26] It was this longing for some sense of ontological belonging found in nationalism which I believe led Heidegger to become an apologist for the NAZI party.

> *society and environment built around the assumption of high mobility"* (Lyons & Rafferty 2001, p.210-211).

Mann (1972), Brett (1982) and Guttman (1963), Magdol's (2000), Wilmuth et al. (1975), all argued that middle-class people were less impacted negatively by residential mobility. Whilst Clark (2007), Doff and Kleinhans (2011) believed that middle-class households usually had more control over where they relocated. Some writers (see Doff and Kleinhans, 2011, Magdol 2000) argued that middle-class lifestyles were better suited to adapting to new environments. By contrast, there is evidence that residential mobility is often experienced more negatively by working-class people. Vale (1997), Turner and Briggs, (2008), Varaday & Walker, (2000) all argued working-class people are more reluctant to leave familiar locations. Fried (1963) described working-class 'grief' following relocation from slums. Jacobs (1961) and Desmond (2017) detailed how working-class people moving into new locations often feel unwelcome and destabilized. Briggs, Popkin & Goering (2010) and Logan & Alba (1993) argued that governmental policy has often been aimed at moving working-class people, involuntarily, out of slum areas into suburbs[27]. However, Lewis (1970) and Van Ham et al (2014) found that working-class households, who are residentially mobile, can still end-up living in poorer neighbourhoods without their previous support networks.

The differential impact of mobility can also be seen in terms of age groups. Wood et al (1993) found a link between poverty and the likelihood of frequent childhood mobility. Oishi (2010) and Kirkman et al. (2010) found children who had moved residential location frequently had difficulties in forming attachment to places. Whilst Jelleyman & Spencer (2004), Oishi and Schimmack (2010) all found correlations between poorer ongoing health and frequent childhood mobility. At the other end of the age-scale, Burholt & Scharf (2013), Rutter and Andrews (2009) and Pennington (2013) identified a particular relationship between relocation in retirement and feelings of social isolation. Goldscheider (1966) argued older people (regardless of class) have less inclination to relocate than younger people.

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[27] The Neoliberal policies followed by the Coalition Government from 2011 seemed to be more interested in forcing the poorest into other poor communities rather than into some aspirational suburban dream.

He also found that, when they do move, they find it harder to develop new relationships. Oishi et al. (2009) believed older people underestimated the likelihood of isolation before relocating.

In terms of gender, Riad and Norris, (1996) concluded that impacts of relocation were more severe on women than men (regardless of paid employment) because of destabilisation in the household. Winstanley et al (2002) argued that research into mobility has presumed a household’s experience is a unified (patriarchal) one and thus often ignored women’s experience. Earlier research into residential mobility did frame women as wives and mothers (see Weiss,1969, Burke ,1972, Speare 1974 and Hall, 1966). Other (male) writers assumed that women’s emotional disposition made them less robust in being able to deal with the impacts of residential relocation (see McAllister et al, 1973 and Gaylord 1979). Riad and Norris, (1996) concluded that impacts on relocation were more severe on women than men regardless of paid employment. The authors posit that this may be due to women feeling more of-a-sense-of household destabilisation. Makowsky et al (1988) summarised many of these points in the quotes below

> *“women have been more likely to move to accommodate their spouse’s job transfers and changes than have men, women can be assumed to have a higher instance of involuntary moves than do men,” (*p*.122).*

> *“women have experienced depression from the real or imagined loss of control over life events and the belief that they were helpless to influence the outcome” (ibid)*

However, some writers have challenged the idea of a unified ‘female experience’ of residential mobility. For example, Magdol (2000) outlined differences in the experiences of single and married women. Brett (1982) felt it depended on how attached individual women were to their jobs. Makowsky et al (1988) found a correlation between lower education achievement amongst women and stress within involuntary relocation. Finally Doff and Kleinhans (2011) found no significant differences between males and females in experience of relocation.

4.4 Mobility As Choice Or Displacement

The normative assumption under neoliberalism is that homes have become assets to be purchased by whoever can afford them. In that sense choice and freedom has become synonymous with ability to consume. Vassenden (2014) showed how owning property meant people are legally 'entitled' to live in any location they moved to. Bauman (1998) gave the example of a wealthy woman who chooses where she wants to be *"[she] has no [fixed] home – but neither does she feel homeless"* (p.91) because she can go wherever she chooses. She reflects Desmond (2017) description of voluntary moves based on active choices to meet wants and needs such as

a) Greater independence
b) Access to better amenities
c) Closeness to family and friends
d) Access to work or college
e) Saving money

Stokols et al (1982) described how these planned, chosen moves are positive, empowering decisions

> "*residential relocation may often serve as an important coping strategy for redressing undesirable aspects of one's earlier or current life situation. Accordingly, the relationship between residential mobility and well-being is more adequately understood within the contexts of the individual's life history and future goals."* (p.16).

These types of relocations stand in contrast to Atkinson and Jacobs (2016) who described the various type of displacement and forced moves which do not come out of choice

> *"forced evictions, foreclosures, homelessness, natural disasters…or the bombing and destruction of homes…are among an array of displacing forces that go well beyond ordinary households mobility and the choice to move home" (Atkinson and Jacobs, 2016, p.56)*

They also state *“The destruction or loss of home is one of the most significant and damaging crises within the range of human experience” (ibid)*. However, not all ‘damaging crisis’ are treated the same. The loss of homes because of a hurricanes leads to Presidential briefings and responses from Republican State Governors (BBC news, 2022)[28]. By contrast the loss of rental home because of poverty and inequality is not seen as a governmental issue.

Desmond’s (2017) research showed the main causes of involuntary, loss of home were not natural disasters, but low-incomes combined with

a) A housing problem, usually involving deterioration of the property
b) Feelings of neighbourhood danger
c) Increased rents
d) Landlord disputes

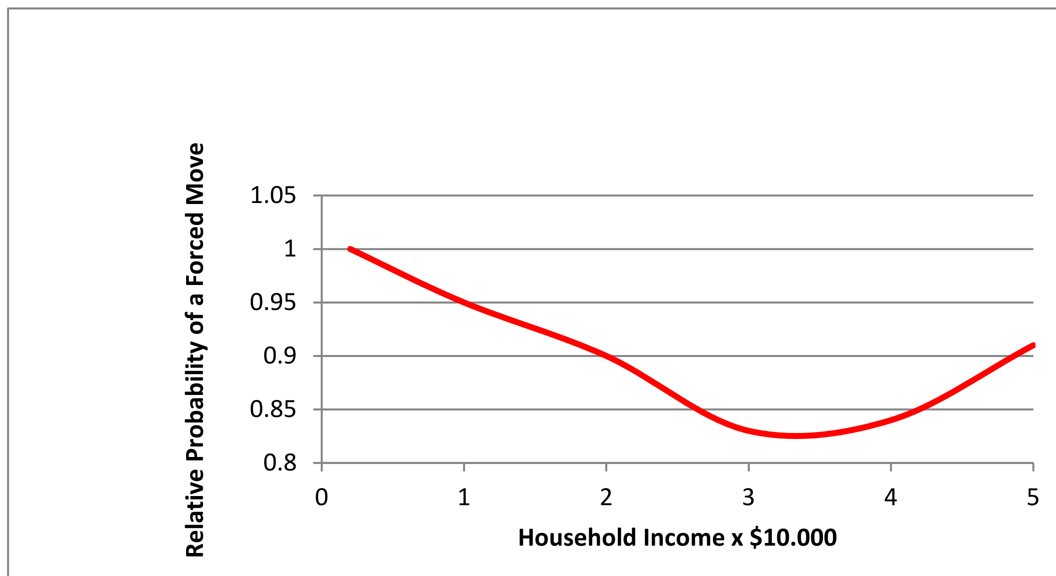
Diagram 13 combined with these two quotes show the structural insecurity within the American economy for the poor - *“between 2009-2011 more than 1 in 8 Milwaukee renters experienced a forced move”* (Desmond, 2017 p.5) and *“In 2013, 1 in 8 poor renting families nationwide were unable to pay all of their rent, and a similar number thought they would be evicted soon”* (ibid)

Academic analysis suggests that to understand the impact of residential mobility one should focus on choice versus displacement,

> *“rather than emphasizing the direct link between mobility and [levels of] well-being, the theoretical analysis [should look at] …the psychological and environmental context of relocation and the specific life circumstances that mediate the health consequences of residential change.” (Stokols and Shumaker (1982, p.15)*

[28] Without being heartless, the logic of neoliberalism is surely that if people ‘choose’ to live in certain areas on the coast of (for example) Florida, they take the risk of their homes being destroyed by hurricanes?

Diagram 13: Likelihood Of An Involuntary Move Within The Last Two Years Amongst Households With Below Average Incomes



Source: Anderson (2022) adapted from Desmond et al.

The previous paragraphs pinpoint the plight of Bauman's 'flawed consumers.' The people who are least-able to compete in a consumption-based choice society. They experience residential mobility as displacement based of the choices of others. Naiman (2022) describes the poorest as having *"constrained choice rather than consumer choice"* (p.344). Heller (1982) Clinton–Davis and Fassil, (1992); Muecke, (1992) and Boyle et al. (1998) all claimed that government policies have increased displacement of the poor. Cohen and Rustin (2008), Hamnet (2003) and Smith and Williams (1986) argued that attempts have been made to make attract wealthier people to relocate into cities and in the process the poor. Savage et al (2005) spoke of how working-class people feel squeezed-out of areas they have inhabited for generations by middle-class families moving-in. Marcus (2008) claimed identified displacement as a process of both actively removing the existing poor people and excluding new ones from entering locations. Cohen and Rustin (2008) claimed that this displacement has led to divided areas with increased wealth increasingly separated from 'residualised' pockets of poverty.

The themes of mobility and displacement are not new. Historically, there have been socially excluded groups who have been residential mobile but with little political consideration as to why they move. The assumption seemed to be their cultures are defined by their 'choice' to be mobile. For example, Governmental language seems to talk of Gypsies and Travellers as if they are an homogeneous

group. However, Evans (1991) described three distinct groups of Travelling Communities - *Vagrants", "Hobos"* and *"Pilgrims"* each with their own distinct cultural relationship to mobility. A Select Committee report (2004) emphasised that the law failed to recognise the different reasons for, and types of, mobility undertaken by these groups. The Council of Europe argued that decision-makers ignored the cultural complexities of gypsy communities when they define them by a generic "mobility" label (see also Niner, 2004, Miller, 1975, Rao, 1996, Fraser, 1992 Cresswell, 2006,),

> *"The definition of 'Gypsy' for planning purposes excludes those who have permanently ceased travelling. This means that ethnic Gypsy and Travellers may be denied their status as a 'Gypsy' "(*The Guardian, 2023)

Similarly, there has been a long-held caricature of 'the homeless' as a person whose essential nature is someone who 'tramps' from place-to-place. Orwell famously described,

> *"A tramp [who] is a native English species. These are his distinguishing characteristics: he has no money, he is dressed in rags, he walks about twenty kilometres a day and never sleeps two nights together in the same place. In short, he is a wanderer, living on charity, roaming around on foot day after day for years, crossing England from end to end many times in his wanderings. He has no job, home or family, no possessions in the world apart from the rags covering his poor body; he lives at the expense of the community." The Orwell Foundation (n.d)*

4.5 The Relationship Between The Neoliberal Market, Precarity And Mobility

The underlying assumption of the 'idealist' neoliberalism (of say Friedman) is that the market will distribute resources to everybody who makes good choices. This will allow them to make consumer choices reflecting their personal needs. However, Bauman (2000) argued that this reliant on markets created a *"new fragility*" (p.169) for all but the rich. Everyone else's financial wellbeing was reliant on the vagaries of capitalism beyond their control such as house-prices, interest

rates, share prices, inflation levels and growth rates. The market also serves to 'punish' those who make bad choices, yet Bauman argued that most people have no control over these external forces. Hence, housing decisions (such as to get a mortgage) come without guarantees. Pleace et al (2022) felt that a consequence of this was increased numbers of people were either experiencing homelessness or precarious accommodation. For example, despite being apparent 'winners' in the system, people who are homeowners often see their mortgage rates rise every time there is an increase in inflation. In the process many homeowners are moved closer to the precarity of repossession. This is not just an economic issue, as Vassenden, (2014) described the self- identity risk of "*a reduced sense of moral worth and loss of identity"* p.755). Those experiencing this precarity are at risk of (re)joining the flawed consumers who must rent.

Within those who rent, those dependent on benefits have seen their likelihood of eviction increase because of rent rises and HB reductions since 2011 (see Powell 2015). These precarious renters, with their lack of security are increasingly close to joining the homeless. The lack of social housing means there is not a safety-net beneath which one cannot fall. Pleace et al (2022) talked of those *"who described a cycle of intensifying precariousness from which there was little potential to escape, particularly for those living in informal housing such as lodgings and house shares".* (p.143). This intensifying precarious extends to those sofa-surfing, in squats, hostels/shelters, local authority temporary housing and Covid hotels. These are the people who have least control around home but under neoliberalism the state has increasingly withdrawn from obligations to help.

Indeed, Bauman (2004) described how neoliberal ideology has changed the role of the state from a 'gardener' tending society for all to a 'gamekeeper' protecting property from the incursions of the vagabonds. The ethos is that *"Those who do not or cannot fit in must be excommunicated and forcibly expelled"* (Bauman, 2004 p.86). Giddens (1991) talked of how there has always been "*a clear divide between inside or outsider or stranger"* (p.118). But under neoliberalism the criteria for insider/outsider status is largely about money. The right of consumers to purchase access into any location is unquestioned. This is illustrated in Savage et al (2005) description of tension between long-term residents of towns and those who had relocated there. *"Incomers (who have bought houses in the area) do not defer to the locals as being those with any kind of moral claim on the place"* (p.37).

The incomers felt that "*one can become [a] local by moving [in] and staying put"* (p.38).

By contrast to these incomers, the flawed consumers of gypsies, travellers, migrants or rough sleepers are unwanted and face a lack of choices where else to go. Without private resources, the only areas (legally) accessible to them are often public spaces which are not intended to be used as home. This can then lead to reactions from others who view such behaviour as 'territorially unacceptable' (Lanicone, 2013). Even when people are not explicitly ordered to leave by authorities pressure can be brought to make their situation unbearable (see Bowen, 2013 Ambrose, 2023). Herring (2019) described how in San Fransisco the police used mechanisms such as removing property and depriving sleep as ways of forcing rough sleeping into shelters. Hao et al (2021) described in China how people experiencing homelessness were seen as burdens by local government and pressured to leave the area. Lenhard (2022) found people creating a 'home' at the train station faced the continual fear that security might force them to move-on. These are examples of what Lanicone (2020) called *"a never complete cycle of finding-losing-making-losing base"* (p.259). Jackson (2015) talked of how young people experiencing homelessness in London are *"fixed in mobility, kept in a perpetual state of being on the move"* (p.146). Yet the examples of Gypsies, Travelling Communities and 'tramps' show how this continual movement is also seen as a form of deviant behaviour (see, also, O'Connor 1963). Indeed, the long-standing Vagrancy Act (1824) talked of someone" not *giving a good account of himself" (s.4)* whether *"wandering…in any deserted building, or in the open air, or under a tent, or in any cart or wagon. (ibid).*.

This is indicative of Ramos (2023) argued that homelessness has traditionally been viewed as a product of 'sin', 'sick', and 'systemic' causes. Bimpson et al (2022) claimed under neoliberalism, the structural link between poverty and social problems has been increasingly downplayed with greater emphasis on the personal 'sin' aspect. Writers such as Jacobs and Smith (2008) talk of the poorest and most destitute being treated like an 'underclass' who choose to live outside of

normal society in terms of morals, behaviour and aspirations[29]. Herring (2019) described how *"Not only are the homeless assumed to violate the social contract bonded by work, but they simultaneously represent the 'constituent outside' of propertied citizenship"* (p.281). This then leads to them being treated as perpetual 'outsiders' who belong nowhere. Hence, not only do the poorest experience housing precariousness, but they usually end-up stopping (and sometimes residing) in dwellings and locations which others eschew, (Bauman 2003, 2007 Smith 1999).

As Bauman (2004) pointed out neoliberalism forces the poorest to be mobile, but their mobility is often met with hostility, and they are seen as *"putative villains"* (p.55). Beckett and Herbert (2010) description of how people experiencing homelessness were categorised as trespassers, and therefore criminals. They are a *"blot on the landscape…[a] dirty spot on the canvas of an orderly world"* (Jacobsen and Marshman, 2008 p.814)[30]. These narratives of sinful behaviour, vagabonds, underclasses, villains, outsiders, criminals, and parasites[31] thus makes punitive approaches a rational response to discourage such behaviour. This process is greatly eased by a geographical separation of people which makes dehumanising stereotypes much easier (Herring, 2019 described this as *"the tendency of public policy to invisibilize the urban poor,"* p.295 as part of depoliticizing poverty).[32] This process of depoliticization is evident in Jackson's (2015) and Herring's (2019) descriptions of people experiencing homelessness blaming 'less deserving' people in the homeless population (such as migrants) for taking-up resources.

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[29] This feels reminiscent of Durkheim's concept of 'anomie' to describe peoples behaviour which is seen as dysfunctional towards the whole societal organism.

[30] As Bauman pointed out the case of asylum seekers is profound here. The political debate in 2023 seems to be more about where to locate them (out-to-see, in Rwanda) rather than whether what they are being offered meets their needs.

[31] If one really carry the Nineteenth Century liberal analogy further, one could look at this description of 1837 Poor Law Amendment Act from Edwad Butler, MP; "Its tendency was to draw the labourer from the haunts of vice, and, elevate his character".

[32] The programme Cathy Come Home broadcast in 1966 was seen as representing a paradigm shit in the way the public viewed homelessness and a catalyst for the 1977 legislation. It is worth comparing this to the way the lack of discussion about children in B&Bs is largely absent.

Flawed consumers face what Hao et al (2021) described as *"measures [which] are liable to displace homeless people to less accessible areas further from services and potential employment, exacerbating their social and economic marginalisation"* (p.297). Other example have shown how this type of precariousness and exclusion which described can be exacerbated by systems designed by authorities to 'assist' people experiencing homelessness (see Lancione 2013 and Hopper et al, 1997)[33]. Naiman (2022) showed how shelter dwellers were powerless to remain, nor move to somewhere that met their needs. They were required to leave the shelters, but the only possible housing was in the private rented sector. This meant they dependent on finding landlords which would accept them, but many landlords considered them as undesirable tenants. Therefore, 'choices' were often only places that other people did not want to inhabit. Reflecting Schneider's (2022) work with rough sleepers, and Herring's (2019) study of encampments Naiman (2022) found that some people preferred to remain in basic shelter provision (where they had friends and felt a sense of belonging) rather than move to locations where they felt isolated. She described this as a 'choice' of 'social or spatial isolation.'

> *"the high cost and shortage of housing, as well as the reluctance of some landlords to accept HF beneficiaries, participants are often left with little choice about the kind of neighbourhood in which to live." (p.341)*
>
> *Those who… leave shelters have little choice in regard to the type of neighbourhood or to what type of house to live in. They often end up having to choose between moving to more affordable neighbourhoods, but often isolated and far from services, or to move to a closer neighbourhood, but in buildings that tend to reproduce shelter-like conditions" (p.344)*

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[33] Bimpson et al (2022) described how for one woman in a refuge *"home was not just a physical house but the whole city"* (p.282) Yet she was banned from taking her children to that city where her support networks were because of the behaviour of her ex-partner. She was powerless to do anything about sanctions imposed on her because of the behaviour of others.

Similarly, Schneider (2022) described processes where poverty, plus rules, forced people into rough sleeping or shelters but then subsequent territorial rules told them these were unacceptable ways to live. Herring (2019) argued that people choosing encampments over shelters were seen as behaving ‘deviantly’. As Lanicone (2020) put it they were choosing to live in places which were supposed to be *quintessentially uninhabitable”*. Hao et al (2021) described how people who refused to conform to rules around wearing uniforms and undertaking mandatory activities were unable to access homelessness service centres. Herring (2019) described how people might have to queue up for four-to-ten hours each night for shelters which were “rule-ridden” (p.295) if they managed to get a bed. Lem (2006) gave an example of such a rule-heavy approach when describing how a condition of entering some shelters was for people experiencing rough sleeping was the to give up one’s dog.. This was despite many people feeling that to do so would increase the precariousness of their mental situation (increasing the risk of relapse or self-harm). These sorts of arbitrary rules were part of the reason that Clapham (2003) and Fitzpatrick (1999) found people turning down hostels and shared housing even though they were the only alternative to the streets.

Enforced residential mobility amongst the poorest has other consequences beyond housing need. Heller’s (1982) literature review concluded that almost all previous research found adverse emotional and behavioural reactions. These included negative impacts such as grief, stress, dissatisfaction, financial problems, increases in crime and loss of social networks (see Atkinson (2002), Cavan et al 1949, Mogey, 1955, Akron, 1974). Stokols et al. (1983) found a *“high residential] mobility rate exerts certain direct, negative effects on subjective well-being and self-relations*” (p.15). This supported work by Mann (1972) and Brett (1982) Fried (1963), Brett (1982) and Seidenberg (1973) who all found negative correlations between poor health and frequent residential mobility.

However, there is evidence that residential mobility does not have to be conducted in this way. Neoliberalism offers lack of choice to those without money, and this ‘lack’ seems significant. Hebb (1955), Toffler (1970), Wapner (1981) and Heller (1982) all believed that the adverse effects of involuntary relocation lessened if the peoples new home area resembled their old one. Kullberg (1997) believed that people’s experiences were impacted by how much control they felt they had over the new property. Neoliberal philosophy also relegates the poorest to the worst

locations and houses as a way of punishing ‘sinful’ behaviour. Yet several researchers claim (unsurprisingly) that quality of the new location and building is crucial to wellbeing. Lyons (1996), Atkinson (2002), Stokols & Shumaker (1982), Schorr (1970), Marris (1974), Bridge (2002), Forrest and Kearns (1999), Kleinhans (2010), Stokols et al (1983), Priemus (1986) and Popp (1976) all argued that people experience involuntary mobility more positively if they perceive themselves as moving to a better residential location.

This last point is crucial in terms of the new ‘nomadic freedom’ which Mobility Turn theorists adopt. Gutman (1963) and Schorr (1970) both talked of how middle-class households moving to locations perceived as worse had negative experiences of mobility. Hence, it may not be mobility per se which is perceived as positive or negative by people, but the actual outcome of mobility. In the sense of are they mobile to somewhere which meets their needs.

4,6 Recent Non-Academic Research into Increased Mobility Amongst People Experiencing Homelessness

As was shown in Chapter 2 relocation as a policy mechanism for addressing homelessness is a new phenomenon, running counter to previous approaches which have emphasised local links, connections, and responsibilities. It is also an approach which has been introduced by ‘stealth’ and local decision-making rather than something transparently driven by central governments. Therefore, there is limited academic research looking at the experiences of people who have been subject to formal relocation approaches. Fortunately, there are a handful of research projects which have been undertaken for charities have looked recently at the growth in residential mobility amongst people experiencing homelessness. These are not subject to academic rigours and are sometimes commissioned or undertaken by organisations with campaigning stances. However, they still provide useful background data.

Clark et al for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) (2017) talked to families subject to ‘forced moves’. This covered both evicted households and those who left before court orders were served on them. Several of their conclusions reflect

themes from academic research. Firstly, pre-existing physical and mental health conditions were exacerbated for some by relocation. Others found that their existing health problems made being mobile more difficult. Some people started to experience new health problems, especially depression and anxiety. In terms of children, the top-line findings were similar, with existing physical or mental health problems being exacerbated. In a small number of cases families had been broken-up because of moving. The research emphasised the importance of social networks for coping *all families stress the impact that this [loss of social networks] had on their mental and emotional health. Parental mental health is crucial to functioning families"* (p.12). This mirrored the conclusions of a long tradition of academic writers (such as Lyons & Rafferty 2001, Lewis, 1970 and Van Ham 2014) that relocation can weaken these networks. "

Clark et al (2017) also found other impacts on households, such as loss of possessions and difficulties obtaining or keeping jobs. Of the 145 households interviewed, only 12% had members in full-time employment and three quarters received HB. This risked creating a causal loop in which they were forced to move to areas of lower economic activity which made paid employment even less likely. This cycle of forced moves, health problems, loss of social support and fewer job opportunities contradicted Government policy of encouraging work as the best way out of poverty[34]. This supports the narratives of authors such as Desmond (2017), Heller (1982) Clinton–Davis and Fassil, (1992); Muecke, (1992) and Boyle et al. (1998) that Government policy was achieving displacement of the poor rather than addressing poverty.

Research undertaking for Shelter (Garvey and Pennington, 2016) investigated 'priority need' families experiencing homelessness who were made offers by local authorities to relocate to other parts of the country. In legal terms, this amounted to local authorities discharging their legal duty to provide a home by making a 'reasonable offer' of 'suitable accommodation.' They found that closeness to their previous home *"did shape a households experience"* (p.11) of moving residential

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[34] *"Figures show that children are around 5 times more likely to live in poverty if they live in a workless household, compared to a household where all adults work."* (DWP, 2018)

location. As with the JRF research, they also found that sometimes families separated, but in these cases, it was 'voluntary' to allow some family members to remain close to the previous area (for example, children staying with extended family to avoid changing schools). Households who *"moved their life to…[a] new area"* (p.12) found the loss of supportive social networks and lack of local knowledge made practical aspects of life more difficult. These included accessing GPs, nursery places, schooling, and shops..

Pennington (2013) undertook research for the Institute of Public Policy Research (IPPR) looking at migration trends in later life. Reflecting the nuanced thinking of authors such as Winstanley et al. (2002), Savage et al (2005) and Stokols et al (1983) Pennington found balanced conclusions. On the positive side she stated, *"Under the right circumstances, movement in later life can improve physical health and social wellbeing by allowing people to age in an appropriate home, or in an area that reflects their changing needs"* (p.16). However, she added for others it can lead to social isolation, declining health and increased financial costs. Reflecting the class analysis of writers such as Clark (2007) and Doff & Kleinhans (2011) she concluded that the benefits of relocation are less available to poorer people.

For the charity Crisis, Johnsen and Jones (2015) looked at effect on of the rise of rules limiting access to non-statutory homelessness services to people with local connections. They focused on the viewpoints of those who had experienced rough sleeping in London. They found that data was extremely limited in the area. However, reflecting Lancione's (2013) analysis around rules around territorial control, they argued 'reconnection' was often used as a mechanism to gatekeep access to services and relocate them elsewhere outside of London without support.

> *The level of support typically received by individuals reconnected within the capital is not necessarily replicated elsewhere, or for those being reconnected further afield, however. On the contrary, whilst some people experiencing rough sleeping feel well supported in the lead up to and during the reconnection process, they appear to be outnumbered by those whom, are provided with minimal support. Further to this, post-reconnection checks are very rare, hence many reconnected individuals feel 'fobbed off'. (p.62)*

Also looking at reconnections Hennesey et al (2017) evaluated the relocation service 'No First Night Out. Safe Connections pilot project' (described in Chapter 2). This service worked with 34 people with no significant local connection to the London boroughs in which they were sleeping rough. The aim of the service was to have "*provided clients with a supported pathway to accessing accommodation, in an area where they felt safe, giving them a realistic opportunity to leave rough sleeping behind"* (p.18).

Of the 12 clients moved half were relocated outside of London and half within. The data is limited as to which areas they were relocated to, or whether they had any previous connections to those areas. 2 of the relocations had lasted less than 3 months and the research was concerned others would breakdown. Supporting the academic work of those like Schneider (2022) and Herring (2019) the research emphasised the importance of social networks especially amongst the roofless. It also supported the idea that people could feel more homeless by being housed in an unfamiliar location, This is evidenced by the reasons people refused to be relocated, even when accommodation was offered,

> *"[people feared losing] ease of accessing drugs, co-dependent relationships, opportunities for begging, a sense of community on the streets, and being homeless in a busy, friendly area compared to other area"* (p.23).

Homefinder UK (2021) undertook a questionnaire of 680 people who had voluntarily moved because of their service. The research report data needs to be treated with some caution. It also does not show the methodology used to ascertain the evidence. For example, were questions focused entirely upon asking people about positive experiences? Was any action taken to reflect those whose experiences were negative, including those for whom relocation had broken-down?

Notwithstanding, these concerns, the headline findings presented in the report were:

- 53% of those relocated had opted to move nationally, for example from London to South Shields, or from Bristol to Middlesbrough. 47% had moved between London boroughs.

- The most common groups to consider moving out of their area were those that spent less than 1 year, or more than 5 years, on their local housing register
- 77% of respondents got rehoused within 12 weeks after opting to relocate
- The top reasons for choosing to relocate were the length of time spent in temporary accommodation, (the threat of) homelessness and fleeing domestic abuse. Overcrowding and looking for job opportunities were less common reasons for moving.
- 95% of the respondents mentioned at least one positive change in their lives after relocating. The top three of these were improved mental health, access to right-sized homes and lower rents
- 3 in 5 of those who relocated were from BME communities and 72 % were female

However. beneath the headline figures there is one other significant piece of data. Most households had not have moved long distances from London (Diagram 14) with nearly two-thirds staying in London or the South-East. This figure seems to support the overwhelming academic evidence as to the importance of choice and control.

Diagram 14: Regions That People Moved To Via The HomeFinder Service

Source: Anderson (2022) - figures adapted from the report on the research.

4.7 Media Coverage Of Increased Mobility Amongst People Experiencing Homelessness

Whilst there is still limited research as to the impact of increases in relocation as a way of 'helping' people experiencing homelessness there has been a lot of media coverage. Obviously, these outlets were trying to describe a 'key story' in a few minutes or several hundred words. But they provide some cultural context in which to consider the issue of relocation and displacement of people experiencing homelessness.

A (distressing and powerful) television program called *"Forced Out*," (ITV, 2020) [35] spoke to people who had been relocated as a way of local authorities response fulfilling their legal duties. The programme claimed that the combined distance of relocations in England was about 75,000 miles. There have also been periodic media articles (most commonly in The Guardian, the BBC and local press coverage). These include stories of local authorities writing to housing providers in locations with cheaper rents to ask them to consider providing houses for people experiencing homelessness in London. There have also been articles on local authorities relocating vulnerable households experiencing homelessness in other areas without informing the 'receiving' local authority (see BBC, 2012. Evening Standard, 2012. Butler, 2016, Dearden, 2017. Booth, 2018. Marsh, 2020. Evening Standard, 2012).

There has also been plenty of media interest in the Everyone-In initiative within local, national and trade journals (see Sheffield City Council, 2020. Lamb. 2020 Booth & Butler, 2020. Forrest, 2020. Heath, 2021. Cuffe, 2022). Alongside these overviews of the policy, some media projects have covered peoples' personal stories. BBC 5Live (2020) undertook an ongoing set of programmes documenting the journey of one person placed in a hotel. Also, a YouTube interview had been conducted with one of the women I subsequently interviewed as part of my

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[35] An example of these attempts to reduce the issue to a 'catchy' phrase is the headline for the YouTube video for the 'Forced Out' programme which is *"You're Playing Chequers With People's Lives; Ross Kemp Living With Homeless Families."*

research (no listing is provided in the references and her name is changed in this dissertation to ensure confidentiality).

4.8 Conclusion

Whilst the general consensus is that mobility is increasing, there remain huge debates about what the consequences of this are. The interaction between residential mobility, choice and displacement is complex. The impact on socio-economic status on experiences of mobility seems increasingly significant as the state provides less housing. In this context it is glaring how little the stories of people who have experienced homelessness have been considered within research on the issue. As the poorest in society, the power dynamics who can access which locations particularly impacts on their lives (See Please et al 2022, and Lancione, 2013. Their stories are needed in an era where governments and local authorities are using de facto displacement as a tool to address homelessness and rough sleeping.

To address this need, the review of literature in Chapters 3 & 4 identified the following gaps in knowledge:

1. *Is location important as an aspect of home to people who have experienced homelessness? How important compared to other aspects to home?*

2. *Which parts of location are important for people who had experienced homelessness in terms of current or future homes?*

3. *Do people who have experienced homelessness and displacement feel they have choice and control people over past and future locations when it comes to home?*

The mechanisms for addressing these gaps in knowledge are identified in the next chapter

Chapter 5: The Research Questions and Analytical Framework

5.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the three research questions which were used to address the gaps in knowledge identified at the end of Chapter 4. It then details the analytical framework in which consideration of the data is framed. It outlines the thinking behind selecting Zygmunt Bauman, whose work provided much of the lens through which the data is analysed. This covered his thinking in areas such as a) the structure of neoliberal post/liquid-modern society, b) the disintegration of collectivism and the c) new nature of social exclusion It frames some of Bauman's key points within the context of some of the writings on place, home and mobility described in Chapters 3 and 4. There are also some references to how Bauman contemporary writings build upon existential and phenomenological traditions.

5.2 Research Questions

To address the gaps in knowledge (Chapter 4) the following overall Research Questions were decided upon.

Question 1 – Are people who have experienced homelessness attached to or ambivalent about locations?

Question 2 - What is it about locations that people feel attachment to?

Question 3 –How do experiences of homelessness and displacement impact on peoples' feelings over whether they will have choices over the future locations?

As a formerly homeless person myself, I believed, ethically the design of these research questions needed to be one that (as far as possible) drew out the authentic stories of participants in the study. This is covered further in Chapter 6.

5.3 Analytical Approach Adopted

In the light of the research questions, an analytical framework was settled upon based primarily around Bauman's later works. These fused aspects of postmodernism and phenomenology in a way which seemed particularly relevant to homelessness in the Twenty-First Century. They were suitable for addressing these research questions because they pay attention to issues of attachment, ambivalence, mobility, choice, displacement, and power. The analytical framework was also influenced by four other writes Beilharz (2000), Blackshaw (2005), Featherstone (2010) and Smith (1999) who have all adopted aspects of Bauman's theories in their writings. These were complemented by the writings of place theorists (dating back as far as Relph (1976, 2016) & Tuan (1975), place attachment writers (such as Altman & Lowe (1992), as well as the more the recent writers on home-making and mobility (such as Lanicone 2013, 2022, 2023 and Schneider, 2022) described in the previous chapter.

Blackshaw (2005) described Bauman sociology as largely phenomenological. Douglas and Johnson (1977) were dismissive of the role of phenomenology in understanding social problems *stating "[the practisers of] phenomenological sociology… have never attempted to contribute anything to our practical political understandings of the social world"* (p.63). However, Bauman's work was politically infused and offered theories which utilised aspects of key phenomenological foundational texts such as Sartre's *"Being and Nothingness"* (1943, 2003), Heidegger's *"Being and Time*" (1927, 1999) and Merleau-*Ponty's "Phenomenology of Perception"* (1945, 2002). In emphasising peoples' every day, pre-reflexive relationships within neoliberalist society Bauman seemed to be prioritising something akin to the phenomenological 'lifeworld.' The process of valuing the lived experience stories of socially exclude people is eminently political (see Parr, 2023).

In Chapter 6, I describe my own beliefs around ontology, and these quotes about Bauman's epistemological approach show how my beliefs complemented his thinking:

> *"[Bauman believes] we should simply remember we make our own worlds'; we cannot claim to represent the world in itself. In other words, we must use our 'talent for speaking differently' about the world in which ways that are able to describe what we understand of the quality of own understandings of the actual reality" (Blackshaw 2005 p. 80)*

> *"[Baumann's Sociology is [in] confrontation with the more limited positivistic view of social science as an inferior offspring or poor imitator of 'real 'science. Cumulative, exact, and verifiable". Jacobsen and Marshman" (2008 p 800)*

As well as leaning into phenomenological tradition, Bauman is also called a *"Prophet of Postmodernism"* (Smith, 1999 p.1). He rejected the term 'post-modernism' because of its suggestion that modernism has ended, hence his preference for the phrase 'liquid modernism' to describe neoliberal society. Nonetheless, the society he described bears much of the hallmarks of post-modernist writings especially those focused on mobility (see Klanten et al 2005) and lack of fixed identity (see Braidotti, 1994). Bauman agreed with the essential post-modernist position that the end of an age of social scientific 'metanarratives' and 'ultimate truths' had been reached (see Aho, 2015). The faith in pure rationalism shared by authors from Plato (Weissman, 2021), through Enlightenment logicians (Aho, 2015), to the Logical Positivists (Philosophy Overdose, 2022) is gone.

However, Bauman did not share the narrative of liberation that many postmodernist authors ascribe to the death of certainty (such as Klanten et al, 2015 Deleuze and Guattari. 1988 Morley, 2000). Instead, he argued that any 'freedoms' from traditional structures which exist in neoliberal society are often superficial, theoretical, dependent upon socio-economic status and lead to huge anxieties. His description of the conditionality of freedom, combined with the existential consequences resulting from a loosening of traditional social structures, makes his theories particularly relevant to people experiencing, or on the cusp of,

homelessness (as evidenced by the type of research conducted by Schneider (2022), Jackson (2015) and Hoolahan (2022).

Bauman's philosophical approach was complemented by what Blackshaw (2005) characterised as a passion about his subjects rather than an attempt to create 'pseudoscience'. Featherstone (2010) points out how Bauman has consciously produced widely accessible/understandable works (via, for example. his use of metaphors) which were aimed at engaging with a world beyond academia. For example, in 17 pages of his book 'Liquid Modernity' (2000 pp.53-69) he referenced an eclectic group of people to support his arguments including, Lewis Carroll, Aldous Huxley, George Orwell, Harold Walpole, Aristotle, Plato, Karl Marx, Anton Gramsci, Henri de Mann, Henry Ford, Marina Bianchi, Margaret Thatcher, Peter Drucker, C. Wright Mills, Melody Beattie, Jane Fonda, Oprah Winfrey, Trisha Goddard, Anton Habermas and Tony Blair. His insights into the current world helped him author engaging books on neoliberalism which referenced everybody, from the founding fathers of sociology to popular talk-show hosts, In doing so Bauman attempted to use the levers of neoliberalism to engage with people rather than sitting detached. Without such engagement, the distance between the writings of academics and the lived experience of those they write about remains a chasm.

5.4 Analytical Approach - Application

Having covered the rationale for using Bauman the next section details the aspects of his work which form the analytical framework for the research. There are occasional references to other sociologists, philosophers and authors who helped show the strength of his analysis. Bauman (1989) described how solid, traditional modern society has clear rules and roles. These were decided by a benevolent elite and based upon a concept of the common good, rationalism, science, and the conquest of nature (for example, the Industrial Revolution or the development of vaccines). This modernism was the Hobbesian antidote to more primitive societies in which the powerful savaged the weak. The aim was to create a society based on the type of 'value-rationality' that Weber spoke of (Bauman, 2000). Bauman (2000) quoted Durkheim (1924, 1972) to illustrate how this worked in practise,

"The individual submits to society and this submission is the condition of his liberation…By putting himself under the wing of society he makes himself also, to a certain extent, dependent upon it. But this is a liberating dependence; there is no contradiction in this." (Bauman p.20 quoting Durkheim p.115)

The prototypical example of this was Bentham's philosophical attempt to base societal rules around 'the greatest good of the greatest number' and the 'pleasure/pain principle.' A punitive institution like Bentham's 'panopticon' (Harrison and Bentham, 1983) aimed to provide feelings of security and a greater good, even to those subject to it. Location was as important part of solid modernity as they assumed a close geographical proximity of the governing and governed. In the case of panopticon there was *"a model of mutual engagement"* (Bauman 2000, p.10). Bauman (1989) saw solid modern societies using a kind of 'social physics' to advance societal evolution. One can see this in *'A Handbook of Sociology'* by Ogden and Nimkoff first published in 1946 which compared societies and institutions to living organisms and body-parts. The aim of leaders was to find rules to keep the societal organism functioning ever-more healthily. Then those rules were implemented across the whole society. This 'neo-functionalism' echoes the descriptions given by Rolnik (2019) of post-war attempts to use housing as collectivist, redistributive but, also, socially stabilizing policy tool.

However, as Weber (1920, 2009) feared, and Orwell (Dean & Orwell, 2003) described, dreams of such societies run by all-powerful elites had often ended in concentration camps, gulags, and other dictatorships[36]. Logic and the pursuit of the greater good, had been used to legitimize intolerance, violence, and murder of those who did not fit-in into the vision of society (see Bauman 2003, Featherstone 2010 and Beilharz 2000). Years after capitalists sent chained slaves across oceans, communist countries were killing millions of people as part of 'great leaps forward' and 'multi-year plans' in the name of progress.

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[36] Arguably the Cold War was chillingly (sic) efficient in stopping countries from fighting because of the threat of mutually-certain destruction. It was also a terribly frighting time to be growing-up with the underlying existential threat of Nuclear War.

Advocates of societies based purely on enlightenment rationalism, failed to appreciate that they still had to be based on foundational beliefs as what are rational, ethical and the greater good. In a book called "Ethics for Beginners,' Kreeft (2020) argued that *"No one has succeeded in creating a system of values in which arbitrariness, self-indulgence, egoism, cruelty, injustice…were virtues"* (p.21, my underlying). Yet what constitutes cruelty and injustice is socially and historically fluid. John-Turp (2023) described how this leads to

> *"a moral guru handing down what he takes to be the absolute truth from a position of authority. He might be looking down from a preacher's pulpit or a professor's lectern or a politician's hustings. He might take himself to be in the business of civilising the natives. This is a somewhat frightening image. In the most extreme version, it involves a toxic combination of power and moral certainty that is the prelude to authoritarianism, totalitarianism, oppression and even genocide." (p.14)*

If societal development is based on some form of adapted Darwinian model of evolutionary progress, then where does this leave those who cannot contribute 'their share,' such as the disabled, the sick, the elderly, the physically weaker, the mentally-ill and the orphans? The great Benthamite government of 1830-41 introduced the Poor Law Amendment Act 1834 forcing children into workhouses. Whilst the powerful trade union movement of the 1970s, run by white working-class men, did little to progress the rights of oppressed groups other than white working-class men.

Lash (1990) described how postmodernism entails the rejection of a society founded on the certainties of elites. Smith (1999) summed-up this as, *"The effort by modernity's legislators to impose perfect order on society by tidying it into neat garden plots has failed*" (p.144). Bauman (2000) argued that people came to reject the type of universal rationalism described above.

> *"the turn of events in the world under capitalist rule proved to be the exact opposite of what Max Weber anticipated and confidently predicted when he selected bureaucracy as the prototype of the society to come and portrayed it as the liminal form of rational action." (p.59)*

In the UK they people revolted against the restrictions on freedom and choice that the post-war political consensus entailed. This manifested in the continual re-election of Thatcherite Governments after 1979 with their neoliberal polices described in Chapter 2. Bauman (2013) showed how policies around taxation, welfare provision and ethical collectivism had changed. He did not seem to believe in a grand conspiracy of the super-rich, working together to cynically pursue neoliberalist agendas. He argued that much of the rejection of statism came from the aspirational middle-classes who had lost faith in the wisdom of elites and grew to reject an expanding state bureaucracy. Reflecting Braidotti's (1994) description of cultural and political nomads, Lash (1990) described the middle-classes *"are [increasingly] likely to perceive their own 'ideal interests' in terms of a whole different range [of things]"* (p.20). Bauman (2000, 1997) argued that this rejection of collectivism has led to a downsizing of welfare provision with. huge impacts on the poor.

Blackshaw (2005) claimed that Bauman also adopted ideas from social psychology. For example, Smith (1999) explained how postmodernist lack of certainty undermines any fixed, permanent, sense of who one is, where one belongs and how one should behave. One of Sartre's (1943, 2003) existential themes was the inevitable anxiety created by human never being certain about their future wellbeing. He encapsulated this in his famous declaration that 'man is condemned to be free' (Sartre, 1946, 2003. Streller, 2012). The following quotes describe this lack of certainty as more socially prevalent than ever,

> *"Ours is a pluralist age. There is no one right way of doing things, but many; no one set of beliefs, but a diversity; no one true religion, but a host of equally legitimate faiths. We can, and should, live our lives as we wish, according to our individual aims and values" (Griffiths and Paseau 2023, p.8)*

> *"for Bauman, as for Sartre, the individual liberated through reflexivity is not so much rational as burdened with choice and is at every turn faced with the need to make decisions; it is up to the individual to choose the life he or she thinks is best (Blackshaw, 2005 p.83).*

In contrast to when Sartre was writing, stomach-churning choices are no longer about whether to fight dictatorships but rather *"often consist of little more than whether to eat at McDonald's or Burger King"* (Blackshaw (2005, p.126). This can be compared to the era (described by people like Rolnik (2019) and Hanley (2012) when an apprenticeship plus waiting one's turn on the council house waiting list, would guarantee a job and home for life. Under neoliberalism, instead of this structured, long-term certainty, all sorts of consumable object offers visions of happier lives. Blackshaw (2005) stated, *"Bauman argues [consumption] is the existential feature of liquid modernity"* (p.117), whilst Bauman (2000) himself described it as the ubiquitous addiction of neoliberal society. The social psychology perspective of Bauman's thinking around consumption is captured well in this quote by Mate (2022).

> *"Later-stage capitalism is expert in catering to this sense of present-moment dread – in fact much of its success depends on the chasm between us and the present…getting wider, the false products and artificial distractions of consumer culture designed to fill the gap." (p.33)*

Instead of Weber's (and Orwell's) prediction of dictatorial, statist iron cages in which lack of conformity is punishable, one has a myriad of individual choices every day (Bauman 1998, 2000). If one has the basics of shelter, warmth, food, and clean water but still feels unfulfilled or unsafe, how does one decide what to pursue next? Neoliberalism's continuous commodification has colonised society; but not as Malthus (2001, 1798) or Marx and Engels (2018, 1848) predicted with scarcity, but with undifferentiated excess. Boniwell (2012) described this as a psychological 'weighing-down', caused by over-choice in all aspects of life. Bauman (1988) gave the example how there is no longer a hierarchy of quality in cultural activities, and instead one only difference, choice, and preference. Indeed, in 1946 Ogburn and Nimkoff (1964) described how it was *"more difficult to change consumption patterns and lifestyle in Europe than the United States" (*p.370) and *"In some respect the United States does not have an equalitarian code. Thus, it is not considered good taste to emphasise differences in taste."* (ibid).

However, Bauman also described how this choice and consumption cannot supply an existential safety-net. There is no certainty of security. The state no longer redistributes wealth to ensure everybody has enough. There are no promises to

protect people from economic forces such as the financial crash of 2008. People live, each day, subconsciously aware that they are now increasingly at the mercy of external forces over which neither they, nor anybody on their behalf, has overall control. There is no omnipresent, benevolent elite keeping everything ordered. Bauman (1997, 2000) argued this is a society characterized by an *“ambience of uncertainty* (Reset DOC-Dialogues on Civilisation, 2019) leading to *“crippling anxieties”* (Featherstone, 2010 p.127). In practical terms, actions such as working hard, getting qualifications, saving money, investing in pensions, and paying mortgages cannot guarantee economic security. There is no better example of this than when a Conservative government in 2022 tried to ‘abandon capitalist orthodoxy’ by cutting taxes using borrowing from the financial markets. International finance withdrew its resources from the UK and millions of people saw pension funds threatened plus mortgage costs rising. This resulted in an economic volte-face and the shortest Prime Ministerial reign in British political history.

Adopting more social psychology, Bauman (1991) argued people crave both freedom and security simultaneously. Yet they must make their own decisions as to how to achieve these. This reliance on individual actions means that people are necessarily in competition with each other. Rising house prices for some lead to unaffordable housing for others. Cheaper products are built upon lower wages. Reductions in taxations means reducing public services. Yet Bauman argued, belying the predictions of Marx and Weber, that these changes have led to less, rather than more, class solidarity.

Within his model of a globalised, liquid, neoliberal society Bauman (2003, 2007), emphasised lack of autonomy and security is not equally distributed. Instead, it reflected a *“social and economic continuum”* (Smith, 1999, P.151). Choice and control are dictated by what one can afford (see Jacobsen & Marshman 2008). Those in the worst position are whom Bauman’s (2007) ‘flawed consumers’. They are unable to express much choice and control because of poverty. This was illustrated by the examples of research into peoples’ experience of homelessness detailed in Chapters 3 and 4 of this dissertation.

Bauman (2003) differentiated between solid modernism in which there was a role for the poor as manual labour and liquid modernism where the poor are often

reduced to ‘economic waste’ and serve no purpose. Bauman (2004) claimed that they have gone from being viewed as temporarily ‘unemployed’ (due to external economic circumstances) to being ‘redundant’ (because of bad individual choices). Neoliberal globalisation means people are expected to be flexible around types of work, retraining, employment conditions and locations because,

> *the responsibility for [one’s] damnation cannot be laid at society’s door…responsibility and doom alike are of your making and solely your concern – the outcome of what you, the free agent, have been doing with your life. (Bauman, 2000 p.64)*

This has been part of neoliberal thinking for many decades as shown by this infamous quotes from a Conservative Employment Secretary just after the 1979 election *“I grew up in the 1930s with an unemployed father. He didn't riot. He got on his bike and looked for work, and he kept looking 'til he found it." (robz40, 2012).”* This ignoring of the structural causes of poverty can be seen forty years later in the way that private landlords increasing rents are seen as acting in an ethically neutral, or even positive way. Similarly, politicians reducing HB are ‘protecting the public purse. This contrasts with people experiencing private sector rented housing precarity. They are blamed for *choosing* to want to rent accommodation in unaffordable locations. This is even more the case for asylum seekers who are accused of *choosing* to come to the UK in large numbers and should be grateful for any help they are given. This type of thinking punishes the most vulnerable by presuming they have choices even when the evidence suggests otherwise (see Crisp and Powell, 2017 and Homeless Link, 2013).

Bauman (2017) argued the victory of individualism means people relate to each other not only as consumers, but also as ‘commodities’. Relationships become increasingly transactional. Groups amongst the poor who are stigmatised and viewed as underserving risk not just being flawed consumers but also flawed commodities whom nobody wants nearby. This is illustrated by research which found certain groups of poor people continuously being displaced from one location to another (Schneider, 2022, Lenhard’s 2023, Jackson, 2013).

This lack of a coherent, consistent ethical framework leads to it being acceptable for these flawed consumers/commodities to be paradoxically ‘caged-in’ to mobility.

They have no economic power, no clear route out of the ‘wasteland’ of poverty and homelessness, with few prospects of their situation improving and ittle help available.

In a society lacking a sense of shared social justice, Bauman (1999) perceived an increasing reliance on ‘carnivals of charity’. Help for the poor is increasingly turned into a kind of inverted beauty contest. In Goffman’s (1990) terms, some groups are seen to have “spoiled identities” where they do not deserve sympathy and help[37]. The recent edition to the political lexicon of the term ‘illegal asylum seekers’ is a perfect example of flawed commodities. They are not only poor but have ‘broken the law’ to come to the UK. One ends up with BBC articles in which the ‘influx’ of asylum seekers into communities has led to local people losing business (Sandford and May, 2023

Hence homelessness charities tend to focus on the ‘sickness’ and bad luck rather than ‘sin.’ Many have large fundraising campaigns in which they work out which images of people experiencing rough sleeping are most likely to elicit donations as the most deserving ‘commodities’ (for example, see the 2023 Christmas adverts for The Salvation Army and Crisis). This is not a criticism, but more a recognition that these ‘campaign’ exist within a normative vacuum in which one has to counter beliefs propagated by propagandists such as Kelvin McKenzie[38] that the poorest are getting drunk and watching Sky TV all day As Dean (2020) put it, people do not donate to charities in terms of their effectiveness in helping people because *“it’s about what donors are close to, affected by and care about. People think it is moral to give to the issues they care about rather than those which have the most effective impact.”* (p.152).

Alongside changes to charities one can also see examples of this ‘commodification of need’ approach in the increased devolution and shrinking of the welfare state. Because there is no universal, ethical belief system that

[38] This great adjudicator of ethical behaviour (Kelvin McKenzie) is the man who, whilst editor of the Sun, wrote lies about Liverpool fans who died at Hillsborough in 1989.

underpins allocation of resources those seeking must navigate a myriad of local labyrinths. Smith (1999) described local communities *as "Parochial, backwater, prejudice ridden, oppressive and stultifying"* (p.151) whilst Blackshaw (2005) talked of increased social closure and exclusion for those who are not seen as desirable. In practise, arbitrary local rules have been increasingly introduced This has allowed refusing access to social housing registers, discretionary housing payments and local welfare assistance to those deemed to be undeserving. These reflect the arbitrary conditionality of help described by writers such as McCarthy (2017), Hoolahan (2022) and Fitzpatrick (2005)

Bauman argued that neoliberal societies run into a difficulty because people have an instinctive concern for the welfare of the poor (Bauman and Donskis 2012). Merlau-Ponty (1945, 2002) argued that one cannot dehumanise the other if one is looking her in the eye and seeing her pain. Therefore, it is easier to embrace the *"annihilation of …otherness"* (Bauman 2000, p.101) if one never encounters those labelled as 'other'. Hence policies which reduce physical interaction play a significant role in blunting feelings of compassion. Instead, they facilitate the reduction of people to outsiders, illegals, shirkers etc who do not belong.

> *"The temptation is strong to get rid altogether of a phenomenon of [those seen as] sheer nuisance and unredeemed, not even mitigated, by any ethical consideration that is due to the suffering other" (Bauman, 1998a: 93–4)*

In terms of home Bauman argued people yearn to feel *"the security of being part of concrete social groups living in specific ways in particular places"* Belharz (2000 p.58). One can relate this to the place theorists from Heidegger onwards in which home is one of geographical location situated in culture, history and belonging. However, in neoliberal liquid modernity. geographical location has become just another *commodity* to be consumed and then disposed of. Perhaps one no-longer has homes in the sense that Heidegger meant, but rather locations to reside in temporarily whilst beneficial (like elongated holiday destinations). Smith (1991) argued that in neoliberal, liquid modernity relationship to locations came from

films, television, or glossy magazines[39]. These fantasy relationships mean one could never be satisfied because there is always the possibility of something better. Therefore, it makes little sense to become emotionally (or otherwise) attached to locations when the possibility of moving is always present.

Pleace (2015) believed that neoliberalism requires people to embrace a type of psychological nomadism. Bauman (1998) argued it is done by the poorest ‘vagabonds’ as much as the rich ‘tourists’. Both groups eschew commitments (either practical or psychological) which might bind them to a particular location (see Schneider 2022). This inevitably requires a sense of ambivalence towards wherever one currently resides. One needs to be attached enough to the idea of a location to stay temporarily, but simultaneously ambivalent enough to discard it when necessary.

However, the ambivalence to location is different for the poor because they may be forced to move at any time by the will of others. Bauman (1998, 2004) gives the example of mobile refugees who have little choice where they end-up. For them, there is little to be gained in being attached to the place they left, nor places they travel to. His description reflects the ‘forced ambivalence’ of Lenhard (2022) and Schneider (2022) description of rough sleeping migrants. Schneider (2022) argued they have no choice but to *“quickly forge social relations”* in various places as they are continually moved. As Bauman (2005) puts it *“commitments and friendships looks suspiciously like recipes for frustrations and broken hearts.”* (p.66).

Finally, it would be remiss to conclude this section without a paragraph on the role of the ‘virtual world’ which has obviously taken on more significance during the lifetime of this dissertation. In this virtual world (epitomised by the experiences of 2020) one has family, friends, and colleagues with whom one is not in physical proximity to. On-line conversations do are not effected by physical distance. As Blackshaw (2005) stated, in liquid modern terms this sounds like the ultimate freedom from traditional constraints

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[39] This advert (roddersmk, 2015) for from my childhood of presenting Milton Keynes as a fun town to go and live-in, is a good example of the superficiality underpinning decisions which Smith is referring to https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XfSoZ6_x7kk.

> *“the idea of the ’virtual ’is the perfect metaphor for liquid modernity. It is a world...in which all the traditional markers of linear narratives – time place and fix identity – are being constantly dissolved.” (p.100)*

Over two decades before Blackshaw wrote this, Stokols et al (1983) warned that *“advanced technological and heightened mobility have eroded the physical and interpersonal foundations of social cohesion and created communities of placeless, traditionless strangers”*. Artus (PN 2021) describing the limitations of on-line relationships talked of “*A social life conducted through screens has shown how impoverished life is without the physical presence of others” (p.14).* From a phenomenological perspective, he argued that interaction with others was about much more than words exchanged across screens..

5.5 Criticisms of Bauman

One challenge to the value of Bauman’s work comes from writers such as Rattansi (2017) and Outhwaite (2010) who claim that in his attempt to produce works which are widely accessible he has sacrificed intellectual depth. Flint and Powell (2013) claimed his work often reads more like a brief popular philosophical commentary on an aspect of society, rather than conventional sociological analysis. He undertook no research, did not tend to cite peer evaluated studies and instead made broad statements about areas of interest such as migration, human nature, consumerism, and poverty. He simply assumed that his a priori assumptions in disciplines as diverse as philosophy, psychology, economics, and politics were correct. Identifying a Kantian propensity to transcendence, Kilminster (2013) stated *“The depth and extent of his unquestioned philosophical commitment is clear*” (n.p). He adds that Bauman uses words like *“freedom, emancipation, liberation and social transformation”* (ibid) without ever clarifying what he means by such concepts mean. Arguably, the adoption of such strong a priori philosophical foundations combined with a undefined use of abstract concepts leads to sweeping political statements such as *“the sole grand narrative left in the field [of politics is] …the accumulation of junk and more junk, and we are all trying to accumulate it”*. (Bauman 1999 p.4). Or broad social psychological claims like “*continual ambivalence results in cognitive dissonance, state of mine, notoriously demeaning, incapacitating and difficult to endure”* (Bauman, Wasted Lives p.124) .

Kilminster and Varcoe (1998) claimed part of the freedom to make these ‘eye-catching’ statements came from how Bauman always remained outside the British Sociological ‘establishment’. This has allowed him methodological freedoms not available to more academically rigorous authors- *“Zygmunt Bauman is not concerned with methodological issues as such.”* (Jacobsen and Marshman 2008, p.3). Indeed Tester (2007) quoted Bauman as boasting of gathering evidence in ways which eschewed conventional Sociological analysis.

> *“Learning sociological methods may guarantee a job, but not wisdom and insight. Great writers can easily compete I (Bauman) personally learned more about the society we live in from Balzac, Zola, Kafka, Musil, Frisch, Perec, Kundera, Beckett. . . than, say, from Parsons and quite a few other in and out footnote stalwarts.” (p.4)*

Jacobsen and Marshman (2008) summarised this further,

> *“Bauman has no taste or appetite for so-called ‘academic sociology’, consisting of highly systematized and structured linear arguments, complex graphical figures, abstract reasoning, logical propositions, iron-clad terminology, coherent arguments and statistical correlations.” (*p.5)

However, this approach to philosophical certainty, subjective ‘data’ selection and undefined concepts risks stretching the concept of social science as an ordered, systematic discipline to breaking-point. As Jacobsen and Marshman (2008) stated *“if literature conventionally belongs to the scale of fiction, science, including social science belongs to the scale of fact.”* (p.4). It is unclear how interested Bauman was in facts which contradicted his narratives. For example, in 2004 he described how *“economic migrants have virtually vanished from public exposure”* (p.58) to support his macro analysis of neoliberalism and the victory of unregulated capitalism. However, one could argue that the evidence of the last 20 years suggests that this was a premature analysis. Bauman presumed the breakdown of structures such as national borders and tariffs on products. Yet the UK has moved away from open labour migration even though businesses require it. Supply-side ideologies favouring self-regulating, cross-border labour markets have been increasingly challenged by nationalism in later capitalist societies. Thes have been

fuelled by semi-mythical beliefs about that country's history. According to Kilminster and Varcoe (1998) Bauman has a potential blind-spot here; he has not appreciated the importance of, such historical, emotional, patriotic bonds.

Similarly, one can challenge, as oversimplistic, Bauman's broad narratives that the state has irreversibly withdrawn from its role as the provider of a collectivist welfare state. As Kilminster (2013) stated, there is a risk in Bauman's approach of *"cataloguing all that is wrong in society at the expense of a more balanced picture involving achievements and benign compulsions"* (p,7). Rattansi (2017) accused him of presuming that American models of poverty and state (non)-intervention applied elsewhere. Yet, the UK Labour Government of 1997-2010 oversaw some measures of redistributive taxation, reductions in poverty (and homelessness) and huge increases in public spending especially in health and education (Joyce & Sibieta, 2013). In terms of homelessness there were actions driven by government which led to reductions of people on the streets and in Temporary Accommodation. Bauman may not have valued figures and statistics as analytical tools, but some data more supports the Third Way' progressive social order described by Giddens, rather than rampant individualism of Bauman. As Kilminster (2013) stated "*Bauman's later writings constitute a passionate moral indictment of global capitalist society couched in the language of massive overstatement*" (p.8).

Some people have argue that Bauman exaggerated the nature of the social solidarity which existed in pre-neoliberal societies. Rattansi (2017) accused Bauman of seeing *"a totalising deterministic framework"* (p.91) similar to functionalism in these societies. Despite Bauman having expressed his concern about the stultifying and potentially totalitarian nature of elites, Rattansi accused him of drifting towards a belief that there was some form of quasi-organic structural social 'good' which superseded all individual needs and wants. Bauman (2000) lamented the decline of institutional 'harnesses' which tied collectives together. He seemed to suggest that the rejection of these binds was an economic one driven by the rich and adopted by the middle classes.

In his passion for collective economic structures, Bauman risked glossing-over the possibility that people actively rejected a personal identity based upon membership an externally-designated class. Especially if they found the culture and institutions associated with such membership as exclusionary and stifling (e.g.

racism and sexism within 'closed shop' trade unions in the 1960s and 1970s). This reflected Rattansi (2017) claim that Bauman did not understand the way that institutions treated women and ethnic minorities as if they were "*in need of supervision and government by (white) men*" (p.97). My experience of state-owned hostels for people experiencing homelessness was that they were run for the benefit of the staff rather than the residents.

Rattansi (ibid) also accused Bauman of being completely dismissive of the language of 'political correctness' and group identities based upon anything other than economic interest[40]. Despite writing about the poor, Rattansi (ibid) suggested there was a lack of real inquisitiveness to understand the complexity of their experiences in Bauman's work. This lack of understanding and empathy as to people's lived experiences is mirrored in Outhwaite (2010) suggestion that some of the words used by Bauman to define the excluded are unnecessarily demeaning (phrases such as "vagabonds", "human waste", "weeds", "the vicious."

These criticisms of Bauman are powerful but do not overwhelm the value of his work. They often seem like philosophical, methodological, and presentational critiques to be learnt from. For the purposes of this dissertation, they do negate the value of his focus on fluidity and mobility in neoliberal society. This is particularly because of his large focus on the plight of the poor and displaced within increasingly mobile societies. The dissertation offers opportunities to use his macro-level overview to relay the stories of the poorest.

5.6 Other Analytical Approaches Considered

Various other analytical frameworks were contemplated for this dissertation. Post-modernism with its emphasis upon mobility and freedom from arbitrary constrictions was seriously considered. It offered a potentially useful way of framing the experiences of people who have moved geographical location as a way of obtaining accommodation (e.g., Braidotti 1994). Another possibility was to adapt the thinking of traditional place phenomenologists such as Relph (1976,

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[40] How one can be dismissive of support groups for people who have suffered pain in their life is a loss to me.

2016) and Tuan (1975) with their emphasis on attachment. Both these approaches have added a great deal to the understanding of the relationship between people, location, and residential mobility.

Forms of structural macro analysis were considered (such as neo-Marxism). But these were rejected because the focus of this dissertation is *on description rather than explanation* of the stories of under-represented groups. The aim was to avoid the sort of determinism that Sartre (1965, 2013) attributed to Marxism.

> *"The effect of all materialism is to treat all men, including the one philosophizing, as objects, that is, as an ensemble of determined reactions in no way distinguished from the ensemble of qualities and phenomena which constitute a table, or a chair, or a stone" (p.149)*.

This desire to not 'second-guess,' or 'contextualise' peoples description of their experiences was part of the reason for also rejecting a critical realist approach. This is despite it representing the 'new consensus' which tends to dominate much sociological thought around homelessness. It is an approach which is particularly beneficial in terms of influencing the political debate but, for a dissertation as inductive as this one, it did not provide the analytical tools

5.7 Conclusion

In summary, Bauman (and his advocates) provided a framework in which the mental world has been reduced to a handful of phenomena which could be used to analyse peoples stories around home, location, mobility, displacement, and choice.

- A situation in which one covets objects (including locations) enough to pursue them, but treats them with ambivalence once obtaining them
- The objects of consumption promising, but never delivering, a potential answer to the economic existential dread which characterises liquid modernity.
- An increased existential dread due to the realisation of the powerlessness to control one's own economic fate and a realisation that nobody can provide real protection. Only the rich are exempt from this.

- Simultaneously the rejection of security which limits ‘freedom.’ This freedom usually being understood in terms of the ability to choose, consume, and discard objects - including locations, dwellings, and people.

- The extent of choice and control being limited by one’s social and economic resources. Mobility being about choosing for some people and displacement for others

- For the poor, the perennial risk of things getting worse. Hence choices more focused on survival (or at least things not deteriorating) rather than hopes of major improvement.

Chapter 6: Research Methods, Methodology and Ethics

6.1 Introduction

Chapter 6 is divided into three sections. The initial part covers the methodological and ontological foundations which underpin the research methods. This includes a substantial section on my own experiences and how these impacted upon the methodology chosen. This is followed by detailed descriptions of the methods practically used in the gathering of the research. Finally, there is a third section discussing the ethical issues which arose. This chapter is interlaced with discussions as to how Covid-19 hugely impacted on the development and delivery of the research.

This dissertation has a particular focus – relaying the lived experience stories of people experiencing homelessness. It set out from a particular research perspective. That is that the experiences of people as described and vocalised by them are a form of 'truth.' While these needs to be systemised and described to find themes, they do not need to be 'second-guessed' by others,

> *"Homelessness is a taboo. Most people only see what they want to see; unless you have experienced it you can't relate to it. At the age of 19 I was just left to live on the streets. It's frustrating because I've been to see lots of charities and people trying to help – but most people overall don't listen." (Anonymous, my underlining)*

6.2 Methodological Underpinnings

At the outset I wish to be clear that I do not envisage myself and the research as separate distinct entities. The nature of the research resulted from my life experiences; there is no 'me' conducting the research without pre-reflexive assumptions. Furthermore, each day that I undertook the research, it became part of my experiences and impacted upon those assumptions. It is true that at some

points it took more immediate prominence in my consciousness than at others, but there was never a time in which the research was not part of my life.

My Lived Experience

To explain this relationship further I need to describe some of my life experiences creating my epistemological stance. Some people may find the following levels of disclosure uncomfortable, which may be why people rarely disclose such stuff to researchers or anyone else. I grew-up in an incredibly violent 'home,' as a result of which I suffer from complex post-traumatic stress disorder, depression and crippling social anxiety. There were points in my childhood in which my parents came close to killing me (and each other) when inebriated. I was put into a remedial class at school and seen as a wilfully disobedient child. The only reason I was able to progress any sort of career was because my abusive 'mother' left when I was 16 (and for the last three decades we have hardly spoken). At 23, even though I had a degree from Oxford, I became homeless and lived in a bed & breakfast private hostel for people experiencing rough sleeping. If it had not been for the kindness of two people I would have been sleeping on the streets. As a result of these experiences, I became an addict, suffered eating disorders, and twice attempted suicide. I have been in therapy for the best part of 15 years, have had four spells in rehab and am probably on medication for the rest of my life. I have written a chapter in a book on the impact of childhood abuse on my later life. Despite numerous academic and professional qualifications, being an advisor to two mayors, having spoken in Parliament, drafted legislation, owned my own home and being happily married, the trauma of my past life and fear of destitution still haunts me in my dreams and subconscious.

The reason I describe these experiences so graphically. is because I believe nobody can begin to understand them unless they have been through something similar. Thus, I advocate a phenomenological approach to research into homelessness and its emphasis on peoples' lived experience. I believe one simply cannot understand the sense of 'lack' and existential terror experienced by people who have been without a safe home for the parts of their lives. Cox's (2016) quote about Sartre's phenomenology is illustrative,

> *"[he] is unwavering in his view that we interpret every situation according to our desires, hopes, expectations and intentions. In other*

words, every situation we encounter is understood presently lacking something needed, wanted, anticipated, or searched for." (Loc 855).

Charmaz (2014) stated *"If you ignore, gloss over or leap beyond participants' meanings and actions, your grounded theory will reflect an outsider's view rather than an insider's view."* (p.49). Hence with my own biography - followed by decades of working in homeless hostels, shelters, outreach teams, community projects, and a history of serving on lived experience panels - I am sceptical of sociological papers using impenetrable language, positing abstract theories, and written by individuals who I (perhaps unfairly) believe have never been close to homelessness. I am especially angered by people who have not worked trying to help people experiencing rough sleeping, but still feel able to dismiss the efforts of those who have.

This all partly explains the attractiveness of Bauman's thinking. Jacobsen and Marshman (2008) said his sociology is characterised by both logical and intuitive elements (thoughts and feelings). Perhaps channelling the spirit of Wright Mills (1970) they add *"to him (Bauman) the only prescription is that the sociologist should use his or her sociological imagination" (*p.800). Blackshaw (2016) argued that Bauman believed "*Sociology should reflect the world we wish to achieve…[specifically]…a plural world in which nobody is shut out or excluded"* (p.76). He implied that Bauman attempted to do this by writing books which are digestible to non-academics. Featherstone (2010) praised *"[the] approach which Bauman has taken to critically engage the neoliberalism cultural industry, [which] is truly utopian in its effort to speed up the critique [of society]"* (p.143).

My approach to this research was, indeed, based on a mixture of logic, intuition, and feelings reflecting my own values. I believe any model of sociology that claims to establish objective truth via the scientific method is a residue of nineteenth-century positivism. I am more attracted to Blackshaw's (2005) description of Bauman's sociology as *"characterised more by passion than exactitude"* (p.53).

However, this passion within me was pulled in differing directions by the experiences of academic life and my previous career. Prior to this dissertation I would have supported what Lancione (2023) labelled "*humanitarian pragmatism".* My unquestioning approach would have been of a critical realism with a focus on

evidenced-based actions. I would have presumed that finding somebody 'appropriate' accommodation was better than being on-the-streets or in dangerous accommodation. This was the case even when this was not the accommodation the person wanted. I would have presumed that such moves would mean they were 'less homelessness.' I have produced reports about how to practically do this, for example praising Housing First (an approach criticised by writers such as Lancione). I would have also argued that academic literature that focused on home making was pointless and self-indulgent. To quote JM Keynes "*In the long run we are all dead"* - so we need to focus on finding solutions now

Having read home making literature I am now less sure. I was moved by the struggles of those experiencing homelessness to make the best of their situations against the might of external forces. One benefit of the writings of authors such as Naiman (2022), Hoochalan (2022) and Lancione (2013, 2023) is that they challenge the conventional 'establishment' understanding of what home is. They show how the debate is framed by the limited provisions of neoliberalism rather than the needs of people. In doing so they open a space for peoples experiences and stories to be heard. My own story was of growing-up in a homeowning, conventional nuclear family. Yet it lacked safety, security, and love. The writings of home making authors left me pondering how authorities can attempt to end somebody's homelessness without trying to understand what home means to them.

Ontology

Because of the experiences described in the previous section, I have strong views of ontology. Whilst it is clear to me there are self-contained objects which exist external to the researcher and are not somehow hidden from view, I share Sartre's belief in that one can only ever experience them from a perspective (of which there are infinite possibilities). This perspective can only be reflective of one's life-world. Cox (2016) makes the point, "*He (Sartre) simply accepts the mind-independent reality of reality and gets on with the job of describing our relationship to it, not in terms of its being for us, but in terms of its significance to us"* (loc. 855). Whilst Aho (2020) quoted another key phenomenologist Heidegger as effectively altering Descartes's (1641) 'orthodoxy' *from "I think therefore I am" to "I care therefore I am"* (p.173) We can never see the world through an objective lens of

thoughts and feelings but rather have a continuous relationship with it. As neuroscientist Buzaski (2022) put-it *“Nothing is completely novel to the brain because it always relates the new to the old”*. Whilst physicist Roveili (2018) described a chair by saying

> *“The object (chair) is still here, within its obvious physical characteristics of colour, hardness and so on. But even these characteristics exist only in relation to us. Colour comes from the encounter between the frequencies of light…and the particular receptors in the human retinas. It is not about the chair; it is the story between light, [our] retina and reflection.” (p. 123)*.

The language to summarise my hermeneutical, phenomenological, philosophical belief system is not easy for me to find, but would be something like,

> *“Whilst external objects exist, we always have a perception-based relationship to what we believe we are observing. This relationship means we are subconsciously ‘creating’ the meaning of the phenomenon that we think of as the external object. We do this via assumptions based on previous experience in the world. This conflation means subject-object dualism is not possible in research. The phenomenon we think we sense (see, hear, touch etc) is a product of a ‘conflational’ relationship between subject and object. Therefore, what is being described in this dissertation is not the interviewee’s relationship to location but my relational perception of the interviewee’s relationship to location. This is based upon my own life-world which results from my being-in-the-world from birth. Another researcher would experience something different which reflected their life-world,” (Anderson, 2023)*

Whilst some people might criticise this as anti-scientific, I would argue that the active, relational intermingling of the (apparent) observer with the (apparent) observed is being increasingly given significance within theories of the natural sciences’ which have traditionally leant towards entirely materialistic explanations

of the world. Examples of this include Rovelli. 2016, 2021, Carlson 2020, Documentary Online, 2021.[41]

Therefore, I believe the researcher and the (ostensibly) external tangible or abstract ‘thing’ under research create a phenomenon which is relational. This phenomenon is uniquely individual because it is a combination of one’s life-world and perception of the (ostensibly) external object. In the case of the interviewees for this research, the world they describe to me is their world, and what I then report is a result of my interpretation of what they have told me, based upon my own assumptions. I cannot hold with a logico-positivist type *high altitude thinking”* (Merleau-Ponty 1968, 1945 p.20) which searches for some objective truth. I refuse to treat participants like water molecules without hopes, expectations, intentions, priorities, certainties, prejudices etc.

As mentioned in Chapter 3 prevalent thinking amongst academics studying homelessness is often based in ‘critical realism’ (Somerville, 2013). I take this as a presumption that situations have an empirical reality beyond the experience of the individual. One example is the debate whether homelessness is a subjective state of mind or an objective state of being? As a rejector of ‘dualism’ I believe that the feelings and experience of an object is actually the phenomenon to be investigated (despite what a third-party might believe). Having read the works of Home Making authors such as Lancione (2013) and Hoochalan (2022) I conclude that if one does not feel at home, then one is homeless[42] Indeed, the very concept of feeling at home is necessarily subjective and therefore reflective of one’s own experiences. These feelings need to be documented without searching for ‘causes’ or ‘explanation’ which somehow lie ‘beyond the understanding of the participant’.[43]..

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[41] A surprising by-product of this research is that I have become increasingly interested in the Philosophu of Quantum Mechanics and whether work around things like “superpositioning” and the “collapse of the wave function” present a challenge to naturalism from the classical sciences.

[42] Similarly if one feels that they enjoy their work and get meaning from it, then they do

[43] Prior to starting this PhD I had an overlying belief in crude causality of behaviour which came from me reading a chapter in E.H.Carr’s seminal work “What is History” when I was 20.

However, where I am less clear about "objectivity" is in whether one can assume metanarratives of progress or regress in both knowledge and societal development. If one reads the transcripts of the original Housing Act from Hansard (1977) one sees language which no MP would use now.

> *"It is plain that those who come off the beach because they are homeless, or those who try to leave their parents' home so that they may become homeless, and, indeed, a myriad of other cases, would all be accorded equal priority with those on proper housing lists at present. As the [Homelessness] Bill stands it is a charter for scroungers and scrimshankers."* (Line 898-901)

Instead of describing people as scroungers, successive Governments have set targets at reducing or ending rough sleeping. Does that mean that we have greater understanding now? Have we learnt from the past? Is this a sign of societal progress? During the period 2010-2015 I was involved in lots of meetings with civil servants who used slogans like 'social justice for both taxpayers and welfare recipients'. How does one square this gentler language with policies which cut benefits and stigmatise the poor?

My Diary Entries

I hope this section helps describe the struggles I faced throughout the research. If I expect others to be honest, I need to be so myself. Here are some quotes the diary I compiled throughout - some of this made difficult reading back but is relevant.

12th June 2020 – As I was trying to recruit participants.

> *"My questionnaire is just about to go out to ZZZZ this weekend. I still haven't heard anything from YYYY which is rubbish really. So far, I have written-up two transcripts and analysed the statistical data. I have no idea whether I am going to get loads of people, or no people from this latest flyer. I guess I'll know in a day or two. Or will I have to come back with a new strategy if I don't get anybody? I am, entirely, in the hands of whether people want to participate and whether their experiences are useful to the research. Time will tell."*

20th June – As I was trying to pin volunteers down to interviews

The quote below was part of a five-minute, 'train-of-thought' recording which was full of exasperated sighs and pauses. Following this point in the research I started adopting a more flexible approach to interviewing people. I grabbed opportunities with people when I could, as appointments arranged in advance were not working.

> *"This is proving extremely difficult & stressful because people are not being where they say they are going to be at certain times. Yet the expectations are that I deliver. This is proving very triggering for me as I don't know what else to do or what's expected of me. It's making me want to burst into tears and smash my flat up. Trying to do everything right and I feel like nobody is helping me. Feel very alone, nobody returns calls. Feel very rejected, like nobody understands how difficult this is. How difficult it is to do this by phone when people are not living their lives like that.*
>
> *I feel broken by the whole experience. This is so traumatising for me because I am expected to do research within a middle-class world with people who don't live like that. It's very, very hard work to try and get hold of these people. Extremely damaging to my nervous system. I feel on- edge, frustrated and not knowing whether to hope for the best or not. Of all the calls I have made, only on one occasion has somebody been there when they were supposed to have been.*
>
> *I guess it's indicative of the system of expecting people experiencing rough sleeping to be turning-up for appointments on time, of living life in that sort of structured way. They don't live life like that. I never know who is going to be there and who is going to let me down. I feel really let down by them. They are unreliable. I feel depressed by the whole experience.*
>
> *I don't know whether to hope that it's going to be okay. How on earth am I going to get twenty people to take part? Because I can't make people return the calls they don't want to return. I can't make them be reliable when they are not."*

July 2020 – Whilst undertaking the interviews

> *"The whole interview process is a deeply physical, emotional one of fear, dread, sadness, and gratitude. Would be easy and dishonest to underplay these. Peoples' description of wounds, of addiction, of hopelessness and fear felt like a reflection of my own life. To such an extent that I am aware that I am imposing my own lifeworld on the experiences. I can't separate my life from the research study. There isn't an 'I' or 'Me' which has never experienced homelessness."*

September 2020 – On transcribing some of the interviews

> *"I feel disgusted at myself, like I am treating peoples' despair and hopelessness like a microbe to be studied. I think what is at risk of not being understood in this is the sensitivity of what we are asking people. It's not about whether they prefer jam over marmalade, or even Sheffield over Rotherham. It's about their emotional relationship with an ideal of home, their experiences of homelessness, and their feelings about the place they are now based-in (which takes on more sensitivity than ever). And real existential, emotional stuff about how much their life is not what they want it to be. I think this can only be properly explored via relationships, and I am not offering them one*."

January 2021 – As the Analytical Framework was being further applied.

> *"I am not interested in a sociology which says people think something because they are experiencing 'false consciousness' or are products of 'the limitations of their horizons.' All of which dare to suggest that, somehow, the author has a greater appreciation of the person's experience than they do. Somehow formal education means they are aware of structural factors that people experiencing rough sleeping cannot see. That sociologists are somehow able to see 'beyond' the falsehoods, prejudices and presumptions that constitute a lifeworld, without their own one being just as full of these characteristics. As somebody who grew-up in a home which was not safe and has been impacted by it every day in life, I find the suggestion laughable and*

comparable to the idea that a white person can know what it feels to be black."

June 2021 – On my need to not feel hypocritical as I was drafting findings.

> *"I am not going to criticize anybody involved in the business of working with people experiencing rough sleeping. It would be incredibly hypocritical of me to do so. I am simply trying to give a voice to people who have been homeless, and their experiences as best I can. When they say that local authorities or homelessness agencies 'choose not to help me' I am describing what they are telling me, not commenting on whether they are somehow ontologically right."*

This last entry gets to some of the issues around ontological truth which were alluded to earlier. In the chapters covering data findings I describe how several interviewees believed people working in homelessness did not care about them. However, I will always struggle to believe, whatever the evidence, that this is the case for most employees in hostels etc[44]. Indeed, I now look back upon some of the hostel work I did in the 1990s with a great deal of shame. My naivety feels astounding, yet I was doing my best with the life-skills I had. This illustrates how research can only ever be a relational perspective. If one starts from a position of an underpaid, charitable workforce doing their best in difficult circumstances, then one reaches a certain conclusion. However, if one views them as people who make decisions about the lives of others without considering the impact, one reaches a different one.

Other Events Impacting My Relationship to the Research

Two external events happened towards the end of writing this chapter which I feel have changed to some degree the way that I view this research project. The first is that I obtained a job in the homelessness section one of the largest local authorities. I only stayed for one month before resigning, but during that time I did see first-hand the huge resource problems that councils were facing and the

impact of national policy on their ability to stay within the law and help vulnerable people. The second event was that my uncle who had a stroke last year was served an eviction notice by his private landlord. He found himself in a similar position to some of the people I interviewed. The fundamental difference was that he had me to advocate on his behalf. I knew the law and how to influence decision-makers, Following a few targeted emails by myself he was offered a flat for life of decent quality near to family members

6.3 Research Methods: Background

In this next section, I detail the mechanisms which were used to collect and analyse data before turning to the ethics of the research. The data gathering methods were primarily qualitative interviews with people who had experienced homelessness plus interviews with other stakeholders. These were supplemented with other data sources such participant and researcher diaries, and a short questionnaire. I also gathered photographs which were more about providing background and context.

The rationale for this qualitative approach was based upon several years of undertaking research with excluded groups. I was looking for the most effective way of trying to document the complexities of peoples' stories. A more quantitative approach would not have been able to encapsulate these adequately. I also was sure that written mechanisms of engagement such as surveys would not be something that people who had experienced homelessness would extensively engage with. I also wanted to flexibility to investigate how stories and views around geographical location fitted within wider worldviews. Examples included how much autonomy people did feel they have over their lives? What had been their experiences of gatekeepers and decision-makers?

The Impact of Covid-19 and Changes to the Research

Discussion of the methodological approach of this research needs to be set against the background of my original planned research project and how this was impacted by Covid-19. I was planning to use a case study approach based mainly on the approach of Yin (2003, 2009) complemented by the pedagogical lived

experience thinking of Van Manen (1990). I described this project as "*A case study into a group of people experiencing homelessness who have been relocated and therefore affected by a policy response (i.e., relocation). With the aim pf trying to understand their experience of it."* There were several Methodological assumptions which were underpinning this approach.

The first was that thick data would be obtained from around half-a-dozen households. This would have preferably been a mixture of single people and families. The second was that the research would have some longitudinal data within it, monitoring how peoples' situations developed over-time. The third assumption was that there would be some element of ethnography. Prior to Covid-19 I had wanted to visit peoples' accommodation and spend some time in the surrounding location to better understand their day-to-day lives. A fourth assumption was that that people who had been relocated to address their homelessness would consider this relocation as a significant event in their life. Fifthly, I assumed that that there would be participants keen to relay their stories via several data sources including interviews, diaries, photographs and showing me around their homes. Finally, I assumed I would be able to utilize a former employer's mailout list to recruit people.

The Uniqueness of this Research

Once Covid-19 began these plans had to change. For example, face-to-face contact, travel and putting 'extra burdens' upon homeless agencies were specifically prohibited by the university. The research approach which was, subsequently, followed was adaptive to these unique circumstances. Unlike the original research plan, it did not fit into an easy definition of research methodology. Also, changes had to be made to the ethical framework, which meant I needed to get ethical approval twice.

In summary, resulting from Covid-19 I had to modify my planned research in all the following areas:

- Recruitment methods
- Participant group

- Types of interviews (from semi-structured, face-to-face questions, to phone calls covering very loosely structured narratives)
- Other data collection methods
- Data analysis techniques (and volume of data collected)
- Time ‘windows’ for undertaking data collection (I needed to speak to interviewees before the hotels closed)
- Ethical framework

This meant that the revised research methods had the follow characteristics:

- Pragmatic
- Opportunistic
- Responsive
- Flexible
- Largely inductive
- Qualitative

However out of adversity came a unique research opportunity. People who have recently experiencing rough sleeping have been particularly difficult for sociologists to reach. The question of how one safely and respectfully undertakes research with people on the streets has always been a difficult one. This meant there were large gaps in knowledge and literature which needed addressing.

For all the havoc it wreaked elsewhere, Covid-19 created a single unified approach to rough sleeping by decision-makers in an unprecedented way. It brought people in off the streets who would otherwise still have been sleeping rough. The opportunity to have such a large group of such people in a small number of places meant unique levels of ‘reach’ were possible Thus the research was one of the largest in terms of interviewing people with recent experience of rough sleeping. Furthermore, via the short questionnaire its reach was lengthened even further. Furthermore, the fact that people had been moved into hotels from

various locations meant participants also had recent, first-hand experience of relocating to secure accommodation. The research was also enhanced by having a mixture of people with long-term histories of being on the streets alongside those who were new to rough sleeping.[45]. Finally, data was also obtained from people who had previously been homeless and other stakeholders in the homelessness sector.

6.4 Methods And Delivery

The Sample

The original research proposal was to target half-a-dozen households who had been relocated from London and work with them over a period of several months. Instead, I ended-up primarily interviewing people experiencing homelessness in the Covid-19 hotels in London (specifically Croydon and Waterloo). I also interviewed other people in South-East London living in their own flats after having previously experienced homelessness. Two interviewees from areas in the London 'commuter belt' (Kent and Bedfordshire) also took part. A number of other key stakeholders were interviewed. Most worked in London with a couple of exceptions. Obviously, this created a 'London-centric' sample which was reflective of the limitations imposed by Covid. Sampling was a pragmatic process based on finding organisations willing to take part. I interviewed as many people in these organisations' hotels as I could before they closed. I also spoke to a number of people who responded to a request for participants from another organisation. These people had previously experienced homelessness but now had their own flats. Overall, the approach was one of convenience sampling responding to the circumstances. However, the lack of a sampling frame for the population staying in the hotels, or in the own flats, would have made anything more 'scientific' difficulty. To off-set the London-centric nature of the research a short questionnaire was also completed by a number of people who were staying Covid-19 hotels outside

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[45] Historically they have been traditionally worked with by different services within the 'homelessness system' so not been in the same services As mentioned in the Background chapter No Second Night Out is focused on new people experiencing rough sleeping, whilst other services target people with longer-term experiences of being on the streets.

of London. Again, this sample was reflective of who I could access rather than something more systematic.

The sub-groups within the samples can be divided into four groups (anonymised)

. 1) *Hotel dwellers* (n=22)– These interviewees were recruited using contacts I had in the homelessness sector. Three of the biggest providers of hotel accommodation were approached about taking part. One refused due to lack of resources. A second one agreed at a senior management level but seemed to 'resist' at an operational level. Fortunately, the third organisation agreed to allow me to interview people in two of its hotels – one in Croydon, South London and the other in Waterloo, Central London. In these locations, I interviewed whoever was willing to take part**,**

Table 1: Participants Staying In Covid-19 Hotels. All Of Whom Had Been Rough Sleeping Earlier In The Year (n=22)

No.	Name	Current Hotel	Gen-der	Migrant to the UK?	New to Rough Sleeping	Number of I/Vs	Any other Data sources	Currently Working o Volunteer
1	Ranter	Croydon	M	No	No	1	No	No
2	Kate	Croydon	F	No	No	2	Photos Diaries	No
3	Kaloo	Croydon	M	No	Yes	1	No	No
4	Mo	Croydon	F	Yes	No	1	No	No
5	Harry	Croydon	M	No	Yes	3	Texts	No
6	Darren	Croydon	M	No	No	2	No	No
7	Cody	Croydon	M	Yes	Yes	1	No	
8	Storey	Croydon	M	No	Yes	1	No	No
9	Claire	Croydon	F	No	No	1	No	No

10	Simon	Croydon	M	No	No	1	No	No
11	Saul	Croydon	M	No	Yes	1	No	Working
12	Lucas	Croydon	M	Yes	Yes	1	No	Working
13	Silver	Waterloo	F	No	Yes	2	E Mails	Working
14	Alano	Waterloo	M	No	Yes	1	No	No
15	Sheila	Waterloo	F	No	No	2	Texts	No
16	Kodil	Waterloo	M	Yes	No	2	Texts Photos	No
17	Ranjit	Waterloo	M	Yes	No	1	No	No
18	James	Croydon	M	Yes	No	1	Photos	No
19	Leonal	Waterloo	M	Yes	Yes	2	Email	Working
20	Dean	Waterloo	M	Yes	No	1	No	No
21	Josef	Waterloo	M	Yes	No	1	No	Volunteeri
22	Craig	Waterloo	M	No	No	1	No	No

2) *People who have previously experienced homelessness* (n=8) - The second largest group interviewed were people who had previously experienced homelessness. Almost all of them had experienced rough sleeping. Five of them were living in their own social housing flats. One was in a PRS flat, one in a Temporary Accommodation flat and one in a hostel. These individuals were spoken to after most of the hotel interviews had been completed. This group can be defined as a mixture of theoretical and convenience sampling.

Table 2. Participants With Experience Of Being Homeless Who Have Now Their Own Accommodation (n=8)

No	Name	Current Type of Accommodation	Gender	Migrant	How Long in Current Place	No. of I/Vs	Any Other Data Sources
1	Mick	PRS Flat	M	No	6 years	3	No

2	Prichard	Stat T/A Flat	M	No	5 weeks	2	Diaries
3	Barbara	RP Flat	F	No	5 years	1	No
4	Mark	RP Flat	M	No	10 years	1	No
5	Stan	RP Flat	M	No	5 years	1	No
6	Alison	RP Flat	F	No	20 years	1	No
7	Khan	Hostel	M	No	6 months	1	No
8	Kristine	RP Flat	F	No	5 years	1	No

3) *Other stakeholders* (n=10) - The third group interviewed fell under a generic category of 'other stakeholders'. These included civil servants, politicians, housing advisors, and people working for homelessness services (including some working in the hotels). They provided background information and other perspectives on homelessness.

Table 3: Other Stakeholders Who Participated In The Research (n=10)

No	Name	Job Title	Relationship to the Subject Being Researched
1	Spike	Housing Advisor	Advised people who were relocated to and from the local authority in which he works.
2	Imelda	Director	Senior Manager at a charity running some of the Everyone-In hotels
3	Jenny	Hotel Manager	Ran one of the hotels accommodating people under Everyone-In
4	Bryan	Hotel Manager	Ran one of the hotels accommodating people under Everyone-In
5	Lonnie	Regional Government Rough Sleeping Manager	Commissioned some of the hotels which accommodated under Everybody In
6	Jackie	Housing Advisor	Advised families who were relocated to and from the local authority in which she works.

7	Pat	Central Government Special Advisor	Advised Ministers on the operation of Everyone-In. Also worked with local authorities and hotel providers in terms supporting those staying in them
8	Siobhain McDonagh	MP for Mitcham and Morden	MP who spoke out about homeless families being moved to and from her constituency
9	Ben	CEO	Head of a charity running some of the Everybody In hotels
10	Councillor Gavin Callaghan	Leader of Basildon Council	Leader of a local authority which 'imports' a substantial number of homeless families from London, and 'exports' others to places outside of Basildon

4) *Participants living in hotels who completed the short questionnaire (n=104)* – Finally people from 12 parts of the country, took part in a 'short questionnaire'. These were also people living in hotels as part of Everyone-in. At the start of pandemic, most of them had been sleeping rough, with others in very unstable types of accommodation such as squats or friends' flats. Data was obtained from anyone willing to take part. The appendixes contain the multiple-choice questions. All were asked at the bottom of the questionnaire, if they were willing to be contacted to answer follow-up questions pertaining to this research. About 20 people ticked this box, but many did not leave any contact details. Attempts were made to contact some of the remaining ones but none of these replied to voice messages or e-mails which were sent.

Table 4: Location Of Participants Who Completed The Short Questionnaire (n=104)

Area	**Number completed (n=104)**
Leeds	41
Luton	21
London (Westminster)	14
Gosport	11
Bedford	5

Durham	3
Hastings	3
Stoke	2
Bexhill	1
Birmingham	1
Blackpool	1
York	1

Recruitment

1) *Hotel Dwellers* – The recruitment of participants in the hotels began with talking to one Chief Executive and two Directors of large homeless charities managing several hotels in London. One agency ended-up taking part and offered access to hotels in Croydon and Waterloo. The process of recruiting interviewees was then via a flyer (see appendixes for a copy) which gave people a mobile number to text t if they were interested in taking part. These flyers were distributed under room doors in the Croydon hotel and left at the reception desk in Waterloo. My initial approach was to phone 'texters' back, explain the research to them and then make an appointment for an interview if they wanted to participate. After several failures, where people did not pick-up their phones for these 'scheduled appointments' or had forgotten about them this approach was abandoned..

   In the circumstances, I decided to try and narrow the time-window in which the initial contact to undertaking interviews took place. Hence, I started to offer to email, text or 'WhatsApp' people details of the research and call them back in an hour. Or, if they preferred, verbally read them the research paperwork over the phone, answer their questions and conduct the interview immediately after. This all meant that we had to move to a system of primarily verbal consent, the ethics of which are address later in this chapter. Without this flexibility the research would have failed to get the interviews from the hotels.

2) *People who Have Previously Experienced Homelessness* – All but two of this group were recruited via the homelessness charity Groundswell following contact between them and my research supervisor. These were individuals who themselves had undertaken peer research and had a good understanding of the processes. Compared to the hotel dwellers, they were much easier to correspond with via email and stuck to pre-arranged appointment times for interviews. The other two people in this group were recruited via personal contacts (one was an ex-colleague of mine) and the second one was via a contact on lived experience group I was involved with.

3) *Other Stakeholders* – This group was recruited via a collection of existing networks and speculative contacts on my part. All but three people were already known to me from previous work roles. Two of these were a parliamentarian and the leader of a local authority both of whom had appeared on television discussing homelessness and relocation. The third person was a charity worker who had been very vocal on social media about the displacement of families experiencing homelessness by local authorities.

4) *Snapshot Participants Currently Experiencing Homelessness* – These were recruited via a lived experience group I was a member of. As part of my role for that group I devised a brief questionnaire to be completed by people living in the Covid-19 hotels in various parts of the country (see appendixes). As part of this questionnaire, participants were asked if they agreed to some of their answers being used as part of this dissertation. Consent was not presumed, and participants had to opt-in to take part. 104 of them did so - the data was not used of those who did not.

Other methods of recruitment were attempted but with no success. I attempted a social media 'blitz' asking for participants but got only one response (which was an ex-colleague who became part of the study). I also contacted the producers of a television programme mentioned in Chapter 3, but they were unable to help. I attempted to talk to a person who claimed she was forming a charity which was supporting people relocated by local authorities, but I struggled to find anything about the charity's subsequent development.

There were some groups who it was not possible to recruit from. There were no perspectives from those currently on the street. It was not possible to interview people who had been resettled from the hotels. initial recruitment in the hotels was via written form, which may also have excluded those who were unable to read English. There is also no way of knowing how representative views of those who took part were compared to those who were not interviewed.

The Development of the Questions

The questions that the research was trying to answer went through three broad iterations. In the initial research plan the aim was to answer overriding questions around

- *What constitutes 'home'?*
- *How Important is 'location' to this?*
- *How have people experienced relocation?*
- *Do they feel at home in a new location?*
- *What are their future hopes and plans around home and location?*

I was particularly interested if there were identifiable 'variables' such as type of household, distance moved and knowledge of the new areas relocated to,

These questions needed to be altered once it was clear that the respondent group was going to have to change because of Covid-19. It was necessary to find ways of obtaining data which had sufficient coherency to the original research plan but could also be agreed with the agency providing me with participants. Hence, the research was adapted to answer these broad questions

- *What does home mean to people?*
- *What are the key aspects of any future home?*
- *How significant is location in all this?*

These questions provided the broad structure for the first three interviews, but several problems emerged. It became clear that these questions were too abstract. Thus, the interviews were adapted to become much less structured and more biographical. They focused on,

- *Peoples past experiences*
- *Their current situation*
- *Their hopes and expectations for the future*.

Prompts and follow-ups were used to explore relevant areas. These questions were better understood by people and were more successful at eliciting information. At an ethical level it felt more respectful to allow greater freedom to allow people to discuss and disclose whatever they wanted under these headings. It was also more likely to reflect their life-world because they had greater control of the direction the interview. This meant interviews would be more reflective of their thought processes.

It is worth mentioning that initially the plan had been to use a focus group of people with lived experience to test potential questions, but Covid-19 made this impossible. This lack of a 'pilot' was partly why the interview process evolved throughout the data gathering.

The Interviews

Due to Covid-19 all the interviews took place over the phone. For the hotel dwellers this usually necessitated verbal, rather than written, consent as virtually none of them had access to regular emails. The appropriate documents were read out describing the purpose of the research, the security issues etc. (see appendixes). For some of the other people interviewed I was able to email the paperwork through in advance

The ethical issues which arose from undertaking interviews over the phone are discussed later in this chapter, but there were also potential impacts on the quality of the data. The need to fit into available time-windows meant the process was often rushed. There was a great deal of variety in terms of how long the interviews lasted (between 15 and 90 minutes). This meant participants were able to express

as much or as little as they wished. The way the questions were phrased also gave people a lot of control over the process. For example, when it came to *'past experiences,'* some people described aspects of their lives from childhood. They talked extensively about their locational journey across their whole life. However, others focused upon the events immediately preceding them becoming homeless. In terms of 'current situation' answers tended to have a similar focus. Most talked initially about the building they were residing in and the surrounding location. There were often prompts within this question including using some of the main aspects of location which had come up in other interviews. Finally, 'hopes and expectations' was something all interviewees expressed views on. People in stable housing tended to focus more on the past and present whereas hotel dwellers concentrated more on the future.

The nature of these open-ended interviews required a great deal of listening and responding. I was mindful of being respectful of what people were telling me, as it was significant to them. It was hard knowing when to interrupt if people were moving a long way from the ostensive subject-matter. There were questions of whether to challenge things which made me feel uncomfortable such as discriminatory language. Overall, interviewing by phone felt time-consuming and intense in ways which were different from my experiences of face-to-face research.

The interviews were all recorded anonymously on an audio-recorder and transferred onto a password protected, securely stored computer. They were then transcribed into individual 'Word' documents. The sheer volume of data meant some of the less sensitive interviews were transcribed by an external agency. Sometimes the process of transcribing phone recordings was difficult due to a lot of background noise. This was even more difficult on occasions when people had English as a second language. These factors, plus the use of jargon in the interviews, led some parts of the interviews to be branded 'unintelligible' by external transcribers. On most occasions I was able to decipher these unintelligible sections by listening to them in the context of the 'flow' of the interview.

As the number of interviews increased, I was unsure exactly how much the open-ended nature of their structure would provide coherent, thematic, relevant data. It

was not until I started formal analysis that I could tell how much it could be ‘threaded together’ to address the gaps in academic knowledge identified,

Diaries and Text Messages

Some interviewees who seemed enthusiastic about the research were asked if they wished to participate further. The definition of who was ‘enthusiastic’ was inevitably subjective, but efforts were made to not ask people who might feel pressured to agree. Some individuals agreed to provide other data but then did not, which reassured me that people were able to decide for themselves whether to take part.

In terms of those who did participate, two individuals currently experiencing homelessness completed diaries. They wrote about their thoughts and experiences without any external direction. They were not questioned about the information in the diaries. Over a period of about two months, one person sent three completed sets of pages and the other sent two. Three individuals also sent regular text messages with updates on their situation. Whilst obviously not as comprehensive as diaries, texts served a similar purpose in providing information on their experiences. The text messages felt more like a ‘two-way conversation than the diaries.

Two individuals, one of them also a person who completed diary pages, also provided photographs. One set of photos showed a room in the hotel, a bag of medication and an eviction notice. The second set was of the flat that two of the interviewees were moving into. These photographs allowed people to visually represent what was important to them. They also offered an opportunity for me to better visualise the accommodation and environments under discussion.

Overall, the data provided by the diaries and text messages complement the interviews and so are more valuable than the photographs. There was value in giving participants ‘the space’ to describe aspects of their day-to-day experiences which were important without being prompted by research questions. It gave them the chance to raise relevant aspects of their life which they may not have been asked about. These approaches also gave people greater control because they could ‘self-edit’ the data.

Data Analysis

The approach to analysis was to be led by the data as much as possible, trying to capture the essence of what people had said rather than presuming to know in advance. An approach was followed of recording entire interviews, transcribing them, undertaking line-by-line analysis, seeing which themes and categories emerged. The data then needed a second layer of analysis using these themes/categories to discover aspects which had been overlooked, underplayed or over-emphasised during earlier analysis. Despite my concerns whilst undertaking the interviews, this process was successful in creating initial categories which then evolved into new categories and sub-categories each time a new level of analysis took place.

The initial process was a line-by-line open coding data analysis completed by NVivo following the transcribing. I had never used NVivo before and I tried to use the advice of Charmaz (2006 p) in terms of practical actions,

> *"Coding means naming segments of data with labels which simultaneously categorises, summarises, and accounts for each piece of data. Coding is the first step to moving beyond concrete statements in the data to making analytical interpretations" (p.43)*

From this, the following categories emerged. They list below does not reflect the relative frequency or importance of the categories but rather the chronology in which they emerged. Data which did not fit into any of these categories was discarded.

Categories Level 1

- *Avoiding Places*
- *Decision-Makers*
- *Decisions*
- *Employment*
- *Gratitude*
- *History*
- *Home Now*
- *Hopes and Wants*

- *Hotel*
- *Positive Action*
- *Rejecting Things*
- *Short-Termism*
- *Support Needs*
- *Unfairness*

There were also several 'memos' I wrote of at this stage which outlined emerging themes which 'cut-across' the categories.

Memos Level 1

- *Importance of Location*
- *Relationship to Authority Figures*
- *Rejection of Things*
- *History of Home*
- *Methodological Thoughts*
- *Other Stakeholder Perceptions*
- *Making Change Happen*
- *London Conceptualisation*
- *Examples of Chaos*

Interestingly I wrote this after I completed this Level of analysis

> *"Prior to this Coding, my impression during this stage was that people did not talk about the importance of Location very much. However, I then undertook line-by-line analysis (using NVivo) and found that this was not true, and some interesting data emerged on this subject. My next stage will be to interrogate the data within these Categories to refine it further. I envisage some of these categories merging with others, whilst others will see sub-categories develop. For example, the category on "People" will probably be divided into sub-categories including: "Children," "Partners", "Parents", "Wider Family", "Friends", "People to Avoid". And then these may have sub-categories within them. The Children one may have things like "concrete plans v vague ideas," "want to be near children v want children to live with them."*

The Level 1 categories were then examined manually using some of these thoughts and the memos. This was largely because I was not finding NVivo a useful tool to use and felt more comfortable using little strips of papers grouped together in categories. Second and third level of categories were developed with sub-categories and sub-sub-categories (these can be found in the appendixes). Data, from Level 1 which did not fit into any of these categories was discarded.

Categories for Level 2

- *People*
- *Actions*
- *Views of the World*
- *Living in the hotels*
- *Living in other places*
- *Other key events in life not directly related to accommodation.*

The third level of analysis led to the following final categories emerging.

Categories Level 3 (final categories)

- *Past Experiences*
- *Present accommodation*
- *Future hopes and wants.*

After the third level there were another two levels of sub-Categories and sub-sub-categories (see appendixes).

Significantly, Level 3 categories closely resembled the structure of the interviews (focused upon past, present and future). It is impossible to tell how much this is because the interviews were particularly adroit in drawing-out data, and how much because of the way the interviews were structured.

In several ways, the interviews with other stakeholders were heavily informed by these Level 3 categories and sub-categories. Firstly, other stakeholder interviews did not take place until those with people who had experienced homelessness were concluded. Secondly the topic guide, used to structure other stakeholder interviews reflected themes which had emerged from earlier interviews. Finally, the data analysis other stakeholder interviews was focussed upon similarities and

differences between their views/experiences and the data which had already emerged from talking to people who had experienced homelessness.

My Personal Data

During the progress of the research, audio and written diaries were kept to document theories, findings, and challenges These were usually completed after a particularly impactful interview, or when something significant had happened (such as the emergence of a developing theory or a new way of questioning). After the interviews were completed, these notes were pulled into a single document with the following headings

- *Personal Feelings Throughout the Research*
- *Thoughts About the Conduct of the Research and Ethical Concerns*
- *Thoughts About Emerging Theory*

I also gathered personal data by visiting the hotels and the surrounding location on three occasions and taking non-intrusive photographs. The reason for this was twofold. Firstly, I wished to try and have an ethnographic immersive experience as to the environment in which people were living-in. This was a process somewhat like what Wacquant labelled *"enactive ethnography"* and *"immersive fieldwork"* (see Herring, 2019). For example, if interviewees talked of the neighbourhood being 'noisy' or shops being 'nearby' I had an idea of what those terms were being used to describe rather than imposing my own meanings on to them. I did ask to stay in the hotel for a few nights to enhance understanding of what it was like to stay there but this was refused. In retrospect I feel glad I was not able to stay there because I risked falling into the trap of diminishing the experiences of others who could not leave after two nights. In this sense it would not have been immersive or an authentic recreation of their situation. It also feels like non-consensual, covert, participant observation, something I am ethically opposed to.

The second aim of the photographs was to allow the reader of the dissertation to be able to better visualise the type of area that the hotels were in. "Hotel" is a term which is used to describe everything from lavish accommodation on country estates, to decrepit inner-city buildings, I hoped the photographs would help to

better understand the building and location interviewees were living in (especially when combined with the photographs in the Chapter 9).

Photos 1-6 Exterior Of The Croydon Hotel

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Conclusion on Methods

As stated at the introduction to this chapter, the aim of the research was, as far as possible, to specifically to relay the stories of people experiencing homelessness as told to me. The underlying ontological positions was that nobody understands the journey somebody else has been on. In a sense this was recognition of the quote at the start of this chapter that *"most people, overall, I don't listen"*

Notwithstanding, the challenges of Covid-19, the research highlighted the value of interviews as a way of gaining knowledge from into excluded groups with complex stories who *"most people…don't listen"* to. Crucially it showed the importance of co-production in research in the sense that the questions needed to be broad enough to give people space to tell their own stories, in their own way. it showed the importance of flexible, responsive follow-up questions and clarifications rather than uniform and formulaic prompts. The research showed the importance of inclusive language bereft of esoteric jargon which people do not understand. I would argue the best quality data emerged when the tone was informal and conversational.

The diaries, texts and photographs were also part of giving people space to tell their stories in their own way. They described their priorities, feelings, and day-to-day reality with less direction from me as to what they 'should' focus on. In retrospective, my personal diary served a similar personal role in allowing me to document my thoughts and feelings. This would have been much harder to in an interview with a third-party whom I had never met.

Overall, I have no doubt that, in the circumstances of Covid-19, the approach adopted. However, the virus that meant people could be reached also meant they could not be seen face-to-face. This kind of interaction would have enhanced the research even further

A Note on the Relationship to Grounded Theory

The following are components of Grounded Theory according to Hallberg (2006) and/or Glaser and Strauss (2003)

- Simultaneous data collection and analysis until saturation is achieved
- Intensive interviewing
- Theoretical sampling
- Memos
- Categories/Concepts as the foundation for theory to emerge
- All is Data. Not just the words on paper, but the context, environment, role of the researcher etc.
- Theory emerges from the data, does not test a macro-theory
- The researcher tries to minimise preconceptions

This research adopted the following aspects of these methodological techniques from Grounded Theory. However, these were pragmatic, rather than indicative of research design.

- A degree of memo compiling, via a researcher's diary, throughout the project
- These memos being part of a process of reflexivity informing the direction of the research.
- The evidence from early interviews influenced the subsequent nature of future interviews and hence the data collected
- Large numbers of interviews being undertaken, supported by other data such as diaries, texts, and visits to the surrounding area.
- Saturation in the sense that everybody, in the hotels and the other groups, who volunteered to be interviewed was spoken to.
- Notwithstanding statements about ontology earlier in the chapter, a general philosophical attempt to follow this statement by Strauss and Corbin (1996) "*it is not the researcher's perception or perspective that matters, but rather how research participants see events or happenings".* (p.47)

However, there were aspects which deviated from a Grounded Theory approach,

- The sampling was mainly ‘convenience’ rather than ‘theoretical’
- Whilst the progress of the research was informed by data already collected, the formal analysis of data took place after tranches of interviews were completed.
- Grounded theory research has tended to not be undertaken over the phone, *“whilst Charmaz and Corbin and Strauss make no comment on using the telephone to conduct a grounded theory interview, they implicitly assume that an interview is conducted face-to-face”* (Ward et al, 2015 p.2776). The devisers of Grounded Theory were not writing at a time when a mobile phone is an essential part of the ‘survival kit’ for living on the streets.
- Saturation was not achieved in the sense that it was unknown whether further interviews would have led to different categories..

6.5 Ethics

The original proposal was one of interviewing people who had experienced homelessness and had been relocated to obtain a home. The nature of Covid-19 meant the interviewee group changed significantly. Whilst some of the interviewees in their own accommodation did meet similar criteria, the people in the hotels were a more vulnerable, group. Hence changes to the ethical framework before undertaking fieldwork were needed. In this section I wish to show how such ethical issues were addressed to avoid maleficence and act with professional integrity. These are discussed with reference to the British Sociological Association (BSA) Statement of Ethical Practice (2017).

Storage

The BSA (2017) states that *“Appropriate measures should be taken to store research in a secure manner”* (p.7). In this case data was conducted in compliance with GDPR regulations and data security, and management procedures were consistent with the law and best practise. The data was secured safely within the University system (Q Drive) and was only accessible outside the

university by connecting to the secure server. Encrypted equipment was used- including Dictaphones, laptops, smartphones, USB keys - to ensure that data collected in the field was held in the most secure way possible. All data hardware and paper-based documents was stored in the locked private environments of my home. Any personal and university computers were all password protected. Originally, the plan was to use the CRESR office more during the research, but this became impossible due to Covid-19 and then the office being demolished.

Recruitment Methods

Initially the research was planning to recruit 6-8 case study participants from a variety of homelessness organisations. Covid-19 led to extra stresses upon such agencies and instead the focus was changed to three organisations who were keen to participate. They did not think their involvement would impact significantly on their capacity. It also meant more of the people interviewed were currently experiencing homelessness in London. The changed nature of the research also meant a greater role for other stakeholders such as politicians and officials recruited via existing networks.

One ethical decision that I strongly regret making, was around my flyer for the research, I consciously emphasised my own experience of homelessness as I felt this might make people feel more comfortable talking to me. Despite this receiving sign-off from the University authorities, I do not in retrospect feel this was an ethical decision. I felt that it implied that I was sharing similar conditions to potential participants at the time creating an impression of shared identity (Parr, 2022). As I sat in my privately-owned flat, talking on my expensive phone, I feared I may have misled them into taking part. Whilst on occasions people expressed how nice it was to be heard by somebody this does not assuage the feelings of unease on my part. I fear the flyer served to blur my role between researcher and peer, which created some of the problems described in the section on *“Potential benefits to participants.”* Whilst I am certain that the flyer has bothered me more than participants, I am still conflicted as to how much my approach conformed to the BSA (2017) statements around the importance of *“personal and moral relationships with those they study”* (p.4).

Potential benefits to participants

Whilst there was no immediate, direct, material benefit, (other than supermarket vouchers compensation for time), the hope remains that this research will help articulate the stories of this group into the public domain. It gave people space to describe their stories in their own words and images. In practise there was confusion amongst some participants as to my role and whether I could help them. This confusion was increased by my own 'insider' status, which meant they trusted me more than other people. This situation was probably exacerbated by the flyer issue described in the previous paragraph.

This confusion led to lots of requests for advice and information. On one occasion somebody phoned me late in the evening because he was having a crisis in the hotel and planned to walk-out. On another occasion he asked me if he should *"take a punt on heading up North."* Somebody else messaged me to ask if I could help get her work and sent me a message in which she described me as *"a mate."* Several people questioned me as to what they should say to the hotel staff. I also had one person asking me to intervene on his behalf by sending him additional supermarket vouchers to pay for medication. In all these circumstances I made the decision to help, if I could, because I am a human first and a researcher second.

Another major ethical dilemma was the likelihood that some interviewees took part primarily because of the £10 voucher available to them rather than a desire to have the story documented in a dissertation. Whilst people should be paid for their time there is a risk that I was reinforcing power-dynamics. For example, the payment was only offered as a voucher for a particular supermarket. In doing so it reflected Lanicone's (2022) and Dean's, (2020) description of how 'help' given is reflective of what the provider wants to give, rather than what people might want, or need. A second issue is that I was offering £10 voucher to people, who had no other money, as a condition of them doing what I wanted. Naiman's (2022) description of "constrained choices" is useful here. In this case their constrained choices were to tell me their story or spend more time with no money. However, I too had the constrained choices of pay people vouchers, do not pay people at all, or break university rules and pay them cash.

Consent

The BSA (2017) states “*As far as possible participation in sociological research should be based on the freely given informed consent of those studied*” (p.5). This research was aimed at individuals who were able and willing to give voluntary, informed consent after understanding the purpose of the study. In providing informed consent, the attempt was to ensure that participants were not deceived or coerced into taking part in the research. People were informed, in plain language, of the purposes, processes and intentions of the research. The aim was to be inclusive but also be guided by the Mental Capacity Act 2005[i]. The legislation around mental capacity is based on the following principles: 1) a person must be assumed to have capacity unless it is established that he lacks capacity; 2) a person is not to be treated as unable to make a decision unless all practicable steps to help him to do so have been taken without success; 3) a person is not to be treated as unable to make a decision merely because he makes an unwise decision.

Initially the plan was to always get written consent. But because there was no face-to-face contact with people this needed to be changed to verbal consent which was given ethical clearance. Where possible, people would be emailed the documents describing the research. However, there was no way of knowing how thoroughly people read or understood them. I was not comfortable asking people if they were literate or under the influences of substances. For interviewees without email, I read the content of the documents down the phone. Everyone who took part gave verbal consent. Some participants asked questions during this process about what they had read or heard, but most did not.

Attempts were made to keep the paperwork as straightforward as possible. However, the forms people were expected to read and process still come to nearly 1,400 words and over 20 different clauses. They include sentences such as *“CRESR data management protocols are consistent with government GSAD and NHS data toolkit requirements, as well as GDPR legislation*.” Without asking people to summarise these documents back to me, I had no way of knowing how much they understood and therefore, how informed the consent was. On the other hand, if one does not want to exclude vulnerable groups it is hard to see practical alternatives.

Safeguarding

To ensure that the wellbeing of research participants was not compromised by their involvement in the study, the following principles were always observed. Any risk of immediate harm was to be reported immediately by me to the University Ethics Committee and any other relevant bodies. Whilst historical safeguarding issues, or any other concerns I had, were to be discussed with (one or more of) Supervisors/Head of Ethics/College Safeguarding Leads to assess what response is required. Whilst there was nothing concrete which needed pursuing in this way, there were still several ethical issues which arose in the safeguarding area especially resulting from phone interviews. Prior to undertaking the interviews, we had a conversation with colleagues at St Andrews University about the ethics of phone calls as a way of gathering data. As mentioned earlier, I also investigated how much Grounded Theory had been conducted by phone and found it was a rarity (Ward et al, 2015 p.2776). I feel all was done to meet the BSA statement (2017) that "*Sociologists have a responsibility to ensure the physical, social and psychological well-being of research participants is not adversely affected by the research"* (p.5) but this does not mean several issues did not arise, especially from the lack of face-to-face contact.

The first of these was that I could not see the conditions in which people were speaking to me. In the original ethics application, it stated, "*The interviews will take place where they (participants) feel comfortable"* and *"They will take place somewhere sufficiently private which is safe for everyone and where the person feels comfortable*." I could not tell whether people were in a confidential space, being pressured to take part, under the influence of substances or might have mental capacity issues. Interview were ended prematurely if there was a sense that a participant was in distress.

Another issue which arose was that in the original ethics application it was stated that participants would be given an opportunity to ask questions after the interview. People were provided with an information sheet outlining my contact details and were invited to get in touch if they had any further questions (and some did). Nonetheless, by not being able to talk to people over a coffee before, and after, an important informal part of the process was lost,

> *"I tell my students that when they are doing an interview, they have to allow for time for tea or coffee with the person…I think it is unethical not to, and leaving the person in a vulnerable place is simply unacceptable*" (Charmaz 2009, p.85)

> "*We don't talk about this a lot but there's some work that needs to be done at the end of the interview. I think it's not a good idea to just get up and walk out".* (Bowers 2009, p,85)

The issues under discussion were often emotional ones, and when the conversation ended, I felt like I was sometimes abandoning the person to cope with any feelings they had. I did not feel comfortable contacting the staff in the hotel to express my vague concerns about someone's wellbeing.

Balancing Confidentiality and Honesty

In the ethics application it was made clear that the research would be conducted to create a positive, rather than distressing, experience for participants. People were offered the entirely, voluntary opportunity to discuss whatever they wanted which was relevant to the research. The interviews were conducted as informally, sensitively, and conversationally as possible. Questions were framed in ways which allowed participants to express themselves. The aim was for a 'co-production' project built on trust and rapport. However, a major issue arose around role of the researcher in terms of balancing confidentiality and honesty.

> *"I understand that the information collected will remain confidential, unless I say anything that makes the researcher concerned that there is a risk of harm to me or someone else. In these circumstances I understand that the researcher must report this information to the relevant agency that can provide assistance."* (SHU Consent Form)

> "*Since the relationship between the research participant and the gatekeeper may continue long after the sociologist has left the research setting care should be taken to not compromise existing relationships within the research setting*." (BSA Guidelines, 2017 p.6).

In the case of this research, interviewees were anxious because of rumours that the hotel was about to shut. Following interviews with those commissioning the

hotels, I was aware they were opened in reaction to Covid-19 rather than pre-planned. This meant people were accommodated without an exit strategy. When interviewing those managing the hotels, they told me they were deliberately not telling people how long they expected to be open.[46] I had a confidentiality commitment to both those running and those living-in the hotels. This may seem extraordinarily cruel, but it was a practise I was familiar with myself from running time-limited shelters for rough sleeper. The reason behind keeping people unaware of closing-dates was to motivate them to attend appointments, undertake agreed actions etc

During the research I was frequently asked what I knew about the hotels closing by anxious interviewees. In answer to these questions, I chose protecting the confidentiality of the hotel managers over truth. In other words, I misled my participants about how much I knew. In doing so, I may have indirectly contributed to the distrust that people in this limbo state were experiencing. Furthermore, on occasion people asked me what actions I thought they should take. In my answers I feel I may have created too optimistic a picture of the future. Overall, I may have been conforming to a system in which users homelessness services are expected to be honest and open with staff, whilst people with knowledge and power withhold the truth.

Transcribing

Two major ethical issues arose for me around transcribing. Because of the volume of data, I had collected it was necessary to delegate some of this to external, professional agencies. Even though this process was confidential, it was not something that I had agreed with interviewees in advance. In retrospect it was the only pragmatic decision available, but it still feels a bit disrespectful. A second issue for was the extent to which I 'cleaned-up' or 'censored' interviews. In my MRes I transcribed what people said verbatim and interviewees objected. Indeed, some refused to have their evidence used unless it was put into coherent, grammatically coherent sentences. This time I did the same, so that what I believed people were trying to say was reflective of the quotes attributed to them.

This went from turning streams of consciousness into structured sentences & turning dialect into grammatical English (for example, “*wanna*” became “*want to”).* For some people with English as a second language this involved substantial interpretation and ‘best-guessing.’ Finally, there was also an issue as to whether discriminatory language should be removed from quotes. I chose to do this where I judged it as not central to the point being made.

Conclusion on Ethics

This ethics section is not meant as a criticism of anybody involved in the research (me included). Instead, it serves to highlight some of the dilemmas faced in trying to ‘reach’ populations who have often been excluded from research. Covid-19 was the first time that government had committed to leading the way in accommodating every rough sleeper regardless of ‘behavioural issues’, ‘immigration status’, ‘substance misuse’ etc. Hence a window of opportunity was created to engage with people who had been on the streets earlier this year. It was inevitably a learning process for all concerned. I believe all possible was done to avoid maleficence or harm to participants. The aim in outlining these ethical dilemmas so openly is to contribute to discussions about ways of conducting research with excluded groups in the future.

Chapter 7:

Findings –The Importance of Location to People Experiencing Homelessness

7.1 Introduction

This chapter is the first to present findings from the data. It explores participants relationship to place. Whilst the concept of place is usually used in the context of geographical location, other meanings of place are occasionally referenced to provide contrast and context. The data specifically considers whether people who have experienced homelessness feel attachment to places as a component of home. When they do feel such attachment, what is about some places that provide this attachment?.

As described earlier, one of the key elements of Bauman's description of liquid modernity is the hegemony of ambivalence over commitment. In the case of locations, they are simply used by people as another commodity to be consumed when desirable, then discarded if something better comes along. Subconsciously (and perhaps consciously) people know they will move to another location, so any affective or emotional ties are weak. This leads to ambivalence towards aspects of location such as people, physical environments, or personal histories. Indeed, Bauman argued that, in liquid modernity, loyalty is no longer seen as a virtue but instead an irrational self-imposed restriction on freedom and potential. However, he does not share the optimism of the postmodernists, as he believes that the shallowness of this emotional connection to locations is based on the fantasy of a better life, but without clear ideas as to what that life looks like or how to achieve it. The underlying assumption of governmental policy seems to agree with Bauman in seeing location as unimportant to people experiencing homelessness. This chapter explores to what extent this is correct, starting with a table of interviewees desires around locations.

7.2 Summary Of Respondents Desires Around Location

Table 5: Locational Desires Of People Living In The Hotels (n=22)

1. Alison doesn't want to be in non-cosmopolitan area where she fears racism.
2. Khan has the same concerns about racism as Alison
3. Kaloo wants to be near his family.
4. Mo wants to be in Central London coz it's all she knows, where here survival mechanisms are.
5. Harry doesn't want to be in Croydon (where he is now). He desperately wants to get out of London.
6. Darren didn't want to go to Croydon because he was from Central London. He only did not leave the hotel because he met somebody he knows once he moved in. He would be willing to move out of London, but It must not be too far away. This is because him and his friend will have paid work in London.
7. Cody wants to be near his kids in London (although he accepts that might not be financially viable and he may have to leave)
8. Storey was the first person I have come across who was sleeping rough in Croydon & accommodated in Croydon hotel. He doesn't care about location as long as his children can be with him.
9. Claire and Simon want to live in the country with their daughter as they hate London. They are fearful of the idea of being placed in accommodation a long way from, or unsuitable for their daughter.
10. Lucas has a Job near Croydon, which is vital to his mental health, so he needs to be near there. He does not want to go to the place where he lived before (Hammersmith) because of drug use. He also does not want to return to Poland.

11. Belinda wants to remain in London but does not want to stay in Croydon as she does not like it. She does not want to leave the UK even though its hard (destitute) being here.
12. Silver who would rather stay in East London because that's where her son is at school and grew-up. But would go anywhere anywhere that she can get her son. Is considering leaving London just to get a place.
13. Alano who was in a hotel in Clapham where he knows people and was moved to Waterloo (without explanation) where he doesn't know anyone. Would consider leaving London for employment.
14. Sheila who preferred it in the hotel in Finsbury Park where she knows people compared to the one in Waterloo where she was moved to (without any reason and) nobody speaks to her. Although the area and hotel are better this is no compensation for the isolation. She would try to “jump the bus” to where she had been sleeping rough to meet people.
15. Luis needs to be near Stockwell & Elephant for work reasons
16. Kodil is a destitute asylum seeker who (maybe) wants to return home to Algeria rather than die on the streets here (he refers to Algeria as "Home". But he cannot because of the travel restrictions made by COVID-19.
17. Ranjit is studying in the City of London. He says he cannot bear the other people in the hotel, and he is going back to rough sleeping. His choice of where to rough sleep is to be near college.
18. James returned to Croydon as the place to be homeless because it's where he is from. He now wants to live with his partner Kate as near to his daughter (and other family) in Kent.
19. Craig has never lived anywhere in the UK except London. He does not want to go anywhere else.

20. Daniel has spent his whole life in London since coming to the UK 13 years ago. He has friends at the Church who are like family. He does not want to live anywhere else.
21. Ranter is used to moving around. He feels he has little choices where he lives and moves from location to location to make life more bearable. He cannot stand being in London
22. Daniel has spent his whole life in London since coming to the UK 13 years ago. He has friends at the Church who are like family. He does not want to live anywhere else.

Table 6: Locational Desires Of people In Their Own Accommodation (n=8)

(1-5 are in Social Housing. 6 is in PRS, 7 is in a hostel and 8 is in a temporary flat)

1. Kristine wants to stay where she is currently (near the countryside). But suspects she won't be able to & so is hoping to move to the seaside.
2. Stuart turned down three flats because he was worried about being in an area he associated with drugs.
3. Alison wanted to be away from the area where she suffered. so took a property with rising damp coz it was better than being in a more dangerous area. It took 20 years to get the damp sorted out. Now wants to leave for somewhere without and memories.
4. Barbara talks about the people she is working with and how they do not want to leave London because all their resources are here. She also had turned down a flat (when she was living in a hostel) because it was too far from her family and Job.
5. When Mark moved to London for the first time. He lived in Greenwich because he had friends there. He says now he would leave London and his friends & family if he needed to, to get a home as a last resort.

6.	Mick wants to be back near his friends and feels miserable in an area where he has no history or connection (his health has horribly declined since he moved)
7.	Khan is choosing to stay in Temporary Accommodation hostel so he can be near the location he wants to live in.
8.	Prichard would choose to be in a property that was dangerous or sleep in a tent to be near his children.

7.3 Relationships Between Location And Home

Rejection of Geographical Locations

The simplest example of a 'Bauman-type' ambivalence' to location came from a group of people in the hotels who were looking for something of a 'fresh start.' In some ways they reflect the choice-based rational narratives of writers like Deleuze & Guattari (1994) and Stokols & Shumaker (1982). However, rather than something planned and calculated, these individuals tended to describe future hopes in terms of vague goals. This reflects Smith's (1999) description of people forming opinions on locations based on beliefs and expectations rather than experiences. It also reflects the postmodernist, rejection of fixed identities described by Braidotti (1994) and Morley (2000).

However, one nuance to the postmodernist choice and consumption agenda was how participants described locations primarily in terms of where *they did not* want to reside in the future. They divided all locations into desirable and undesirable, regardless of whether they had ever visited them. This group split between those who were:

- Wanting to leave the area they were now in (London or parts of London) without clarity as to where they wanted to go. Sometimes they talked favourably of relocating to places they knew little about

- Refusing to leave London for any other geographical location. Appearing to conceptually split the UK into London (desirable) and everywhere else (undesirable).

Wanting to Leave Without Knowing Where to Go

To some degree these people reflected the locational ambivalence narratives of Stokols and Shumaker (1982) and Bauman (2003). However, this was driven by their current location not feeling like home. For example, Harry was clear that he did not want to be in Croydon where his hotel was, as he had a history of drug use in the area. His main concern was to not be around people whom he felt would be a bad influence on him. He associated these people with London generally, and Croydon specifically. Harry spoke of wanting to settle down but did not think that was possible in London. He said that he would make anywhere home which offered him the opportunity to get away. This quote shows the contrast between the clarity with which he rejected London compared to the vagueness of where he positively wanted to be *"[I want to live] outside of London. Far away from here as possible. Southampton, Nottingham, up North somewhere."* This is an example of Bauman's (2005) and Smith's (1999) description of shallow attachment based upon fantasy. He believes these other locations would make him happier, yet he knows little about them except they are not London. Therefore, his conceptualisation of the locations of *"Southampton"* or *"Nottingham"* are subjective and psychological concepts not based upon tangible interactions. Reflecting narratives of freedom (Braidotti 1994), consumption (Bauman 2012), and fantasy (Smith 1999) Harry seemed more attracted to locations he did not know. This is like Sartre's (1946, 2003) concept of objects being perceived *by what they are not*. In this case, it is a fantasy based on 'absence;' namely Harry is attracted to locations (Southampton, Nottingham, Up North) because they are not somewhere else (London). One evening a few days after our interview I received a phone call from Harry. He told me that had a cousin in Harrogate and asked me whether he should pack-up his belongings in the hotel and *"head-up to Yorkshire"* to try and find somewhere to rent. I told him that I had no idea because I did not know the area (Yorkshire is 4,500 square miles).

Another example of this judging locations by what 'they are not' was offered by Lucas, an EU migrant who had come over to work. Reflecting the dislike of other 'types' of people experiencing homelessness described by Naiman (2022) and Jackson (2015), he expressed vehement opposition to residing in either Hammersmith or Poland. The former was where he had been sleeping rough prior to the hotel, and which he described as being *"full of junkies."* The latter was the

country where he had migrated from. When asked what locations he positively wanted to live in he said he did not know. He claimed he had not been outside of London much but was flexible. Again, the freedom, consumption and fantasy narratives were visible, with both Lucas and Harry rejecting some locations because of drug users without any idea as to the amount of drug use elsewhere.

Other people reflected the forced mobility narratives of Desmond, (2017) and Lanicone (2022, 2023). Ranter listed several things he hated about London including the large population and the lack of compassion that he detected for the poor on the streets. *"I've been wanting to get out of London for years. I can't really cope with it. It's too fast for me. Lots of people."* Claire shared a similar poor opinion of London, but she was harsher in her description. *"[I want to move away] because London is absolute shit. It's just crap. Everywhere [else?] you look is no good."* However, when they were asked where they might prefer to live, neither Ranter nor Claire named a particular location. Ranter said *"the coast."* and Claire *"the countryside."* Reflecting Jackson's (2013) writings Harry, Lucas, Ranter and Claire all had no sense of 'belonging' anywhere.

Refusing to Leave London

An interesting contrast came from those who did not want to leave London at any cost. To this degree they reflected the place attachment narratives dating back to writers such as Tuan (1975), Relph (1976, 2016) and Altman & Lowe (1992). These interviewees were equally strong in dividing the country between London and the rest of the UK but reached the opposite conclusion as to its suitability as a home. Demonstrating the flexible nature of psychological attachment which Riley (1992) and Casey (2001), they tended to speak of 'London' without ever clarifying what the meant. They rejected the rest of the country without expressing a preference for which part of London they wanted to stay in. They also attributed elements of the defensiveness that the poor have around mobility that Bauman (2003) and Desmond (2017) described. Alison was somebody who did not want to leave London even if it meant staying in her current flat which she hated. Her reasoning was that although she had visited other locations which she liked, she always needed to get back to the *"craziness"* and *"mix"* of London. Another 'London-only' person was Daniel who reasoned that he had lived in London his whole life and anywhere else would be too big a change. Another interviewee,

Sheila, expressed a willingness to live in *“any part of Inner London*” but nowhere else. Her rationale was that she had lived in inner London for 37 years and was too old to try somewhere else. However, if one looks at official definition of Inner London (Law Insider) it covers 14 local authorities with many having little in common with each other (namely Barking and Dagenham, Camden, City. Ealing, Greenwich. Hackney, Hammersmith and Fulham, Islington, Kensington & Chelsea, Lambeth, Lewisham, Southwark, Tower Hamlets, Wandsworth and Westminster).

A more nuanced version of this “only London” philosophy came from Khan who said.

> *“I’m not saying that the whole of the UK is a no go area, but I grew up in the UK, I, you know what I mean, I’ve been in Birmingham, I’ve been in Leeds and etcetera, do you understand me, I know what it’s like, so, the majority, if you’ve spent thirty to forty years in London, that’s your home, do you know what you mean, you’ve got everything here.”*

He went to explain how he feared that other locations would be less diverse and accepting of him. However, unlike Alison and Daniel he caveated his opinion with the provision that if the only way for him to get a new own flat then he might be willing to relocate. Therefore, as well as place attachment, he also had (reluctant) elements of rational-choice theory in his thinking.

Reluctant Acceptance – A Form of Ambivalence?

Khan’s perspective around leaving London to obtain a flat was reflective of a group who expressed reluctant acceptance that relocating might be undesirable but necessary. They were weighing-up the various aspects of home described by Neale (1997b), Lewicka (2011), Despres (1991) and many others. However, this process was taking place within the fatalistic, resigned acceptance around location which Bauman (1991) and Smith (1999) described as characteristic of the poor. One of the hardest of these cases to hear was Kodil who was HIV+ and had his asylum claim rejected. He said all wanted from life was somewhere where he could get food, a roof, and his medication. He described not caring whether he was sent back to the country he had fled, because it would be better than his current conditions and prospects in the UK. His story is covered in more detail in

Chapter 9. Claire expressed similar sentiments. Even though she desperately wanted to be near her family, her experience of rough sleeping during lockdown had been so horrible she would now accept "*whatever was offered"* as a home. Kate described her aspirations to discard her current life for an undefined better life when she said, *"I want to make something of my life, {but] I don't know what to do."* In this quote she described aspirations for something other than her current life but an inability to see a way out of Bauman's (2003) wasteland ((see Chapter 9 for more information on Kate)

Barbara offered another interesting perspective s. Having experienced homelessness recently, she now worked supporting people in similar situations. Barbara described conversations with people experiencing rough sleeping who fitted into the 'Refusing to Leave London' group.. She had told them that they were being unrealistic because there is "*no space in London*" to accommodate them. This is despite Barbara having been allocated a flat in South London as her route out of homelessness. In doing so, she reflected the writings of Jackson (2015) and Hoolahan (2022) who described the sense of competition for resources amongst people who experience homelessness.

Compromisers; Ambivalence and Attachment Simultaneously

The difficulty of categorising people as either 'attached' or 'ambivalent' to locations becomes more complicated when one considers the question of those who would be accepting of somewhere which met their other priorities from a home. These priorities tended to be focused on people and employment.

Their thoughts on key people reflected the writings of Schneider (2022) and Lenhard (2022) about the importance of those who one considers family. Being with these people meant locations could socially and psychologically meet many of the components of home. To be with key people, interviewees were considering 'trading-off' other aspects of home (such as feelings of belonging, historical connection etc.).

Children

Several participants would move to an unfamiliar location if they had their children with, or near, them. They were ambivalent about locations in the abstract, rather they were judging whether locations could meet this need. With this one condition

serving as an absolute constraint, they were willing to move anywhere, The term children was used by interviewees to describe offspring from toddlers to young adults. Many interviewees presumed that they would become the primary caretaker of their children at some point in the future. One such individual was Silver whose son was currently living with Silver's Mother and Stepfather. In an unfortunate twist of fate, they lived in Croydon, but Silver was in the hotel in Waterloo which serves an example of how people were not placed in the locations best for them. She expressed her willingness to relocate anywhere to be with her son.

> *"Yes [I might relocate] because the rent [in London], everything is very expensive as well you know and so I am still, you know in two minds, shall I stay in London, or shall I move out? I don't know, I am just thinking Don't get me wrong, I like East London (where she has always lived) but, at the moment, the way my life is I would not mind going to any area. Because home is not where we have been, but where we are happy. If they give me a home outside of London, I'll be happy as long as I've a roof over my head. The main thing is to be with my child. So, I am not too picky. I just want to be reunited with my child. Yes, if the opportunity was given to me today or tomorrow to go into a property, but I didn't know where the location was, I'd still go if I had my child."*

Similar sentiments were expressed by Storey whose sons were living with his Mother, *"I don't have any ties anywhere recently. So, I'll go anywhere. My boys are with their Nan in Watford. So as soon as I am sorted, I can go and get them".*

A different nuance to the relationship between interviewee's location desires and their children was provided by those who did not expect to gain custody of their children but expressed the need to be near them. These varied from those who previously had regular contact with their children until they lost work/accommodation because of Covid-19, through to those who had not spoken to their children for years. One example was Cody who was in the hotel in Croydon and said that he felt that he might remain in that town as somewhere which he could afford to rent a flat. He wanted to be near his children in Hackney but considered Croydon a reasonable travelling distance. This travelling issue was an example of how geographical location can be about transport options as well

as distance. This is illustrated by comparing Cody and Prichard who both had regular contact with their children and who said that relationship was one of the most important aspects of their life. Cody was staying in the Croydon hotel which was one train ride to see his child in Hackney. This allowed him to share the caretaking with his ex-partner. He was happy to see this situation continue in the future

> *"[I would accept anywhere] as long as I can get transport there [Hackney]. That's what I mean, even if I can get a place in Croydon, it will be good as I can get one train. So, if I get a job, I can finish work and then go and see him."*

By contrast Prichard was approximately the same distance away from his children (10 miles) but had no direct train route. He described being reliant on various mechanisms to see his children. These included an infrequent. expensive bus service, the generosity of friends with cars and taxis paid for by the local authority so he could collect his medication. The last option involved him refusing to have his Methadone Script moved away from a chemist near his children's home. By doing so he had an ostensive reason for needing a local authority funded taxi to that area. He felt his ability to see his children, and be involved in their welfare, relied on this service. In his diary, on his birthday. Prichard described how important this relationship was to him.

> *"Seeing the kids is all the birthday gift I needed, but I got some handmade cards that are more valuable than all the gold in Fort Knox. After cake, I spent around 6 hours with the kids. It was bliss."*

However, he stressed the difficulties of these travel logistics. On occasions Prichard had found himself stranded late at night with no way of getting home (a private taxi would have cost £45). In my first interview with him he described a temporary flat his friend lived in, which was in the same town as Prichard's children. The flat had faulty wiring and a "big hole in the floor." Despite this Prichard said he might have lived there if it had been offered to him,

> *"Yes, purely to be near to my kids. Even though it's really dangerous. Although I wouldn't have been able to take the kids up there because*

it's not safe. So that might have put me off taking it. It depends…"
(see Chapter 9 for more about Prichard's situation)

A slightly different example of the importance of 'children' and distance is illustrated by Barbara. When she referred to children, she was talking of daughters who were in their late twenties. When she was offered a room as a way out of a hostel, she turned one down because of its distance from her children and only took the second with her eldest daughter's approval.

> *"I called my daughter, and I said come with me to see the room and she came with me, and I said, "I can't [take it] what do you think"? She said Mum, "take it because if you miss this place, you maybe not have something better than this" and she encouraged me to take the place [so I did]."*

Cody, Prichard, and Barbara all had clear plans where they needed to be for the sake of the relationship with their children. But parents who had more irregular contact with their offspring seemed to be talking the language of fantasy (Smith 1999) rather than plans. This situation was further complicated by the fact that some interviewees had for the first time in many years been able to restart relationships with their children. Stable(ish) accommodation had moved them from a life based entirely on day-to-day survival (Bauman 2003) to one where they could reflect on other aspects of life. These relationships were at an embryonic stage with interviewees focused upon building contact. An example of this is Kate, who told me that one of the happiest locations she had ever been, was being in prison because she was with her daughter after she was born. Her desire to rekindle this relationship showed the, literal and metaphorical, distances some interviewees had to travel,

> *"[I want to be] near my daughter in Kent really, so Kent would be the ideal place and Rochester would be ideal, near to my daughter…They are not going to throw the kids to me [until I can show I am] clean, settled and there are good schools [nearby]."*

Other Family

Although by far the most common family members mentioned in terms of influencing location desires were children, the importance of other family relationships was described by a couple of others. In doing so they reflected the feelings of connection which came from a supportive group outside of the nuclear family which Schneider (202") and Lenhard (2022) spoke off. Stuart talked of his adult children as a *"massive part of my recovery*" and his granddaughter as the *"biggest thing in my life."* He also mentioned the importance of his relationship with his Mum. He described the journey to see family members, *"[to see them] takes me about an hour all told… [and it is] absolutely murder."* If it were not for these family relationships, he *"might be interested in moving down to the coast."* He was now volunteering for Groundswell, and he talked eloquently how other people experiencing homelessness valued family.

> *"You know, you might be interested to know that a lot of people who I've spoken to… have talked about family being so important to them. And for some reason people don't understand that. The politicians don't think about it. They kind of think that people who've experienced homelessness are a bit different from everyone else."*

One can see how the need to be near key people reflected the experiences of Hoolahan (2022) interviewees who chose staying in shelters or Fried's (1963) participants' who lamented leaving familiar slums. Michael, an advice worker, described how clients he supported would choose to stay in the local hotels rather than make a statutory homelessness application and risk being moved into accommodation in a new location adding, *"some people refuse… [out of area] offers [of flats] and remain homeless [instead]."* Jane who undertook a similar job in a different location confirmed the centrality of children to the lives of the people she supported. She stated that they would choose to stay in horrible conditions rather than move to a location distant from friends and family.

> *"I was saying this to a social worker the other day, why do you think this mom would prefer to stay in a crap, mouse-infested single room than move? Why do you think that is? She is not stupid, she knows that if she's destitute and she has nothing else; her community is all that she has and she will, if she's pushed, prioritise that over a self-contained*

accommodation somewhere else because she knows that if she needs to go to the doctor, she's got someone to leave her kid with when she's here. If she has no food that evening, she can go and she knows where to find it from somebody from the church, from a friend or whatever, you know. So, she is giving you the information that you need that this concrete box on a flyover in Harlow [where you want to move her to] is not a home. She's telling you…so why don't you believe her?"

Other Important People

Another powerful example of home encompassing people came from those who talked about the crucial role of friends. Stuart described how *"All my neighbours are quite long in their recovery as well now. You know – I get on well with [them]. There's only seven".* He described a system of mutual support in which people did shopping and picked-up medicine for each other. Reflecting many of the findings of home making theorists, Sheila said she would consider sleeping rough again rather than be sent to a geographical location where she was distant from her friends. She relied heavily on one close friend for practical help with things like making benefits claim. Similarly, a crucial resource in helping Prichard see his children was his friend who owned a car. Mark described a number of times where being near his friends had been vital for his mental health. An interesting slant on the friendship/ place relationship comes from Darren who spoke of the friendship he had formed with another person living in the hotel. The most important thing around future locations was that he was near this friend. Bauman (2005) and Smith (1999) argued that informal community bonds are exclusionary and insignificant. However, for Craig and Daniel their local churches provided friendship and enhanced the sense of belonging,

> *"London is my home, and this town is my home, and I have people around here who I recognise and know fairly well. Because across the road is the church and if I want to go there, they don't look at me like I'm a scumbag. They're like 'hey, welcome back, how are you doing?" (Craig)*

A small number of interviewees talked about the overriding importance of having partners living with them. Two of these were Claire and Simon who were in a relationship and were hoping to have their children returned to them so they could

"become a family again." Kate was also in a relationship (with James), and they had similar hopes. The third was Darren who wanted a 'new start' outside of London and was planning on *"bringing his girlfriend over"* from Thailand when he had done so.

Pat, a stakeholder described how she had worked in homelessness in the North-West for decades. She described, in-depth, how people would only move locations if it meant being near to people of importance to them.

> *"[When I] Started working on the frontline in terms of housing options, probably when I was about nineteen, twenty, so you are talking quite a number of years ago and even then people wanted to remain in their locality, they wanted to be close to their family, they wanted to be, the children's school was always at the forefront of everybody's mind, understandably and that was one of the real elements that caused a number of challenges to local authorities"*

She added that people would turn down potential homes if they were perceived as distant from key people, shops, services or where they grew-up. She emphasised that this was not always about pure geographical distance but sometimes reflective of poor public transport.

> *"they wouldn't want to come into the city centre [to obtain accommodation], it was bad enough coming into the city centre for a housing interview let alone to be thinking they are going to move there permanently, and the same with ZZZ (name of a city) and it was because of you know, history where they grew up, where their family was from, where they knew in terms of you know, their friends, the local services, shops and that's always been to the forefront of peoples' minds."*

> *"People would turn the offers [of housing] down, [and] the challenge from a local authority point of view was actually you know if it was still within, a local authority boundary. you know geographically. The city was quite a broad area, it would be very, very hard to say that it wasn't [legally] a reasonable offer, because of the transport links and other things."*

However, she had seen a growing flexibility in recent years with people more willing to move to other locations but only if they still had some form of connection to the new area (friends, family, history etc.)

Another example of people refusing to move to locations where they had no connections was offered by Siobhan McDonagh, the MP for Tooting. She described how desperate a family in her constituency were to not leave an area because of existing contacts,

> *"We've had a case in the last couple of weeks where the family claim to have slept in their car rather than be sent to Orpington. Because the chap is under the cardiac department at St George's Hospital in Tooting and his family is there, so they don't want to move out of the area."*

The Hotels, Location, and the Importance of People

The absence of a sense of belonging and lack of social connection was a prominent aspect of some interviews with people in hotels. Their views reflected the social aspect of home described by home making theorists such as Lanicone (2013, 2017, 2020) but also the psychological aspect of belonging outlined by place attachment theorists such as Relph (1976, 2016) outlined. These hotel dwellers spoke of the isolation they felt in an unfamiliar location away from the people and places they knew. Alano and Sheila both described how they went days without speaking to another person. Darren was similar, *"I never knew no one and I never knew the area;"* Sheila expressed gratitude for the opportunity to chat to me as a break from the loneliness. She described how she missed the friends she had in another hotel. She described a combination of loneliness, poverty, and lockdown, *"there are only so many knockbacks you can take. I just end up locking myself in my room and just being like a fucking prisoner in here.."* Harry who'd previously had experiences in his current area said, *"I just need to get away from here mate, and it needs to be quick".* Khan talked of how all the all people he relied upon, and all the other resources he usually relied upon, were in a different geographical location to the hotel.

> *"I've lived and grew up in Westminster, so this is where my friends, family, doctor, etc. etc. are, everything that was there, I've lived in the borough for thirty to forty years. I've got everything there, my probation,*

my doctor, my counsellor everything, you name it up there, but they don't yet recognise my need to be there."

Blackshaw (2001) described how, in the mobile world of neoliberalism, increasing amounts of communication would be virtual. Braidotti (1994) spoke of how the increased freedoms did not necessarily require physical movement to engage with others. Yet, for those experiencing isolation in a new location, the option of digital communication as an alternative to face-to-face contact did not seem viable. Nobody I spoke to described conducting friendships virtually. It became clear that the services which people traditionally used for contact and support were missing during Covid-19. On-line day services cannot provide heat, shelter, showers, and meals. A medical assessment and scripting service is not going to work without face-to-face interaction. Libraries which had been used for internet access were closed. Other than mobile phones, there was a sense of digital exclusion. Many interviewees were not familiar with more modern forms of on-line communication such as Zoom, Teams, Skype etc.

Employment

The relationship between location and employment was another prominent theme. Almost all respondents expressed a desire to undertake paid work in the future. Indeed, some people were already working or had secured employment. Lucas was currently working as a landscaper nearby and needed to stay in the location of the hotel. Luis had obtained one part-time job in Stockwell and was hoping to get confirmation of another one in Elephant and Castle shortly. He told me that *"I need to be able to get to the two places. So [them being] 20 minutes from here (Waterloo where the hotel was) is no problem at all".* A third interviewee Saul was also working and was going be earning *"good money"* soon. Once he had adequate savings, he was planning on renting a room in a pub in Central London.

Clearly, in the consumerist, neoliberalist world described by writers such as Bauman (1997, 2007) and Powell (2015) employment has a relationship with spending-power and choices. Yet for interviewees, work was about more than just a rational transactional relationship of financial reward for contributed labour. Their feelings reflected Herring's (2019) writings of the importance of the social contract of rights and responsibilities. The relationship with work seemed to be an important part of a person's self-identity, being part of the community and feeling

'normal.' For example, Harry described getting a job as central to *"fucking sorting my life out".* Cody equated work with normality, *"I'll do any work, anything."* Lucas described how he always worked until his parents died, and that, for him to, work represented normality. Daniel equated finding a job with "*getting my life back."* Saul described how he worked since he was 14 and how the Covid-19 interruption was *"the longest period I've not worked".* The interviewees who had been volunteering with Groundswell gave several reasons for doing so other than money. Stuart described the experience as "*coming back to the community, you know, you come back to society*?" For Mark, a huge part of the value in his volunteering was the contact he had with people experiencing homelessness to whom he felt he could offer expertise

It does need to be stated that the belief in work as some sort of panacea might be optimistic. Interviewees statements about what work would offer them often contrasted with a shortage of recent experience of being in the labour market. Some also had a lack of concrete, deliverable plans for achieving work. The experiences of Silver served as a word of warning that paid employment was not always unproblematic. She was now in a hotel *because* she got a job as a teacher. She explained how when her HB ended, she accrued rent arrears, which led to eviction and homelessness.

For those with more clarity around employment, the jobs they wanted were varied and showed impressive skills: Darren was trained in welding: Lucas was working as landscaper: Harry was hoping to get dock work: Barbara wanted to be a gardener: Storey was a carer by profession: Sheila wanted to clean or work in a restaurant: Mo wanted some form of live-in domestic work or an administrative role. Some people volunteering at Groundswell were hoping to get jobs supporting people experiencing social exclusion in the future.

The interviews took place at a time where Covid-19 was leading to jobs increasingly involving on-line interactions, but all the desired jobs described by interviewees involve being in an actual, tangible workplace. These could be building-sites, gardens, offices, or hostels. Interviewees were not talking about roles which could be undertaken by Zoom or by phone. Hence their residential proximity to potential workplaces was important. In this they reflected Bauman's

(2004) description of the challenges faced by those reliant on traditional, manual jobs in a neoliberalist labour market.

People had different perspectives on which residential locations they needed to be in to obtain employment. Reflecting rational-choice theorists, such as Stokols et al (1983), they were working out what type of locational choices were most likely to get them jobs. Belinda and Alano both did not mind which location they lived in if they could earn money. Whilst Harry (whose priority was to leave London) felt that there would be work available wherever he ended-up. Saul asserted that *"I'm going to stay in London. I'm going to have to stay in London to get my finances back in order. I have to."* Darren had a similar perspective*, "[I] don't want to be too far from London because if I am going to start work [then] a lot of it is in London."* Other interviewees did not explicitly link particular locations to employment. They were not making active choices per se but presumed that when they found work it would be in London.

The Hotels, Location, and Accessing Work

Reflecting the experience of a number of writers, several people argued their current dwelling and location were blocking hopes of getting into work. These were because of the externally defined rules (Lancione, 2013), the de facto forced mobility (Jackson, 2015) and the nature of the accommodation (see Herring, 2019). Storey talked of how he could not work in the caring professions because he had no fixed address, nor any idea which location he would be living in a few weeks.

> *"I am the next stage when I want to get out and get a job. Me being stuck in here is not letting me move-on. There are certain things I can't do whilst I am in here, I can't go for a job interview because this is not my permanent address. So, I am being held back in a way."*

Other people felt moving locations to access the hotels made finding work harder. To secure a roof they had needed to sacrifice the pyscho/social/economic positive aspects of being likely to obtain a job. For example, Mo was an EU migrant who became destitute when services in Westminster closed. She told a heart-breaking

tale of how prior to Covid-19 she had sought any form of work (legal or otherwise). She feared deportation in 2021 if she was still on the streets and would go to almost any lengths to avoid this happening

> *"Before lockdown, I wanted to post an advert on a website looking for free accommodation in return for doing some work like shopping. Or maybe somebody will have a company and need someone to help them with office work and will have a spare room in their house. They wouldn't have to pay me, just provide me with accommodation. I wanted to find some casual work in shops. I wanted to do up my cv just in case they needed some extra help stacking the shelves in the supermarket. Something like that."*

Reflecting the 'stratification' within the homelessness population that Herring (2019) described, Mo was one of several migrants who had limited recourse to state support. Employment that paid enough to cover rents was the only conceivable way out of homelessness. She felt that these plans had been ruined by her having to leave the centre of London to come to the unfamiliar environs of Croydon where she did not know the opportunities or resources available. Many of the things that most people regarded as essential to survive during lockdown, were not available,

> *"The problem [of being in Croydon] is that my next step was to find work, to get odd-Jobs to support myself. And to get a six-month contract to support myself and find accommodation. The problem is that in Croydon, unlike in Westminster, they do not have any libraries open to use the internet. So, I am completely isolated because I don't have a mobile phone. I was given a mobile phone with a sim-card, but it doesn't work. I have no access to the internet. There is no library I can use. There is a cyber-café, but it would cost me £1 for half-an-hour." (Mo)*

Other Important Aspects of Location

A handful of interviewees in their own flats talked about the link between physical environment and their relationship to location. This usually came down to a desire

to live by the countryside and/or the coast. Claire said *"[I want to reside in] a nice quiet land with a nice country pub at the weekend. Bit of normally."* Whilst Kristine who had her own flat on the edge of London, liked the location she currently lived-in but also had an idyllic image of living by in a village or by the coast,[47]

> *"Yes, [I would be happy at the] seaside. I love the sea; I just love the beach and country. I am not a town person, a city person so yes. I am more a village person, mmm, yes. Yes, I love it [where I live now]. I live on a field and the house was built on a field. So, you go out my back gate and you are in acres of land. I absolutely love it and I am a horse-rider so there's lots of horses around there."*

The vague language suggested fantasies rather than developed plans – is all countryside or coastline equally desirable?

Cristine was representative of interviewees who had social housing flats. These tended to be areas they did not choose, but they had worked to create a home (reflecting literature such as Schneider 2022). Many told-me of reluctance they initially felt in moving location to get to these flats. But their dwellings and locations now had a sense of belonging, stability, and opportunity. This sense of home meant they were able to develop positives in their life. Stuart's story was typical, "*No, no [I didn't want to move here]. Because I didn't know the area. So, I felt quite [nervous] – it was daunting. Obviously, there's the fear of the unknown if you like".* But now he felt safer because of the flat and the people around him,

> *"we've got a communal buzzer entry system for the three flats upstairs, so, yeah, if you haven't got a fob, you can't get through the main door. And then I have got my own front door upstairs that says Richard and Pat, my neighbours upstairs. So, yeah, I feel quite safe."*

Similarly, because of its location Barbara was reluctant to accept her flat initially. However, she grew to love it because of security and the environment,

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[47] In fairness I think this is a very common future aspiration for people (myself included)

"They've done beautiful apartments here and they gave me a place downstairs because I've got problems for walking and it's very secure, there's CCTV, the people are very nice. Well, they gave me a big present, this is my home now."

"I had new letters saying, you know, you can stay in the flat forever. It's yours. They gave me, how do you call that? Indefinitely. I'm very happy. That's why I've been waiting eleven years to get something proper, very posh, very tidy, very nice."

These positive views were the opposite of Mick who felt he had just been 'dumped' in a location and insecure accommodation where few other people wanted to live (Mick's story is covered more in Chapter 9)

"The area I currently live in is one of the highest crime spots in Medway and Kent, prostitution, drugs, vandalism, fly tipping, anti-social behaviour and theft are all prevalent in this area. There are a lot of HMOs in the area and little regard or respect for open spaces. Medway currently has one of the biggest unemployment rates in the country."

Feelings Around Location and Dwellings – A Contrast

Hao et al (2021) described how the meaning of home could be divided into physical, psychological, and social aspects. The diversity of relationships to locations described in this chapter reflect a variety of psychological and social aspects. However, this variety stands in contrast to the uniformity around the physical aspect (i.e. dwellings). Interviewees uniformly believed that home needed to be a self-contained property. In doing so they also reflected a long tradition of thought amongst authors on the meaning of home (for example Hayward,1975, Dovey 1985, Jacobs & Smith, 2008). They also mirrored the findings of Parsell's (2012) rough sleepers.

However, the situation was complex because for most people the general position was

a) a home needs to be a self-contained property

b) but a self-contained property is not a home if it does not meet other needs (some of which might be locational)

Reflecting views around location, some interviewees would only accept flats which facilitated them having a relationship with their children. Shared accommodation was sometimes seen as dangerous in this respect. For example, Prichard said he would only accept an offer of permanent housing if it was safe for him to bring his children. Saul said he expected to be offered shared housing, but he would not be accept it because of his children. Cody described the need for a dwelling with enough space where he could have his children sleepover. Kate and her partner, James, expected to be offered shared social housing but said they would turn it down. They would prefer any dwelling which was self-contained. even if it was less secure and more expensive, *"I need to get a flat. I need to settle. I need to get a job. I need to prove that I am doing the right things."*

Other interviewees without childcare responsibilities felt as strongly about self-contained dwellings. These people framed the discussion in terms of not being able to share with others. Without giving a specific reason Darren stated that he *"can't share"* with people. Stuart, who now had his own flats simply said he was too old to share. Sheila said she needed her own key and front door regardless of tenure. Daniel expressed this explicitly, *"I need a council house. All the time I see friends who have their own houses."* Only Luis expressed any sort of enthusiasm for sharing accommodation in the future.

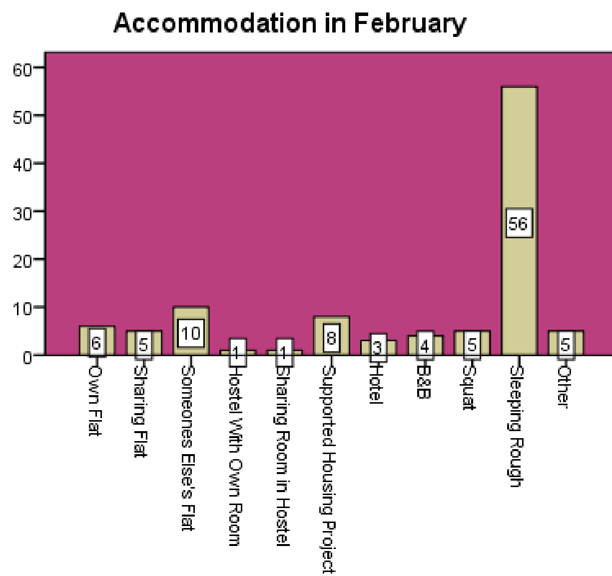
> *"I say to the other people [in the hotel] that if you have a good job and enough money to pay for a nice house yourself that's okay. But you can't expect the Government to give you a house. There is not a house for everybody. We need to be real. You cannot take everybody of the street and give them a house."*

He already had one job and almost had a second one lined-up. He also was close to securing a room in a shared house for £300 per month which he had sorted out for himself. So, for him, choice of dwelling was about imminent decisions rather than future hopes.

> *"*

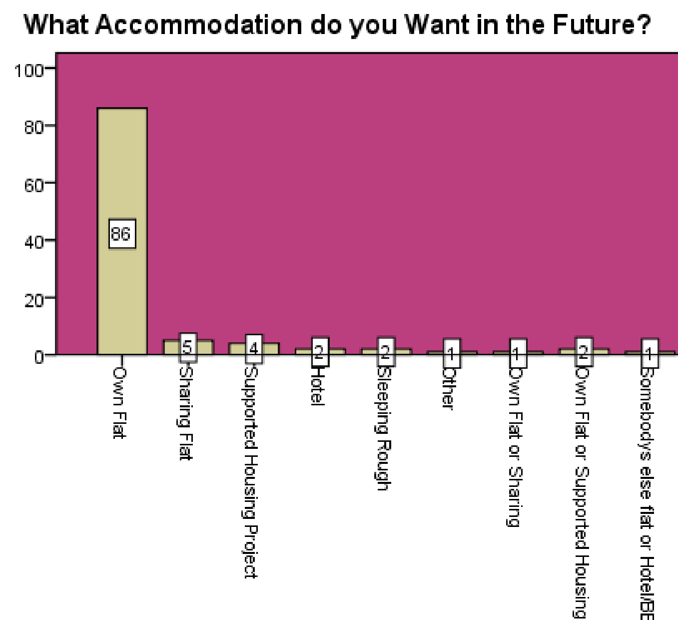
The overwhelming attachment to securing one's own flat was reflected in the short questionnaire data (Diagrams 15 & 16). Whilst the vast majority favoured this accommodation, only 5 people had been living in their own flat at the start of the year. By contrast 56 had been rough sleeping, but only 2 expressed a desire to return to the streets.

Diagram 15 Short Questionnaire On Previous Type Of Accommodation.



Source: Paul Anderson 2021

Diagram 16 Short Questionnaire On Desired Type Of Accommodation



Source: Paul Anderson 2021

Finally, even though they did not perceive them as a home, a few people in the hotels spoke positively of their locations. For example, Silver stated *"So, when they put me in the hotel, I was very surprised, because it's a beautiful place with beautiful people. The area is different from East London. Like nothing I have ever seen before."* Ranter was also complimentary "*Luckily there are some good shops around here. West Croydon is a very convenient place to live. It's all about location, isn't it? Even for transport it's excellent*". Finally, Sheila also favourably described the area "*Luckily it is SE1, it's not too far out, it's about 20-25 minutes on a bus to Hackney. I am glad they didn't move me further out like South-West London or somewhere really far out because otherwise, this isn't too bad."*

By contrast to location the quality and nature of the hotels as dwellings was something almost everybody had opinions on. This ranged from whether hotel-type accommodation was desirable to the consequence of living with lots of strangers. Everyone viewed the hotels as a short-term option which was better than the streets. It was often perceived as a foothold as summed-up in this quote by James.

> *"This is the first time that, for the first time, for the last 2 years I haven't been in trouble at all. It's the only time I haven't been like, offending*

really. My whole life, yes. It's changed a lot of things. I feel hopeful for the first time in years."

7.4 Conclusion

The key findings from this chapter is that location is often seen as an important part of home. People desire to be near those important to them, or to be close to work, or to be in a familiar environment. Some have single places which match these desires, whilst others are much less sure of where they want to be. Some desires around location are driven by clear, concrete plans whilst others seem more in the realm of fantasy.

People did not view the hotels as home even when they were in locations they desired. Instead, they were approached as short-term 'fixes.' Many were grateful for this. Although for some people the benefits of having a roof and three meals a day had to be balanced against the problems of being in the hotels such as isolation. Within these limitations, the degree to which people were able to incorporate aspects of home (such as having close friends and partners) into their hotel living varied.

People were faced with trade-offs between the physical, psychological, and social aspects of home. They needed to be near families, friends, partners etc. But they all also wanted to be in their own self-contained flat. And these trade-offs were all in a context of recent rough sleeping experiences. They were faced with questions around desire to live in a particular location versus not wanting to be on the streets. To what extent would they accept a flat in an unfamiliar location? How powerful were the draws towards work and their children when pitched against structures which demanded they move further away? If they did locate away from people could those flats ever feel like home? The two quotes below do not give answers but suggest that people focus on physical survival above everything else,

"A home to me is a place of safety, shelter, comfort and welcoming. Good prospects of work, affordability, good travel links and with a suitable social scene. For me also there should be a mix of diversity and inclusivity and a feeling of community and belonging." (Mick)

“For me, it would be a – a home would be somewhere that is warm and it’s a roof over my head. Somewhere where I feel comfortable and safe and away from burglars and murderers and drug dealers and rapists.” (Mark)

Chapter 8:

Findings; Residential Mobility & Relocation Experiences

8.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses interviewees' relationship to residential mobility. It starts by highlighting experiences of having to move to new locations. It then looks at experiences of having to move from locations before considering peoples' experiences of mobility within the context of other aspects of their lives. The chapter contrasts the stories of people who have experienced homelessness and relocation with evidence from other stakeholders.

Diagram 17 Key London Locations In Chapter 7 (Red = Location Of Hotel)

Source: Anderson (2022), Adapted From London List Recruitment

8.2 Displacement Experiences of Having to Move to New Geographical Locations

Reflecting the forced mobility dialogue of writers such as Lenhard (2022), Pleace et al (2022), Desmond (2017) and especially Bauman (2003) some of the people in hotels described how they were presented with a *fait accompli* in terms of location. Mo did not know where she was headed until she was in the taxi. Because she was almost destitute, she felt she had no choice but to accept what was offered.

> *"They didn't tell me [the hotel I was being referred to] wasn't in London. I expected it to be in Westminster, Hammersmith, Kensington – somewhere in Central London. They didn't tell me it was Croydon. I didn't realise until I was in the cab. I wasn't sure whether to accept but they wouldn't have helped me to find another place."*

Darren had been sleeping rough in Hackney and was put in a hotel in nearby Dalston for one night and then moved to the other side of London the next day. He described how this had worried him because he was *"used to Central London*." Silver also described how she had also been sleeping rough in Hackney. She was then told by street outreach services that a cab was coming to take her to Croydon. She was moved to an area without discussion or choice, *"No one… said [where I was going to stay] …once I'd come from Hackney to here (Croydon)"*

Reflecting the writings of Lancione (2013) and Jackson (2015) people described how they were subject to rules they did not understand. The interviews showed no correlation around geographical history, connection, or personal preference and which people were placed. The previous chapter showed how key parts of home for interviewees included a sense of safety, feelings of belonging and proximity to family/friends. None of these seem to have been considered. For example, Silver and Kodil had no prior knowledge of the area where they were placed. Whilst Ranter and Harry were sleeping rough in Heathrow Airport (26 miles away) before being sent to Croydon.

Like the experiences of displaced individuals described by writers like Jackson (2015) and Lenhard (2022) some people said their explicit requests had been ignored. Harry unsuccessfully objected to being placed in Croydon despite bad

historical and social associations with it. Similarly, two individuals explained how they had been initially moved into areas they liked because of a sense of belonging and social connection. Then were told to move to Waterloo without explanation. Alano explained how "*I was [sleeping rough] on the Wandsworth Road. Then they moved me to a hotel in Clapham Common. Then they moved me here. I don't know why."* Sheila described how she was living in a hotel in Finsbury Park, surrounded by people she knew. Then she was told by street outreach staff that she had to move to another hotel within an hour. Initially, the worker was not sure where the new hotel was, so Sheila did not know her new destination. She felt angry about having to move location but unable to refuse (see Chapter 9 for more details).

Like Hoolahan's (2022) literature on homeless shelters being set-up in reaction to a crisis in the USA, Jenny, one of the of a hotel managers described how the original plan was for the hotel to be for 'low-need' clients who had recently lost their jobs and just needed accommodation. But, because hotels were opened with little planning, hers had become a *"default option"* for people who were still rough sleeping after other hotels were full. Therefore, like in Hoolahan's (2022) research, the rationale for where people were placed was based on available hotel space rather than needs or wants. This was confirmed by Pat, the Government Advisor who stated,

> *"people had come from pretty much anywhere across London [to whatever hotels had spaces]. There was no kind of real potential position of "right, well this particular hotel is targeting, this three, four boroughs" and so on."*

For some interviewees, these experiences of displacement to access hotels mirrored a historical pattern where accessing specialist support had required frequent mobility. Stan explained how he had to move to Lewisham to access a *"dry house after Rehab."* For him moving from one part of London to another had been a regular pattern to access support. He accepted it with equanimity *"Over the years I've done (lived-in), sort of, many different boroughs.*"

Reflecting the female experiences described by writers like McCarthy (2017) Alison talked of having been twice moved to locations she did not like to access

accommodation. Firstly, she went to a hostel in an area "*surrounded by prostitution, [and] drugs."* Then she moved to a flat in a South London where she felt like *"fish out of water"* adding *"You know my area is Central London?."* Barbara outlined how frightened she felt in a previous location where a man attacked her and tried to steal her bike. The issue of fear of crime also impacted on Stan who described how *"turned down three properties in Brixton before. All because I knew the areas from drug use.* Like Bimpson's (2022) interviewees, Claire had been required to be mobile to escape domestic violence. She had been in seven refuges, *"here, there and everywhere."* Further reflecting Bimpson's (ibid) writings, a number of other women described how forced mobility interconnected with the threat of losing their children. This undermined the maternal aspect of their personal identity and concept of home. Kate and James described their experience of feeling unwanted in a seaside town yet having to move there or lose their children *"They (local people) were snobbish [to us] because we'd been to prison and stuff.."* Claire felt forced to give-up care of her daughter *because "it wasn't fair to move her from pillar to post."* Eventually the local authority placed her *"far, far, away*" from her daughter making it hard to stay in contact. Kate and her partner were placed in temporary housing by Social Services. Firstly, they were moved to the coast and then on to another town seven miles away. Four years later they were relocated thirty miles along the coast and then their children were removed from them.

Interviewees asked to relocate to access housing had been faced with difficult choices. Accept what was offered even if it did not meet the personal definition of home or risk breaking the rules and having support withdrawn (similar to Hoolahan's, 2022 shelter dwellers). As mentioned in the previous chapter Barbara and Stan were offered flats which were too far away from their families and in areas where they did not feel safe. With her daughter's encouragement, Barbara eventually accepted hers. By contrast Stan declined three flats that were offered because of the location. In doing so he took a risk which led to him being 'struck-off' the list for accommodation. Fortunately for Stan this decision was reversed on appeal. The flats he was viewing were ring-fenced for people with support needs and a history of rough sleeping which meant there was "tolerance" of his refusals. Nonetheless his decision had been a huge gamble..

Spike and Jackie, who advised people experiencing homelessness, were increasingly working with new people as the result of the relocation policies of other local authorities. Spike stated he had worked with people from about ten different towns within a 25-mile radius, whilst Jackie talked of homeless households who had approached her Outer London service after being moved from parts of the centre. Ironically, Spike and Jackie's also provided support to people who had been moved away from their areas.

8.3 Displacement Experiences of Having to Move Location When Homeless

Although the moves described in this section often involve shorter distances than those described elsewhere in the chapter, it was still significant how much people talked of moving locations whilst rough sleeping. Motivations for mobility included avoiding arrest, seeking safety, accessing help, and feeling isolated. This reflected the continual feelings of mobility as displacement described by authors like Jackson (2015) and Lenhard (2022). Mo described her experiences of rough sleeping thus *"For the last 4-5 years I have been unable to use public transport because I didn't have any money. So, I just walked around Central London, Waterloo, Westminster, Kensington*." Belinda stated that *"people had been bothering me"* when she was sleeping rough, so she had needed to regularly find new sleeping-sites. Ranter explained how he been living in a garage in Eastbourne in 2020 but when it *"got cold in October"* he undertook a longer journey to move site to Heathrow Airport *by "jumping the train".* But the airport routine meant "*there are only about 5 hours of sleep."*

Reflecting the quotes on the meaning of home at the end of Chapter 7, people frequently described histories where safety and survival became their focus. This sometimes meant being on the move frequently and going wherever they could to avoid rough sleeping. The choice was between the streets and what Lancione (2013), described as territorially unacceptable places. At this point location took on a secondary importance compared to finding somewhere relatively safe. Sheila had spent most of the last decade on the streets and she described mobility as a survival mechanism. Leonal had been living in a garage owned by his friend as it felt safer than being in the local park. Kodil had oscillated between sleeping on the

streets and the bus. Silver explained how she had been found by outreach services when she was using an old car as shelter. Storey described seven years of "*living room-to-room, living in disused garages, rough sleeping, living in crack houses."* Kodil expressed how he had begged immigration services to send him back to the country he had fled, because, he had been afraid he was going to die on the streets of London *"like an animal."*

The experiences of mobility as displacement reflected Bauman's overall analysis of choice being dependent on socio-economic status. Lack of autonomy was also a perennial aspect of peoples' lives which often forced them to be mobile. Reflecting the power dynamics Lancione (2013) described decisions by agencies of the state often had massively negative impacts on peoples' lives. James described how he been 'on-remand' for about a month on a criminal case which did not end up going to trial. When he was released, he found the locks changed on his flat, meaning he lost his home and possessions. After this he resumed a previous relationship with Kate and their children (aged 5 and 2). However, as described earlier their children were removed by the local authority and "*everything went downhill, they took the housing away from us there…and then we went back to drugs."* Kristine, who had been a 'looked-after child' spoke of how homelessness has been a perennial part of her life, *"I've been on the street since the age of 11, do you know what I mean, very streetwise. I was a hustler from the age of 11 because I had to be."* Belinda talked of how she had been arrested for domestic violence and was not allowed to go into her former home. She ended up homeless as a result. Prichard also attributed his homelessness to bail conditions. Kristine told how she had been away from her home, caring for her son in a mental health hospital as there were no local beds. Her brother had been looking after her flat and ignored rent arrears letters which led to eviction. Sheila had been immediately evicted from a homeless hostel on to the streets because *"I had a bit of a fight in there, so they threw me out and Hackney wouldn't rehouse me again."* Alison's flat was ravaged by damp, so her friend had allowed her to use his house whilst he was away. One day she found the property boarded-up and her belongings thrown away. Christopher described how he had been evicted because people he had been living with viewed his behaviour as "*more and more weird"* and had complained to the landlord. He described how he tried to enforce his right

to not move without a Court Order and in response was threatened with violence by the landlord..

One important aspect of the research was the difference in experience of people who ended up rough sleeping for the first time because of Covid-19. They did not seem to have the 'ground-down' fatality of individuals who were used to being 'punished' by the decisions of others, Instead, they seemed grateful that the hotels offered them an alternative to the streets. Even though they were now in an unfamiliar location, which definitely was not home, they felt optimistic. Alano, Leonal and Saul ended up homeless because they all lost their jobs and accommodation at the start of the pandemic,

> *"Usually I work around the country, and I was always staying in hotels. And basically, when this fucking – when the shit hit the fan with this, the hotel that's the company, that I was living in, it closed down. So that was me out on the street; I had nowhere to go. Like, fair enough, our job stayed open for a week after this coronavirus started. I said, where the fuck am I going to self-isolate? I had money in – I had a couple of pounds and every time I tried to get booked in places I couldn't get booked in anywhere." (Saul)*

> *"I basically lost everything. I lost all my clothes; I lost – Fucking. It's harder than people think. Yeah, I was* sleeping *rough for three weeks. Do you know, for the first three days I was sleeping I had no sleeping bag, no blanket, no nothing. Just what clothes I had. And then people come around at night and one of the first nights I was there someone came around and fucking robbed my bag. Three quarters of my clothes were in it." (Saul)*

Whilst they ended up experiencing rough sleeping because of Covid-19, these individuals may have been saved by the hotels from a period on the streets or in hostels. This meant from they could get stability, hopefully obtain a job, and avoid sinking deeply into the destructive wasteland (Bauman, 2003). A grateful Saul said, *"I wouldn't last six months on the street."*

As well as illustrating Bauman's point about socio-economic stratification, the people who experienced rough sleeping because of Covid-19 are an example of

the need for the substantial safety nets which Bauman (2000, 2007) said have been depleted. Mo and Kodil stories showed the lack of support which existed before the virus. Both were both destitute in Westminster and survived via odd bits of income, day centres, soup runs etc. Yet this destitution (with the risk of assault, rape, starvation, dehydration, sickness, or death) was not enough to create a crisis requiring a response from Government.

8.4 Examples Of The Lack Of Other Choices Impacting On Home And Homelessness

The displacement described by writers like Hoolahan, (2022) and Jackson (2015), Chao (2022) etc is not just of continual mobility, but also being forced to places where one does not want to be. Khan talked of how he had felt *"in a vice"* when he was told by his solicitors that he had to accept a hostel, albeit in the location he favoured, because if he refused "*you're intentionally making yourself homeless*." He described how, *"I live in a hostel with thirty-five people. Half of these people have alcohol or drug addiction, and it's like they're just going downhill, and no one helps them."* Belinda and Alison both described moving into frightening hostels as the only option available to them. For Alison this was still preferable to her experience of rough sleeping which she described thus,

> *"So, I was living, I don't know, like a bear really, with nothing. Yes, I don't know how I survived. Really, I didn't know where to look. Sometimes I didn't know where I was going to live from one minute to the next because the trauma was more than anything else."*

Dean spoke of how sometimes he had chosen to return to the streets because friends who had been accommodating him had *"turned to alcohol"* and were "*too crazy for me to stay there"* Christopher spoke of how he had tried to live with a friend in the past but *"I moved in with him and he was very abusive."* Khan talked of how he had struggled to find a home after leaving prison, *"after my release, after the first month I didn't have anywhere to go so I'm sleeping on friends' sofas, friends everywhere, sleeping in night shelters, on the bus, in churches, anywhere and anywhere."* Jackie, who offered housing advice to asylum seekers spoke of people having been forced to live in packed, inhumane detention centres,

"The housing manager had come round [to her] and said that she (the asylum seeker) [has] got an infestation of mice. He said you need to clean up [your room] and she said, "well I haven't been provided with a hoover" and she was ten days post caesarean section. He said, 'get on your hands and knees and scrub the floor'."

This quote from Kate sums up the paucity of choices that people sometimes described, *"luckily about 3 weeks before the Coronavirus we had somewhere to stay. It was just horrible and the man we were staying with was disgusting. It was a nightmare."* The word *"luckily"* does not necessarily seem to complement the rest of the sentence. However, this accommodation followed a period of *"sleeping on the floor of London Bridge. Outside shop doorways and churches. At crack houses, in cars and car parks, squatting. Anywhere."*

Some people reflected Lancione (2013) description of 'help' being restricted to what providers offered, rather than what recipients needed. For example, Prichard described how his friend had been moved by the council into a property with a hole in the floor. Belinda asked the question of why in the past *"they (the council) sent me [to flats] with people who take drugs?"* Alison talked of having moved into an unfurnished flat without even a carpet or mattress. For twenty years she lived in this property riddled with damp. The type of 'support' was offered on a 'this-or-nothing' basis. The 'choice' often seemed to amount to either rough sleeping or accommodation with no control over location, dwelling, tenure, or length of stay.

8.5 Examples Of Others Having Choice And Control Over Displacement And Location

"Tourists stay or move at their heart's desire. They abandon a site when new untried opportunities beckon elsewhere. The vagabonds know that they won't stay in a place for long, however strongly they wish to, since nowhere they stay are they likely to be welcome. The tourists move because they find the world with their (global) reach irresistibly attractive –the vagabonds move because they find the world within their (local) reach unbearably inhospitable. The tourists travel because they want to, the vagabonds because they have no other bearable choice' (Bauman 1998: p. 87).

Reflecting Bauman's quote above and the impression of many academics (both from Critical Realist and Home Making schools) interviewees felt that agencies made decisions which forced them to move to locations.

The Role of Local Authorities

Reflecting the writings of Hoolahan (2022), Hao et al (2021) and Jackson (2015) one of the most criticised agencies was local government. As described in Chapter 2, local authorities have a variety of legal responsibilities to people experiencing homelessness depending on the household situation. Some participants described experiences of being told by council that it was not worth them asking for help. Silver described being given a booklet when asking for assistance, and Ranjit stated the *"council will not help me*." Whilst neither Silver nor Ranjit understood why the local authority were refusing to help them, other people ascribed negative motives to local authorities. Prichard believed it was part of an attempt to clear local people like him out of the area, so that people from other councils who would pay more money for rent could be moved-in. He reflected the de facto 'social cleansing' that other critics of neoliberalism (such as Desmond, 2013) make. Others were closer to the views of Hoolahan (2022) and Jackson (2015) in claiming that other local people were being prioritised over them. Mick claimed the social housing rules froze him out. Ranjit claimed he was deserving of help because he did not use drugs or alcohol, but that the local authority *"only help big business."* A lot of interviewees echoed Bauman's (1998, 2000, 2007) perspective around the poorest being treated as an underclass by what remains of the welfare state. Sheila stated*, "I find the system very corrupt"* adding that local authorities "*don't give a shit"* about people experiencing homelessness. Ranter believed that local authority employees *"have contempt and think people [experiencing homelessness] are stupid."* Silver did not trust her local authority, a feeling made worse not being able to get face-to-face appointments to argue her case. Khalid talked how he believed that "*some boroughs don't want to help*." He had been found to be in Priority Need and thus legally entitled to housing, but he still felt local authorities *"don't believe you."* He believed there were aspects of racism in his treatment by council employees. This was something Silver also perceived. She believed that because she was black the local authority wanted, for racial reasons, to separate her from her child.

In contrast to local authorities, there were only three mentions of central government. The first was by Ranter, who claimed that the country was run by *"right wingers following ideologies"* of not wanting to build homes and creating an uncaring society. The second was by Sheila who claimed that the government only cared about the middle class and always had done so. The third was an asylum seeker Kodil, who believed the Government had made life as unpleasant for him as possible so he would agree to deportation. He felt he was only allowed to access a hotel to stop him becoming infectious to others. Finally, Stan aimed criticisms at all politicians rather than governing ones, *"The politicians don't think about it (the needs of people experiencing rough sleeping). They kind of think that people who've experienced homelessness are a bit different from everyone else."*

The Role of Landlords

Reflecting the massive powerful differentials built into neoliberal society which Lanicone (2013) emphasised, landlords were mentioned frequently as 'misusers of power'. There was no distinction made between private sector and social landlords. There were two key examples given of power misuse - a) landlords providing inadequate quality accommodation; and/or b) landlords evicting people without justification. Alison felt landlords *"don't treat people who have problems right. Because they don't really care; [their message is] if you don't like it, just go."* Ranter explained how he felt rules were unfair and coercive. He described how he felt forced to sign unread forms and agree to a curfew as a condition of receiving accommodation, "*Things can be inconvenient and unsuitable, but they don't care. Take it or lump it [is their approach]*." He believed that he was going to be forced to live in private sector accommodation in the future, which would mean even less control than when he had been in social housing. He suggested he might choose to go back onto the streets than agree to this.

> *"Landlords take advantage; the amount you have to pay for things, the standard of accommodation, the number of people crammed in. The fact [is] you don't have any freedom in these flats – you couldn't have a friend coming over and staying over, that'd be against the rules."*

Interviewees often described the type of consumer ethos amongst landlords that Bauman described. They treated homes as transactional commodities. If poorer tenants did not like the accommodation offered, then they were expected to leave

and live somewhere else. Meanwhile the landlord would find other tenants who would accept what was offered for the rent required. This sees housing (and tenants) similar to Blackshaw's (2005) example of a burger to be sampled then accepted or rejected. With the ongoing possibility of subsequent disposal and replacement. Quality of housing becomes a matter of negotiation rather than rights or ethics..

The Role of the Homelessness Support Sector

Alongside local authorities and landlords, the third group which interviewees were heavily critical of was 'the homelessness sector.' This broad term covered organisations running hotels, supported housing, hostels, day centres and street outreach services. Barbara believed around 75% of people working in the sector *"don't care*". She added that *"people who work in hostels aren't telling the truth. Most of them don't care about us because we're from the streets."* Silver was even stronger in her language,

> *"[People working in homelessness services] don't give a fuck about our situation. They don't understand where we've been. We are still people. They look at us as if we are different, we are not different. It's just circumstances, they change and life changes with them."*

Some of the criticism of the homelessness sector focused upon the structures rather than those delivering the services. Ranter lamented a lack of facilities where people could sleep during the day. Khalid complained that homelessness agencies would not help vulnerable people with *"a crack, [or] heroin addiction"* until they slept rough. He said,

> *"they have to see you three or four times outside sleeping somewhere before they will assess you and then it's, like, they'll put you in a hostel for six months, or more, even if you do not want to go in one."*

This point about hostels was also picked up by Barbara who claimed that little positive happens inside them. She claimed people are unwillingly moved to locations where they surrounded by other vulnerable individuals. This means they are unable to progress with their lives,

"There are beautiful people in there, there are big artists, people who have got a good job in them, you know, can work the wood, build house, there is anything you want out there, they need meetings, they need directions. And when they leave the hostel, the people are still in the [same] hole because they put them in the same environment, it's not hostel, it's a house but it's the same people [they are surrounded by]. They cannot stop their drugs and all that."

This was echoed by Stan who claimed people were moved out of hostels without the support they needed. His story was interesting because he was moved into a block with other vulnerable people but still thrived,

"At the end of the day, you know, they (the people leaving hostels) still need support, they still need to be connecting, active, being aware of what's going on and giving where they can back – maybe that's volunteering or – They need to be eating properly; they need to be sort of able to budget with their bills. You know? It's not just about throwing someone a set of keys and saying go and live there, boom, boom."

Other criticism of the homelessness sector was targeted at the way the hotels were run. Darren described how the only hotel offered to him was one being used by people who "*should be in…mental hospitals"* Kodil argued that people like him who were migrants without 'status' were being singled-out and not being offered help. Sheila went further and argued the hotels had a corrupt agenda,

"[A staff member] is saying [to me] 'they're throwing loads, the government are putting loads of money into that hotel, get on it.' But it's all right her saying that. I said somebody might be getting on it in this hotel, but it certainly isn't the fucking, people experiencing rough sleeping from what I seen. Maybe it's the staff who are getting on it. Someone is skimming it off, but it isn't us."

The Role of Wider Society

A smaller group of interviewees, who felt they had not been assisted with their homelessness experience did not specifically criticise individual institutions but more nebulously thought 'nobody cares.' Reflecting Bauman's (1995, 1997,2005,

2007) overall description of neoliberalism they saw the behaviour of agencies like landlords, charities, and local authorities as reflective of an increasingly individualised society. Ranter talked of how *"this country doesn't care, it's just so insensitive. It's an awful country compared with Europe."* Stan explained how people who were moved from one location to another were forced to change support services without anybody caring about the impact. Barbara sceptically, asked" does *anyone care?"* about what would happen to the people in the hotels once the Covid-19 danger was over.

One aspect of Bauman's (2007, Bauman & Donskis, 2013) analysis was how the welfare state has led to resentment amongst people who feel they have contributed taxation. He also pointed out how poor people, viewed as 'outsiders' (Bauman, 2003) moving from one location to another are often 'scapegoated' for social problems. Hoolahan (2022), Hao et al (2021) and Jackson (2015) all described 'competition' within groups of people who experience homelessness for help. Dean (2020) showed how differing vulnerable groups were perceived differently. This was reflected in the views of some interviewees who thought others, who were less deserving, were given more choice, control, and help. Silver held this view,

> *"I only had my job. I had a child, but I wasn't receiving anything. No benefits at all. I always worked in this country, always. For me, finding myself in that situation and not receiving any support. It was very upsetting. I was somebody who contributed a lot. And when I needed them the most, they turned their back on me."*

Khalid described himself as a *"born and bred Londoner"* and argued that very few other people in the hotel matched this description and so were less deserving of help to live in London. He believed that he was being pressured to relocate from his home city because of an influx of outsiders. He described impoverished individuals who migrated to London *"because their areas are deprived, they want to find work."* He named a variety of areas such as Liverpool, Cornwall, Kent, Scotland, Sheffield, Doncaster, and Leeds where he thought people were coming from. He was even more scathing on preferential treatment he perceived being given to EU Migrants and people who had come through the asylum system.

"I find it ironic [that] a refugee can come off a boat in the channel and will be housed. Where[as], if I walk out of here where I am in London Bridge and walk towards Westminster, I see people lying in the streets in tents, people drunk, homeless etc. No-one gives a shit about [those]people, but we care more about people coming across in a boat. [As a born and bred Londoner] I'm a minority, do you understand me? I'm a minority."

An interesting contrast to this view came from Kodil and Ranjit who had both been asylum seekers. They believed that their immigration status was a barrier to them receiving help. Kodil felt that people with drug and alcohol issues, who were 'choosing' their lifestyle were being given preferential treatment over him because he was a refugee. As somebody with HIV and PTSD he felt he was more deserving but was being left to die on the streets. Despite being a refugee from Algeria he perceived himself as a local person and those coming from elsewhere in the UK as outsiders,

"There are people from [places like] Peterborough, Manchester, Liverpool, coming to London. They get a house. Everything is good [for them]. They are not going to college [unlike me]. I ask the Home Office to help me, but they don't."

"The housing and homelessness parts of the council will not help me. I am not drinking. No drugs. No marijuana. Too many people are drinking. They will help them, so why not help me. I am no problem. I don't bother people. I don't understand [why they will not help me]."

Sheila argued that, despite contact with various homelessness agencies, the only person she could trust for help was her friend Lisa. Alison believed that nobody understood the distress she had experienced in losing her partner and home. She felt everyone expected her to just keep functioning normally and solve her own problems. Khalid believed that no one wanted to help him now because he had been in prison. He felt abandoned by those close to him, and that no other help was available. *"Even if you've got medication, if you've got a doctor's letter, a council letter, even if you've got a probation officer, no one really gives a shit."*

Saul talked about how his own recent personal experience of rough sleeping had changed his perception of who he could trust. He said none of the family and friends he had helped in the past had assisted him during Covid-19. He described how some of the strongest help he had got was from strangers rather than people he would have hoped he could rely upon,

> *"And then I actually got speaking to this old lady one day. She's seen me sitting on a fucking – It was a Sunday. She's seen me sitting on a bench. I was reading a paper. Two bags with me. She said, come over here, starts speaking, she was like, you know, are you OK? And yes, yes, fine. And she said, like, well, are you living local? I said, no, I'm not living nowhere at the minute.*
>
> *She goes, you are joking. So, I sat – You know, I spoke to her for about an hour. And do you know, it turned out she was a psychologist. So, anyway, listen to this one. Right? This is no – I'm sitting there for about – I was still sitting there for about two or three hours. And the next thing is –*
>
> *Then she come walking back to me again with this man, and they handed me a fucking big container full of spaghetti Bolognese. She went home and she made it fresh. She gave me a little bottle of red wine. You know them little, tiny bottles of red wine? And she turned around and she says, here, have this. I says, no, no, I says, look, I don't want charity. I don't want any your money. I said food, yes, the money, no. She said, no, no, you have to take it."*

Despite Saul's positive story, I was left with an impression that most individuals felt that, when they have asked for help, doors were repeatedly slammed in their faces by local authorities, homelessness charities, landlords, statutory services and even their own family.

The Role of Money

Reflecting the individualist, consumer/commodity neoliberal society described by Bauman (1995, 1997, 2005, 2007), many people believed it was their lack of money that meant nobody wanted to help them. They felt in a vicious circle of

homelessness and worklessness. For example, Mo did not have access to internet facilities to research job vacancies. If she were to get a job, she had no bank account for wages to be paid into. She could not get such an account until she had wages to pay off outstanding bank fees. Kodil, an asylum seeker, explained that he felt he would be forever trapped in poverty because he was not allowed to work legally. Khalid because of his criminal record and gap in his employment history feared nobody would ever employ him. Sheila, who hoped to work as a cleaner said that without a job she would struggle *“to keep going.”* Storey explained how, unless he obtained work, he was condemned to be living on £55 per week due to DWP penalties. Yet the small amount of money he was living on made getting a job more difficult (see Homeless Link, 2013).

Some people spoke specifically about how lack of money was directly impacting upon their choices around geographical location. Mo wanted to return to France where she was born. However, the rules around habitual residency in both the UK and France meant that, without a job, she was facing destitution whether she returned or not. Others focused upon how they felt the private rented sector was inaccessible without the income from paid work. Silver thought she would not be able to find a landlord who would accept HB, especially without a large deposit. Stan had a social housing flat, was building a network of friends, and doing volunteering work. However, he was anxious of what would happen if he lost his social housing,” *I’m hoping that I won't ever have to go back to private rental, because I wouldn’t be able to afford it, to be quite honest with you.*” Making the point as to the importance of money, Christopher described how his parents had given him £2000 so that he did not end up rough sleeping *“I was so unwell I didn’t know what to do with the money, so I used that to get a bedsit in Greenwich*.

The contrast between Christopher and the others illustrated Bauman’s (2000, 2007) point around access to financial resources. He talked of how neoliberal liquid modernity has rendered many people permanently ‘redundant’ who would previously have been temporarily unemployed. These are the people who had little hope of obtaining the work needed to escape the financial wasteland of poverty (Bauman, 2003). Yet many did not want to move to cheaper locations where the chances of obtaining paid employment are even slimmer.

Why Did Some People Have More Control Over Their Lives and Locations Than Others?

In contrast to 'redundant' individuals a handful of interviewees had found work and were confident of accessing accommodation. In Bauman's (2003) terms these were the more economically useful who could see a way out of the wasteland. They were not seen as failed consumers/commodities. People such as Saul, Lucas and Luis spoke of the hotels in terms of respite, stability, and gratitude. They accepted their lack of control over things such as location and displacement as part of their circumstances. They reflected Bauman's (2007, Bauman & Donskis, 2013) belief that the increasingly predominant ethos in neoliberalism was one of self-help rather than reliance on the state. They argued that some people had not tried to find a way out of homelessness and expected too many resources from others. Saul explained how he had to use his wits to get to work and contrasted this with people in the hotel whom he felt had wasted opportunities.

> *"[I said to the Ticket Seller at the station] I haven't worked eight weeks. I do not have a penny to my name. But if you let me get in here and I get paid next Friday, I said I'll come in and I'll take you out for a fucking good drink. He just said to me get here for 5:30 every morning. There's a station here with no barriers. So, like, fair play to him."*
>
> *"There's one fella in there (the hotel) and he's had numerous flats. He's had four or five flats. I said, for fuck's sake, I said if one of them – if one flat was offered to me, I said that would be my home for the rest of my life. You know? You would look after it. And, as I say, they do – they're on benefits; they only have to pay a small rent. So, like, how do they end up losing the place, when they're given a great opportunity for home security for the rest of their life?"*

Saul held a belief that three-quarters of the people in the hotels would be back on the streets within two months of being given flats. Similarly, Lucas expressed dismay that some people in the hotel complained about the *"free fucking food."* Luis stated that, although his homelessness experience was tough, other people did not appreciate how generous state support was. He described how people in the hotels should not expect a flat in a location of their own choosing,

"You can't expect the Government to give you a house. There is not a house for everybody. We need to be real. You cannot take everybody of the street and give them a house. People need to be more understanding. If they are given a room, it's already very good. There is not a flat for all of us."

Other interviewees were less positive about their situation but did not feel powerless. They felt they had to 'fight' authorities to get help. Ranter, Khalid, Prichard, Mick, and Kate all understood 'the system' enough to have had solicitors or charities arguing their cases. Khalid talked of how this involved needing to compromise and be patient,

"you have to go through the procedure, and it might take years to get some kind of accommodation, and that's where I am at the moment, I'm coming up to the two years, I'm just playing, and using the system"

One reoccurring theme is that interviewees in their own flats were more positive about levels of control and relationships with agencies. This was even the case if they had been involuntarily relocated to obtain a home. Many had ended up living in areas they did not like, but still felt grateful to the agencies who had helped them. Alison said *"I was lucky that the manager took pity on me. He knew my circumstances.""* Kristine expressed her ongoing gratitude that she had *"got my first council flat, which I've [now] had for five years, yes!!!"* Barbara described how her Housing Officer "*said 'listen, it's been difficult but I'm going to find something for you, and she found something for me*." Christopher had also gained a flat which he liked, *"[its] quite a nice little flat and it has good connections and it's close to the hospital and stuff, so I haven't done too badly out of it."* He explained how *"it was furnished which was lovely, by a Housing Association called Hexagon."* The rest of Christopher's interview had been a distressing story of cyclical mental health crisis, chronic homelessness, and exploitation by others. Yet since had moved into his own flat he had a history of *"really good volunteering roles"* with four homelessness organisations including Groundswell. He had combined these with setting up,

"A social club for socially excluded adults who had issues of homelessness, learning difficulties, substance misuse, mental health,

mild physical illnesses and stuff like that so we set up a social club that started off as a Friday night place for people to come and socialise, especially for people who are coming off the drugs [and ended up] funded by the Council, by the NHS and by the National Lottery."

All the people I spoke to who were now in social housing were working or volunteering even though they had moved to an unfamiliar location. Stan spoke about how volunteering had allowed him to be *"involved in different projects and to be active"* He was grateful for the expenses payments he received and hoped that *"I would have had a year in with my foot in the door and I'm hoping that I'll be able to progress into full-time work. "*Alison had been volunteering on a women's mental health research project. It was the first time she had been able to work since the trauma of her partner dying and she described the role as a "*really great experience."* Khan hoped the work experience he was gaining at Groundswell teaching English and working as a health advocate would help him *"get into that kind of field."* Belinda had qualified as a gardener with another homelessness organisation and had been volunteering at Groundswell for over 5 years. She was effusive, *"I was starting to do the garden with my friend Tim from Romania…we were doing beautiful things to the outside*" and *"[The] work with Groundswell, this has been helping me a lot. Because when you work with Groundswell you come back to the community, you know, you come back to the society."* Stan also talked of how he benefited from the human interaction of volunteering, "*I like to do in-reach where I used to go there [into a hostel] every week and spend a couple of hours…with the residents."*

Some of these interviewees had achieved qualifications as part of their volunteering, but they also had an impressive scattering of other skills like social work degrees, linguistic abilities, and being a chef. It may be that these skills were representative of a level of stability which made them capable of adjusting to a new location. Alternatively, the flats may have had facilitated stability and adjustments..

The difference was stark between individuals who had 'footholds' in society and those who did not. This reflected Bauman's argument that one needs to consider socio-economic status in its totality rather than purely poor v non-poor. Individuals might have a similar lack of material resources, but assets like marketable skills

and understanding of systems made a difference. Those people stuck deep in the wasteland (Bauman, 2003) without such assets could only make minor changes to their lives, *"[once the hotel closes down] I might have a bike and trailer to take my stuff around" (Ranter).*

8.6 Perspectives From Other Stakeholders

Many of the interviewees seemed to presume that the people running the hotels were deliberately withholding information and help from them. However, the other stakeholders described a different picture. Reflecting Bauman's analysis of the weakened state, they felt nobody was in control of events around rough sleeping and Covid-19, and actions had been reactive. The different perspectives between stakeholders as to what the hotels were supposed to be achieving and the (lack of) future plans for people staying in them was reflective of this of this reactive nature. In the sense of getting people off the streets and then working out what happens next, they reflected the emergency, warehousing narratives of the shelters described by Hoolahan (2022) (albeit this was not the intention of any of the stakeholders who were trying to provide the best support in the circumstances).

Bryan and Jenny who ran two of the hotels explained how they were "*opened-up very quickly, with short notice for an uncertain amount of time."* This meant recruiting whatever staff were available including ex-employees and agency workers. This led to" a *lot of work, upskilling people with limited experience but lots of empathy*." Lonnie, who commissioned some hotels argued that one could only understand them within the context of their origins. Namely, the GLA had responsibility for some aspects of rough sleeping policy in London whereas most responsibility for general homelessness lay with the local authorities. Lonnie explained the situation suddenly faced.'

> *"The first week of March [we were] pretty much in tears as a team because our health colleagues were saying…out of the 9- to 11,000 people who are people experiencing rough sleeping or in hostels and all that kind of – that world, we reckon about 1000 people could die from this because of their comorbidity."*

This imminent threat drove their actions; the priority was

> *"Get everyone out [of communal services like shelters] as soon as possible into hotels, followed by people on the streets because at least, although it's horrific to say [they are] a bit less exposed from kind of community infection [than people in communal services]."*

Lonnie felt that they had to undertake this emergency response and then work out practical implications afterwards,

> *"At its peak there were 14 hotels and one of those hotels includes the Care Site, which never has more than two or three people in at any one time, which is just incredible. Until a couple of weeks ago it was 1400 people; now we're in a position where we've got 1200 people in effectively ten hotels now."*

> *"It's been mad…setting up contracts with hotels, setting up the laundry service, the food – so three times – food three times a day, for a logistics company, security. Because obviously with lockdown, like, laundry wasn't happening, no food was happening in hotels."*

Clearly, there was a lack of clarity as to whom exactly the hotels were aimed at and what types of help, they were supposed to give. Jenny who was involved in negotiations over the setting up of one of the hotels explained how initially the belief was that it would be for people who had lost accommodation during Covid-19, rather than people experiencing longer term rough sleeping.

> *"Because it was the last hotel to be set up and was meant to be for people who were newly arriving on the streets. Obviously, what's happened is we've found that that's not quite the case and we do have people with some [kind of] pretty major support needs who are going in there."*

And Bryan described how,

> *"there's a good chunk of people [living in the hotel], like sixty integrated people who are just they're fine you know? They just needed a room, you know, there's still lots of things to be done, support, wellbeing and*

> *all that sort of stuff but not the same sort of cohort [as many of the other people in the hotel] who have been in and out of homelessness services for years."*

Ben reflected the language of Lancione (2013) around the nature of support being provider driven rather than user-led. His organisation ran other hotels, and hostels, talked of how these *"integrated people"* were not the 'type' they usually worked with, and he was concerned that they would end up *"institutionalised in the homelessness system"* by receiving disempowering support. He expressed concern that accessing the hotels created an incentive to sleep rough,

> *"My worry is that some of that [integrated] group will have been in hotels all expenses paid for the best part of six months and when we say here's a private rented sector flat…you are going to have to pay your rent and everything else and your bills. How far are we equipping people to do that?"*

However, Pat, a Government Advisor was more reflective of the pragmatic, humanitarian approach which Lancione (2013) described. She was supporting agencies running the hotels

> *"that to a degree, is not the point in my mind. They are in that situation [of being currently homeless] and we need to be trying to understand and work with them. I was talking to [a hotel provider] this morning and I have been putting them under a little bit of pressure because they had some people that they were ending accommodation for. And I was kind of like "hang on a second, we were hoping that people would at least be getting single service offer" … [so now] we are going to work with them, we are going to try and get them PRS Accommodation."*

Lonnie described the reactive nature effectively. The hotels were chosen because they were empty due to Covid-19, not because they were particularly suitable. She said, "*we needed to get people into some sort of self-contained unit."* The speed of the response meant there was a minimal amount of planning which went into them. This meant that the basis for which hotel people ended-up in was driven by vacancies.

> *"At one point we were thinking of we were going to have to open up two hotels a day and move at that pace and move in 100 people or 200 people a day, but we – that just wasn't possible because staying at a hotel you've got, yeah, those staffing but you also need to speak to the local authority and get health providers on site and all that and, you know, that takes at least a few days. In a normal world that will take a year. In this world it took a few days." (Lonnie)*

Jenny and Bryan believed services had responded in an unprecedented way in terms of *"acting swiftly"* to help people. Bryan listed how joined-up working had come from street outreach, local authority housing, substance misuse services and primary/mental health services. However, Jenny and Bryan identified several barriers they faced in supporting individuals once they were in the hotels. These reflected wider issues of social exclusion such as language barriers, limited recourse to public funds, unclear immigration status, forthcoming changes to residency statuses, large numbers of people with support needs with whom no pre-existing relationship existed. The quick nature of referrals meant that staff knew little about peoples' histories, local connections, existing support networks, migration status etc. Bryan described it thus,

> *"We had a lot of referrals coming from one of the Heathrow hubs where people were being found returning from abroad and so no understanding of their history. So, we had quite a lot of people coming in being categorised as like no support needs, they had, actually, ended up going on to be some of our most challenging sort of guests, but even more challenging because nobody [in support services] knows them. "*

All of these were challenges enough but there were also some specific Covid-19 related issues which had never been faced by homelessness agencies before. People were expected to quarantine on entry, wear PPE and social distance whilst in the hotel. Lonnie found it *"astonishing…how willing people have been to come in and work with us and stick with rules that are pretty difficult in terms of not being in contact with other people."* But Bryan said that some people could not cope with these behaviours,

"If the behaviour is managed and they're generally comfortable being quite isolated, they're able to keep themselves to themselves. But generally, with that [other] sort of client group (person with longer-term experiences of rough sleeper), that's unlikely or it's rarer."

This was shown in Bryan's example of how in the first week,

"We had one eviction from the Croydon hotel with a young chap who just found it impossible to comply, [he was] very aggressive with staff, wouldn't comply with social distancing and [the quarantine] which comes from it being…a protected site."

Whereas several people living in the hotels complained of not getting adequate support and feeling stuck, Jenny and Bryan both pointed to the small number of evictions and abandonments as evidence of success,

"The last thing we want is for people to go back onto the streets. That would feel like a failing considering the amount of goodwill there's been. The multi-disciplinary teams which have been working together really well. If only it could always work like this." (Bryan)

Similarly, Lonnie argued that the success of the hotel commissioning policy should be judged by the fact that the mass deaths that his health colleagues had predicted never happening, "*it's just staggering how our sector has come together and just done everything we can to protect this group of people."*

Whilst Ben believed that there was "*nothing new about people experiencing rough sleeping being stuck"* in locations they did not want to be. However, he was concerned that, similarly, the hotels might become perceived by people as a 'gateway' to a flat.

"So, the longer that people spend in that [hotel] accommodation the more entrenched they become in saying 'the only thing I am going to leave for is this [type of flat, in the place I want]. I have put in this much [so] I am going to get something out of it.' Unfortunately, it doesn't work like that, but that's something I've often had said to me, and I think that is the case, so you know, what always worries me, so conventional pathway stuff, but it worries me about the hotels actually. We should be

housing people in that sort of, we should have enough, enough movement on accommodation to move people when they need to move."

Michael, who was providing housing advice to some of the people in the hotels, said local authorities were not liaising with them about their post-lockdown plans. He felt that clients had no choice but to psychologically" live *in the moment."* There was little clarity as to what the strategy would be for finding accommodation when the hotels closed. Bryan and Lonnie described their perspective on finding accommodation,

> *"[The hotel is] due to close on the 20th of July. I think what's going to happen…there's a lot of money being thrown at this, so I think that a lot… [will be done to overcome the] big barriers to try and get people into accommodation. So…like rent deposit schemes are being sorted, so therefore I think the majority will be able to be accommodated. (Bryan)*

> *"[the accommodation offers for] some people by the 20th of July [closing date] will still be unclear. There will still probably be in some battles with some local authorities about, for people who private rented might not be appropriate. There might be some battles with local authorities who want to question the local connection. So, then what they (the Commissioners of the hotel) need to do is…probably look at…trying to extend this hostel again, buying another couple of weeks or so, and then also moving over anybody left [to another hotel]." (Bryan)*

> *"[running the hotels] is the long, hard work…and, at the same time, I'm working out how to wind down hotels. But if you're moving 150 people of a hotel, where do they go and [you also have more] referrals coming in, So, you can't close somewhere. So, yeah. it's been a nightmare".. (Lonnie)*

Once again one is drawn to the similarities of Hoolahan, J (2022) description of shelters opening in San Fransisco. The perception of what defines a crisis which leads to a change to (previously unchallengeable) rules which previously have restricted access to territory (a la Lanicone 2013, 2023) regardless of the awful

lives people were experiencing. People destitute on the street was not enough of a crisis to withdraw the rules and bureaucratic processes described by Hough and Jones, Lancione (2013), Pleace et al (2022) and Pleace et al (2022) to be waived. However, under Covid-19 this then happened. But also, as Hoolahan described the reactive nature of this provision meant that it was not allocated based on need, nor were the services provided driven by the wants and needs of the people living there.

Bauman and several home making authors (such as Chau and Jackson, 2015) all raised issues about people being continually displaced because nobody was clear whose responsibility it was to house them. The issue of the fraying welfare state under neoliberalism was exposed by the lack of provision in place for flawed consumers/commodities. It is worth noting that despite the language of choice underpins the neoliberalist philosophy, the question of options for people in the hotels was not even on the agenda. Instead, the struggle was to find any sort of housing for them.

> *“[there is a need for] five or six different other organizations to bring…[another] 400-to-600 PRS properties [plus] a need [for] about 400 properties [for people who cannot move into PRS]. Of these [housing] the non-UK nationals [who cannot get Housing Benefit] is the biggest challenge because they need somewhere to stay for a lot longer, because where do they go if a hotel closes? And obviously we don't want to put people back out on the streets. So, we are looking at kind of slightly longer-term arrangements [for them].” (Lonnie)*

A governmental advisor was sympathetic to interviewees who did not know what the plans were for them when the hotels closed, but felt the responsibility lay with the local authorities and people running the hotels,

> *“Now [local authorities are] ending some of these hotels because… [but]they are keeping some on for a little bit longer… people [are] not knowing what the plans are with them, that for me is, absolutely, horrendous. That’s the one thing…that they should know exactly what’s going on for them as an individual, so that they can be informed and have an element of choice.”*

Another anonymous stakeholder explained it was unclear which local authorities would be responsible. Would the authorities where the hotels were located face the additional 'burden' of finding homes for people? Or would they become the responsibilities of the local authorities where they had slept rough before accessing the hotels. Again, these were discussions taking place at governmental levels, rather than involving the individuals themselves,

> *"The numbers on the street are now down to pretty much a zero figure, that's been maintained, and now they are actually looking at really positive move on options for people and they are the ones who are looking across. The biggest challenges are the finances for [councils is] …little because I think you know, there's always the stuff around well, 'how much it would cost to accommodate all these people' … but the bigger picture is what you see in the press about the loss of revenue…so that the broader financial picture for the local authorities is very, very tough. Government's doing what they can [to help], but arguably…it doesn't appear like its sufficient and they (local authorities) are going to have holes in their budgets that could inevitably lead to further cuts."*

> *"A lot of the London boroughs are very concerned because of [they fear] people [leaving hotels] being pushed back to them which is fair enough. But if people [in the hotels] want to go back there's an element of a joint responsibility there. I think some [local authorities] have thought that the people who have been picked up in the GLA hotels, [that] the GLA will just solve it, so it's almost a case of a problem away from than they [the local authorities] need to consider before some of these people start coming back."*

The dilemma about whose 'responsibility' people were reflected Bauman's point about how the poorest are continually displaced as flawed consumers/commodities. It was as if authorities who helped risked being punished by losing resources. Bryan asserted that local authorities had to be pressed to have hotels in their area because they were fearful that there was no exit strategy and other authorities would use it as an opportunity to *"wash their hands"* of

people experiencing rough sleeping from their area. And secondly by an anonymous source arguing that that this was what happened,

> *"I think on the Friday [48 hours before the hotel opened up] I'd been told that the council had said "no, it can't be here". So, I think then it (the decision) got escalated to somebody senior who said "yes, it's going to happen." I think there was a lot of anxiety…about people not being left as the council's problem…sort of a lot of anxiety around that that people were just moving back to the streets [when the hotel closed] and them inheriting a lot of very complex sort of clients." (Bryan)*

> *"As I suspected would be the case, it came to pass, the local authorities have all had massive fallings-out with each other and with the GLA. So, you've got kind of fourteen GLA funded hotels and then each of the local authorities have done their own thing as well. So, ZZZZ Council have got four [hotels of their own] I think. And basically, what the local authorities have said is that 'they'll rehouse the [local] people themselves [who are] in their own hotels but they're not willing to take on responsibility for…[other] people on top of that.' And so how…[statutory authorities] have responded, is to turn around to the hotel providers and say 'well, [it's] over to you guys [to sort out]. (Person involved in the running of one of the hotels)" (Anonymous)*

Before leaving the issue of the hotels, for balance it is important to note that Jenny made two points about any criticisms of the help offered. Firstly, she emphasised that people who had been successfully moved-on from the hotel might have a more positive view but would not be part of this dissertation, due to the difficulty of contact. Secondly, she it was impossible to let people know when the hotels were closing because nobody was sure how long lockdown restrictions would last. At the point of interview, the immediate future of the hotels depended upon such external factors as the Covid-19 infection rate, hospital admissions and medical researchers' success at creating a vaccine.

8.7 Other Stakeholders On The Wider Structural Political And Economic Climate

As described in Chapter 2, critics of neoliberalism such as Madden & Marcuse (2016) and Atkinson & Jacobs (2016) described how it changed the nature of housing to a private commodity. The ‘golden straitjacket’ which Friedman (Thompson, 2023) described was evident in legal and financial constrictions which both governmental advisor Pat, and the leader of Basildon Council Gavin Callaghan described. They talked of a decade of local authority cuts and benefit reductions. The impact of these constrictions was a necessity for local authorities to increasingly use relocation as a way of housing people experiencing homelessness. Their descriptions of was of reluctant displacements rather than active exclusions,

> *“As we start looking at what the next steps are going to be for people [to be found homes when they leave the hotels], particularly in terms of London, there’s the worry there around, well everyone’s going to start then looking at where the affordable properties are; inevitably on the outskirts of London and start going further and further afield.” (Pat)*

Although he was referring primarily to statutory homelessness families, Councillor Callaghan explained how displacement was often considered the only option by local authorities,

> *“There are 55,000 people who are homeless in London, and the consequences of that is that there is an overspill out to us. You have issues that are – you know, you have spending power issues, so you have London boroughs who have a vastly superior spending power to their neighbouring authorities outside of the M25 ring [and they send people to Basildon]” (Gavin Callaghan)*

> *“which means that people who've lived in Basildon all their life, in a rented home for the last 20, 25 years, suddenly are finding themselves being undercut by London boroughs who can add another £10,000 or £15,000 a year onto the price of the property and, therefore, the Basildon lot are turfed out. We have nowhere for them to go. All that means, is that they’re moving further and further down the railway line.*

Because we're having to use Southend and we're having to use Clacton and Colchester in order to house some people. If that means that they've got a roof over their head in Southend or Colchester rather than being on the streets in Basildon, then we'll do it." (Gavin Callaghan)

From a voluntary sector perspective, Jackie described what was happening in her Outer London borough. She seemed to adopt more of a Bauman -type (2003, 2007) view that local authorities were actively trying to 'dump' people who were perceived as undesirable.

"I work in a borough which takes in a lot of homeless families from more expensive boroughs in…[who] all buy up properties in Newham or lease properties in Newham and then put all of their homeless families here as well. Which means that a lot of families [experiencing homelessness] in the borough are not connected to local services like GP's and health visitors and children's centres and schools and nursery nurses and mental health services and social care everything like that because they are not visible to those services."

Jackie went on to speak of how people who have been displaced to new areas have been *"shaking and crying and going 'I cannot go, I cannot go. You know like I would rather live in a tree. I would rather take my chances on the street' because they feel so brutalised by the experience."* She described people refusing offers of permanent relocation, 'preferring' to remain homeless.

Councillor Callaghan detailed a number of social problems which have emerged because of this increased displacement of vulnerable people experiencing homelessness. He added "*our domestic violence team are now seeing a real increase in the number of cases that they are dealing with."* He reflected the concerns that Hau (2022), Hoolahan (2022) and Jackson (2012, 2015) described around 'arrivals' being blamed for a lack of resources by the local community

"the people who are regularly coming [from London to Basildon] … are involved in drugs, they are involved in addiction, they require support in terms of AA, in terms of drug rehabilitation, but they're not turning up here as looking at the accommodation they're coming into as some

form of the Priory. They're, actually…being put in the way of [drug and alcohol] temptation more by the places and the accommodation".

"You're literally having people in Basildon…saying "that's a London block and that's a London block and that's a London block," and that builds resentment. It doesn't build communities; it just builds resentment."

This perspective was mirrored by Siobhan McDonagh MP who spoke of *"a place outside Manchester that got to be known as Little Bromley"* because of the numbers being relocated from South London,

Reflecting Jacobs and Marshman's (2008) description of the poorest being treated as a *"blot on the landscape"* (p.814) to be hidden from view, Gavin Callaghan, and Siobhan McDonagh both described how it was not just the mobility between local authorities which created problems but also the specific areas of boroughs that people were being displaced to. Siobhan McDonagh said that Central London local authorities were *"Putting them in red light districts, putting very vulnerable people in very difficult locations."* Gavin Callaghan gave a new meaning to the word 'warehousing' when he described people being placed in

"a large warehouse on an industrial estate that has been converted into accommodation under the…. permitted development rights. So, 86 [homeless] families next to car breakers, waste tips, lots of skip hire, heavy dirty industry. We've had people who have been moved into Connect House as a result of gang violence only to have members of opposite gangs also in there because nobody knew who was there. And so, I mean nobody talks to anybody else."

At the level of individual dwellings, Jackie reinforced this 'dumping' narrative. She described the experience of families placed in Newham by other local authorities who then took no interest in their well-being,

"[women and children experiencing homelessness] sometimes have [to stay in] a mixed gender place so you have got you know, men with mental health problems and that kind of thing sharing a bathroom or a kitchen. You know sometimes in the hotels I am sure, unfortunately you may have

had experiences of that, but bed and breakfast hotels where the, even the corridor between your room and shared bathroom is quite a frightening place to be and you have got really traumatised kids you know, cowering behind furniture as they listen to drug [use] or people who are high arguing the odds like outside their door."

It is fascinating that the same governmental department (MHCLG) has responsibility for both local authorities and community cohesion. The language of local decision-making has been increasingly common within policy (Localism Act, 2011) yet it seems ineffective against consumption-power. The leader of Basildon Council felt he has little real power to help people experiencing homelessness in his borough because of the greater financial strength of London local authorities. Their extra resources allowed them to pay more rent for properties in the Basildon area. However, these London authorities might argue that their approach is dictated by their lack of local affordable rented accommodation due to supply/demand issues and an unregulated market. Reflecting the thinking of Bauman (2007), Glynn (2009), Atkinson and Jacobs (2019), Siobhan McDonagh suggested the 'real winners' of the entire process were 'rogue landlords' benefiting from the market. They were acting unethically, but legally, to maximise profits,

> *"why are we stuffing money into the hands of people who don't maintain their properties? The other side of it is that very few councils prosecute landlords or unregistered HMOs or disrepair or anything. So, it's a completely unregulated market. The councils aren't regulated, and the landlords aren't regulated."*

Reflecting Friedman's (Thompson, 2023) description of the power of markets, Gavin Callaghan suggested that local authorities cannot regulate/prosecute because private rented shortages are already the norm, and they fear worsen situation. Pat, who had previously worked in a local authority, before becoming a governmental advisor, predicted that the PRS would become even more unaffordable, "*Discretionary Housing Payment has been cut in some areas and that was the thing that basically was papering over the cracks."*

Siobhan McDonagh, Jackie, and Pat all argued that there was a lack of strategic thinking as to whether relocation is a suitable way of addressing homelessness,

“for the London boroughs and [nearby authorities], they are going to be increasingly looking for the specific pockets of places where there is accommodation available and whether its affordable. Now without the infrastructure to support people correctly, that’s also another potential accident waiting to happen really.” (Pat)

Finally, an anonymous interviewee described the difficulties of co-ordinating the move-on of people from the hotels across various levels of Government.

“Because of the pressure that they have been under, the GLA and councils haven’t been great in terms of communication, and I know that we’ve pushed them on that, and it’s from what I gather difficult when GLA obviously have taken responsibility for a lot of this and from central government we have got to be balancing the different politics there as well. GLA want to lead everything in London. MHCLG might not be completely happy with everything that’s happened in the way that it happened, but at the end of the day they can’t step on the toes of others.” (Anonymous)

The thoughts of other stakeholders described the housing precariousness which authors like Pleace et al (2022) and Lancione (2013) felt was embedded into the system. This meant, if hotel-dwellers managed to secure accommodation it would be of a type which lacked many of the components of home (such as security, stability and belonging). This situation meant there was a likelihood of returning to rough sleeping, potentially undoing any benefits of their period off the streets.

“My worry is that all of what comes afterwards will not allow them to continue the progress that they’ve made, and I worry that if its back to what it was before, yes, we will offer you a flat in somewhere you don’t know, you might not get much support, you have got to pay the rent,. I worry that then, people could very quickly go back to where they were on the streets and that is not, for me, us taking this opportunity by the scruff of the neck and trying to make it work. Yes, we have got money to [support people], but it’s not necessarily going to be sufficient when you are talking about three hundred and odd local authorities in

England that are going to want a piece of that pie, and who have got different levels of numbers that they need to support.” (Pat)

8.8 Conclusion

This chapter has shown how little choice people experiencing homelessness and, especially, rough sleeping over have over the locations where they reside. The language of ‘displacement’ rather than ‘relocation’ is a better description of peoples experiences. There is a real sense that people experiencing rough sleeping or homelessness are increasingly expected to move to locations where other people do not want to live. For most of the interviewees there is no sense of postmodern freedom in mobility, but more a feeling of being ‘pinballed’ around by the decisions if others. Within this environment it is hardly surprising that most people do not feel they have any control which locations they live in. It is a paradox within neoliberalism that the language is increasingly of personal responsibility, yet people have no choices over their lives.

Any process of seeking to address homelessness which operates in this way risks leaving individuals without a sense of safety, security, belonging or hope. It also creates a ‘ripple’ displacement effect. This threatens to undermine community cohesion. The social problems created by the relocation of families experiencing statutory homelessness should serve as a warning to the idea of moving all the people in the hotels into a clutch of cheaper areas without consideration of the consequences.

Chapter 9:
Findings; Personal Stories of Relocation

9.1 Introduction

This biographical chapter allows for a more rounded and integrated interrogation of some of the themes mentioned in the last 2 chapters. It facilitates peoples' lives being viewed more holistically. Bloor and Wood (2006) suggested one form of biography is that of 'narrative' stories, and that is the approach used here. By Creswell and Poth's (2018) categorization, this narrative data was a hybrid of biographical study and autoethnography which they argue provides useful data tools to show how people experience events.

Van Manen (1997) spoke of the value of allowing people to use more than one mechanism to describe their experiences. Covid-19 meant face-to-face contact and visits to locations were difficult; however, participants provided rich material in the form of diaries, text messages, photographs, and at least two phone conversations each. The diaries contained whatever people wished to say about their stories. The photographs were of hotel accommodation, medication, eviction notices and a move-on flat.

There was an element of pragmatism in the sampling process, in that all five were willing to stay involved in the research for a few months. All immediately consented to more in-depth involvement than a single interview. Three were keen to do diaries, whilst the others texted me regularly with updates. Participants were also selected because their narratives offered interesting data. Their stories reflected predominant themes from Chapters 7 & 8 and served to 'flesh-out' salient issues. All of them had interesting things to say about the importance of location, mobility, and the amount of control they felt they had over their lives. All had experienced displacement from homes and living in locations not of their choosing.

Demographically, the male-female ratio of three-to-two was reflective of interviewees. Four were white British, aged 35-52 approximately and had good English language skills. Whilst the fifth was African, in his 20s and did not have

English as his first language. Four were heterosexual and one gay. One had a partner, the other four were single. One had an Assured Shorthold Tenancy, one was in Temporary Accommodation with no known tenure status[48], one was in the Waterloo hotel and the other two were in the hotel in Croydon. Although pseudonyms are used, anonymity feels different compared to Chapters 7 & 8. The biographical narrative feels more like 'sharing' a person's life-story than do the individual quotations and descriptions in those chapters. The concluding section of each narrative 'places' their story within the analytical framework and existing literature.

9.2 Narrative 1 - Mick

I knew Mick prior to this dissertation as he had been a work colleague in 2007. He became part of the research project in response to a 'tweet' put out asking for people who have had to move location because of homelessness. He volunteered to take part, rather than my asking him. When I spoke to him, he was, in his early 50s. in poor health and living in a one-bedroom flat in Medway with his two dogs. He was on Employment Support Allowance (ESA) and HB. Mick told me he had a history of renting bedsits and one-bedroom flats in West Kent and London. He had worked sometimes, but he had been usually reliant on benefits.

I had visited his previous home in Greenwich a few times. It was a location and flat which he seemed happy in,

> *"I had lived in my South-East London flat for 11 years. It was privately rented through a Lettings Agency who came to inspect every 3 months or so, and it was always in good order even with pets. For a one-bedroom flat it was large, with a nice sized garden and a full basement below. The owners were an older couple living in Cornwall. The main thing about my flat was the rent hadn't changed since I initially rented it,*

[48] Legally he must have had tenant or license legal status of some form. But he said he had never seen any documentation to this effect.

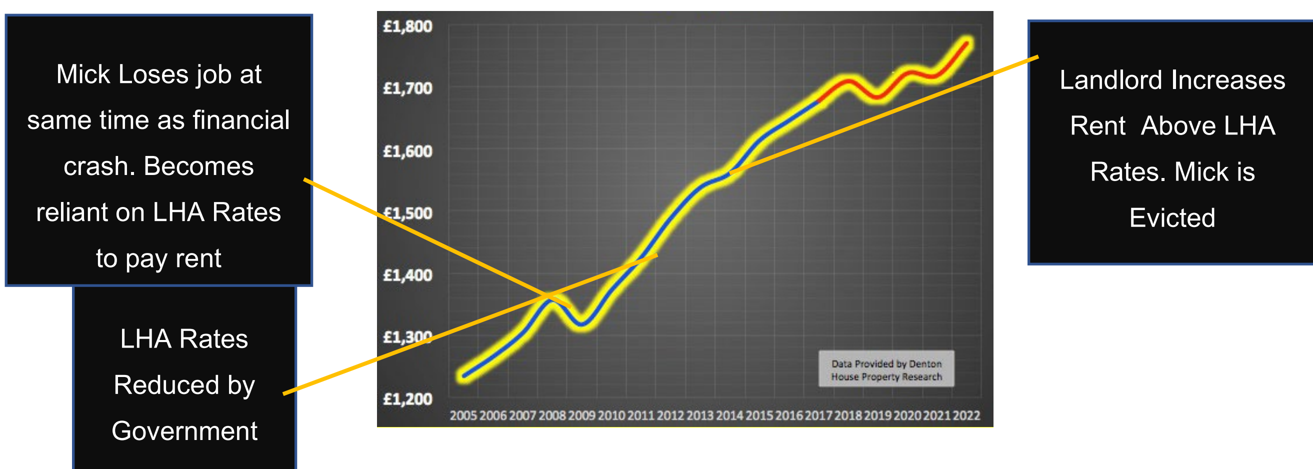
remaining quite a bit under the local LHA, which for private renting was exceptionally good, especially in SE London."

Because of the lack of rent rises, the 2011 LHA reductions did not have an immediate impact upon his ability to pay the rent. In 2013 this changed, when his rent was increased considerably, to an amount he could not afford. Mick blamed lettings agencies, rather than the landlord, for losing his home. He believes, to try and increase their own profits, they told his landlord he could *"get double"* his current rent. Mick had been an employee in charitable sectors where work was often part-time and insecure. He was unable to keep up with the new rent levels.

"I'd had a few bouts of unemployment, working in the charity sector was volatile at the best of times even more so during a recession which hit charities the hardest in. 2012, I left a charity which I helped found and which had been paying me to work a couple of days a week, I fell behind in rent payments."

At this point Mick was served a No-Fault eviction notice ending the tenancy (see Chapter 2) meaning he was expected to leave. This was quicker and easier for the landlord than allowing arrears to reach a threshold for mandatory eviction. Mick, again, believed that the lettings agency was behind this process and had suggested to the landlord it was the most straightforward way of evicting him. Mick reflected many of the themes in Chapter 7 & 8 around the importance of a lack of money and power differentials with landlords.

Diagram 18: Average Rent Levels In Greenwich 2005-2018



Source – Anderson (2022). Adapted from Denton Property Housing Research

Mick was in a situation where he was forced to into mobility by local rents increasing and HB reducing (Diagram 18).

In terms of the mobility choices at the time, he believed he had three, none of which were both feasible and attractive. His first option was to try and find somewhere to rent in, or near, London. Reflective of his lack of choice he could not even find a bedsit which would accept him and his dog on HB. At one point Mick was offered a privately rented one-bedroom flat in Southend in Essex (37 miles from Greenwich) which was affordable. However, he refused this because, *"I was told to put my dogs down as it would be more attractive to landlords. My dogs were the only lifeline, my only reason for living at that time."* Secondly, he could have moved *"up North"* where he felt he would have been able to afford the rent, but that he did not want to be far from London where all his family and friends were. There were no parts of the North of England where he had significant contacts or history. This left the final option which was to become homeless. Whilst he was waiting for his eviction period to expire, he approached his local authority for help. However, his experience reflected that of people in the Chapter 8 who felt the council did not seem interested in helping,

> *"Because I was a single male in my 40's Greenwich Council would not help me at all. In line with their homelessness policy, I was able to join the housing register, but it would take an average of five years to be offered a council property if there wasn't anybody in more need. I was classed as a C Priority, the lowest priority."*

Greenwich's Allocations Policy (Royal Borough of Greenwich, 2015) states keyworkers and council employees "*who need to live' in the borough*" are put in 'Band B' ahead of people like Mick. The local authority has responsibility for services such as education and so has a vested interest in prioritising the needs of teachers and other keyworkers over people in dire housing need. Contributing to the community in an arbitrary way seems more important than being homeless. Mick was allocated Band C, and Table 7 illustrates how unlikely he was to get offered a flat.

Table 7: Social Housing Waiting Times In Greenwich

Answer from Greenwich Council to the question: *"[When was] The last time an applicant on band C was made an offer for a property (not including properties with any medical adaptations, restrictions or age-related properties) in all 2,3 and 4 bed categories."*

SIZE	REGISTRATION DATE	OFFER DATE	LENGTH OF TIME WAITING FOR OFFER
2 Bedroom	21/1/12	16/2/22	10 Years 1 month
2 Bedroom (Parlour)	18/07/12	24/02/22	9 Years 7 months
3 Bedroom	6/11/06	24/1/18	11 Years 7 months
3 Bedroom (Parlour)	06/11/2009	24/01/2018	8 Years 2 months
4 Bedroom	27/10/2009	30/03/2016	6 years 5 months

Source: Anderson (2022): Adapted From A Freedom of Information Request (WhatDoTheyKnow, 2022)

Mick had one asset, an old car which he sold for £300, and he used this to find an alternative to living on the streets, but by official definitions, he was sleeping rough illegally (Public Health England, 2020)

> *"The night before my eviction date [from my home in Greenwich], I purchased an old caravan, made of tin, leaky, cold, a few windows missing with no running water, toilet facilities, electricity, or cooking facilities. The law says you cannot live in a caravan that is parked on the road. The following day I moved into the caravan with my dog and lived there for the next 11 months."*

Over the next year, reflecting the experience of some other interviewees, Mick fought to get Greenwich Council to help him. Having worked in the voluntary

sector, including for homelessness organisations, he had some knowledge of the system. He enlisted the assistance of the homelessness charity, Shelter, and featured in their adverts.

> *"Despite Shelter advocating on my behalf and me appearing in a promotional video for them and in local and national newspapers, the council would still not raise my priority level saying I was not a priority for them."*

Living in the caravan, Mick had put on weight due to not being able to cook properly and stress. This culminated in a severe heart attack. He was also a man in his late 40's with a history of severe childhood abuse and depression. It was likely that the combination of stress, depression and sleeping rough had caused permanent health damage. Yet, he was still not judged to be in Priority Need by the local authority. Eventually, Shelter decided to test Mick's case in the Courts. This was around the same time that scrutiny was increasing of how local authorities were interpreting homelessness legislation following a recent landmark judgment had outlawed the exclusionary 'Pereira Test' (Homeless Link, 2015[49]).

> *"[Supported by Shelter] I decided to take them to court regarding my priority level and the conditions I was living in and informed them of my intention. Within a day I was telephoned by the homeless team and was told there was a landlord in Chatham that had a property that would suit me and my dog. This was not a council property, but they would pay the deposit and as the rent was higher than the local LHA, they would pay the landlord the top up for the next two years direct to the landlord."*

Reflecting the stories in Chapters 7 & 8 Mick was faced with selecting the least bad option. Either be displaced 28 miles away to a location of someone else's choosing or live in an illegally parked caravan with no utilities. If he did choose to move, he did not know what would happen after Greenwich's two-year commitment to top-up his HB ended.

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[49] This analysis was actually written by me in my previous role but is no longer credited in that way.

> *"I came to view the property and met with the landlord who informed me he'd already been paid the top-up money in advance and been told I was taking the property. I had no choice than to accept the property rather than living in the caravan." (Mick)*

Mick believed it was the fear of going to Court which changed the position of the local authority. This reflected the arguments of other interviewees in Chapter 8 that local authorities were trying to find ways not to help them, and that one needed to understand 'the system' to have a chance,

> *"I had a call a few days later [from the Council] regarding the complaint and my intention to take it to court and was told that as I am now housed, I am not deemed as homeless [any longer], and therefore it is pointless taking it to court."*

Having been forced to the leave his home location, Mick had lived in Chatham for 6 years at this time of the interviews. Despite his flat being adequate, the surrounding area and his isolation have meant his experience has been bad,

> *"To be honest there aren't really any good points to where I live now, compared to other places I have lived. I have made a few friends and joined a couple of local charities, becoming Chair of one of them. I do still have my dog and even now have another as a companion for him! My health, both physically and mentally, has suffered I believe, as a direct result of me living here. I have had a heart attack and suffer with my weight, depression, and other related ailments. I'm constantly depressed and lonely with many of my friends and family seemingly abandoning me."*

Having been subject to displacement from a location where he felt at home, Rick now feels he has no control over his future. He has been told by both local authorities that he cannot go onto their respective Housing Registers for a potential move because a) he no longer lives in Greenwich and b) is not viewed as eligible for help by Medway council. He is an example of someone being caught in the fraying safety-net, and localisation of decision making described in Chapters 2 & 5. His future housing is very precarious, as the rent payments on his home remain 'topped-up' by Discretionary Housing Payments made by Greenwich

Council. Similarly, to the people in the hotels he lives in an existential fear of a letter arriving saying he must leave. Because of his deteriorating health he is now on sickness benefits rather than unemployment benefits as he was in 2014. Hence, his chances of obtaining work, the route out of poverty advocated by Government Ministers (robz40, 2013. Conservatives, 2015, Pring, 2015), is declining rather than increasing.

At the end of the research, Mick had little idea of what the future had in store for him or how to influence it. He sent me a message saying his landlord had told him he might be evicted again. This took place in the same week that it was announced that rents in Chatham had risen by 21.4% in one year (Lawford, 2022).

> *"I received a phone call from my landlord on a Monday giving me 5 days' notice that he intended to put the property, I rent up for sale with me as a sitting tenant. I was assured that my tenancy was secure. He was to show two different estate agents around both my self-contained one bed flat and the two-bed above me. The estate agents came round and inspected the flat and left. The landlord then phoned me the following Monday to inform me that the estate agents had said he would get more money if he sold the properties empty and so he would be issuing me with a Section 21 eviction order.*
>
> *Since then neither myself nor the upstairs tenant have received our section 21, and it has been 2 weeks. I cannot do anything until I receive the Section 21 and have been told several times by different people that my local council will be unable to help me with accommodation and despite the law changing regarding pets, again I have been told that my dogs will be a disadvantage. I am trying to stay positive and not get anxious or stressed as I cannot do anything until the Section 21 has been received.*
>
> *I have viewed a local flat that a local letting agent thought would benefit me. It has had a reduction of over £100 in a monthly rental making it £750pcm which is still £150 more than the local LHA. On a basic UC payment leaves me with £150 to cover utilities, food, etc and no*

guarantee that 6 months down the line rent would not be increased or property being sold. This is typical of the rental scene in Medway."

Analysis of Mick's Biography

Mick's story was a stark example of the housing precariousness which Pleace et al (2022) described. At the point of an economic crash in in 2008 Mick lost his job and become part of a doubling of the size of the private rented sector dependent on HB (Diagram 8). This coincided with huge increases in governmental borrowing, and the 2010 election of a coalition government trying to reduce the size of the state via austerity and benefit reductions focused on the working-age poor. In 2011, the narrative from Government was that that people on benefits would have to make 'more realistic' rental choices[50]

As soon as the HB reductions of 2011 were introduced Mick's status as one of Bauman's flawed consumers in the rental market was amplified. As Powel (2015) showed the choices open to people like Mick in the circumstances were limited or non-existent. Even though he was housed at the end of my time speaking to him, he was still on the cusp of homelessness. One of the only decisions he could have made throughout was to give up his dog. Bailey et al (2023) entitled their research into to the relationship between people experiencing homelessness and their dogs as "A part of me". For Rick there could be no "home" in which his dog would be

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[50] The then Prime Minister David Cameron continuously used extreme and atypical cases to push this agenda. https://fullfact.org/news/how-many-families-are-claiming-100000-year-housing-benefit/

absent, hence he was faced with choosing between one type of homelessness (rough sleeping) or another (being without his only companion). In choosing a caravan with his companion Mick was protecting social aspects of his home against rules which said he had to lose them to get help (Schneider,2022, Herring 2019. Naiman, 2022).

The way that Mick lost his home (and was in danger of doing so again) because the landlord could make more money from another illustrated showed the de facto ethical framework in which the UKs unregulated, neoliberal rental market operates. As described by Glynn (2009), Atkinson and Jacobs (2016), decisions to evict people from their homes are ethically unquestionable if they maximise profit. Indeed, they could be seen as morally good, in the sense of securing a decent standard of living for oneself in the future. As Rutan and Desmond (2017) described it there is no sense that rising rents making homes unaffordable to people like Mick is a governmental issue. Instead, in the individualist world described by Bauman, the onus is on people like Mick to make choices, even when he had very few.

Mick's story shows how far neoliberalism has colonized thinking since the Conservative Manifesto of 1979. Part of the rationale behind introducing HB and tenancy reform in the 1980s was to give consumer-power to the unemployed by paying their rents so they could 'compete' in the private rental market people against those were earning wages (Margaret Thatcher Foundation, Year Unknown). In an earlier era, when HB rates tracked rent rises, Mick might have had negotiating power with landlords competing for his rental 'custom.' By 2011, this had been reframed as excessive drains on the public purse. The coalition government did not just introduce the rent restrictions that started Mick's journey into homelessness but that they also claimed they were doing it for peoples' own good. Since 2011 the mantra has been that work is the best route out of poverty with the threat of loss of accommodation being presented as an incentive out of the 'feckless lifestyles' that right-wing commentators berate. The fact that a person (and a dog) living in a disused caravan is treated as an illegal act of criminality rather than a sign of an unjust society shows the supremacy of individualism (Bauman, 2003, 2007) and territorial exclusivity (Lanicone, 2013, 2023).

Mick's experience after he lost his flat were reflective of the fraying welfare state which Bauman (2000, 2007) described. In an environment of limited social housing, benefit cuts and local authority underfunding there was no provision for somebody like him who did not incontrovertibly have a legal right to help. Being a 50-year-old man living in disused caravan without heating, sanitation or electricity was not enough to qualify him for assistance. Mick had no control over HB rates, his landlord's decisions, or Greenwich Council's policy priorities.

However, reflecting the socio-economic stratification Bauman (2003, 2007) described Mick did have some advantages over other people in this chapter. His history of working for charities, and understanding of the system, did help him eventually get expert advice and support. A crucial point was that (reflecting Lancione's 2013 territorial authority writings), Mick, and his advisors, understood how to challenge the system within its own rules.

Eventually Mick was offered a choice between having no flat or losing his sense of belonging and social support. He had to prioritise some aspects of home over others (Hao, 2022). After a year in a caravan without heating or sanitation he chose the flat. The price he paid was losing most of his friends and family and ending up isolated (Hoolahan, 2022). All the work on the importance of social support contained in the home making literature (Schneider 2022 and Hoolahan 2022) was of no importance to decision. Similarly, just as Jacobsen and Merriman (2008) described, like an unwanted *'blot on the landscape'* (p.814), Mick was moved into an area with high levels of poverty, 28 miles away, where his housing precarity continued.

9.3 Narrative 2 - Prichard

Prichard was one of the first people spoken to during the research. Further conversations via phone, text and email took place over a couple of months. He was put in contact with me via somebody I knew from a lived experience group I was a member of. I was told that Prichard was keen to talk about his experiences. He was much harder than Mick to pin down to scheduled conversations and would, occasionally, send me unprompted text updates about his life or ask for advice. Unlike Mick, he was less focused on previous experiences of displacement and the route that led to him being homeless. Instead, he spoke more about the

current location where he lived. and the way he was being treated by his landlord. Overall, he provided less information than Mick, but with many similar themes. During the time I was in contact with Prichard his situation deteriorated, with him losing his accommodation at the end.

Prichard explained that he had become forced out of his home when he was sent to prison with a condition of bail that he could not return to his accommodation. He felt his ex-wife/mother of his children had psychologically abused him on an ongoing basis. He was a former heroin addict who had managed to stop using via a methadone treatment programme. Like Mick's description Prichard felt buffeted around as part of a wider political and economic environment beyond his control. He, too, felt unwanted by his local authority

> *"Councils are trying to get people out of London and into places like Bedford and Luton so that richer people can move into the places in London. Landlords in Bedford then think they can make more money because they can let to London councils who will pay more money. These councils will then check that this place is okay. Meaning local people are left with properties which are either poor or further away. "*

As a condition of the local authority providing him with Temporary Housing, he was moved into a location 20 miles away from his children and friends. This reflected the take-it-or-leave-it choices described in Chapter 8.

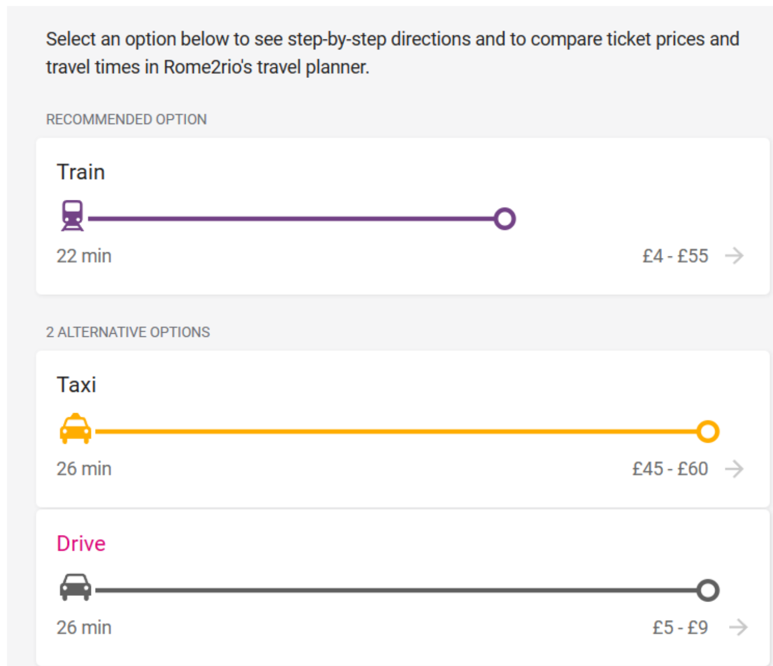
> *"It was [either move to] this town or another one [even further away]. They council told me they couldn't offer me anything else. The council said 'if [you think] it's too far we can take your name off the [housing] list."*

> *"I don't have a driving licence. The council say phone up and we'll get you a taxi for appointments. But that's only during office hours. If there's an emergency, they are closed. A friend of mine gives me a lift now and I pay petrol but before that I had to get taxis. It's £45 each way."*

This was an area with little public transport, no direct bus routes, and an assumption that people can drive. Prichard said of it "*It is the worst thing I can think of really. I have to get a taxi there and a taxi back to see my kids. It takes at*

least half an hour." He added "*I have never been away from my kids for more than a couple of days. Half the time I can't sleep because I worry about them.*"

Diagram 19 Potential Transport Options From Prichard's Current Address To His Children's Location



Source – Rome2Rio, 2023

Having felt forced to accept displacement to the accommodation, he stated that he was scared to complain or ask questions. In the five weeks he had lived there, the local authority had only contacted him to threaten him, *"I have been told by the council 'we won't give you a tenancy, do as we say, or we'll evict you. Then we're not obliged to house you again'."* This fear of eviction and more involuntary mobility seemed perennial for Prichard. He felt that he was being actively persecuted by external forces, namely the local authority, the housing association landlord and his neighbour. Like Mick, and the hotel-dwellers, he was in a state of continual anxiety as to whether his accommodation was going to be taken away from him.

> *"I am living on eggshells. The guy below keeps complaining about the noise. He'd make a good concentration camp officer. So, I have to walk around on tiptoes because my rooms do not have carpets. The laminated floor does not work. It's not like I play music or anything. I*

walk around in socks. I have already had a warning telling me that I am at risk of eviction. But I haven't had a tenancy or any rules. I have been accused of having another person living there when I have visitors."

This dialogue below showed how Prichard believed that far from trying to help him, the local authority was an 'enemy' looking for ways to evict him.

Paul – "Any idea about how long they are expecting you to say in this Temporary Accommodation place?"

Prichard– "They haven't told me anything. They don't want me here at all. I don't understand why they are being so horrible. I am terrified I am going to get evicted. The only time they ever ring me is to call me to tell me that someone has complained."

Paul – "Will you be on the streets if you get evicted?"

Prichard – "That's what they said. If they evict me, they don't have to rehouse me."

Reflecting language in Chapter 8 he spoke of *"the obvious corruption of the housing associations and the collusion between them and environmental health.".* As further evidence of this, he described the flat which his friend had been placed in. Although Prichard described it as *"so dangerous,"* he also said he would have preferred it to his current accommodation because of the location. Prichard added that he would have accepted the flat and then made it safer,

"I have a friend who is in the area that he wants to be in, but the place itself is so dangerous. Health and Safety should not let anybody live there, it's that bad. He had a fuse box for instance which is in the airing cupboard in the wet room and is not put together properly. Bottom bit has fallen-off, it's not put together properly. A fire exit is in the only way in and out, the lighting on that does not work. Two people have fallen down the steps already. Every time he takes a shower, he is danger. It's so dangerous. Basically, the option is, take the place they give him or go homeless. He seems happy with it but it's dangerous. There's a hole which is maybe 7 by 7. It could easily have a grid on it, but it

hasn't. The only heating, he has got is one of those crappy radiators with the feet which has been wired into the wall."

"I am a bit more savvy. So, I would have taken it (the dangerous flat). Taken photographs of everything. And asked the landlord to do the repairs. Or got somebody else to do it and charged the landlord the full cost of the repairs."

To cope with his isolation in an unfamiliar location, and have some modicum of control, Prichard had devised a way of 'playing-the-system' whereby he would keep his support services in the general area where his children were living. This meant that the local authority had to pay for some transport for him, which he used to see his children.

"Truth is the council wouldn't pay for me to get a taxi to see them (his children). It's not one of the reasons [they pay for]. They told me they won't pay for that. They will pay me to get my script, but they were trying to get me to swap it over to the area I am living in. But I won't because it gives me a way of seeing my kids that day. There have been times where I have had to stay where my kids are because I have not been able to get back."

Avoiding rough sleeping and being near his children were the two things Prichard's future hinged upon. In his diary he described how important these two things were to him and drove his accommodation hopes,

For me, seeing the kids is all the birthday gift I needed, but I got some handmade cards that are more valuable than all the gold in Fort Knox. After cake, I spent around 6 happy hours with the kids."

"[I want] My own place. Clean and safe. Ideally with two beds so I have can have my kids stay over. And that's near my kids. If I was offered some place that was nearer, even if it was like an unsafe place, I would be very tempted to take-it purely to be near to my kids. Even if it's really dangerous. Although I wouldn't be able to take the kids up there because it's not safe. So that might have put me off taking it."

"To clarify my own position, I would take a flat in the area I am in now. But only if it was the only one on offer or nothing as I won't make myself homeless. I'd take the flat but live in a tent in the area near my kids most of the time."

The last time I spoke to Prichard, things were looking bleak. In one week, he had been both mugged at knifepoint in the street, and then evicted from his accommodation with no formal paperwork, warning, or explanation. Suddenly he had no choice but to leave his flat with no idea where he would end-up. Even his Housing Worker at the local advice agency did not know what was going to happen. The precarity of housing was such, that because of one decision from the local authority, Prichard had gone from hoping to get a flat near his children, to rough sleeping again. I never heard from him again after the conversation below,

Prichard - I just went back home to my flat and when I saw the door ajar thought I'd been burgled. So, I went in, and the council had moved a family into my home. This was the first time I knew I'd been evicted.

Paul – "I'm sorry mate, that sounds awful. Where are you staying then?"

Prichard – "It's like one kick in the balls after another."

Paul – "Are you staying with your friends?"

Prichard – "Yes, I've been sleeping in the car and whatnot, you know? Look, can I call you back in 10 minutes."

Analysis of Prichard's Biography

In many ways Prichard's story is reminiscent of that told by Mick. Despite, their varied histories, they did describe shared themes.

Like Mick, he felt unprotected by the fraying welfare state Bauman (2000) described. It seemed clear that he would have been deemed vulnerable by any reasonable interpretation of homelessness legislation. He was also somebody who was trying to do the 'right thing' after being through adversity. He had come off heroin, had tried sort his life out after being in prison and wanted to be a good father to his children. Yet he did not feel that the local authority was sympathetic to his needs.

Like Mick he also described a world where he was subject to the decisions of others based upon rules that he had no input into (see Lanicone, 2013). These included losing his home, being offered unsuitable temporary accommodation on a take-it-or-leave-it basis (as was his friend), being forced to move 20 miles away and being threatened with eviction on a regular basis. Reflecting Desmond's (2017) work Prichard felt that the prospect of things getting worse (rough sleeping) might follow any challenges he made to this authority.

Despite the flat he was staying in being a 'response' to his homelessness, the local authority did not ever discuss with him whether his needs were being met in the temporary home they offered him (Schneider, 2022, Naiman, 2022, Jackson, 2013, Herring. 2022). Like Mick he had been displaced into an area distant from his family, friends, and support networks with a loss of aspects of home (Hao, 2022). The definite attitude that Mick received from the authorities was that he was 'lucky' to be getting any help at all (Lanicone, 2020). The lack of compassion and 'humanity' as to the impact of being evicted (Desmond 2017, Atkinson, and Jacobs, 2016). There seemed to be no discussion, consultation, advance notice or appeal against the decision or the process. Those in power were unchallengeable (Lancione 2013, Jackson, 2015, Bimpson et al. 2022)

Neither Prichard or Mick were in locations they wanted to be, nor did they feel they had control over this. They both felt like a victim of local authorities wanting to move poor people out of London to a surrounding area. Their personal stories show how structural this phenomenon is. Reflecting Cllr Callaghan's (Chapter 8) experience Prichard felt that people like him were being displaced from counties on the edge of London. Meanwhile reflecting Siobhan McDonagh's (ibid) constituency Mick felt people like him were being displaced by people who were being relocated from inner London.

However, in other ways Prichard's situation was tougher than Mick's. His route out of Bauman's (2003) wasteland looked even more difficult. Even more than Mick he felt treated as inconvenience whom others did not view as deserving of support (one of Bauman's 'underclass' 2003, 2007). Prichard was seen as a 'flawed commodity' who had been in prison, was battling a drug addiction, and had a long history of being on the cusp of homelessness.

The techniques he used of manipulating rules to access cabs to see his family and friends plus keeping his 'head down' were reflective of Schneider's (2022) description of *"meticulous planning and constant movement" (p.243).* He was navigating the challenges of seeing his family and keeping his home whilst staying within the externally defined rules (Lancione 2013). However, despite his best efforts, one decision by another person led to his precarious 'house-of-cards' collapsing overnight (Pleace et al, 2022). At the end, I had no idea if he was back on the streets and still off heroin.

9.4 Narrative 3 Sheila

Sheila started by describing how she had come to London from Liverpool over thirty years ago when she was 15 or 16. She said she chose to come after her Mum died. She said she could not remember what her motivation was other than that she *"needed a fresh start to get away from the bad memories."* As a result of the distance that she has had from her family over the last 35 years "*it is not a close relationship".* She described how she has not thought about them very much since she has to focus on surviving each day.

Despite these problems, Sheila said that prior to experiencing homelessness she *"had a good life"* and had travelled extensively. During her first few decades in London, she said she "*she always worked."* During this time, she had a number of jobs as a housekeeper, nanny, chef and serving in bars. Sheila gave up paid work to focus on bringing up her a daughter whom she parented alone until she was about 13 years old. She said the cause of her homelessness was being a victim of a violent burglary which led to her having major mental health issues and being unable to look after her daughter,

By contrast to this earlier period, most of the last half-a-decade had been spent sleeping rough. She described how painful this had been particularly as an older woman. She felt that to survive it was necessary to choose locations which were quite visible.

> *"[It's] Very rough, being a woman as well. And being like 52 it's not easy either you know…people say when you sleep at night [you should] hide out somewhere where no one can see you but then I found out that*

> *you're leaving yourself vulnerable when you're off the plot and no one knows where you are because you get people who are deliberately coming looking for vulnerable people you know."*

She described how, three years ago, before her latest bout of rough sleeping she had been in a hostel from which she was immediately evicted. She was forced onto the street and judged to have made herself 'intentionally homeless' (see Chapter 2). *"I had a bit of a fight in there (the hostel), so they threw me out and Hackney wouldn't rehouse me again."*

Sheila caveated the experience of rough sleeping (twice) by saying that it was not as bad as it could have been because "*I had a good sleeping bag and quilts on the bottom of the floor [of the tent]. <u>It was okay</u>"* and *"<u>I was lucky</u> I had a double-skinned tent, so like the dew and that weren't making it in."* Sheila mainly survived by begging, claiming that she found the rules around claiming benefits too difficult. She also found the amounts paid so small that "*it doesn't last a day and then it's another 28 days, so I don't bother to claim it. I don't think the Government care, do they?"*. She added that for the last few years she had tried to get work, but people *"will not employ you when you are on the streets with no address. You're stuck in a catch-22 position really"".*

Sheila described how, when the decision was made to move people off-the-streets into the hotels, she was sent to a location where she felt happy, "*When I'd got to the hostel, the hotel in Finsbury Park most of the people in there I knew them all from Hackney, they'd all come off the street there."* She considered her home area to be Hackney which felt close enough for her. However, she was subsequently told, with only one hour's notice, by an Outreach Worker that she needed to move to another hotel. Initially, the worker was not even sure where the hotel was, so Sheila did not know her new destination. Her exasperation was clear at the lack of consultation or explanation,

> *"Yes, she (My Outreach Worker) said to me can you get back to the hotel now because you're moving, and I were coming to help you pack. I says hang on; what do you mean I am moving? She went oh yes, you're going to a new hotel, I don't know where it is yet but I'm in an*

Uber now on the way up there to Finsbury Park, I'll explain when I see you. So, I got back to the hotel, I went in my room and started packing and she came about 20 minutes later… and she said they're moving you to SE1"

"So, when I said I said, 'why is this [that I am being moved to a different hotel?]' She [the Outreach Worker] said 'well look how much it's costing the Government to put you here.' Well. that didn't make sense to me Saul because when she brought me in the cab here this hotel is obviously a lot more expensive than the Finsbury Park one. So that didn't make sense to me straight away. It wasn't about the finance."

"I don't understand why they moved me at all, and I am still in touch with people in Finsbury Park and they are still in the hotel. They are still there, so they haven't been moved [out the hotel] on so I don't understand it. I was playing by the rules, I didn't have any warnings, I wasn't in any trouble, it's not like they wanted to get rid of me because I'd like broken the rules or anything or I'd had any warnings. I was getting on quite well there. Yes, I am a bit [annoyed]. but what can you do?"

Compared to the next two people in this chapter (Kate and Fodil) Sheila was in a more expensive hotel. It had a Three Star Rating, was in the centre of London, and she described it as being in much better condition than the Finsbury Park one. Yet, despite this, Sheila was one of the people for whom the location of a hotel was a major factor. *"[the Finsbury Park hotel] was a was a lot more run down, but it was all right because I knew more people so socially I didn't feel so isolated"*

Sheila's was a case where mobility had been enforced without any reason being given. She had been clearly upset by what happened. It, both, shaped and confirmed the view she had on services which were supposed to be helping her.

"I was so pissed off. I just went upstairs, I just sent a text [to my Outreach Worker] and said look I am sick of this place, I feel like just buying a fucking tent and going back to London Fields. No one is giving me any help here; I am totally alone…What am I fucking doing here?"

Sheila expressed gratitude for the opportunity to chat to me as a break from the loneliness that she was experiencing in the new hotel. She stated that *“not one person's knocked on me door in the 2 weeks I've been here to see if I'm alive or dead”.* She talked of how she had nearly returned to the streets rather than stay in the hotel. She explained how isolated she was,

> *“a lot of them (her friends) are still back there, [in the other hotel], they only moved me on, I don’t know why they moved me here particularly because since I’ve been here, I’m not too happy really because not one person has come to ask me how I am, do I need any help with anything”*
>
> *“I felt totally on my own and isolated you know. Because I am in SE1 and I was finding myself jumping on the bus just to go to Hackney for a few hours just to feel in a familiar place, you know what I mean? I know it sounds mad but that’s what I was doing, yes.”*
>
> *“I know, and then having to jump the buses because I don’t have a bus pass and that and all this sort of carry on. When the proper lockdown was on you could just walk on the bus but now you need, and if you’re not getting any benefits and stuff you’re having to jump buses and all that which sometimes the driver lets you on, sometimes he doesn’t, it all depends, you know?*”

The mixture of anger, confusion, and powerlessness that Sheila felt was expressed in her view of services. Reflecting the views of Mick and Prichard she stated that local authorities *“don’t give a shit”* about people experiencing homelessness. She also added that *“I find the system very corrupt - there are only so many knockbacks you can take. I just end up locking myself in my room and just being like a fucking prisoner in here.”* She talked about the *“corruption”* and *“skimming”* that she thought was taking place (see Chapter 8). Sheila added that when she was in the hotel in Finsbury Park, she kept the same services that she was used to working with (such as drug scripting services). But now, she had to work with a new GP, Outreach Worker, and Substance Misuse team

“because I’ve come from Hackney to here, now they’re saying I’m in a different catchment area now so I’m having to have all new workers and things like that now because I’m not in my old area”

Sheila’s experiences of being evicted from the hostel, being relocated to a different hotel, and then allocated new workers, fed into a narrative that things were done ‘to her’, rather than in consultation with her. The most vocal example she gave of this was the failure of anyone to tell he when the hotel was closing down and what was going to happen to her. She described feeling like she was *“dangling”* in a way that was very reminiscent of other interviewees (Chapter 8)

“I don’t know what’s going to happen for me because no-one’s sat down and asking me what’s happening you know what I mean, are they going to put me back on the street when the total lockdown has finished or is it going to be a flat, are there, no one’s explained nothing to me yet.”

The lack of communication as to the future of the hotels created a situation in which the vacuum was filled by rumours, reflected in a number of messages which Sheila sent to me. The message on the 24th of August was particularly powerful because at that stage she believed she would be leaving in 4 days’ time with no idea where.

1st August - “I’m keeping well, we are at the hotel until the 28thAug”. “After that your guess is as good as mine.”

24th August – “Hi I’m leaving on Friday [28th August], it’s the last day for us all. And from what I’ve heard, lots of people here have no place to go on to. I see a woman in the morning from LA, I’ll let you know the outcome.”

28th August – “Got another extension until 30 Sep.”

10th October – “The word is the extension keeps going on, it is on 31st Oct, but they reckon maybe up to Xmas”. “Hopefully, winter inside will be a blessing at least.

Sheila also explained how she felt she was not getting her needs met in this hotel compared to the Finsbury Park one,

Sheila – "I've spoke to the reception before because the sink's been blocked in the bathroom since Friday. And I said what, because I'm alone, they're not coming up here, if I was a paying guest yes, I get you would have been up here on Friday when I reported it. And now tomorrow is Thursday, it's been nearly a week, and the room is stinking now. I said if you don't come up tomorrow, I'm going to leave because this is, it's very hot in here as well and when you can't - I can't wash or do anything so I said if you don't come up tomorrow, I've had it. I don't know how they expect you to keep going through everything, you know what I mean Paul?"

Paul - "I do, I do, it's, it grinds you down, doesn't it?"

Sheila – "It does, and I don't want to sound ungrateful but two weeks of this, it's the same everyday yes and I don't want to seem ungrateful because it's food yes but every day porridge, every day a banana, every day that pasta and tuna for lunch, every day and you just think you know. when I met my mate Lisa today, just get me a bacon roll, I just craved a bacon roll, just a little thing like £2 it was but you know what I mean it's just like oh - so I don't know, I'll meet this woman called ZZZZ tomorrow and just find out what's going on because I've heard we're here until the end of July, but no one's told me where we are going or what we are doing."

The displacement had been particularly hard for Sheila in the sense of putting distance between her and Lisa. She was Sheila's friend and the one person she felt she could trust. Sheila expressed how she only felt understood by other people who had experienced *"a hard life."* She explained how, in contrast to the staff at the hotel, Lisa had persuaded her to make a benefits claim,

"I went out with my friends because luckily enough I've got a very good friend, one called Lisa who works, and she put a claim in for a Universal Credit claim because they've not paid me anything, so she did it on the 22nd of June. And I spoke to them yesterday and they're going to pay me on the 28th of July. It's been a long while, and she's borrowed me £70 and she got me a phone for £40 and then I put £10 voucher on, Giff Gaff

and £10 for the laundry and £10 for an oyster card and Lisa's trust me enough that I can pay her back on the 28th".

"I asked the guy (staff member) the other week can you help me fill in a Universal Claim form. He said 'yes, sit down there' he said, "his name was ZZZZ." 20 minutes later I was still sat there. When I got up and went round the corner and he was eating his lunch, 'I went listen, if it's too busy or you want to re-schedule just say.' I said, 'I am very flexible.' He went 'yes sorry I didn't realise how busy I was'. I said 'yes, I see you are very busy eating your lunch there yes. I tell you what, shall we call it tomorrow, I said can you call me, I'm in room ZZZ, I'm in my room, contact me'. Not heard nothing since, nothing. I've passed him at reception when I've gone out and he's not even so much as said 'hello' or 'sorry about the other day, didn't get back to you'. So, it's made me think basically 'fuck you, why am I coming to look to you for help when you're basically just blanking me'. It's making me feel like I am putting him out the way, so it just makes me feel like I don't want to bother with any of them you know what I mean."

In terms of her hopes for the future, Sheila was clear about what type of accommodation she wanted and in which broad location. Even though her experiences of rough sleeping had been awful, she was prepared to consider a return to it rather than be displaced somewhere she did not like,

"Right now, as long as it's my own place…I'll just have to rebuild wherever I am, as long as I've got, it's a place and I am not moving on I can make anywhere in inner London home, not a problem, any part of Inner London."

Sheila also believed that getting a job was crucial to her future, adding that she could not survive on the little money she had, *"when you've got no money you've got no money doesn't matter where you are, you're broke, if anything it's worse being in somewhere nicer [like a hotel] with no money because you can't really do anything at all".* She did have vague plan for getting a job and a home,

"They're just pushing me as far as I can go, with having no money and anything else. But now I've got this phone I am just going to do my own

research; I am going to look for jobs and rooms to rent and that and just see what the situation is with things. Because if I don't get off my arse and do it Paul no one else is going to do it. I can't rely on anyone to do anything from here."

This lack of being able to rely on anyone to help manifested itself in terms of Sheila contacting me on several occasions. She sent me 'WhatsApp' messages asking me to watch out for any jobs which had 'live-in' accommodation. She said she was willing to work for free for a trial-period to show her worth to an employer. She asked if I was aware of any websites which advertised flats for people on Universal Credit. One day's worth of messages was particularly powerful

3rd August

"Hey Paul, I'm just wondering if you have heard of ZZZZ? They are the people helping with the rehousing here at the hotel, I haven't heard of them before

I'm actively looking for cleaning jobs. I need to get a c.v. going right now looking for an opportunity to show what a good grafter I am. I just need a break even if I do the first clean free at least they will see what I am capable of. I will work any day or time. Can you please keep your ears to the ground for me Paul. I will be very grateful. Thank you

Sorry for rambling. I realize I haven't talked to anyone in a few days, hence the going on. I apologise."

However, a couple of months after that text, Sheila's story had an unexpected outcome. She texted me to say that her employment and accommodation situation had improved markedly. I did ask her for more details, but never heard back from her.

19th November – *"Got a job today 😊 live in housekeeper". "Start Sunday, so moving out of the hotel tomorrow, I will give you a text when I'm settled."*

Analysis of Sheila's Biography

Of the 5 narratives in this chapter, Sheila seemed to be the angriest and (along with Kodil) the one who felt most helpless in terms of the control she had over her life (Jackson, 2013). This is not surprising, since Sheila had a life which had been full of social exclusion, disadvantage, and lack of help from an early age. Neoliberals may talk of the consequences of individual choices, but Sheila had very few such choices. She had been battling against the adversity of homelessness for the last half a decade of her life. Her story chimed with the writings of Lancione (2013) in describing how had been no appropriate support services to meet her needs. Here was a woman who had suffered the loss of paid employment, her child, and her home (Bimpson et al,. 2022). She was expected to live in hostels with strangers, and when that did not work out she was told that even the limited support she had was being withdrawn because of her behaviour (Lanicone, 2022).

Despite all this adversity, prior to moving to the hotels Sheila was an example of the type of home making on the streets described by Schneider (2022) and Naiman (2022). She had a decent quality tent, which kept her warm and she avoided the 'system' which required her to claim benefits and engage with officials who she felt did not respect her (Herring, 2022 and Hao 2022). Location was a huge part of that home making for Sheila. She had found an area of Hackney and Islington where she had a sense of belonging and companionship. A location where she had friends to provide community and mutual support. Hence when she was offered a hotel, with her friends in Finsbury Park and for which she did not have to go through bureaucratic 'hoops' (such as claiming HB) she had the closest thing to a home for a long time.

Hence, the decision to displace her into another hotel in an unfamiliar location had a serious impact on her (Atkinson and Jacobs, 2016). She talked of how she now felt isolated, in a prison and on the verge of leaving. She had been removed from somewhere she felt aspects of home such as a sense of belonging and social support (Neale 1997b). Furthermore, like Prichard she had been given no prior notice that it was going to happen. Nor had she been given satisfactory explanation of why this was happening instead (like Mick and Prichard) the assumption seemed to be that she should be grateful that she was getting any

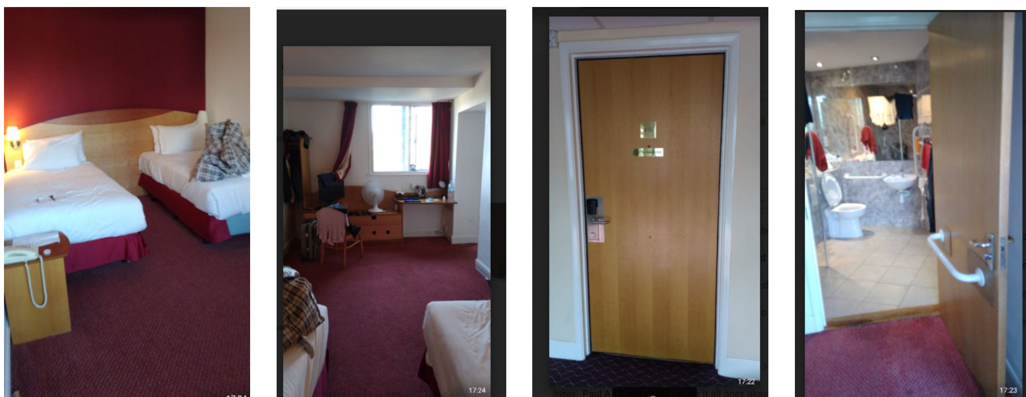
state support at all. As described by Lancione (2013) she was effectively told these are the rules and that it was 'this or nothing'.

This process of not being listened to and displaced reflected, and fuelled, a feeling that Sheila had (shared by Mick and Prichard) had trust people in authority. This was a situation exacerbated by nobody informing her of when the hotels were closing and what was happening them. She lived with the type of precariousness described by Pleace et al (2022) daily. She did not know if she was going to be put back onto the street, moved to another location or left in the hotel where she currently was. With no other option she adopted the type of individualism which Bauman described as characteristic neo liberal society and sorted out her own employment and accommodation. In doing so she showed that many people (me included) underestimated Sheila.

9.5 Narrative 4 – Kodil

Kodil was one of many interviewees who were migrants. However, unlike most of the non-UK nationals I interviewed he was not an economic migrant from the EU but a 'failed asylum seeker' with limited recourse to help from the state. Kodil was in the same hotel as Kate. As well as interviewing him, he sent me texts and photographs including some which help visualise the hotel rooms.

Photos 7-10: Kodil's Hotel Room



Kodil had experienced involuntary mobility when came to the UK in 2013 from Algeria fleeing persecution. He arrived in the UK with major health issues of trauma and HIV. He made a claim for asylum upon arrival and for a while was sent to a dispersal centre. it took four years for his claim and appeals to be rejected. In

2017, after the final rejection, he had been fearful he was going to be face deportation back to Algeria. So, he decided to stop ‘signing-on’ at the Home Office in breach of his asylum conditions. Thereafter, he was living in the UK without legal entitlement to be in the country.

Table 8: Number Of Asylum Claims To The UK From Algeria in 2021

No. of Applications for Asylum from Algeria in 2021	No. Granted Asylum	No Refused	No. Awaiting Decision
250	15 (6%)	70 (28%)	165 (64%)

Source Anderson (2023). Adapted from Worlddata info.

To survive he visited day centres to access food, showers, and medication. When these closed due to Covid-19, he asked immigration officials to send him back to Algeria. However, because of Covid-19 restrictions, he was told there were no flights available. It felt like, prior to the virus, he had been pressed to accept deportation or voluntary repatriation but that was no longer possible.

Kodil - I was in Heathrow, asking them to send me back my country, because I was going to die here on the street. I was sick, I lost my medicine.

Paul – If you talk to immigration will they not arrange for you to go back if you want to?

Kodil – They don’t want to talk to me. When I tried two months ago, they will not talk to me. They said “we cannot send you to your country because nothing is working. No flights [available]”

Paul – Oh I see, because of Coronavirus you can’t fly?

Kodil – Yes, and they sent me back to the streets and I have nothing.

Paul – You can’t go back to Algeria because of no flights. You can’t get a house in the UK because of no benefits. You can’t get a job because you can’t get any documents.

Kodil – Exactly. And then they sent me a taxi [to Heathrow] and [then] they sent me here to the hotel

Instead of being returned to Algeria, Kodil was placed in a hotel. However, because of his immigration status and lack of access to benefits he lacked even the most basic provisions such as money or food beyond that provided by the hotel.

> *"My case is very difficult. My situation is very hard, it's too much. No money or nothing. I can't even go to work. At the moment, I just need help with food and a place to stay*."

This lack of resources and choices was reflected in a text message updating me on his situation and asking for help. I sent the voucher, as requested in the text below, because it was for life-saving medicine.

> *"Hi Mr Paul. How are you doing? I hope you are ok and doing well. It's me Kodil I just want to tell you that I am still at the Croydon hotel. I just want to let you know maybe u can help? If not no problem at all. And I am sorry to ask if you cans send me £10 voucher for my medicine, please? If not no problem at all. Many thanks Paul. God bless you."*

Kodil felt trapped in an unfamiliar location with little control over his own life. He saw other people being moved from the hotel whilst he was not *"They have started sending people to the other place. Two, three or four have been sent, but they do not talk to me."*

The next message I received from him was to tell me that he had been immediately evicted from the hotel because he had a fight. In his message he accompanied a picture of the eviction letter, plus the giant bag of medication he had to take back out on to the streets with him. He asked me if there was anything I could do to influence their decision.

Photos 11-12: Kodil's Messages A

Photos 13-14: Kodil's Eviction Letter And His Bag Of Medication

23rd July 2020

Dear Resident,

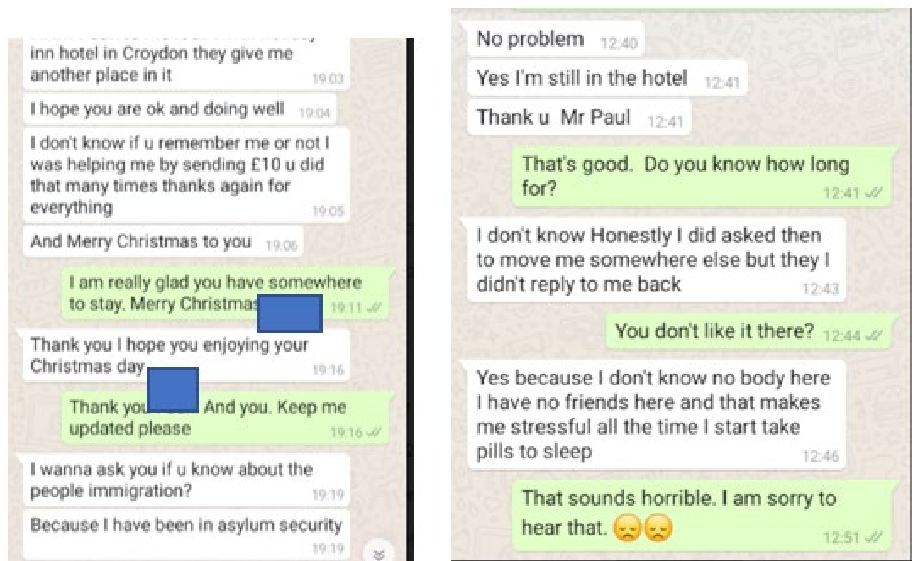
We wanted to inform you that an agreement has been made with the Greater London Authority that we will be extending the opening of the hotel until **Monday 31st August 2020**. The Resettlement team will still be working hard to create move on opportunities during this time.

If you have any further questions about this letter please feel free to ask a member of staff at reception.

Yours Sincerely,

On Christmas Day, six months after our first conversation. I sent Kodil a text message wishing him a *"Merry Christmas."* He replied telling me that he had been readmitted into the hotel. In that message he asked for advice again, this time around his immigration status. He talked also of how lonely he still felt in this unfamiliar location and how he was struggling to sleep because of anxiety.

Photos 15-16: Kodil's Messages B



Kodil was an example of somebody who had faced displacement several times and had a choice of hotel or streets. But he could not enjoy any respite in the hotel because he was continuously anxious, isolated, materially impoverished and in poor health. As somebody with HIV and PTSD he felt he should be helped but feared that he was going to be left to die on the streets. He believed 'less deserving' people were given preferential treatment. He reflected the common belief in Chapters 8 & 9 that local authorities did not want to help,

> *"There are people from [places like] Peterborough, Manchester, Liverpool, coming to London. They get a house. Everything is good [for them]. They are not going to college [unlike me]. I ask the Home Office to help me, but they don't."*

> *"The housing and homelessness parts of the council will not help me. I am not drinking. No drugs. No marijuana. Too many people are drinking. They will help them, so why not help me. I am no problem. I don't bother people. I don't understand."*

> *"They [have] started sending people to the other place. But nobody has talked to me I think they are only going to give the places to people who have Status here. So, I am worrying about it. I don't want to go back to the street."*

"I don't want to get rich or something like that. I want to do something in my life. I just want to be normal. I'll do any work, anything. That's all that I want. I don't want to be rich you know. And I am not a bad boy, you know? I don't stop people [to beg], I never drink."

Kodil did not care which location he lived in and was willing to be as mobile as required for food and shelter. As per Bauman's (2003, 2007) analysis, he was focused on survival,

Kodil – I told you; I just want a place to stay. At the moment, I just want a place to stay.

Paul – Anywhere?

Kodil – Yes.

Paul – In London? Or you don't mind?

Kodil – I don't mind.

Paul – You just want a roof over your head?

Kodil – Yes, I don't mind where it is.

Kodil's was despairing towards the end of our dialogue stating, *"If they want to send me back to my country, I cannot go. I will say no. But now I don't care. If they want to send me back to my country, I don't care. Fucking Hell, I want to die."*

Analysis of Kodil's Biography

The way the life-stories have been ordered in this chapter has reflected my perception as to the levels of social exclusion that individuals have experienced. Of all the socio-economically excluded groups that Bauman (2003) identified in the 'wasteland' such as 'vagabonds', 'veteran vagrants', 'failed consumers' and 'the underclass' none is powerless as the penniless migrant. Bauman (ibid) especially focused on the plight of the refugee whose lack of access to locations is legally and culturally enshrined. They are kept moving because nobody wants them

Reflecting the situation of migrants studies such as Lenhard (2022), Kodil's been the most extensive geographical and cultural displacement of all the people in this

chapter. He was living in a country where his focus was upon daily survival. He did not know whether he would be able eat or wash tomorrow. Nowhere did he feel a sense of belonging or social support. His isolation seemed to be the most comprehensive. Although the hotel was better than the streets, it still sounded like a kind of prison offering a roof and three meals a day, but little in the sense of home (Hao et al 2022, Herring 2019).

Kodil shared the lack of trust of Mick, Prichard, and Sheilagh in authorities. He claimed to have stopped attending his asylum appointments because he feared they were going to deport him. Then when he asked to be deported, that was denied to him as well. Eventually, he ended-up in a hotel and then was evicted for fighting (breaking the territorial rules described by Lancione (2013). Yet there was no consideration of how his experiences, health problems, his anxiety, and the process of sharing with lots of strangers might have contributed to his behaviour. Or how devastating eviction would be for somebody with his vulnerabilities (Desmond, 2017 Atkinson & Jacobs 2016). Ironically, in an environment where homelessness policy was focused on protecting people from one virus, he was displaced back onto the streets whilst suffering from another one (HIV).

This lack of trust combined with a multitude of displacement experiences led Kodil to believe that authorities in the hotel were deliberately not helping him. Instead, he felt they were focused on finding housing for others further fuelling his feelings of isolation. Probably correctly, he inverted the opinions of people in Jackson's (2015) study by claiming that as an asylum seeker he was getting less favourable treatment than other people. This was not because of staff prejudice in the hotels, but more the challenges of asylum seekers within a politically-driven structural framework which seems intent on providing them with the most inhumane accommodation[51]. For Kodil's and other migrants experiencing destitution there seemed to be little hope in site.

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[51] Currently this accommodation seems to be between being on a barge floating off Portland or being sent to live in Rwanda

9.6 Narrative 5 - Kate

When I first spoke to Kate, she was in the Croydon hotel with her partner James. I spoke to Kate three times and received regular diary pages and some photographs of a flat they moved into. The exact timeline of Kate's history was a little difficult to follow as she described her past in a non-chronological way.

When I asked Kate about her connections to places and her history of mobility, she told me *"It's going to be a long story."* She said she was unable to live with her parents and had not been part of a family unit with them since she was 15. At 18, because of domestic violence she had a stroke and has been left with what she described as *"partial paralysis"* ever since. She said she had needed the help of her current partner to alleviate the psychological trauma,

> *"Ten years ago, I had a little boy with my first love basically. He used to beat me up. Ripped my ears, disabled me. He put me in a really bad place. My current boyfriend, who I have two kids with, took me away from all that, we've been together for ten years."*

Over that following decade Kate had experienced repeated displacement in the sense of *"bouncing around"* between prison, accommodation, and rough sleeping. Despite this history she talked of two locations for which she has a great affection. One was her parents' home where she had grown up and the other place the prison, where one of her children was born. There she formed happy memories of bonding with him.

When Kate and James came out of prison, they found a home and were settled but she felt this stability was shattered by the actions of others which forced them to move. Once again, the primary agency held responsible were local authorities. The series of displacements that Kate and James had to undertake was described in Chapter 8. They culminated in their children and housing being taken from them by Social Services,

> *"And then the reason we became homeless again was because Social Services became involved when our oldest was 5 and our youngest was 2. We weren't using or taking drugs. We had the odd joint and a drink, but we weren't using but we lost our little boys. Then we went on*

a downward spiral. We were sofa-surfing, staying on the street. It was pretty chaotic until this Lockdown thing. It's the first time since I lost my boys that I've wanted to sort myself out. [Before now] I thought 'fuck it I've lost my boys; I might as well get smashed until I die' basically. God, we spent one night sleeping on the floor of London Bridge. Outside shop doorways & churches. At crack houses. In cars and car parks. Squatting. Anywhere."

Kate used 'being homeless' as a synonym for 'rough sleeping.' She saw it as worse than being in a hotel or hostel. Like Mick and Prichard, she felt inferior quality accommodation in unfamiliar locations was better than the streets. She expressed how she and James wanted their own flat, in a location where they had support, but would do anything to avoid a return to rough sleeping.

> *"I definitely don't want to move to a hostel. It's shared accommodation. You've got people who are on drugs & stuff like that. So, staying off drugs when I'm low will be really hard for me. So, I think something like a studio flat would benefit us really well. Hopefully not in this town (where the hotel was) Maybe they'll offer me somewhere that's a compromise. I always try and find a silver-lining."*

> *"Well, we are not going to be homeless (on the streets) again. We have been promised a flat but have been offered the hostel which we originally met in. If nothing comes of this flat, we are going to have to move in there. Because I am not being homeless again, I really am not being homeless again because it was horrible."*

> *"Yes, it's not a [traditional] hostel. It's quite new, it's got its own kitchen and is more supported housing. The other hostel [is a traditional hostel and it] has bedbugs and everything. It's disgusting in there. We don't want to go in there but we are not going to be homeless again so we will [if we have no other option]."*

Despite her experiences with Social Services Kate was more trusting of agencies than most interviewees. She believed the homelessness organisations would make sure she was okay.

“We can’t complain, you know the staff have been really nice, they’re really nice the staff they, I mean they’ve got some problematic people to deal and that here, so they don’t have it easy you know, and they’re really nice, they’re actually really nice people2. We haven’t got a grumble with nothing, to say anything bad about them.”

“Yes, ThamesReach have been absolutely, brilliant. And Crisis have been trying to help me. I do feel guilty with everybody trying to help me. In the future I’d like to help somebody else. We should [all] definitely get a place, they’re hoping to house everyone [before the hotel closes].”

Kate described a newfound optimism, For the first time since she started rough sleeping, she felt she had some stability and was hopeful for the future. She felt that having *“a base”* was central to this,

“I think, actually I know now, that the key to having a normal happy life is having a base and I intend to keep it this way. I am making amends with family. Me and James are getting better and I’m not waking up being sick anymore. I’m clean, my surroundings are clean, and I can see the bigger picture defo. The only thing that made me feel like that (optimistic) was my little boys because I had a reason to live. But now I feel there is a reason to live, and I am going to try my damn best to sort it out.”

“I am getting used to doing normal things and its great. Today and yesterday, I spoke to my first born. It feels really good. Jim is going to go see his daughter soon, so everything is progressing nicely. He has even got little odd jobs with friends. I am enjoying my time on you tube and am actually learning things by watching them. Happy days.”

Like many interviewees in Chapter 7, Kate’s aim around location was to be near her children. She saw other actions such as staying off drugs, stopping begging, getting a flat, obtaining work and financial stability as stepping-stones to this process. Kate described how important James was, and how she wanted them to be a stable family.

"[I want to be] near my daughter in Kent really, so Kent would be the ideal place and Rochester would be ideal, near to my daughter. My other little boy lives on the South Coast but I speak to him every other night. And my Mum said I can go down and see him whenever I want to. I'd really like my partner to be near his little girl [too]. I need to get a flat. I need to settle. I need to get a job. I need to prove that I am doing the right things…They are not going to throw the kids to me [until I can show I am] clean, settled and there are good schools [where we are living]. Whatever my children want, I want, they are my life. They are absolutely gorgeous; I just want to make it up to them. If I can do that, I'll die a happy woman."

"Me and James have stuck together despite everything he has been my rock and although he has his faults, he is a good man and I love him. He is all I have, and we can share a room. First of all, they said I couldn't. I ended-up crying, kicking-off and stuff. Since then, I've been in his room although I do have my own one if I want space."

Like most other interviewees Kate believed getting a job was a crucial step. She saw employment as both a key to financial security and wider life stability.

"I need a job. Need money. I couldn't go back to what I used to do [begging on the trains]. Number one, it would be a lie now and, number two, there's no one on the trains anyway. So, I need to come up with a plan to make some cash. Money isn't the be all and end all of things, but we do need it in our little existence."

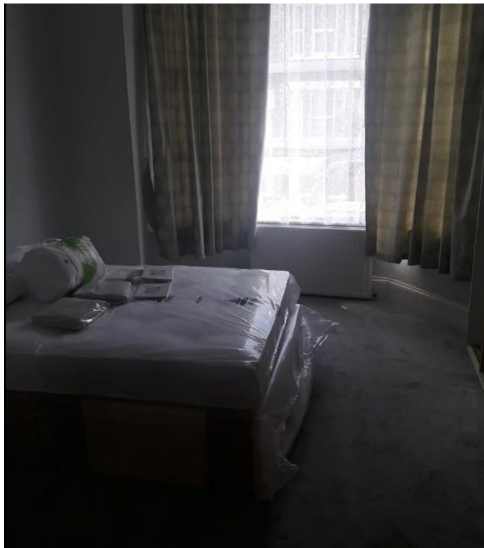
Kate was thinking about the future which belies Bauman's view that the poorest are only focused on day-to-day survival. However, she was unclear what her route forward was,

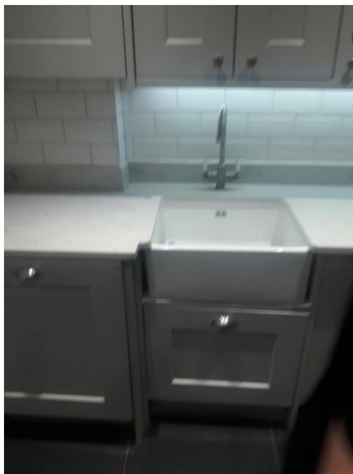
"I don't want to leave here in one sense, but I do in another. In that I want to get on with my life. Just to make a go of things. I've been thinking. I want to make something of my life. Don't know what I want to do. I'll figure it out. I'm not going to say, "I want to be this, or be that, for the next 10 years". I haven't decided yet. What I am doing now is taking one step at a time. Sorting things out bit by bit. I know where I have

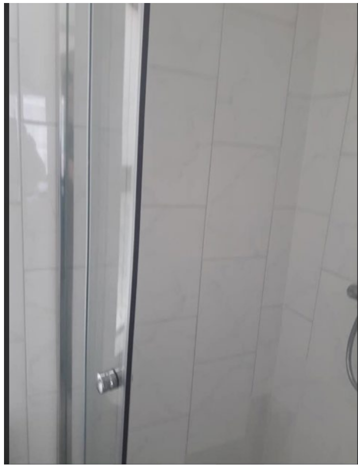
tried in the past to do too much it has gone wrong. One of the things I will do is help Police catch Paedophiles or something to do with animals. I would like to help vulnerable creatures. I know I could never work in a child-like environment because of my criminal record. Not necessarily a career, but a hobby maybe. Perhaps work in Performing Arts. I am also very interested in Psychology at the moment."

The last time I spoke to them Kate and James were making progress in that they were moving into a flat, all-be-it in a location where they had said they did not want to be. Below are some photographs she sent me on the day they were moving-in.

Photos 17 -22: Kate and James' New Flat







(Copyright Paul Anderson 2022)

Analysis of Kate's Biography

Kate's story bears thematic similarities to the others in this chapter. She shared a history of struggles with authority and decisions being made by others that had huge impacts on her life (Lanicone, 2023). She also had experienced geographical and social displacement, leading to the loss of liberty, homes, and children. She shared their universal experience of the type of housing precarity described by Pleace et al (2022). Like Shelagh, Kate was a woman who had been separated from her family early in life and then lost her own children (Bimpson et al, 2022). Like Prichard she had a history of being incarcerated, rough sleeping and battling substance misuse issues. Like most of the interviewees in Chapter 8 she needed to get paid work in the future but had vague ideas how this might happen.

The crucial difference is that of the five people covered in this chapter Kate was noticeably more optimistic about her situation. Reflecting, the writings of people like Schneider (2022), Kate had undertaken home making in her dwelling. From her base in the hotel, she talked of the importance of cleanliness, eating three meals a day, using her time constructively and engaging with other people (Lenhard 2022, Naiman. 2022 and Hao, 2021). Despite her bad experiences with authority figures, Kate was grateful to the people running at the hotel and compared it favourably to previous accommodation. She did not share the fears of all the others that there was a risk of her being evicted on to the street.

It is hard to explain the difference in attitude between Kate and the others. Her story was one of experiences of violence, displacement, abandonment, loss, abuse, neglect, and daily struggle. It culminated in her been moved to a hotel in an area she had no history in and no choice over. Yet like a small minority described in Chapter 8, she thrived. Having a partner seemed incredibly significant here at a number of levels. It seemed as if James was her family and, if they were together, they had aspects of home. The decision by the people running the hotel to let them share a room seemed to strengthen her trust in them. Even though she had preferences around wanting a flat in a location near her children, she was willing to go into a hostel in an unfamiliar area so long as James could be with her.

Once again one sees the power of money in neoliberal society. As mentioned in Chapter 9 some local authorities were reluctant to open-up hotels because of a concern that people sent there would end up staying. This reflects Bauman's analysis of closed communities which are unwilling to allow membership to people who are flawed commodities. However, because Kate and James were renting in the private market, using their combined HB, the local authority were unable to stop them living there even if they had wanted to. Once again reflecting arbitrary rules and the fraying welfare net, the ability to access housing had nothing to do with social justice or vulnerability (Lancione 2013, 2023, Bauman & Donskis, 2001). If Kate had not had a partner, she would not have been able to afford the flat, despite having the same support needs. That Kate and her partner were so excited and grateful about moving into a mainly bare, small one-bedroom flat in one of the cheapest parts of London is indicative of the low level of expectation amongst the poor which runs through Chapters 7, 8 & 9.

9.7 Conclusion

Despite the individual differences, the common threads that ran through the five stories are strong. Everyone in this chapter has had significant experiences of moving location because of displacement. All believed they had become homeless because of the actions of others. Those responsible included landlords, local authorities, insular communities, and the immigration services. Like most people in Chapters 7 & 8, all five felt that agents of the state had failed to listen or support them around home, displacement, and mobility. In the case of Kate and Prichard

they also felt ex-partners had contributed to their homelessness by making home a place of physical and/or psychological violence. Mick felt abandoned by family and friends whilst Kodil had fled his country of birth for reasons of safety.

All five had slept rough recently according to official definitions (see Chapter 2). Compared to Mick who had ‘only’ become homeless for nine months in 2014, Prichard, Sheila, Kate and Kodil had longer term experiences of homelessness. They also had more of the common problems associated with rough sleeping, such as addiction issues and spells in prison. All five had health problems of differing sorts, which were exacerbated by their experiences of being on the streets. They were unified in their commitment to do whatever they could to avoid a return to tough sleeping, even if this meant staying in locations that they felt unhappy about. Whilst Mick, Prichard Sheila and Kodil had little positive to say about their current location, Kate felt less trapped where she was.

In terms of future locations, everyone except Kodil had ideas about where they wanted to live. Rick wanted a return to his old life in London. Kate and Prichard wanted to be near their children, Sheila needed to be in Inner London near friends. One got the sense that for Kate this was a longer-term aspiration, but for Prichard and Sheila the right location was essential. However, Kate would not go anywhere that took her away from her partner and Mick was the same with his dogs (who were effectively his family). <u>Crucially, if the option was to give-up key relationships or live on the streets, they all seemed to suggest they would choose the latter</u>. For Kodil, who had left his family and friends to escape persecution, there were no such relationships, he sounded very alone, and he simply sought the basics of life - a roof, regular nourishment, his medication, and some income.

Only Kate felt she had control over whether she would be able to stay in her current location. For the others, the threat of further displacement hung over them. Mick was waiting each year to see if his DHP would be renewed. Prichard felt that the landlord was trying to get rid of him. Kodil and Sheila were anticipating being sent back to the streets by the hotel. Whereas Kate was much more trusting towards those in positions of power, believing they were working in her best interest.

Reflecting Bauman (2013), one is struck by the lack of choice that people had over their daily lives. They lived in poverty so were failed consumers without spending power. They were also subject to systems of bureaucracy and services who had rules which they could not influence and had been thrust into. They were expected, to unquestionably, to conform to required prescribed behaviours which were non-negotiable and could lead to de facto ‘punishments’ (such as eviction) if not followed. In Lockean terms it was a social contract but one that was dictated to them. One in which the rights and responsibilities were decided by others and for which they would be individually blamed for breaking. Because of the precarity of their situation punishments were severe.

Yet, people tried to make the best of the conditions, rules, and locations they were living-in (just as writers such as Lancione (2013, 2023), Pleace et al (2022), Schneider (2022), Jackson (2013), Herring (2019), Hao (2022) and Naiman (2022) described). People tried to create aspects of home such as routine, socialising, self-care, hope and belonging. To facilitate these, they were used to utilising all sorts of resources such as thick sleeping bags, quieter areas, unsuitable buildings, friends, hobbies, fringe criminality, the internet knowledge of the system and living in-the-day. They could not control the threat of displacement, only their ways of mitigating it.

Chapter 10:
Conclusions and Contributions to Knowledge

10.1 Introduction

In this chapter I identify the specific contributions to academic knowledge the findings offer. Some of these came directly in answer to the research questions but some unanticipatedly emerged from the data analysis. This chapter starts by recapping what the research was seeking to find out. It then describes whether and how, this was achieved. Seven contributions to knowledge are detailed including some which do not relate to the initial aims of the research. All of this is contextualised in terms of building-upon existing academic research and theory. This is followed by some advice for policy makers and future researchers. Finally, a section of personal wider thoughts concludes the chapter and the dissertation.

10.2 Key Findings

The questions which the research was seeking to answer were:

1. *Question 1 – Are people who have experienced homelessness attached to or ambivalent about locations?*
2. *Question 2 - What is it about locations that people feel attachment to?*
3. *Question 3 –How do experiences of homelessness and displacement impact on peoples' feelings over whether they will have choices over the future locations?*

This research has explored these three questions and made important and unique contribution to knowledges. The findings answer Question 1 by revealing the aspects of location which are important to people and the complexity of those

feelings. It shows the difficulty of categorising these relationships as either ‘attachment or ambivalence’ and why the word ’desire’ better describes their feelings (see contributions 1-3 below). In terms of Question 2, the research reveals key aspects of residential locations which are important (either positively or negatively) to research participants; the most frequent of these was being close important people, followed by having the opportunity to find nearby work and finally living in a place where they feel safe and secure (see contribution 2). The findings also show the inadequacy of viewing the phenomenon of attachment as either logical or emotional. Instead one needs to consider the intersection between them. In terms of Question 3 much of the focus is upon how the impact of experiences of displacement shape future expectations about choices. This then often leads to an (almost) involuntary ambivalence to location despite feelings of attachment.

Contributions 4-7 cover subjects which were not, directly, broached in the original questions. There is a contribution on the relationship between people who have experienced homelessness and the agencies (especially local authorities) who are supposed to help them within a neoliberal environment. Contribution 5 demonstrated the unique value offered by the work of Bauman in analysing participants stories around location, displacement and mobility within a shrinking welfare state and commodified society. The last two contributions cover important methodological and ethical issues around largely inductive research (Contribution 6) and the use of mobile phones to interview people experiencing homelessness (Contribution 7). There are, also, some crucial ethical questions raised within these two contributions

10.3 Contributions to Knowledge

This section identifies the key contributions to knowledge that this dissertation makes. Seven contributions are firstly summarised, and then discussed in detail.

10.3.1 Summary of the Contributions to Knowledge

1. People experiencing homelessness have needs and wants around location
2. The practical relationship they have with relocation is often best understood in terms of displacement rather than attachment or ambivalence.
3. Their needs and wants around location often clash with the reality of displacement
4. Agencies trying to help people experiencing homelessness, feel like they are operating in a structural straitjacket created by a lack of resources. This limits the support they can provide
5. Bauman's analysis helps identify the covert mechanisms by which people experiencing homelessness are displaced and excluded from locations in neoliberal societies.
6. Largely inductive methods are particularly valuable in drawing-out and understanding the experiences of people experiencing homelessness
7. Conducting research with people who have experienced homelessness without face-to-face contact is possible, but there are drawbacks, including methodological limitations and complex ethical questions.

10.3.2 People Experiencing Homelessness Have Needs And Wants Around Location

For many people, their personal concept of home was bound-up with location. In the sense 'belonging,' some people felt an instinctive affiliation to locations where they had historical, social and cultural roots. In this research many people had never lived outside of London, and some had little experience of other locations. For them, London was their home, and it was where they felt they belonged. The

idea of relocating was something they had never even considered. Saying things like ‘I am a Londoner’ or ‘I live in Hackney was part of their self-identity.

Location was also crucial in terms of the ‘social’ aspect of home. The research showed how difficult it was for an isolated person to have a sense of home. Those who were disconnected from key people struggled. Most interviewees expressed a need to be close to their children, family members, friends, or community. Some people had developed a support network based on peers, support services, churches etc which served as a proxy family and were crucial to their survival. This intersected with a sense of belonging. Some of the people who had been displaced from locations where key people lived described how traumatic they found the sense of loss. The starkest indicator of how important family and social contacts are to the meaning of home were highlighted by the people who said they would turn-down flats distant from people important to them.

In terms of the functional requirements of home, the relationship between location and work was crucial. Some people were already in employment, or volunteering and needed to be near their jobs. For others, they needed to be in locations where they felt they could obtain work. The hope of working was a crucial part of their self-identity as ‘normal people.’ A small minority were willing, or even keen, to leave London to obtain work. However, most presumed they would be remaining in London and that was where they would be most likely to obtain work

Reflecting the home making tradition in academic literature, the issue of location, also challenged the binary divided between homed and homeless. Even when people had been rough sleeping, there were aspects of some locations which made them feel more homely than others. By contrast, a number of people who were in the hotels were grateful for accommodation but felt more isolated than when they were on the streets because of their lack of relationships. For some, people, their family/friends were no longer nearby, travelling cost money and public transport was limited. Other people talked of how they felt cut-off from the services which had traditionally supported them. They did not want to change to a new group of agencies where they did not know staff and clients. Another concern was the loss of access to resources they had got used to, such as libraries and soup runs. Hence, whilst mobility had provided them with a roof it had taken away

other aspects of home which had been built over time. This makes the decisions to move people from local hotels to ones further away, even harder to understand

This finding fills a gap in knowledge by bridging a divide in academic approaches. One side of this divide is represented by authors who have emphasised the rational-logical elements of locations. They claim levels of desirability are based upon an analysis of what locations can currently 'offer' a person. Whilst at the other end of the divide are thinkers such as place attachment theorists who have claimed attachments to locations are based on past emotional connections. There has been little research with people who have experienced homelessness to see which of these approaches best applies to them.

Most of the aspects of attachment described in this chapter fulfil both past and present aspects of home. Social and familial networks reinforce a historic sense of belonging but also provide functional support. Being in a location where work is more likely can reinforce the sense of being part of the community but is also rational in terms of having more money. One might feel instinctively more secure and safe in an area where one belongs but also one know which parts are to be avoided at night

Finally, it significant that the aspects of location which are important to most people (historical connection, family, employment, living in a safe area, wanting to be part of the community etc.) are reflective of very traditional, conservative version of home. This completely belies the two stereotypes of 'homeless people' as a group of nomadic wanderers or a counter-cultural underclass.

10.33 The practical relationship people experiencing homelessness have with relocation is often best understood in terms of displacement.

The predominant relationship paradigms in literature has divided between those who believe people remain strongly attached to residential locations and those who believe that attachment is weakening. Many place theorists such as Relph and Tuan have presumed that their theoretical underpinning – namely psychological attachment to locations - remains a universal one. Whilst writers concentrating on the 'mobility turn' (such as Braidotti, 1994 and Cresswell, 1996)

see increased ambivalence to locations as part of the postmodernist movement away from fixed identities. However, the attachment/ambivalence dichotomy has not been explored extensively with people who have experienced homelessness. Exceptions include Parsell (2012) and O'Connor (1963) who concluded that location was unimportant to people experiencing rough sleeping and Kirkman et al (2010) who by contrast showed the significant impact on children of frequently moving as part of being in families experiencing homelessness.

The contribution to knowledge offered here is that peoples experiences are much better understood in terms of displacement rather than attachment or ambivalence. Displacement can be formal such as being forced to leave as result of an eviction notice or a court order. However, it can also take informal forms such as environments which make places too unpleasant to remain (such as enforcement measures). It sometimes involves formally being barred from entering places (such as bans after eviction) but can also entail de facto exclusion by requiring subjugation to unacceptable rules (such as no partners or no pets). This is all overlaid with an economic structure where locations are increasingly unaffordable to the poorest.

Most of the people interviewed felt they were in locations because of the decisions of others. They had not chosen to be there but had been effectively given no choice by 'gatekeepers' with control over access to locations. These gatekeepers included landlords, local authorities, and homelessness charities. This situation was exacerbated by a lack of money to be able to compete in rental markets. This lack of choice meant they were not in location which immediately matched their needs around aspects of home such as belonging, social support and security.

Within these limitations various levels and mechanisms of 'home making' had been adopted. A number of individuals in flats had initially been ambivalent (or hostile) to the locations which they were moved to. These were amongst the cheapest areas of London and had accepted them as the only alternative to hostels or the streets. However, they had successfully created elements of home (such as belonging, social support and security). Other people had tried to use the respite from the streets that the hotels offered to gain some footholds in life. People talked of giving-up crime, creating positive routines, developing friendships, looking after their wellbeing, and undertaking work.

10,34 The Needs And Wants Around Location Of People Experiencing Homelessness Often Clash With The Reality of Displacement

This contribution to knowledge is what follows from the synthesis of the previous two findings. A complexity is created when locational attachment desires clash with experiences of displacement. This creates a number of different relationships to location.

One relationship is that of people in their own social housing flats. They believed that they were not going to be displaced in the future. Most thought were going to be staying in their current housing (and therefore location) for years ahead (and maybe the rest of their lives). These feelings allowed them to develop strong, positive, footholds with the surrounding location. Most talked of the importance of their location in terms of community, belonging, safety, opportunities, and closeness to important people. The desire to stay in that location was strengthened by them building up relationships via things like local churches and volunteering groups. Even those amongst this group who expected to have move at some point in the future (because of benefit or tenancy rules) did not believe it would be a displacement process but more of a negotiated settlement where they be consulted as where they moved-to.

A second group had only just become homeless because of losing work through Covid-19 but now had paid work. These were not people for whom the experience of displacement at the decision of others was a common experience, but an aberration created by Lockdown and the virus. They did not perceive the hotels as part of a process of frequent displacement. They viewed it as a temporary safety-net operating as a ‘trampoline’ back into normality. They had been offered free hotel accommodation for several months, found jobs and could save-up money. The last few months had been a shock to their psychological assumptions about how bad life could get, but now they now had strong desires and plans to return their previous lives. They spoke the language of individualism and held a belief that their own efforts would be enough to make this happen. Paid work was their foothold, and they would, temporarily, move to whatever location necessary for

them to obtain it. However, they had a sense that they would ultimately be living in locations they chose.

In contrast to these two groups were people in the hotels and the insecure flats, without paid work. They knew staying in their current dwelling depended on their current landlords. They still lived in a world of daily precarity both psychologically and practically. They knew that a letter could arrive tomorrow telling them they had to leave shortly. A history of previous experiences of such displacement hung over them. Similarly, accessing new locations dependent on the help and permissions of others. They were completely at a loss as to where they would end-up but had previously found there was extraordinarily little to stop them falling into rough sleeping. The psychological responses people had to this situation seemed to divide between hope and fatalism, although individuals could sometimes oscillate between the two.

The hopeful group were mainly individuals (like Kate) who, despite long histories of displacement, were still trusting of the authorities making decisions over their lives. Although they did not have concrete plans, and realised they might have to compromise short-term they still were optimistic that they would end-up in locations which met many of their needs from a home. This group tended to be particularly populated by those focused-upon being reunited with their children. Perhaps this helped give a more tangible vision of where they wanted to be. There was also a minority within the 'hopeful group' who did not trust authorities but believed in their own ability to stand-up to them These people tended to be new to homelessness and had gone down a legal or advocacy route to challenge decisions. Reflecting Bauman's (1999, 2003, 2007) argument that relationship to the law, depends on socio-economic positioning, their foothold came from their ability to navigate and advocate for themselves. They had experienced displacement, but it had been modified by their ability to get some of what they wanted around locations and dwellings.

However, the larger group were more fatalistic. Their lives were the living embodiment of Bauman's (2005) quote that *"commitments and friendships looks suspiciously like recipes for frustrations and broken hearts." (p.66)* They did not trust in authorities to help them access locations (or dwellings) which satisfied their need for home. They felt there was little they could do about this and did not

expect authorities to treat their needs with compassion. They reflected the writings of authors such as Hickman (2017), Keck and Sakdapolrak (2013), Batty and Cole (2010) who all argued peoples' understanding and expectations of the world had been forged in the bitter heat of experience. After having a history of displacement there was little value, for this group, in forming psychological or social commitments to locations. Instead, they had to find ways of coping with the daily insecurity they experienced. For some this involved trying to not think about the future. living on a day-by-day basis and creating as much of feeling of home as possible.

Overall findings 1-3 illustrate the limitations of existing dichotomies within literature (past v present, emotional v logical, attachment v ambivalence). People experiencing homelessness do have clear, coherent feelings around what location (and dwelling) need to provide to meet their needs from a home. Yet the reality of many peoples' experiences is that they have no obvious way of actualising these attachment feelings into housing outcomes. Instead, histories of displacement push people into a kind of 'resigned ambivalence.' Most people interviewed had a combination of the following - living in insecure accommodation, fear of rough sleeping, extreme poverty, suffering from mental health problems, social isolation, battling addiction and long histories of not getting the help they needed. These external constraints are so formidable that they are focused on daily survival rather than more long-term choices.

10.3.5 Agencies trying to help people experiencing homelessness feel like they are operating in a structural straitjacket created by a lack of resources. This limits the support they can provide

The growing challenges faced by agencies tasked with helping people experiencing homelessness is another contribution to knowledge from this research. The data was captured by interviewing stakeholders involved in the politics, commissioning, and delivery of homelessness services. Whilst there is a body of non-academic research produced by charities which alludes to the pressures under which local authorities operate, this dissertation goes further in detailing those pressures and their responses to them. It also shows how people from other agencies, operating at either a political or operational level, view these

responses, The dissertation demonstrates the gap in perspective between distinct groups of people as to how local authorities are approaching the issue of homelessness.

There was a particular conflict between people from statutory bodies and their voluntary sector colleagues as to whether local authorities were doing all they could to help people to find suitable accommodation in their locality. Local (and regional) authority stakeholders did not believe they were acting without compassion. They were not choosing to ignore peoples' needs around homes. Instead, they stated that, they did not want to displace people from their area as the way of addressing homelessness. However, housing people locally was increasingly difficult. Reflecting Bauman's (1999, 2005, 2007) analysis of structural problems created by a shrinking state in neoliberal society, they argued they had fewer low-cost resources (social housing) within their control. Reductions in HB were forcing local authorities to displace people experiencing homelessness to cheaper location. The decline in social housing meant local authorities had had little control, over who lived in their locality. Furthermore, they had no power to bring down non-social rents to make the PRS more affordable to local people. Reflecting decades of under-investment in social housing, local authorities felt they were in the impossible position of having to prioritise[52] inadequate social housing resources to meet competing needs and demands.

Stakeholders described how this leads local authorities to feel they have no choice other than to displace some people experiencing homelessness. This creates a 'domino effect.' People are displaced from inner to outer London (for example Westminster to Croydon): others from outer London to commuter areas (for example Croydon to Basildon or Kent); others still from those commuter areas to further out (for example Basildon to Colchester). This led to people being in unfamiliar areas and viewed as 'outsiders' taking housing from local people. Stakeholders spoke of this breeding resentment, division, and fragmented

[52] For those of us who might be quick to judge people for holding this view, it maybe illustrative to think how much more sympathetic we probably are to people in, for example, Cornwall towards non-locals buying 'holiday homes' there (Weekes, 2022).

communities. Neoliberalism with its emphasis on individualism and voluntary associations seem to have no answer to these social problems

The 'time-bomb' of people in hotels (and other temporary accommodation) needing somewhere to move onto remained a problem. The only resolution would be to use poor-quality housing or move people into cheaper rental areas. The quotes below, from a confidential governmental document, described the structural dilemma local authorities face. Should they accommodate people in local, sub-standard PRS housing or displace them elsewhere?

> *"It's a bit of a double-edged sword really, because people have said it's better than being on the streets even if it's a total dog's dinner of a house and there's no support provision."*
>
> *"The majority of residents were quite happy of the level of support they [the providers] were providing but that was [due to] a lack of expectation and it's down to, them getting nothing normally."* (Anonymous, 2020)

There was a particular issue of what the local authorities' responses should be towards migrants with limited recourse to public funds in their area. To some degree this question had been avoided prior to Covid-19 because of the transitory and 'invisible' lives destitute migrants lived. They often slept rough and relied on charities for food, showers, companionship etc. However, once large numbers of these individuals had moved into the hotels, it was unclear what would happen to them next or whose responsibility it was to find a solution. There was a fear that another structural gap in support, meant they would become the 'hotel-hosting' local authorities responsibility default.

Local authorities seemed to be 'rationing' resources based on arbitrary rules not greatest housing need. People who could get a job (especially as a keyworker) or secure legal advice were much more likely to be housed compared to those unable to advocate for themselves, access support or attend appointments. This is not a criticism of local authorities per se, who must ration somehow, but it does mean those deepest in Bauman's (2003) wasteland have the least chance of escaping. These 'gatekeeping' processes led other stakeholders to be critical of the activities of local authorities. Jane and Spike, both housing advisors, struggled to understand why local authorities were making 'take-it-or-leave-it' offers of

relocation to people experiencing homelessness when the offers failed to meet the needs of the individuals concerned. Pat was worried that relocation was going to be increasingly the only offer for people in the hotels. Whilst Jenny and Brian (hotel managers) feared that local authorities were trying to avoid taking on responsibility for finding settled housing,.

10.3.6. Bauman's Analysis Helps Understand How People Experiencing Homelessness Are Displaced And Excluded From Locations In Neoliberal Societies

The insights offered by Bauman's analysis in understanding how people experiencing homelessness, are displaced, and excluded from locations has been largely absent from academic research into homelessness. This is significant because Bauman (1998, 2003) spoke forcefully of the displacement of those experiencing rough sleeping and impoverished migrants. In his description of the evolution of societies, he showed how certain groups have been 'othered' and then expelled from locations. Within solid modern societies, with the growth of the state, this became an increasingly formalised and technical process. He showed how in NAZI Germany criminalisation was followed by formal expulsion or extermination. He also showed how in solid modernity refugees were expected (as 'outsiders') to accept whatever locations were offered to them. These were usually locations where other people did not want to reside (Bauman, 1989).

By contrast, Bauman (1998, 2000, 2003, 2007) illustrated how people experiencing homelessness in neoliberal society are not always overtly displaced by being forcefully removed or officially prevented from living in certain locations. The law around private property is ostensibly based on equality, as it allows anybody to purchase or rent in any location. Rather than legal barriers, choice of location is dependent upon the financial wherewithal that individuals have. The displacement and exclusion of the poorest from many locations is because of their inability to afford the rent. This is then badged as a result of individual choices. This then becomes a narrative of blaming past decisions such as taking drugs, committing crime, and not working hard. It is easier to ignore the plight of the poorest because their inability to live in certain locations becomes a result of their own actions. <u>They are seen as effectively having displaced or excluded themselves</u>. This in turn makes it possible for communities to oppose housing for

people experiencing homelessness in their locality. Changes to rules around local connection and homelessness (see Chapter 2) mean the process of exclusion from locations is more covert and deniable but, simultaneously, stronger than ever.

The individualism that Bauman identified is reflected in the experiences of interviewees in two ways. Firstly, they often believe that they will continue to be displaced and excluded until they personally to find a way out of the wasteland (Bauman, 2003). Hence, so much hope around future opportunities is focused upon the possibility of paid work in the future. This feels very much like neoliberal ideology, in which the route out of poverty is believed to be hard work and talent (rather than, say, luck or state intervention). Secondly, there is a lack of solidarity. Although individuals do not tend to believe they have brought their current situation upon themselves, they tend to think others have. They attribute their situation to a lack of compassion from authorities, but also blame 'undeserving' groups using-up resources.

10.3.7. Largely Inductive Methods Are Particularly Valuable In Drawing-out And Understanding The Experiences Of People Experiencing Homelessness

Carrying out research with this population has historically been difficult. People who have experienced certain types of homelessness, such as rough sleeping and staying in temporary accommodation are an under-researched group. This means that there is little in the way of their stories to build upon. This dissertation shows how much quality data can be gathered by consciously attempting to reduce researcher assumptions at the start. It also highlights the value of having flexible approaches which maximise opportunities for participants to tell their stories. An overt co-production approach is both ethical and productive.

In achieving quality data, the adoption of aspects of Grounded Theory was important. As far as possible, this allowed data to emerge from what interviewees said. Questions testing a macro-theory risked being too narrow in focus. Therefore, failing to elicit information due to lack of relevance to peoples' lives. A

more open-ended approach to interview structures (and other data sources) allowed discussions to reflect the priorities of participants. This reflected the co-production aspect which allowed participants to have a much greater input into deciding what was relevant ‘data.’ This was evidenced by a plethora of subjects in these interviews emerging which one might not think were a priority to people experiencing homelessness (such as the importance of Wi-Fi, libraries, mobile phones, healthy food, transport links and so on)

As well as providing quality data, this also was also the most ethical process. When the subject under research is the participants experiences it is not ethical to claim researchers have access to objective knowledge whereas participant only have epistemological bias (see Chapter 6). An example of this is the anxiety that numerous participants described as they worried about the hotels closing shortly. Fears of returning to the streets were psychologically ‘carried with them ‘. These were reinforced by personal histories of previously being evicted at short notice. It is insulting and hubristic to argue that a third-person, who has never been in these situations, could understand those experiences ‘better’ than the people directly affected.

10.3.8. Conducting Research With People Who Have Experienced Homelessness Without Face-To-Face Contact Is Possible, But There Are Drawbacks, Including Methodological Limitations And Complex Ethical Questions

The challenges and opportunities presented by non-face-to-face research with people who have experienced homelessness are highlighted by this dissertation showing how data can be primarily gathered by conducting mobile phone interviews. It has been implicit within research with people who have experienced homelessness that data either needs to be obtained either a) via face-to-face conversations (see Ward et al 2015) or b) observational via close physical proximity (see Parsell, 2012). Furthermore, Ward believed that there was an assumption amongst the founders of Grounded Theory that such research would always involve face-to-face contact. However, ways of communicating have changed with the growth of mobile phones even amongst the poorest.

This growth in phones meant interviews could take place with over 20 people in the hotels who had slept rough recently. They often had a lot of free-time, and all were given mobile phones them so those supporting them could engage without face-to-face contact. The research showed how familiar people are with using mobile phones as ways of communicating with friends and agencies. People were texts and messaging apps as part of their everyday life.

in contrast to mobile phone calls, texts and apps, there was little evidence of people used other online communication methods such as Skype, Zoom and Teams. This may be because of the pure logistics of purchasing/carrying hardware, or lack of facilities such as libraries during lockdown or perhaps it is simply not part of the culture as a way of communication amongst people who have slept rough recently.

Regardless of these points of clarification, it has been demonstrated that is possible to gather quality research data using mobile phones with people with long histories of homelessness. This offers real potential for engaging with people with whom it might not be feasible to talk to face-to-face. The research also showed the advantages and challenges of this approach (see Chapter 6).

10.4 Messages for Policy Makers and Researchers

My previous role before returning to academia was as a manager in a policy and research department of a homelessness charity. In the light of this, and rooted in this research, I have found many challenges which need addressing. Therefore, it be remiss to not make offer some constructive policy and research suggestions.

Messages for Policy Makers

I am not optimistic that many of these will be adopted but nonetheless these are the changes I believe are necessary to address the concerns of people I interviewed in this research.

Policy Message 1 - A Realisation That A Policy Of Displacement Is Not The Way To End Peoples Homelessness

An underlying premise of government policy is that by when people access a 'suitable dwelling' their homelessness is ended. However, the meaning of 'suitable' has increasingly come to be defined by property size (i.e. does it have enough bedrooms to meet the legal obligation to the household). This approach fails to understand that homelessness is a social and psychological phenomenon as well as material one. Displacing people from locations where they have sense of belonging, social support and security is not providing them with homes in any meaningful sense.

Policy Message 2 - Understand The Importance Of Social Networks For People Who Have Experienced Homelessness

The number one issue which interviewees described around location was around relationships. This was not just a question of preferring to be near key people, rather the help and goodwill of others was vital to their survival. Sometimes they contrasted it to formal institutions who failed to support them. People experiencing homelessness are amongst the most socially excluded; yet the aspects of informal face-to-face, social inclusion they rely-on (whether from family, friends, churches, neighbours, day centres, soup runs etc.) often play central roles in their lives. Any approach to addressing somebody's homelessness which deprives them of this support (for example, by expecting them to relocate from it) is mistaken.

Policy Message 3 – There Is A Need For A Massive Growth in Self-Contained, Good Quality, Dwellings Affordable on Housing Benefit or Low Wages.

Reflecting the literature which associates home with self-contained buildings, most people wanted their own flat, not shared accommodation with strangers. So long as there is a shortfall of this type of accommodation in locations where people want to live, the chances of ending rough sleeping, let alone wider homelessness, are zero.

Policy Message 4 – If The Government Believes Work Is The Best Way Out Of Poverty, Then Greater Rewards Within the Social Security System For Those Working Are Required

Most people also hoped to work in the future as a way of increasing income, rather than live on subsistence-level benefits. But the work they described seemed unlikely to offer a way out of poverty. In particular HB levels need to reflect the costs of renting whilst also providing incentives to work.

Policy Message 4 - The Localization And Cuts Agenda Are Effectively Displacing The Poorest

Other stakeholders showed how they have neither the political power, nor the financial resources to help people experiencing homelessness in their local area. At the same time, reflecting the growing parochial insularity which Smith described interviewees often felt they were not wanted by local authorities where they had connections[53]. The poorest are being forced to be mobile because of no other options.

Policy Message 5 - A Serious Attempt Is Needed To Address All The Needs Of People Sleeping Rough Or In Hotels

The Government has a target to end rough sleeping. Yet the number of people on the streets has increased over the last 10 years and thousands remain in emergency accommodation. There is evidence of a lack of coherence on how to build on the successes of Everyone-In. The fear is that some decision-makers still believe that rough sleeping is about people 'choosing' to sleep on the street. I hope this research helps to nail this falsehood. Housing First offers a foundational model but for delivery it requires people experiencing rough sleeping to, a) have real choices, b) not be punished for temporary setbacks (like abandoning tenancies), c) be given priority over people who have housing need but are not homeless[54], d) be given 'wrap-around' support which is not time-limited (see Homeless Link, n.d.). There also needs to be an understanding that a punitive

[53] I recall having a conversation with Officials at DWP about the localization of the Social Fund (emergency funds to help people in crisis). I asked what should happen to people who could not show a local connection to any area, such as people experiencing rough sleeping or people coming out of prison. I was basically told that was not Central Government's problem.

[54] It is worth referencing back to the Localism Act which attempts to portray homelessness as not real housing need (see end of last chapter).

policy of removing all support to destitute migrants has failed to reduce rough sleeping.

Policy Message 6 – Without Joined-up Action Across Government There Is Little Chance Of Reducing Homelessness

Whilst schemes such as Housing First might be costly, they are not as expensive as people being in local authority care, prison, hospital, rehab, or temporary accommodation (Crisis, 2015). However, the costs of these institutions are spread across disparate parts of local and national government. The research findings show how peoples' interactions with some agencies undermined good work by others (for example people losing tenancies whilst in prison). There have been attempts to deal with rough sleeping across government departments (Johnstone, 2018) but, in my experience, they have tended to not survive personnel and priority changes.

Policy Message 7 - Greater Legal Rights Are Needed To Reduce The Amount Of Precarity Amongst Private Sector Tenants

This is a controversial recommendation in the sense that the fear is that any regulation of the PRS will lead to shrinkage and further exclusions of anybody considered 'risky.' Nonetheless the stories of people losing their homes because landlords could make more money elsewhere were harrowing. There seems to be a sense of confusion as to whose home a PRS property is, with some landlords thinking they are doing tenants 'a favour' by letting them live there. The Government have floated legislation ending no-fault evictions and 'blanket bans' on pets. There has even been talk of limiting rent rises (Burgin, 2022 Boxall, 2022, Lem, 2022). This is legislation desperately needed.

Messages for Future Research

My single most important message to future research is a plea to authentically listen to the opinions of people with lived experience. This needs to be deeper than just ensuring they are (for example) interviewed as part of research projects. The people who are best placed to understand how to 'reach' and meaningfully communicate with excluded groups are its members (or ex-members). They are ones who can tell researchers whether language is ambiguous, questions intrusive, assumptions incorrect etc. There is also a need for researchers to not believe that they can 'second-guess' the reality of people they have interviewed. They need to acknowledge that the life-world of an individual can only be understood by the person themselves. Researchers should not be 'superimposing' a rationalization or causality to explain away why people perceive their own lives incorrectly[55].

Research Message 1 – Find Out What Has Happened To Those Accommodated Under Everyone-In And Why

It is not an exaggeration to say that the Everyone-In project was unique. Never has there been a drive from the state to get all people (including those with limited access to public funds) into accommodation. There is a real need to know what has happened to the individuals who were part of this process. Where were those moved-on from hotels accommodated? How successful have any resettlement processes been? Are there people still in hotels? Why have they not been able to be housed? What is the 'endgame' for them?

Research Message 2 – Clarify Why Everyone-In Succeeded In The Ways It Operated

Leading on from the previous recommendation, there is a need for research to look at what Everyone-In can teach us about addressing rough sleeping. Most of

[55] This is the case whether it be in the guise of Marxist 'false consciousness' or Functionalists arguing that people do not understand the bigger picture.

the research participants were on the streets when the pandemic hit. Yet hardly any wanted to sleep rough in the future. Virtually nobody walked out of the hotels. What was it about the ‘offer’ to those on the streets that meant that people slept rough until hotels became an option? What did the hotels offer that hostels/supported housing do not?

Research Message 3 – Find Out What Is Most Important to People Experiencing Rough Sleeping Or Other Types of Homelessness

A big gap in the data from my findings is the relative importance of the various desires people prioritised. How do individuals ‘rank’ wants and needs in terms of importance? For example, which of these is their top priority?

- Having their own flat
- Being in a location close to people of importance to them
- Being in a location where they can obtain or keep paid employment.

Research Message 4 - People Who Have Successfully ‘Created’ Homes After Experiencing Homelessness Have Invaluable Knowledge To Offer

The group of people who described their own positive experiences of being resettled between 1-5 years ago offered valuable insights. There is a need to find out from these types of people what was necessary for them to go from experiencing homeless to having a successful home of their own. This would also help understand to what extent there are aspects of the meaning of ‘home’ common to those who have previously been without one.

Research Recommendation 5 - Focus On Better Understand of What Home ‘Means’ to People Who Are Experiencing Homelessness

Following from Recommendation 4 there is also a need to speak to people <u>currently</u> experiencing homelessness as to what home means to them. The

predominant assumption still is focused upon accommodation. But my findings have suggested the importance of factors such as location, people, jobs, security, and choice.

Research Recommendation 6 – Have An Ethical Debate On How to Balance The Need To Hear From People Experiencing Rough Sleeping With Responsibilities Towards Them

As described elsewhere in this paper, I believe that when people become involved in our research, it becomes a factor in their life. To pretend otherwise is to deny the reality of the vulnerable and multiply excluded. Therefore, discussion needs to take place with people who have lived experience as to how they think this should be handled. The protections in place need to be as much about the individuals concerned as the reputation of universities. Of particular concern, coming out of this research, is how do studies with vulnerable people operate in a world of mass communication devices? How can researchers ensure that no harm comes to our interviewees if they are rarely interacted with face-to-face?

10.5 Final Thoughts

Long after the Covid crisis had ended there were still thousands of people in hotels with nobody seemingly sure of where they belong and with no idea where they would end up living. The people I spoke to had been buffeted by a serious of events of which they had no control. The long-term effects of a recession in 2008 was followed by the election of a government with an agenda based on political opportunism and an attempt to return to the economics of the 1980's to further 'liberate' free market capitalism. Ministers were committed to shrinking the welfare state whilst oblivious to the impacts on the most vulnerable. This created an increasingly threadbare safety-net. Local authorities and charities were squeezed, with an estimated £1 billion being taken out of single homelessness resources since 2011 (St Mungo's & Homeless Link, 2022). All this led to swathes of unaffordable residential locations for the poorest. Simultaneously, the Government

announced that there should be increased use of the PRS so that social housing could go to people in "*real need.*"

Then a virus from China arrived and people experiencing rough sleeping become a risk to others and the NHS. There was the real possibility of people dying on the streets of starvation and Covid-19. In this era of ethical fluidity, nobody was sure how to deal with this situation and reactive, atomised, decisions were made to put people into hotels in random locations. It was only after these placements that conversations began to be asked as to where they were going to be located next. During my childhood, a Conservative Prime Minister once pronounced "*there is no such thing as society*" (Thatcher, 1987) adding how she thought it undermined families to think that the Government might be expected to house the homelessness. I believe if she (or the contemporary versions of her) had spent some time on the streets, like the people I interviewed for this research, they would have reached a vastly different conclusion.

Appendixes[56]

Appendix 1 - References

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Appendix 2 - Flyer

Hello

My name is Paul

I used to be homeless.

I would like to talk to other people who have been homeless and have moved into places like hotels over the last few months

- Is that you?
- Do you feel at home in your new place?
- Did you have to move to another part of London to get into the hotel?
- Are you settled?
- Are you hopeful for the future?
- Where would you like to live?

Please get in touch.

I want to hear from you!

This is a university research project and will involve an interview of about an hour.

In return a small payment will be made for peoples' times who take part.

£10
Supermarket Voucher

Everything said will be anonymous

Want to know more or have questions?

Please text 07738 580685 or email me on b6043163. If you just send me the word "Research", I will get in contact with you

Sheffield Hallam University

Appendix 3 – Participant Information Sheet

The Importance of Geographical Place to People experiencing rough sleeping
Participant Information Sheet

1. Invitation and Purpose We are inviting you to take part in a three-year research study about people who have been homeless and have moved into new places to get help. The study is being conducted by The Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research at Sheffield Hallam University. Please read the following information carefully before you decide whether or not to take part.

2. Legal Basis for Research Studies The University undertakes research as part of its function for the community under its legal status. Data protection allows us to use personal data (the information you have provided) for research with appropriate safeguards in place under the legal basis of public tasks that are in the public interest. A full statement of your rights can be found at:

https://www.shu.ac.uk/about-this-website/privacy-policy/privacy-notices/privacy-notice-for-research

All University research is reviewed to ensure that participants are treated appropriately and their rights respected. This study has been approved by the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC). Further information can be found at: https://www.shu.ac.uk/research/ethics-integrity-and-practice

3. Why have I been asked to participate? You have been approached about this study because you have experienced homelessness and moved into a hotel to address it.

4. Do I have to take part? Taking part in this research is voluntary. **If you would prefer not to take part, you do not have to give any reason; if you change your mind you** should contact Paul Anderson (at 07738580685) or **Paul.M.Anderson@student.shu.ac.uk) up to 14 days after the interview date. If you withdraw after this point your data may be retained as part of the study.**

5. What will taking part involve? Interviews will take place by phone where you feel most comfortable and should last approximately 40 mins each. We will ask you about your personal story, your experience of the hotel and your hopes around getting a home for the future. There will also be the possibility of being involved in some other parts of the research such as taking photos or keeping a diary of how you spend your time. These will be explained more fully at the end of the interview.

6. What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part? We do not anticipate that there are any risks in taking part. You will not be under any pressure to answer questions or talk about topics that you prefer not to discuss and you can choose to halt or withdraw from the interview at any point.

7. What are the possible benefits of taking part? There are no direct benefits of taking part although some people enjoy the opportunity to share their experiences. You will receive a payment worth £10 for each interview to thank you for your time. You will still receive this payment even if you choose to withdraw from the research after the interview. There will also be similar payments for people who choose to be in other parts of the research (such as the diary keeping).

8. How will my confidentiality be protected? We need to record the interview, with your consent. This allows us to accurately reflect what is said. The recording will be transcribed (written out), with any names or identifying information removed. Any quotes that we use will be anonymised (using pseudonyms) in our reports. Confidentiality will only be broken in circumstances where the researcher is concerned that there is a risk of harm to you or someone else. In this instance the researcher must report this information to the relevant agency that can provide assistance.

9. What will happen to my data during the study and once the study is over? Sheffield Hallam University will be responsible for all of the data during the study and when it is over. No one outside of the research team will have access to this data, which will be held securely on Sheffield Hallam University servers. CRESR data management protocols are consistent with government GSAD and NHS data toolkit requirements, as well as GDPR legislation.

Data from this study may be retained by Sheffield Hallam University for up to 10 years after the study has finished and may be available to the public but only if it can be sufficiently anonymised to protect your identity. The only personal data we keep will be your signed consent form. We have to keep this for 10 years from the end of the project so we will keep it separately in a secure file for this length of time.

10. How will the data be used? We will use data from your interview to inform our final reports – which will be publicly available – as well as presentations and academic publications. If you are interested, copies of final reports will be available on request by contacting Paul Anderson (at 07738580685 or Paul.M.Anderson@student.shu.ac.uk).

11. Who can I contact if I have any questions or concerns about the study? Please contact Paul Anderson at the Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research, Sheffield Hallam University, City Campus, Howard Street, S1 1WB (phone number and email above*)

Tel: 07738 580685

Email: Paul.M.Anderson@student.shu.ac.uk

If you do not wish to contact Paul, you can contact his Supervisor Stephen Green.

Email: sedsg1@exchange.shu.ac.uk

Or in certain circumstances, you can contact more specialist staff members.

You should contact the Data Protection Officer if: • you have a query about how your data is used by the University • you would like to report a data security breach (e.g. if you think your personal data has been lost or disclosed inappropriately) • you would like to complain about how the University has used your personal data DPO@shu.ac.uk	**You should contact the Head of Research Ethics (Professor Ann Macaskill) if:** • you have concerns with how the research was undertaken or how you were treated a.macaskill@shu.ac.uk
Postal address: Sheffield Hallam University, Howard Street, Sheffield S1 1WBT. Telephone: 0114 225 5555	

Appendix 3 – Verbal Consent Form

The Importance of Geographical Place to People experiencing rough sleeping Subject to Relocation Processes—Participant Consent form

Please read these. I will ask you before the interview if you are happy with them

1. I have had details of the study explained to me and understand that I may ask further questions at any point.

2. I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study without giving a reason. If I change my mind I should contact Paul Anderson, (at 07738580685 or Paul.M.Anderson@student.shu.ac.uk) up to 14 days after the interview date. If I withdraw after this point then I understand that my data may be retained as part of the study.

3. I understand that I can stop the interview at any point or choose not to answer any particular questions and this will not have any impact on me or the support I am receiving.

4. I understand that the information collected will remain confidential, unless I say anything that makes the researcher concerned that there is a risk of harm to me or someone else. In these circumstances I understand that the researcher must report this information to the relevant agency that can provide assistance.

5. I understand that my personal details such as my name will not be shared outside this project.

6. I agree that the data in anonymised form (with nobody being named) can be used for other research purposes (e.g. writing articles in journals).

7. I understand that the data from this study may be retained by Sheffield Hallam University for up to 10 years after the study has finished and may be available to the public (but only if it can be sufficiently anonymised to protect your identity).

8. I agree to take part in the interview for the above study.

9. I agree for the interview to be audio recorded and to quotes being used. I understand my name won't be used.

10. If I am unhappy with the way anything has been conducted, I understand I can contact Paul’s Supervisor at the University whose name is Stephen Green (sedsg1@exchange.shu.ac.uk)

For Paul to fill in.

"I confirm that verbal consent has been recorded and that the consent form, information sheet and privacy notice have been read/explained verbally to the participant" (researcher signs below).

Name of researcher	*Signature*	*Date*
………………………………………… …	*………………………………………… …*	*……………….. ..*

Appendix 4 – Original RF2 Proposal (before the research had to be altered because of Covid-19)

The Importance of Geographical Place to People experiencing rough sleeping Subject to Relocation Processes

> *"[the poor] move because they have no other bearable choice."*
> (Zygmunt Bauman,1984 p.98)

Abstract

This PhD is concerned with the geographical relocation of people experiencing rough sleeping to meet their housing needs. Numerous recent legal and economic factors have increased relocation as a key response offered by voluntary and statutory bodies working with people experiencing rough sleeping. This phenomenon has developed in a piecemeal and reactive way and there is a lack of robust academic research and evaluation evidence that considers the experiences of, and impact upon, those individuals and families subjected to relocation. I intend to use qualitative data methods to achieve a deeper understanding of these experiences and impacts. This will provide an important and new contribution to knowledge. My analytical framework will be informed by the work of Zygmunt Bauman who has written about how postmodernist capitalism forces the poor to move to areas that they do not wish to live in.

Context

As the title suggests, this PhD investigates the importance of geographical location to people experiencing homelessness. My interest in this originates from a discussion

with Lord Best, a leading Parliamentarian on housing and homelessness, concerning recent changes to addressing homelessness in England and the impact this may have.

From analysis of the 1977 Housing (Homeless Persons') Act and 1996 Housing Act (which, together, shape much current homelessness law) I identify three key constant principles for allocating housing to people experiencing rough sleeping:

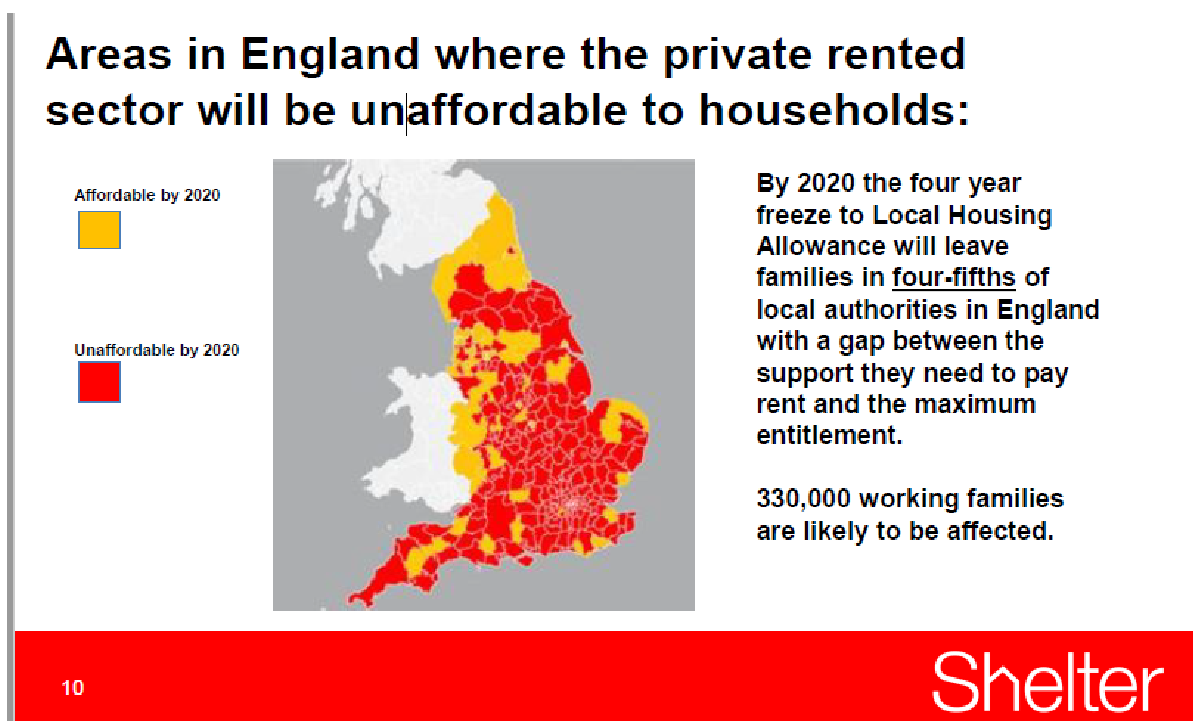
a) Prioritising the "most needy"
b) Rewarding "positive behaviour"
c) Responsibilities for local authorities to permanently rehouse those satisfying conditions a) and b).

However, in recent years there has been increasing ambiguity over the role of locality in this process. For example, the Localism Act 2011 increased local authorities' flexibility over social housing allocations and use of other tenures to meet their homelessness duties:

> *"The Localism Act lets local authorities meet their homelessness duty by providing good quality private rented homes [even if the homeless household do not want to rent privately]. This option could provide an appropriate solution for people experiencing a homelessness crisis, at the same time freeing up social homes for people in **real need** on the waiting list".*
> (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2011, p.16, my emphasis)

Whilst the requirement for private rented sector (PRS) accommodation to be "qood quality" was specified, locality was not given consideration. Furthermore, the affordability and accessibility of the PRS in some areas has been negatively affected by rent increases, landlord willingness to let to housing benefit recipients and changes to Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rules and value. As Figure 1 shows, there is evidence that the PRS is becoming unaffordable for low income households in many parts of England (Shelter, 2019).

Figure 1: (Un)Affordable Areas for Families Receiving Maximum LHA by 2020



Source: Homelessness Reduction Act One Year One (Birring, 2019)

One effect of reduced affordability in the PRS has been that some local authorities have sought to meet their homelessness duties beyond their boundaries, and within their boundaries more neighbourhoods have become unaffordable. Government Guidance states:

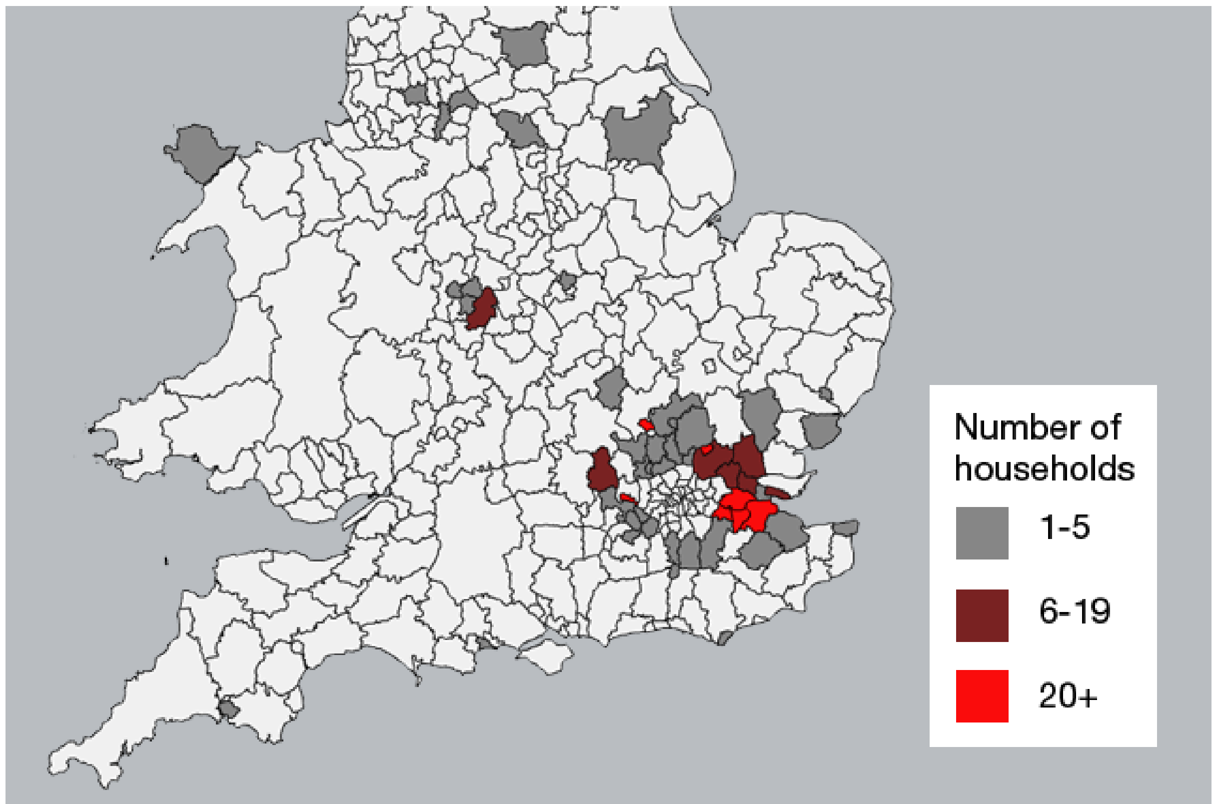
> *Generally, where possible, housing authorities should try to secure accommodation that is as close as possible to where an applicant was previously living. Securing accommodation for an applicant in a different location can cause difficulties for some applicants.*

(Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government. 2018. P.137)

However, research for Shelter (2016) shows that relocation of homeless households in London is taking place. Figure 2 shows “placements” of statutory homelessness

households from London boroughs over a 12-month period. The author acknowledges that these figures are likely to be an underestimate as a) only cover 24 of London's 32 local authorities, b) include some temporary accommodation and c) omit more informal relocation programmes for people experiencing rough sleeping (covered in detail later).

Figure 2: Areas to Which Homeless Households in 24 London Local Authorities Were Relocated to in 2014-15



Source: Garvey, K. Pennington J (2016).

The notion of locality when helping people experiencing rough sleeping that are not owed a ‘duty’ by the local authority is equally confusing. Traditionally, public funding has supported hostels and supported housing for people experiencing rough sleeping and other vulnerable homeless groups. Historically these required no local connection, as was the case for Greater London:

> *The way that services [hostels and supported housing projects] have developed to provide services for single people experiencing rough sleeping and especially people experiencing rough sleeping must be taken into account. The services were not designed to be borough specific but to link across boroughs to enable people to move to appropriate people to move to appropriate services based on need and circumstances.*
> (Association of London Government, 2004 p.41).

Despite this tradition, “ring-fencing” of access to these services to people with a local connection has increased. This has overlapped with a growth in “reconnections” services, especially in London, aimed at "returning" people experiencing rough sleeping to areas where they have a local connection. Despite Government, initially, specifying that this should only be one option, it increasingly became the default approach (this is known in some services in London as a “Single Service Offer”). Various problems particularly exist around applying local connection to people experiencing rough sleeping. Firstly, this group are often “wanderers” without a clear connection anywhere; secondly they may have left an area for reasons of wellbeing or safety; thirdly (unlike statutory homelessness) local connection rules for people experiencing rough sleeping exist nowhere in law. Therefore, the notion of ‘local connection’ has been applied differently across England and has been applied differently to people based on their housing situation.

This confusion is echoed in rough sleeper services. One of these, funded by the Greater London Authority, attempts to relocate people experiencing rough sleeping prevented from accessing local accommodation including hostels, supported housing or social housing due to inadequate borough ties. This service often can only access PRS accommodation in affordable areas; where the people experiencing rough sleeping concerned have no local ties. However, another serviced funded by Government is “Housing First", premised on people experiencing rough sleeping having a "right to a home" and "choice and control" over location. How to reconcile this with unaffordable PRS markets and greater local authority social housing allocation power is, at present, unclear though evaluation is being carried out by the Government and other bodies.

Development of Themes

While the experience of, and impact on people experiencing rough sleeping being relocated is under-researched, a review of academic literature revealed a body of knowledge with direct relevance to this PhD. Three key themes emerged:

a. Residential Mobility
b. Place Attachment

c. The Meaning of Home.

These were not themes I initially planned to focus upon. Instead, I began reading academic literature on homelessness, noticing a lack of consideration of geographical location. This resulted in top-level investigations into six or seven themes which narrowed down to a focus on research into people's attachment to geographical places. I studied papers on the impact of disruption of this attachment, evolving into wider reading around residential mobility. A third theme came as an attempt to understand how these areas of research (mobility and place - often focused upon subjectivity) could be dovetailed with attempts to compose universal models on the meaning of home.

a) Residential Mobility

An apparent theme of the research literature is the negative impact of residential mobility Merging common dictionary definitions of “residential” and “mobility” leads to something like, “movement between places designed for people to live in”. Heller's (1982) literature review supports this says of research into this phenomenon: “adverse affective and behavioural reactions to relocation have been noted in almost all of the urban relocation studies” (p.475). Examples of this include negative impacts on: Physical health (Lazarus, 1966: Selye, 1959): Mental health (Fried, 1963, Siedenberg,1973, Wilmuth et al 1973): Education and family (Evans, 2004). Research specifically focused on *frequent* residential mobility has found particularly negative relationships with health and social functioning (Desmond et al, 2015. Stokols et al. 1983) and strength of place attachment feelings (Benedikt,1995; Toffler, 1970).

However, other literature challenges this negative analysis, claiming it disregards other causal factors. Some writers have claimed that mobility tends to *exacerbate* existing health problems, not create new ones (see: Fried, 1963: Hall, 1966: Miller and Lieberman, 1965). Others have argued that negative impacts should be balanced against the benefits of moving such as better housing, nicer neighbourhoods and increased job opportunities (Fischer et al,1977: Necombe, Huba & Bentler,1982: Rossi,1955: Stokols & Shumaker, 1982).

Other writers have gone further, presenting evidence that it is a *lack* of geographical mobility which can have harmful health or social impact (Billig, 2006; Fairchild & Tucker, 1982: Loo & Marr 1982). This more positive approach is frameable within what Cresswell (2006) calls the "Mobility Turn" of sociology. For example, Malkki (1992) challenges a predominant paradigm of "sedentarism" associating increased residential stability with normality and progress. This challenge to "sedentarism" appears to come from two separate, perhaps contradictory, arguments. Kundera's literary works (1985, 1992) and Boyle *et al* (1998), claim that sedentary paradigms are reflective of narrow Western cultural perspectives, which fail to appreciate the ongoing levels of "nomadism" (i.e. frequent wandering) still common elsewhere in the world. By contrast Braidotti (1994) criticises sedentarism by challenging the idea that it is normative in Western society. She describes "modern-day nomads", whose increasing mobility is reflective of a "critical consciousness" (p.5) which is "the subversion of set conventions…not [necessarily] the literal act of traveling" (ibid).

Braidotti's liberation approach can be also be applied to rational-choice "push-pull" models summarised by Duncan and Newmans' (2007) statement that: "Moves are, for the most part, rational, deliberate, and planned" (pp.174-75). Some authors argue this is a rational response to changes in needs, resources and opportunities (see references to "Life -Stages" models by Kendig,1984: McCauley & Nutty 1982: Morris et al,1976: Stokols,1982, and the "Life Courses" models by Mulder, 2007: Sage et al. 2013). Other writers emphasise rejection and leaving of places which no longer meet needs (Mensch and Manor, 1998: Speare, 1970: Wolpert, 1965). A third group of theorists believe residential mobility choices are driven by future material gain (Clark, 1982: Clark and Moore, 1982: Desmond et al., 2015; Leslie & Richards, 1984; McLeod and Ellis, 1982).

Desmond (2017) nuances these perspectives, arguing that mobility by choice is driven by such desires as greater independence, better amenities, proximity to friends, family and work or saving money. However, involuntary mobility is commonly a result of property, neighbourhood and landlord problems or increased rents. Whilst Speare (1970) argued that forced mobility cases were "relatively few" in America, Desmond (2016) stated that 45 years later, "1 in 8 poor renting [American] families …were unable to pay all their rent and a similar number thought they would be evicted soon" (p.5). This supports Brah's (1996) dialectical approach that mobility can illustrate both increased and reduced choice: "the question is not simply about who travels but when, how and under what circumstances." (p.182).

The case of Gypsies in the UK practically illustrates this statement. Legislation in the UK has upheld mobility as an essential characteristic of “gypsy” culture. However, Liegeois, et al (1995) and Mayall (1992) argue that this mobility is partly reactive to the resistance and suspicion historically received from other groups. In reality gypsies cannot be completely mobile, as they still must pitch-up somewhere and often choose places where they feel they can obtain paid employment (Boyle et al, 1989). When they do stop somewhere, they still face frequent segregation and inadequate facilities (Niner 2004). This casual stigmatisation was encapsulated in language used by the Government’s Homelessness Minister in 2019 to describe gypsies in her constituency; “[they are] the traditional type, old tinkers, knife-cutters wandering through” (The Guardian, 2019)

In terms of reducing homelessness, the Government appears to envisage relocation to areas of surplus housing stock with lower rents as a partial solution. Whilst there seems to be no official data monitoring the effectiveness of this approach, there is a small amount of research from Garvey & Pennington (2016) for Shelter and Clark et al (2017) for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) offering mixed results. Both found some cases where it has been an effective response to housing need. However, other relocated households struggled with practicalities such as losing resources like social networks, medical services and their children’s schools. Furthermore, some people chose to remain homeless rather than accept accommodation which involved moving. Their concerns included moving long distances, lack of transport, losing existing support and disliking areas they were offered relocation to. Other evidence, specifically around rough sleeping, comes from an evaluation of ThamesReach’s service aimed at relocating some of London's street people experiencing rough sleeping lacking a local connection. 14 of 36 people they worked with accepted an offer of relocation. Two these had broken down within three months and it was reported that “Outcomes remain very fragile for some clients, with circumstances liable to deteriorate quickly” (Hennessy, Rice, Savage & Thomas, 2017 p.17). These mixed findings seem to mirror Pennington's (2013) research into older peoples’ relocation. Whilst for many people it is a positive experience which frees up capital or offers a more sedate life, for others it leads to increased isolation and loneliness.

b) Peoples' "Attachment" to Places

Altman and Lowe (1992) described "place attachment" as the process by which people bond (cognitively and emotionally) with 'places' - geographical spaces to which people give meaning. Lewicka (2010) reviewing 20 years of subsequent research following stated "All these findings seem to corroborate the claim made long ago…that sense of place is a natural condition of human existence (dwelling = being)" (p.209) She argues that research shows a correlation between higher levels of place attachment and social/psychological functioning. Dovey (1985) and Milligan (1998) add a potential explanation by arguing that place attachment provides a sense of order, continuity and connectedness. Similarly, research into involuntary ruptures from places to which one feels attached have shown associations with feelings of trauma and loss (Brown and Perkins, 1992; 1949; Fried, 1965; Heller, 1992; Young and Wilmott, 1957) and/or lower -levels of residential satisfaction and friendships (Burgess et al, 1949; Mogey, 1955).

Cuba and Hummon (1993), found relatively high levels of attachment to US states when they investigated whether some types of place are more likely to facilitate attachment. This challenged a long-standing theory of Tuan's (1975) that the city is the scale of settlement which naturally induces such feelings. Both theories are broadly compatible with Feldman (1990) who suggest attachment can be to a settlement type rather than to a specific place. Porteous's (1996) looks at places in terms of types of dwelling and argues there is a near-universal preference in modern western societies for standalone houses over apartments. This seems compatible with Rybcsnik's (1988) historical analysis which showed a generalized movement since the 1700s towards a greater emphasises on domesticity and privacy.

However, rather than emphasising the relative attachment levels of specific (types of) places, most relevant research has focused upon pinning-down what the process of "attachment" practically means. Altman and Lows original concept of "bonding" was a foundation on which a number of others have built; for example Relph (1976, 2016) described differing *degrees* of attachment, whereas Lewicka (2011) adapted work by Hummon (1992) to speak of distinct *types* of place attachment (some more positive than others). Whereas others have used different terms to describe people/place relationships such as "place satisfaction" (Stedman, 2003), "place identity" (Hernandez et al, 2007) and place affinity (JRF, 2007)

A number of writers (Barcus & Brunn, 2009: Gustafsson, 2001; Hall, 1995, Beckley 2003) concluded that place bonds amongst the residentially mobile are different, rather than weaker, compared to other people. Savage (2008) claimed that "elective [and proactive] forms of belonging and attachment are [increasingly] socially and politically dominant" (p.161). In contrast, Higgins (1997) and Putnam (2000) posit the existence of a "defensive" type of place attachment based on resistance to change among the residentially immobile. However, Jeffrey (2018) criticises Savage and others for a class prejudice which fails to understand that elective belonging is only available to prosperous middle classes benefitting from gentrification, leaving the working class with "prescribed [place] belonging" imposed by others (p.258).

The Meaning of Home

"Everyone deserves a place to call home" (Campaigning charity Homeless Link slogan -2019).

Lewicka's (2010) review of literature into place attachment concluded "There is… unanimous opinion that the prototypical place [to which people are attached] is home" (p.211)." However, place theorists seem less focused on defining what the concept of home actually means. Perhaps the reason for this is encapsulated in two statements by Riley 1992: a) "home is magical, instinctive and reflective of personal goal" but also b) "[home is] an extraordinarily malleable concept" (p.3). This reflects the phenomenological trend identified by Case (1996) (referencing Korosec-Serfaty) who argued that experiences of "place, space and objects" (p3) in childhood, help shape the way a person understands the world (including home) throughout their life. Trigg (2012) similarly argued there is two-way relationship between a person and the phenomenon which they identify as home. This relationship includes any individual combination of things such as personal history, dwelling, family, wider social network, neighbourhood, community, physical environment and even memories One can see how this channels Heidegger 's (1971) "dasein" and Husserl's "lebenswelt" (Smith, 2007) but one is arguably, left with a tautology - *one's home is the place, where one feels at home*. Research by Fitzpatrick, (2000) and Kellet & Moore (2003) support this position by

demonstrating that people moving into the same accommodation have differing opinions on whether their homelessness has been ended.

Whilst non-phenomenological researchers do not rule out the importance of subjective experience, they are still more likely to attempt an objective or generalizable meaning of home. Neale's literature review in the area reflects this stating both "Home for each human being is shaped to some extent by that individual's ideal understanding of the concept" (p.55), but also "in spite of definitional complexities home and homelessness are real" (ibid.). It is to attempted universal definitions of home to which I now turn.

It is useful to start by understanding what the law says constitutes a home and how much this is reflected in research. From the official Code of Guidance, home is summarised as "accommodation which a household can legally and practically occupy and which it is reasonable to expect them to do". This definition of "reasonable" specifies material things such as affordability, physical condition and size of property, but beyond these areas, local authorities are largely left to decide. Amongst academics, research which closely reflects this definition includes Parsell's (2012) study which basically found that people experiencing rough sleeping, he observed, regarded any property (regardless of factors such as location or tenure) as a potential home.

However, Parsell stands out for his exception rather than typicality. Other research tends to find that home is more complex than dwelling, encompassing a wider range of material and affective factors. Watson and Austerberrys (1986) claimed that whilst a decent material building was required, home also needed to a) meet social needs b) foster a sense of well-being. These two latter elements have surfaced elsewhere. Clapham (2003) and Harman (1989) both suggested social relationships were fundamental to a sense of home. Fitzpatrick (2000), similarly, emphasised the importance a familiar community. She felt that familiarity (along with permanent accommodation) fostered a sense of security, essential to well-being. Somerville (1992) and Bennet's interviewees also emphasised sense of security but associated it with privacy rather than social or tenure factors. Jackson (2012), May (2000), Robinson (2002) and Sixsmith (1986) are nearest to place attachment theorists with an emphasis on home being somewhere which generates a feelings of belonging. Whilst, Bevan's (1999) focus on freedom to easily move home and May's (1999) emphasis on home as somewhere which provides employment opportunities place mobility above security.

Generally home has been associated with positivity as summed-up by Easthope's (2004) literature review: "One's home, then, can be understood as a particularly significant kind of place with which, and within which we experience strong social, psychological and emotive attachments" (p.135). Despres' (1991) earlier similar literature review into the meaning of home was also positive, arguing it was a material dwelling which one could choose to personalise/modify and conduct relationships and activities. This process facilitates feelings of security, control, permanence, refuge and status which reflect individual ideas and values. However, this assumption that home is an exclusively psychologically positive place is challenged by McCarthy (2017) who, in a potential paradigm shift, raises the question of negative associations which may be central to an individual's understanding of home.

Gap in Knowledge

Two of the three thematic areas described above - place attachment and relocation – appear to have failed to incorporate the experiences of people experiencing rough sleeping. Whilst research into the meaning of home has a better track-record including such experiences, a gap in knowledge exists. There is an underlying policy assumption that relocation can serve to end some peoples' homelessness. Yet nobody has researched how much, to those people impacted, geographical place and moving location impacts their meaning of home? There is a deafening silence of the voices of those offered a roadmap out of homelessness which involves them going to a new area.

Research Questions and Analytical Framework

To address this gap in knowledge, the following questions will be investigated.

- In terms of accommodation feeling like home, what things are important to people experiencing rough sleeping offered relocation?
- How much are these things reflected in accommodation (whether accepted or refused) which has been part of a relocation offer to them?
- How "at home" do relocated people feel in their new accommodation?
- How do peoples' other support needs impact upon the relocation experience?

- How much choice (and in which aspects), do other stakeholders, such as gatekeepers or policy makers think people experiencing rough sleeping should/can have?

My research will be informed by an analytical framework which leans heavily on the writings of Zygmunt Bauman. His is a diverse range of work, which Smith (1999) describes as ranging from searching for a "Modern Marxism" in the 1960's to an emphasis on "postmodernity and its discontents" from the 1990s onwards. The framework for this PhD will be informed by these later works which Smith (1999) claims overlap with both poststructuralism and Critical Theory.

For Bauman, relationships to place are taking place in an environment of *liquid modernity* in which solid societal structures and lifelong connections "melt away" to be replaced with a "more fluid" existence. He described the process thus: "the harnesses by which collectives tie their members to a joint history, custom, language or schooling is getting more threadbare to by the year" (Bauman, 2000, p.169). At other times his emphasis has been more upon the destabilizing impacts of modern capitalism; "economic modernization…has by now embraced the totality of the planet" (Bauman 2004, p.58).

Whether primarily cultural or economic, one defining characteristic of Bauman's liquid modernity is the growth of *individualism* and the elevation of personal choice and freedom as the most important values, "In the land of the individual freedom of choice the option to escape individualization and to refuse participation in the individualizing game is emphatically *not* on the agenda" (Bauman 2000 p.34, his italics).

This growth of individualization in capitalist society has led to what Bauman calls "*a society of consumers"* (2005 pp.81-89) in which the ability of the wealthy to get their desires met, trumps the ability of the poorest to get their needs met. One can see how Bauman's belief in Marxism disintegrated as capitalism evolved not into greater levels of class solidarity but instead individualism. The chains or iron cages, within which consumerism bounds people are freely entered. Thus, creating a society based not on

"from each according to his needs" but rather according to his relative consumption power.

The final particularly relevant strand of Bauman's (1998) thinking is his belief that weaker loyalty to place has created situations in which residential mobility as a consumption desire is increasingly normative, "Nowadays we are all on the move. Many of us change places – [for example] moving homes" (p.77) and "All people may now be wanderers in fact or in premonition" (p.87). However, this does not necessarily lead to contentment; "Fear has now settled inside, saturating our daily routines" (Bauman, 2007, p.8). This reflects phenomenologists' traditional concerns. Stivers (2004) claimed Heidegger connected growth in individualism to "ontological homelessness". Relph (1976), Riley (1992) and Tuan (1975) all believed the importance of feelings of place connection were being undermined by approaches to housing and development which prioritised profits over belonging.

Mandic (2001) summarised the ideal of residential mobility as a consumption choice thus, "[moving is commonly considered as] an adaptive mechanism by which a household can adjust its current housing consumption to a preferred one" (p.53). However, Blackshaw (2005) highlights gaps in choice narratives; "liquid modernity redraws the boundary between social class divisions as a relationship between those who happily consume and those who cannot, despite their want of trying" (p.120).

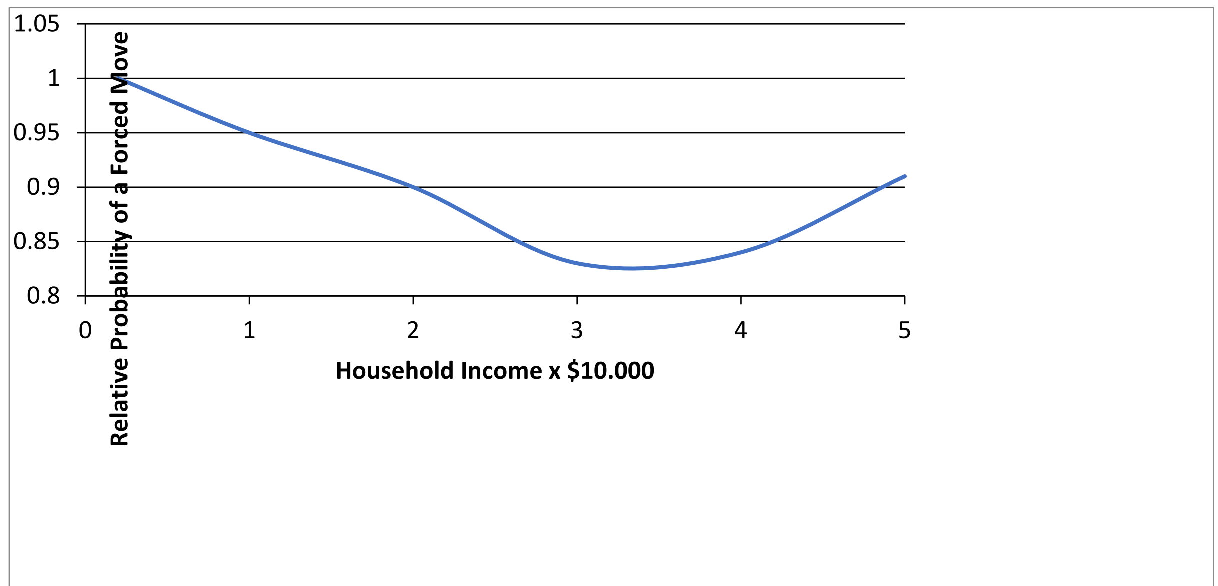
Therefore, for the purposes of this PhD, the challenge is - if access to a home is founded on consumption choices, what happens in this increasingly mobile world, to those who cannot economically compete? Bauman (1998) offers a possible answer:

> "[poorer people] are [not] on the move because they prefer to move to staying put and because they want to go where they are going. Many would perhaps go elsewhere or refuse to embark on a life of wandering altogether – were they asked but they had not been asked. If they are on the move it is because staying at home…in the long run does not seem a feasible proposition" (p.92)

Jeffrey (2018) claims increases in middle-class choice restrict those of the working-class. This is illustrated by Cohen & Rustin (2008) and Smith & Williams (1986) who claim the poor are being excluded from London via “gentrification”. Marcuse (1980) describes gentrification as a two-pronged process of “active” and “exclusionary” displacement (moving the existing poor out, whilst stopping new from coming-in).

Quantitative evidence from the USA supports a theory of choice related to consumption power. Wood (1993) showed that children from poorer backgrounds were more likely to experience residential instability. Similarly, Desmond's (2015) more modern research (Figure 3) shows a broadly inverse relationship between increased income and likelihood of involuntary move:

Figure 3: Relative Probability of an Involuntary Residential Move by Income Decile in the USA



Source: (adapted from) Desmond et al.2015.

Average US Household Income 2015, $56,500 approx.

It is not clear how transferable this data is to the UK, especially as Bauman (2000) claims cultural normative differences constitute (the only?) counterweight to the domination of consumption narratives. Goffman,1963 and Foucault (in Horsell, 2006) both showed how certain behaviours are arbitrarily encouraged/normalised or stigmatised/punished depending on time and place. Jacobsen and Poder (2008) argue that certain groups are increasingly subject to an increasing cultural hegemony which views them as “human waste” and “weeds”. Their visible presence offending a value-system in which the “right” to reside somewhere depends primarily on financial status.

Although, my current plan is for Bauman’s theory to be central to my analytical framework, I am also going to consider other analytical tools such as Bourdieu's theories of habitas, Foucault's emphasis on power-relationships or Marxism’s more traditional class analysis.

Methodology

This research will be a case study focused on people primarily, or exclusively, from London and the South-East who are offered geographical relocation as the way of ending their homelessness. As a new area of research, the study will use inductive methods to understand peoples’ experiences. Whilst analysis, interpretation and categorisation are obviously essential to structure the research, I will attempt to faithfully reflect their experiences by utilising the rich thick descriptions that in-depth interviewing can offer. This inductive approach will avoid such hypodissertation as to whether relocation is a universally negative/positive experience. This desire for depth of understanding is one reason why a quantitative approach is inappropriate

Other qualitative methods which were considered include longitudinal and ethnographic studies. However, the longer timeframes and levels of commitment required from participants needed negates this approach in the confines of a PhD programme. Nonetheless, if possible, I will undertake more than one interview with some of the participants to determine whether their perceptions (or circumstances) alter over time. An alternative method considered was Focus Groups, but I believe the depth of individual excavation will be greater from interviews. Plus, my experience is that group settings are not conducive to less confident people experiencing rough sleeping speaking-out and speaking about very personal and emotional issues in this type of

environment is not appropriate. Therefore, the main thrust of the methodology will be depth interviews.

The methodological approach to the study involves the following:

- Researcher Diary
- DA
- Depth Interviews

Researcher Diary

I will complete a diary throughout the process to enhance both my contemporaneous and reflective experiences of the progress/process of the research. As Punch (2012) explains this offers a way of contemporaneously expressing feelings over processes, difficulties and relationships during the length of the research.

Documentary Analysis

Prior to the interviews I will analyse a number of key background documents. Some of this is publicly available and others may need to be requested. These include:

- Historical records, such as letters and reports, which demonstrate how rules around people experiencing rough sleeping and access to local services and resources have developed
- Descriptions and evaluations of services or policies which use relocation as means of addressing homelessness.
- Publicly available data sets pertaining to relocation actions affecting people experiencing rough sleeping.
- Possibly Freedom of Information requests to access documents not readily available

Interviews

The main data sources for this research will be in-depth semi-structured interviews. I am conscious that Silverman (2013), following Foucault, states there is a risk that these run the risk of reinforcing power structures. Research interviews will be somewhat outside the day-to-day experiences of people experiencing rough sleeping, but I hope my utilising experience of 25 years immersed in homelessness culture will alleviate this. I have experience of conducting interviews in a way which are respectful, boundaried but also effective (things like appropriate clothes, language and setting). Ideally, I would like to conduct some interviews in peoples' homes to help them relax and potentially reduce any private/public accounts of their experiences. Whilst I do not believe it is possible to fully know the social world of another person, my aim is to be open enough to try and create the best possible intersubjectivity bridge of understanding in the tradition of Mead (see Coelho & Figueiredo 2003), Schutz (1962) and aspects of the phenomenological movement.

Sample

Currently there is no sampling frame from which to select possible interviewees (which is another reason a quantitative approach is inappropriate). Hence, there is no option but restrict sampling to representative characteristics. Realistically, despite my network of existing contacts, access will often be through gatekeepers. Hence, I will be using convenience sampling. There is a risk of interviewee bias because it is disproportionately likely that research participants accessed through gatekeepers will be people with a positive view of relocation. To address this, I am hoping for a variety of respondents from a number of sources. Attempts will be made to interview some people who have accepted, and others who refused, offers of relocation. Furthermore, I am hoping to interview people whose relocation offers have been based on different "rationales". This will include both statutory people experiencing rough sleeping (whom are offered relocation for local authorities to fulfil legal obligations) and people experiencing rough sleeping (whose relocation is based on them not having an adequate local connection to the area they are sleeping rough). It is likely there will be differences, both, within these groups but also between them because the broad definition of homelessness sometimes masks a myriad of different experiences. The study will be focused primarily upon London because it is there that some of the highest levels of pressure on housing markets and unaffordability exist (see Figure 1), alongside policies of relocating people experiencing rough sleeping (see Figure 2) and

the highest densities of manifestations homelessness such as over a quarter of all people experiencing rough sleeping, and two-thirds of households in Statutory Temporary Accommodation (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2019).

The aim at the moment is to interview the following sample sizes:

- Approximately 15-20 households who have experienced homelessness and been offered relocation as a way of addressing it. Ideally there will be a mixture of people who have accepted and refused the offer. This number may change as I am considering the value of undertaking fewer, deeper interviews. There has been very little research conducted amongst those who have moved as a result of relocation policies and practises which makes the accessing of them particularly challenging. Because of my long history of working in the world of homelessness I do have a number of contacts which I am hoping will help with this. Some of these provide services (or have contacts with other people who do so) which support people experiencing rough sleeping who have experienced relocation. As I envisage access to research participants being primarily through these gatekeepers there will need to be some form of accessible initial publicity summarising the research.
- Approximately five other stakeholders who work-in or commission services or write policies in which relocation is an aspect of addressing homelessness.

For group 2 the intention is to have single interviews, either by phone or in person. However, as previously mentioned, for some of the first group, I would like to do more than one interview to increase trust and see if experiences change.

Analysing Data

As mentioned previously, I will be using tools from Bauman's writings to analyse the data. Although the research will be descriptive, methods will be borrowed from Grounded Theory. As an almost a completely new area of research this is will inductively allow codes, categories and, potentially, theories to be generated from the data. This is turn will then influence decisions around future sampling and data analysis. After 25 years working in homelessness, I feel I inevitably bring assumptions to analysis but I hope, as Bryant & Chamez put it, to develop "an intersubjectively constructed and shared 'truth'" (p.219).

Ethics

Despite the sensitivities and complexities of this research I believe it is ethically desirable to pursue. It fills a gap in academic knowledge and research. It also offers one of the first opportunities for the experience of people experiencing rough sleeping impacted by relocation approaches to be described. In terms of professional standards, I take these very seriously. I am used to working with people who have experienced homelessness in a professional capacity whilst representing organisations. Therefore, I know how to operate within respectful boundaries. To complement this process, I follow Sheffield Hallam University rules and guidelines and will consult with my Supervisors when unsure. All sensitive records will be kept securely on my password protected computer and will not be shared with third parties without expressed consent. The research will be disseminated to appropriate sources and I hope will highlight this under-researched issue both within and, beyond academic circles.

Responsibility to participants

There are various issues connected to informed consent related to this project. It is likely that some participants are less able to use common communication mechanisms such as e-mail or written information. This is something which will require imagination, empathy and respect. Individuals are also being potentially asked about very difficult periods in their life; out of respect for this, they will not be pressed to discuss any subject areas they are uncomfortable with. It will also be made clear that participation is 100% voluntary and opportunities will exist to withdraw consent at various stages. Names will be changed, and quotes will be presented in ways which does not make it

possible for third parties to identify the person concerned. This commitment to confidentiality will only be potentially overridden where I perceive there to be a risk of harm to the interviewee or other people (including myself). Participants will also be offered small supermarket vouchers for their time plus a copy of the completed research.

Total Words – 5,975

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Appendix 5 – Proposal to Providers of Everyone-in Hotels (following changes to the research forced by Covid)

Summary of Research Proposal

To talk to some [redacted] clients (using) and staff (working in) the hotels set-up in response to cv-19 (and possible some people who have been through the Safe Connections service) and get their perspectives on three broad questions.

Question 1 – Which things matter to people most about a future Home (this is for both staff and clients)?

Which things do they want from your own place?

- Getting somewhere quickly? Or willing to wait for something that matches their choices?
- Own flat? Or willing to share (if so, in what types of accommodation?)? How important is size? One bedroom or bedsit
- Does it matter how long the tenancy is?
- Do themselves want council or housing association? Or private sector
- Garden?
- Decorate it themselves or already decorated?
- Choice of area?

> *"The expression 'home' implies more than just any kind of shelter; it is associated with material conditions and standards, privacy, space, control, personal warmth, comfort, stability, safety, security, choice, self-expression and physical and emotional well-being".* (Neale, 1997 - Review of Academic Literature on Meaning of Home)

Question 2 – How willing are people to compromise on somethings to get other choices met (this is for both staff and clients)?

For example, in terms of location (which I am particularly interested in) do they:

a) Only want to return to where they were staying before or go to another particular part of London
b) Want to stay in London, but do not mind which part
c) Would be willing to move outside of London
d) For non-UK nationals, would be willing to return to country of origin (and/or whether they plan to at some point in the future?)

To what extent would they be willing to go back to homelessness if their preferences are not met on the location question? How much flexibility do they have around this? Would they have accepted a room in the hotel if it had been geographically further away? Would they be willing to stay in a hostel if it is a geographical area they want to live in.

Question 3 – What does Home mean to people (this is for clients)?

The exact nature of this section will depend on how reasonable it is to ask people these questions and how comfortable they are asking.

a) Where did they most "feel at Home"? When did they last feel at Home? What about it made it all made it feel "homely" to them.
b) Which aspects of the hotel they are staying in make them feel at Home? (this might be useful in understanding what about the hotels encouraged people to stay)

Methodology

The data would be collected via semi-structured interviews by phone with a couple of key staff and as many clients who wanted to participate. The questions listed above are the overall research questions and skeleton of the interviews rather than the details of what will be specifically asked of each person (which will depend on their circumstances and answers).

We would also like to ask clients if they would like to keep diaries and take photos of their experiences (please see below on Protecting clients).

This is because, the aim is to understand their experiences rather than ensure a consistency of data-collection methods.

The Sampling is Convenience, which means some data is also being potentially collected from other parts of the country and using other mechanisms (to some degree this is reactive to the circumstances created by cv-19. We are happy to explain these further if required).

Protecting clients

People will be asked to give oral consent to the research process before any interviews progress (this will involve using Sheffield Hallam's formal consent documentation). They will also have 14 days to withdraw their consent after the interview (as will any staff interviewed).

Confidentiality is paramount and will be the norm. No person in the research with be identifiable in anything published without specific, signed consent. The only condition in which confidentiality might be broken would be where there were health or safety risks to the person concerned or others.

We would like to recompense those clients who take part £10 for their time. This will be done through Sainsbury's vouchers. Logistics to be confirmed

Respective Roles

Paul (on behalf of SHU)

- Develop the publicity literature
- Conduct the interviews
- Finance the vouchers for participants
- Analyse the results
- Share findings with [redacted] in agreed ways and at agreed points

[redacted] Organisation

- Publicise the research with clients
- Encourage those whom it is felt might benefit
- Give vouchers to those who have taken part (is this feasible)
- Provide staff interviewees (if staff are willing)

- Work out how they most benefit from findings being disseminated within the organisation.

Next Steps

- Paul to develop flyer
- Sheffield Hallam Uni to give ethical approval
- Flyer to be sent out. Plus brief explanatory note for staff.
- Liaison with frontline staff to take place

A few questions for [redacted]

- Would you want [redacted] logo to be on the flyer?
- What would you like in return for your participation (I realise you are probably not sure yet)
- Do you know when the hotels are due to close?
- Are you happy for Irmani and the LA staff resettling people out of the hotels to be interviewed as part of the research
- Would you be happy distributing the £10 vouchers? Or does this create problems?

2. Appendix 6 – Draft Questions for Everyone-in Provider

3.

Purpose or Research

The thing I am looking at is how much the area is important to people in terms of getting a Home.

General Question

- Tell me about your experience (do they describe themselves as homeless?)
- How much say did you have in where you are?
- Did you have any choices? If so why did you choose there?
- Was it made clear how long you would be there for?
- Have you been asked what you want from your own place?

4.

5.

Question 1 – Which things matter to people most about a future Home?

Which things do you want from your own place?

- Getting somewhere quickly? Or willing to wait for something better?
- Need to have seen it before?
- Own flat? Or willing to share? How important is size? One bedroom or bedsit
- Decorate it yourself or already decorated?
- Furnished or unfurnished
- Does it matter how long the tenancy is?
- Do you want council or housing association? Or private sector
- Garden
- Near an area you know?

Which things matter most to you.

- *privacy,*

- *space,*
- *control (things like your own front door)*
- *safety, security,*
- *choice*
- *personal warmth,*
- *comfort,*
- *stability,*
- *self-expression*
- *physical and emotional well-being".*

Question 2 – How willing are people to compromise on Location to get other homelessness needs met?

Do they:

- Only want to return to where they were staying before in London or go to another particular part
- Want to stay in London, but do not mind which part
- Would be willing to move outside of London

Why is that?

- For non-UK nationals, would be willing to return to country of origin (and/or whether they plan to at some point in the future?)

- Will you sit and wait until something comes up which is where you want?
- How much would you be willing to compromise on this(To what extent would they be willing to go back to homelessness if their preferences are not met on the location question?)

"The expression 'home' implies more than just any kind of shelter; it is associated with material conditions and standards, privacy, space, control, personal warmth, comfort, stability, safety, security, choice, self-expression and physical and emotional well-being". (Neale, 1997 - Review of Academic Literature on Meaning of Home)

We could streamline this list and add Location into it. Then ask about the different aspects.

This could establish how consciously important location is to them versus the other elements of Home identified in the literature

Question 3 – What does Home mean to people?

- Where did they most “feel at Home”? When did they last feel at Home? What about it made it all made it feel “homely” to them.
- Does it feel like Home Which aspects of the hotel they are staying in make them feel at Home? Which bits do not? (possible photos?)
- Which sort of things matter

6.

Appendix 6 – Topic Guide for Interviewing Other Stakeholders

Peoples current “Home” (i.e. the hotels)

- Why do you think people have come into the hotels?
- Why do you think people have stayed in the hotels?
- What lessons can we learn

In your experience what matter most to people around getting a home? How important do you think each of these is?

- Getting somewhere quickly? Or willing to wait for something that matches their choices?
- Own flat? Or willing to share (if so, in what types of accommodation?)? How important is size? One bedroom or bedsit
- How long the tenancy is?
- Wanting council or housing association? Or private sector
- Garden?
- Decorate it themselves or already decorated?
- Location

Which of these aspects do you think people will have to be willing to compromise on to get a Home? For example:

- Location choices will necessarily be restricted?
  Private sector is the only option?
  They will only get one offer?
- The dwelling will reflect what it is perceived they need rather than what they want.?
- They may have to share either temporarily before getting their own place or as a longer-term option (under 35s cannot get sufficient LHA in the PRS)
- Accepting the situation of migrants is different and they will be offered less

Specifically, around location. How much flexibility do you think people will actually have?

e) Only want to return to where they were staying before or go to another particular part of London
f) Want to stay in London, but do not mind which part
g) Would be willing to move outside of London
h) For non-UK nationals, would be willing to return to country of origin (and/or whether they plan to at some point in the future?)

To what extent would they be willing to go back to homelessness if their preferences are not met on the location question? How much flexibility do they have around this? Would they have accepted a room in the hotel if it had been geographically further away? Would they be willing to stay in a hostel if it is a geographical area they want to live in.

Appendix 7

Ethical Approval Application

Q1. General overview of study *

(300 words maximum)

This research investigates the practise of geographical relocation as a way of attempting to meet the housing need of people experiencing homelessness. Over the last decade there has been an increase in the number of voluntary and statutory bodies moving people who are homeless in one geographical area to a new one. Various legal and economic changes since 2011 have made this a more feasible option. However, because this phenomenon has increased in a largely reactive and uncoordinated way, rather than as a large-scale structured programme, it appears to have slipped under the radar of academic researchers. There is little research, or evaluation, evidence considering the experiences of individuals and families who have been subject to relocation as a means of addressing homelessness. This study is an attempt to begin filling that gap in knowledge.

The postmodernist sociologist Zygmunt Bauman has written extensively (and, perhaps, prophetically) on how modern capitalism has increasingly displaced poorer communities (such as refugees and the unemployed) from places that they would might call “home”. Applying his theories to this research will help create a framework for analysing data gathered qualitatively. Tools will be utilised from Grounded Theory and the Phenomenological Method to facilitate the production of inductive, exploratory data in this new research area.

Q2. Background to the study and scientific rationale (if you have already written a research proposal, e.g. for a funder, you can upload that instead of completing this section).

(1000 words maximum)

Introduction

The overall aim of this project would be to explore people experiencing rough sleeping's experience of geographical relocation. The idea was first suggested by Lord Best, a leading Parliamentarian on housing and homelessness. He identified this as a phenomenon which is increasing but has been under-researched.

Background

For the first time, in 2011, local authorities (LAs) were given powers to permanently rehouse homeless households, to whom they owed legal duties, into the Private Rented Sector (PRS) regardless of tenure preferences of that household. The law states that accommodation offers must be "reasonable" and as geographically close as possible, but also "affordable" (Department for Communities & Local Government, 2012 p.14). This change made it easier for LAs to house people into lower-cost areas reflecting an apparent changing of political consensus that saw priority access to local social housing as the default response to homelessness. .

> "The Localism Act lets local authorities meet their homelessness duty by providing good quality private rented homes [even if the homeless household do not want to rent privately]. This option could provide an appropriate solution for people experiencing a homelessness crisis, at the same time freeing up social homes for people in real need on the waiting list".
>
> (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2011, p.16)

The change took place in the wider context of social housing undersupply, Housing Benefit reductions and rising rents. This combination has led some London LA to struggle in fulfilling legal duties to homeless households and some started pursuing relocation policies to do so. Between October 2013-January 2015 over 1000 homeless London households were permanently relocated out-of-borough, with half moved out of the capital altogether. Significantly, whilst relocation policies, thus far, have been a primarily London phenomenon, increasing rent rises and further Benefit Cap reductions are increasingly affecting other parts of the country (Policy in Practise, 2015).

Alongside this response by LAs, relocation has also increasingly been used as a way of working with people experiencing rough sleeping on the streets who have been mobile and are not viewed as being "from" the area in which they are sleeping rough.

> "The Thames Reach Safe Connections service works alongside other outreach teams in London to find alternative solutions for people who are unwilling or unable to access rough sleeping services in the area where they are bedded down.
>
> Safe Connections helps people who are sleeping rough to find accommodation in a new area where they feel safe and are able to leave the streets behind."
>
> https://thamesreach.org.uk/what-we-do/response/outreach-services/safe-connections/

Following the recent Coronavirus outbreak a number of people experiencing rough sleeping were placed in hotels across the country. In some places this involved geographical relocation.Ne

Scientific Rationale

Three themes from academic literature, which have been researched extensively, relate directly to this issue:

a. The Meaning of Home

b. The Importance of Attachments to Specific Geographical Places

c. The Impact of Residential Mobility

Whilst existing literature has been very helpful in developing this research proposal, the lack of any specific studies about relocated people experiencing rough sleeping suggests an inductive, exploratory approach is, both, scientifically appropriate and ethical. Scientifically, there is an inadequate body of existing work to develop theories. This means that there is an increased risk that any hypothetical-deductive approach risks imposing a conceptual “iron cage” more reflective of the researcher’s preconceptions than the emergent data. Furthermore, as a formerly homeless person myself, I believe ethically the design of the research needs to be one that (as far as possible) draws out hear the authentic voices of participants in the study. Hence, a case study approach in appropriate as it allows various methods of engaging with participants (interviews, observation, diaries, photos) for generating "thick data".

Categories and conclusions will emerge from the research rather than existing ones being tested. Alongside filling a gap in knowledge this, inductively generated, depth of understanding is required in terms of, potentially, influencing the wider world of decision-makers and homelessness services. There appears to be an implicit assumption that concepts related to geographical place, such as belonging, attachment and capital, are not significant in terms of discussions around ending homelessness. Researching whether these assumptions exist, and how they compare to the experience of relocated research participants, is part of the rationale for interviews with a small number of stakeholders being part of the proposal.

Q6. Main research questions *

Question 1 – Which things matter to people most about a future Home?

Which things do you want from your own place?

- Getting somewhere quickly? Or willing to wait for something better?
- Need to have seen it before?
- Own flat? Or willing to share? How important is size? One bedroom or bedsit
- Decorate it yourself or already decorated?
- Furnished or unfurnished
- Does it matter how long the tenancy is?
- Do you want council or housing association? Or private sector
- Garden
- Near an area you know?

Question 2 – How willing are people to compromise on Location to get other homelessness needs met?

Do they:

i) Only want to return to where they were staying before or go to another particular part of Bedford
j) Want to stay in Bedford, but do not mind which part
k) Would be willing to move outside of Bedford
l) For non-UK nationals, would be willing to return to country of origin (and/or whether they plan to at some point in the future?)

Question 3 – What does Home mean to people?

c) Where did they most “feel at Home”? When did they last feel at Home? What about it made it all made it feel “homely” to them.
d) Does it feel like Home Which aspects of the hotel they are staying in make them feel at Home? Which bits do not? (possible photos?)

Q7. Summary of methods including proposed data analyses *

Inductive case study research using:

- In-depth, semi-structured informal interviews. Which will need to be done remotely
- Researcher fieldwork journal
- Questionnaire data
-
- Participant diary
- Photo novella
- Interviews with representatives of support agencies and other stakeholders

As an almost a completely new area of research codes, categories and, potentially, theories will be inductively generated from the data. In practical terms data analysis with involve using NVivo software.

The nature of these methods has had to be adapted in the light of coronavirus to reflect the difficulties of face-to-face contact with people, especially those in vulnerable groups.

Q12. Where data is collected from human participants, outline the nature of the data, details of anonymisation, storage and disposal procedures if these are required (300 - 750)

Data from human participants will be in the form of interview transcripts, photographs, researcher fieldwork journal and participant diaries. Data will be anonymised and stored in ways which protect participants' confidentiality and anonymity. Data security

and management procedures are consistent with the Data Protection Act 1998 and ISO27001. Work will be kept on secure networks within the University, which are password protected. Data will not be transferred between networks and will only be accessible outside the University by connecting to the secure server. Encrypted equipment will be used- including Dictaphones, laptops, smartphones, USB keys - to ensure that data collected in the field is held in the most secure way possible. All data hardware and paper-based documents will be stored in locked environments either in my home or the CRESR office (entrance to this latter building is via a main entrance using a staff card and an internal door which has digital locking). My personal and the office computers are all password protected.

CRESR has robust security protocols in place which have been developed to ensure the highest levels of data security. Staff are aware of and adhere to the University's Data Protection Policy Statement and to all terms in this document. Any security incidents, physical or electronic, will be reported to the relevant contact. The CRESR IG Lead will undertake regular spot checks to ensure that all security measures are being met and carried out in accordance with this statement. This statement is reviewed annually to ensure that it is accurate, up to date, and reflects current legal, regulatory and contractual requirements. Security procedures are put in place when data is 'at rest' to ensure that its safety and integrity is maintained. Once transcription has taken place, audio files are destroyed, and the consent form kept as evidence that the interview took place. Where the interview is not fully transcribed, the audio recording will be stored safely on a secure staff drive. Interview transcripts and notes will be stored securely for ten years following publication of related outputs in the SHU Research Data Archive. If the data cannot be sufficiently redacted to enable it to be open access, then arrangements will be made for it to be stored behind a firewall or with an embargo attached. CRESR is currently working towards accreditation on the Cyber Essentials scheme. These procedures are audited on an annual basis and to date have gained full approval.

Q1. Describe the arrangements for recruiting, selecting/sampling and briefing potential participants. *

There is no sampling frame for this group, so the intention is to have approximately six-eight participants based upon convenience sampling. The nature of this has been

changed by coronavirus which has put a strain on many of the gatekeepers, in the form of pre-existing contacts whom I was hoping to use to access participants. In essence, recruiting participants has become much more difficult. At the moment I am reliant upon one or two agencies who may have the capacity to facilitate this gatekeeping process. For pragmatic reasons other sources of data collection have had to be adopted compared to those originally envisaged. These are a) people accommodated as a result of coronavirus b) other stakeholders involved in the accommodating of people who are homeless c) individuals who have researched the importance of locality in terms of Home

Any individuals (or couple) who express an interest in taking part will have the research explained briefly to them in, both, written and verbal forms. If a decision is made to move forward with them as participants, they will be comprehensively verbally briefed on the research and asked to complete the relevant paperwork prior to taking part. This process will clearly outline the purpose of the research and specify that all participation is voluntary. It will also state that respondents are not obliged to answer all interview questions or be involved in other aspects of the research should they feel uncomfortable in doing so. It will be made clear that they are free to withdraw from the study, without giving reason, within 14 days of the last research encounter by contacting me.

Q2. Indicate the activities participants will be involved in.

A number of qualitative methods will be adopted. All participants will be asked to required to undertake the interviews. The other methods (Observation, Photos, Diaries) are more of a menu allowing myself and the participants to work out together the best ways of expressing their experiences research.

1. In-depth, semi-structured, informal interviews with participants – Realisticallly these will now have to be by phone. Whilst I do not favour this method of remote contact with people, it s the only short-term possible approach because of the digital exclusion faced by people experiencing rough sleeping and the challenges of social distancing

2.

3. Participant Diary – Participants documenting how they spend their time, the activities they undertake and the people they interact with

4. Photo novella – Giving participants freedom to express their own experience, priorities and meaning, in a way which does not focus upon the spoken or written word or being observed in behaviour by others. This may not be possible within the shared environments of hotels etc

Having been homeless, and worked in the area for decades, I consider myself an "insider", I will always be flexible and sensitive to the feelings of the participants in how these methods are adopted. Their welfare will be my top priority. I greatly regret that the face-to-face physical relationship between researcher and participant is not possible in the current environment.

Q3. What is the potential for participants to benefit from participation in the research? *

Whilst there is no immediate, direct material benefit, (other than supermarket vouchers compensation for time), the hope is that the research will put the voices of this largely silent group into the public domain (for the first time?). It will give them a space to describe their experiences in their own words and images. It is possible that some participants had little choice in their relocation processes, and I believe the knowledge that somebody is interested and listening will be valued. In the context of the current discussion around what the future of homelessness provision looks like in the post-lockdown world it also offers a mechanism for the voices of people experiencing rough sleeping impacted to be recorded contemporaneously (rather than retrospectively).

Q4. Describe any possible negative consequences of participation in the research along with the ways in which these consequences will be limited *

There is potential for the interviews to raise issues that could upset or distress participants. There are a number of ways in which to a) mitigate against this b) address it, should it arise. I have had extensive first-hand experience of interviewing people who have experienced homelessness. The draft questions will be discussed with a Panel of

current and formerly people experiencing rough sleeping to help with their development.

The way the research is conducted can create a positive, rather than distressing, experience for participants (many respondents welcome the opportunity to talk about their lives). I approach this as a co-production project built upon trust and rapport. I will conduct the research as informally, sensitively and conversationally as possible. Questions will be framed in ways which allow participants to express themselves in the way which is right for them. The interviews will take place where they feel comfortable, with only respectful and gentle probing. Having worked in homelessness services, I am experienced at identifying signs of distress and discomfort and I will adapt the interview accordingly or draw it to a close(sensitively). I will always err on the side of caution and participant well-being. I will also identify organisations which may be able to provide people with external support should they wish to seek it.

There is a current issue of the strain that coronavirus is putting on both people experiencing rough sleeping and agencies. There is a need to ensure that this is not added to unnecessarily.

Q5. Describe the arrangements for obtaining participants' consent. *

The research will only involve individuals who are able to give voluntary informed consent after understanding the purpose of the study. In providing informed consent, participants will not be deceived or coerced into taking part in the research. They will be accurately informed, in plain English, of the purposes, processes and intentions of the research While it is recognised that no group should be unreasonably excluded from the research, neither is it always deemed appropriate that those without the capacity to consent be included unnecessarily in the name of research. I understand the intention of the provisions of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 (MCA) and will be guided by its principles when recruiting participants and throughout the research process. A core principle of the MCA is that capacity should be assumed, as default, unless established otherwise. If prior to commencement of, or during a part of the research, it becomes apparent that a participant may not have the capacity to consent, or actively expresses discomfort or distress, I will sensitively close down the process and their data will be withdrawn from the study. Recruitment materials will be designed in clear and accessible formats. Demonstrable steps will be taken to ensure that the

respondent is able to fully comprehend and retain information about the study. Information sheets and consent forms will be explained verbally and written in plain English to ensure that participants fully understand - the purpose of the research; their confidentiality; how information will be collected and used; information regarding withdrawal; and how to contact me (or my Supervisors). Where necessary, information sheets and consent forms will be translated verbally, with the help of experienced interpreters, according to language needs. The information sheet will clearly outline the purpose of the research and specify that all participation is voluntary. It will also state that respondents are not obliged to answer all interview questions or undertake aspects of the research where they feel uncomfortable; and that they are completely free to withdraw from the study, without giving reason, within 14 days of the last research encounter

Because the interviews are now going to have to be over the phone, consent will need to be oral. This will involve emailing the Consent Form out to people. Or where not possible, reading it to them.

Q6. Describe how participants will be made aware of their right to withdraw from the research. *

The information sheet will clearly outline the purpose of the research and specify that all participation is voluntary. It will also state that respondents are not obliged to answer all interview questions, or undertake any other aspect of the research, should they feel uncomfortable doing so;. It will also state that they are free to withdraw from the study, without giving reason, within 14 days of the last research encounter. Participants' right to withdraw will also be explained verbally and in plain English, in ways that satisfy me that they understand

Q7. If your project requires that you work with vulnerable participants describe how you will implement safeguarding procedures during data collection *

The primary responsibility of sound research is to protect research participants from any physical, mental or emotional harm. I am highly experienced in conducting research with people who have experienced homelessness. I will also follow The University’s code of practice for those researching vulnerable groups. These include

some which often overlap with the homeless population such as people with mental and physical illness, and those with addictions to drugs and/or alcohol. Those taking part in this research may fall into a University's designated "vulnerable" categories (although even in the case of families who have experienced homelessness, participants will not be children).

In order to ensure that the wellbeing of research participants are not compromised in any way by their involvement in the study, the following principles will be observed strictly and at all times:

- Any safeguarding concerns I have will be registered with the University Research Ethics Committee.

- If a research participant tells me about abuse of himself/herself, or abuse occurring within an organisation, i will report through local channels. This applies to reports of historic, and not just recent, abuse or inappropriate behaviour. The respondent will be made aware of this duty before being asked to give informed consent.

- If in the course of working with a vulnerable individual, or family, I have reason to suspect abuse, I will report my concerns through pre-identified local channels. In addition, the concern will be registered with UREC at the earliest opportunity and their advice will be followed.

- I will complete a DBS check prior to starting fieldwork if necessary

Q9. Describe the arrangements for debriefing the participants. *

All participants will be given an opportunity to ask questions after the interview. They will have been provided with an information sheet outlining my contact details and they will be invited to get in touch if they have any further questions. I realise it is a big thing for people to share their stories in this way and I will also encourage participants to engage with me about progress of the research whenever they wish to. Finally, they will be given opportunities to hear summaries of my findings if they wish to.

Q10. Describe the arrangements for ensuring participant confidentiality. This should include details of: *

*** how results will be presented**
*** exceptional circumstances where confidentiality may not be preserved**
*** if images/videos will be used, how is anonymity to be addressed?**

Information sheets and consent forms will be explained verbally, and in plain English, to ensure that participants fully understand the purpose of the research; their confidentiality; how information will be collected and used; information regarding withdrawal; and how to contact the research team. Data storage and management procedures will be put in place to protect participants' confidentiality and anonymity. Datasecurity and management procedures are consistent with the Data Protection Act 1998 and ISO27001; the Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research (CRESR) is a signatory to the DWP's Generic Security Accreditation Document (GSAD) agreement for data security and management and complies with the NHSIG Toolkit to Level 3. IG Toolkit implementation provides a guarantee of sound research ethics and datahandling procedures (including NHS health data) and working practices. CRESR is currently working towards accreditation on the Cyber Essentials scheme. These procedures are audited on an annual basis and to date have gained full approval. CRESR has robust security protocols in place which have been developed to ensure the highest levels of data security: All members of the research team have signed data security protocols in accordance with DWP GSAD. All our work is carried out on a secure network within the University, which is password protected and only allows access to CRESR staff and a limited number of IT personnel. Data is not transferred between networks and can only be accessed outside the University by connecting to the secure server. We use encrypted equipment - including Dictaphones, laptops and USB iron keys - to ensure that data collected in the field is held in the most secure way possible. All data(including paper based) is stored in a locked environment. Entrance to our building is via a main entrance using a staff card and an internal door which has digital locking. All computers are password protected using a 30-day change rule. I will adhere to the University's Data Protection Policy Statement and to all terms in this document, reporting all security incidents, physical or electronic, to the relevant contact. The CRESR IG Lead undertakes regular spot checks to ensure that all security measures are being met and carried out in accordance with this statement. This statement is reviewed annually to ensure that it is accurate, up to date, and reflects current legal, regulatory and contractual requirements. Security procedures are put in place when data is 'at rest' to ensure that its safety and integrity is maintained. Once transcription has taken place, audio files are destroyed and the consent form

kept as evidence that the interview took place. Where the interview is not fully transcribed, the audio recording will be stored safely on a secure staff drive. Interview transcripts and notes will be stored securely for ten years following publication of related outputs in the SHU Research Data Archive. If the data cannot be sufficiently redacted to enable it to be open access, then arrangements will be made for it to be stored behind a firewall or with an embargo attached.

Q12. What are the expected outcomes, impacts and benefits of the research? *

This evaluation aims to investigate a phenomenon (geographical mobility as a way of addressing homelessness) which has been this far neglected, in this respect it will make a significant contribution to knowledge. it will also provide a space for the, as of yet, ignored, voices of those people impacted to be heard. Finally, I hope it will also inform wider political discussions about what “home”, and addressing homelessness, mean in practise.

The impact and benefits of the research have changed somewhat since it was originally envisaged. There is now a huge discussion as to how to avoid people in accommodation returning to the street. The importance of location is one area of this discussion.

Q13. Please give details of any plans for dissemination of the results of the research

The research will form the data for my PhD dissertation, due for completion in 2021. Data from the project will be fully anonymised and held securely and deposited on the University secure server at end of the project. I hope to share the findings in a) academic journals and b) forums for homelessness agencies and other interested stakeholders. Copies of my full PhD and a summary of findings will also be made available to participants.

Appendix 8

Snapshot Questionnaire

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Expert Link Questionnaire

Our voice our future

At Expert Link we believe that anyone accommodated during the COVID-19 emergency should have an opportunity to have their voices heard about future decisions.

We are therefore carrying out a one minute questionnaire to find out what accommodation people would want. We will use this information to try to influence local and national policy to make the right options available.

You do not have to give your name or any personal details in completing the survey. We will not share any individual information, but will share aggregated evidence publicly to increase understanding.

The survey will take **less than one minute.** Thank you for taking part!

Q1. In which town or city do you live?

Q2. Which one of these places did you most live in during February?

- On your own in a flat or house
- Sharing a flat or house with somebody
- In somebody else's flat or house
- In a hostel with your own room
- Sharing a room in a hostel
- In a supported housing project
- In a hotel
- In a Bed and Breakfast
- In a squat
- Sleeping rough

Somewhere else – please say where in the box below

Q3. Where are you living at the moment?

- On your own in a flat or house
- Sharing a flat or house with somebody
- In somebody else's flat or house
- In a hostel with your own room
- Sharing a room in a hostel
- In a supported housing project
- In a hotel
- In a Bed and Breakfast
- In a squat
- Sleeping rough

Somewhere else – please say where in the box below

Q.4 How many stars out of five would you give the place that you currently staying in

Q.5 If you moved into any of the following - a hotel, B&B, flat, flat-share or hostel in the last three months - was it in an area where you wanted to live?

- Yes
- No
- Did not move in in last three months

Q.6 Where would you most like to live in the future?

- On your own in a flat or house
- Sharing a flat or house with somebody
- In somebody else's flat or house
- In a hostel with your own room
- Sharing a room in a hostel
- In a supported housing project
- In a hotel
- In a Bed and Breakfast
- In a squat
- Sleeping rough

Somewhere else – please say where in the box below

Thank you, that completes the questionnaire. If you are willing for us to contact you to talk to you about your answers please put an email address or mobile phone number in the box below. **We will not share your information with anyone else without your expressed permission.**

A PhD. student in Sheffield Hallam University is undertaking research on this issue.

☐ Please tick here if you are happy for us to share this information with him.

Appendix 9

Data Analysis Details

Categories and Sub-Categories for Level 2 of Data Analysis

Category	**Sub-Category L1**	**Sub-Category L2**	**Sub-Category L3**
People	Bad treatment	People in authority Other people	
	Good treatment	People helping	
	Important people	Family Friends Others	
Actions	Actions people have taken	Positive actions	Taking care of health Work/Volunteering Spending time constructively Others
		Negative Actions	Bad choices made

	Actions people could take	Playing the system Positive actions Negative Actions Lack of Choices	
Views of the World	Expectations Hopes Wants	Optimism Pessimism Accommodation Place Employment	
Living in the hotels	Negative aspects	Have to qualify to access No choice of where to go Feeling isolated and trapped Geographical place Rules Food Quality of accoomodation Other people Geographical place Quality of accommodation	Residents Staff

	Positives	Food Other people	Residents Staff
Living in other places	Places which people have not liked living in Places which people have liked living in	History behind this and reasons History behind this and reasons	
Other key events in life not directly related to accommodation	Negative Positive	How do these tie-in with experiences around accommodation How do these tie-in with experiences around accommodation	The impact of Covid

Categories and Sub-Categories for Level 3 of Data Analysis

Category	Sub-Category L1	Sub-Category L2

<table>
<tr>
<td>Past Experiences</td>
<td>Negative Experiences, accommodation-related
• Rough sleeping
• Problems with own flat (problems with the area, problems with the flat)
• Informal hidden homelessness (friends, family, being alone)
• Homelessness accommodation (hostel, temporary accommodation, rehab, refuges)
• Being forced to leave places

Negative Experiences, non- accommodation-related
• mental health problems
• history of being homeless
• being in prison
• no longer working
• drug and alcohol use
• Authorities</td>
<td>• eviction
• behaviour from other people
• going to prison
• losing work
• family death
• Covid eviction
• felt they just had to leave</td>
</tr>
</table>

Past Experiences	• losing family 7. **Positive** Experiences, accommodation-related • help from the system to get accommodation • legal help • Help from other people **Positive** Experiences, non- accommodation-related • work • volunteering • constructive learning • support from people	• (not helping, or making things worse) • (through death, relationship breakdown, or intervention from authorities) • Solicitors, charities • family, friends, partners, strangers

		• family • partners • friends

Current Accommodation	Hotels – **negative** aspects • feel trapped • feel unsupported • don’t like the people • the food • damaging to health • the staff • don’t know what can happen next • the rules (including the threat of eviction Hotels – **positive** aspects • staff in the hotel • support from other homelessness organisations • good facilities • good food • feeling safe and secure • the other people • nice location	Fear of being asked to leave Fear of returning to the streets
Current Accommodation	Non-hotel accommodation – **negative** aspects • location • don’t know anybody • cut off from support agencies and other resources • it is not home • no idea about the future • feel unsafe Non-hotel accommodation – **positive** aspects	

	• people • location • stability • environment • feeling of belonging • security • other people	• lack of choice
Future Hopes and Wants	• own place, not a hostel or any other shared accommodation • near friends • near family • area where there is work available • particular physical environment (countryside, near the beach) • only want to live in London • want to live anywhere except London • Somewhere that meets the meaning of home • somewhere to start anew • With their children	Optimism Pessimism Accommodation Place Employment • Do not mind geographically • Being near them • Having custody

		• Reuniting as a family

Appendix 10

Summary of Other Experiences

Negative Experiences – Accommodation Focused

Reasons people were forced to Leave homes:

- Because of eviction
- Because of covid
- Because of people
- Because of going to prison
- Because of losing work
- Because family death or breakup
- Because of mental health
- Because of unspecified (just had to leave)

Reasons people did not like their own flat

- Problems with the area
- Problems with the flat

They types of Homelessness Accommodation (other than Hotels) people had bad experiences in:

- Hostels
- Local authority Temporary Accommodation
- Refuges
- Rehab units

They types of Hidden Homelessness people had bad experiences in

- Problems with living with friends
- Problems with living with family

Rough Sleeping

- Everybody hated just about everything to do with rough sleeping

Negative Experiences – Other Aspects of Life not Directly Connected to Homelessness

Bad experience of statutory or voluntary authorities

- Not helping
- Making the situation worse

Experience of Losing Family

- Impact of death
- Impact of relationship breakdown
- Impact of authorities intervening in families

Other Bad Experiences

- Covid
- MH problems
- Being homeless
- Being in prison
- No longer working
- Drug and alcohol use

Negative Experiences (Main Ones) – About the Hotels

- Had to qualify (others decide the rules)
- Didn't choose the area was in. No other choice
- Feel trapped
- Don't know anyone
- Cut off from support agencies and friends
- Don't like the people
- Don't feel supported by staff (or homelessness agencies)
- Don't know what's going to happen next (one particular aspect of not feeling supported)
- Its not a home

8.

Negative Experiences (Lesser one) - Hotels

- Food
- Health
- Eviction

Positive Experiences –

Of Current Accommodation

- People
- Location
- Stability
- Environment
- History of connection

Hotels

- Help from staff and homelessness agencies
- Good facilities
- Good food
- Safety, security and stability
- Other people are decent (in or outside of the hotel)
- The area (only three comments)

9.

Other Positive Experiences not related to Housing and Homelessness

- Help from people
- Help from system to get accommodation
- Help from system in other matters
- Help from legal bodies